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SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE (When Data Entered)

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM
1. REPORT NUMBER NA	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO. 2	3. RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER
4. TITLE (and Subtitle) Tactics of the Soviet Army Regiment		5. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED Final Report 14 May 1979
7. AUTHOR(s) Conroy, Bruce, MAJ, USA		6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS Student at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 66027		8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s)
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS U.S. Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATSW-SE		10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS (if different from Controlling Office)		12. REPORT DATE 14 May 1979
LEVEL 1		13. NUMBER OF PAGES 143
		15. SECURITY CLASS (of this report) Unclassified
6. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of this Report) Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.		15a. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE
7. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report)		
18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES Master of Military Art and Science (MMAS) thesis prepared at CGSC in partial fulfillment of the Masters Program requirements, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 66027		
19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)		
Antitank	Defense	Offense (Cont. on reverse)
Artillery	Encounter	Operational Art
Armor	March Column	Operational Support
Attack	Meeting Engagement	Reconnaissance
Breakthrough	Motorized Infantry	Regiment
20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) See reverse.		

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This research project is designed to facilitate an understanding of Soviet tactics at the regimental level and below, and to draw attention to material available for additional study of Soviet tactics. This paper is the result of analyzing numerous primary and secondary sources to ascertain which forms of tactics the Soviets use and which forms we, as US authors, say they use. A review of recent Soviet tactical exercises was used to confirm their implementation of espoused tactical doctrine.

The meeting engagement, the offense, the defense, and the withdrawal are the forms of tactics. A chapter is devoted to each form and possible implementation under given circumstances is postulated. Organization for combat and necessary support elements are included to serve as an aid to wargamers.

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Tactical Warfare
Tactics
Wargaming
Withdrawal

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TACTICS OF THE SOVIET ARMY REGIMENT

A Thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by
BRUCE CONROY, MAJOR, USA
B.S., American Technological University, 1974

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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

14 May 1979

90-C GSC-2959

79 11 26 008

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

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Accepted this 24th day of June 1979, by
Philip J. Brubaker, Director, Master of Military
 Art and Science.

The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the individual student author and do not necessarily represent the views of either the US Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

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ADSTRACT

TACTICS OF THE SOVIET ARMY REGIMENT, by Bruce Conroy, Major, USA, 143 pages.

This research project is designed to facilitate an understanding of Soviet tactics at the regimental level and below and to draw attention to material available for additional study of Soviet tactics. This paper is the result of analyzing numerous primary and secondary sources to ascertain which forms of tactics the Soviets use and which forms we, as US authors, say they use. A review of recent Soviet tactical exercises was used to confirm their implementation of espoused tactical doctrine.

The meeting engagement, the offense, the defense, and the withdrawal are the forms of tactics. A chapter is devoted to each form and possible implementation under given circumstances if postulated. Organization for combat and necessary support elements are included to serve as an aid to wargamers.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author is indebted to personnel from both the Threats Division, CACDA, and the Command and General Staff College Library for their help in obtaining source material and providing guidance for this project. Suggestions, comments, and recommended changes to this publication are solicited and may be made to:

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or: Autovon 680-3497/4472

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1-1. BACKGROUND.

There has been a formalized structure for Threat Development within the US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) since 19 July 1976, when TRADOC first issued Regulation 381-1. This regulation required subordinate schools to prepare a Threat Appendix in support of each combat or training developments study. The Threat Appendix was to be prepared under the supervision of the school's Threat Manager. Initiation of a Threat Appendix started with a review of all approved foreign intelligence documents; intelligence gaps were identified and means taken to resolve them; and then the Threat Manager began to assemble the comprehensive instrument. Each Threat Appendix had to stand on its own and be validated through appropriate channels. Meanwhile, if the study required manual wargaming or force-on-force simulation, the proponent had begun these efforts without the basis of having a validated Threat. Although each TRADOC school prepared its separate specific Threat Appendixes, there was a common denominator, Soviet tactics and tables of organization and equipment. Thus, throughout TRADOC there has been considerable duplication of effort in the preparation of numerous Threat Appendixes. The need for a common, non-specific Threat Appendix to aid in the initial phases of studies has been

recognized at virtually every level within TRADOC. This paper is intended to serve as the basis for such a non-specific Threat. The US Army Combined Arms Combat Developments Activity (CACDA) has made plans to augment this effort with additional classified volumes concerning equipment characteristics and performance data, TOEs, and system specific Threats. All of these writings will be updated on a periodic basis. This portion of the study effort has been kept unclassified to allow the widest possible dissemination.

Within the last few years there has been a significant effort by the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) and the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence (OACSI) to provide unclassified literature concerning Soviet tactics to aid in wargaming and service school instruction. Many of these documents have been reviewed and portions included in this paper. This effort is designed not to replace these documents, but to synthesize them and call attention to specific publications which can provide additional information. In other words, view this treatise as a base upon which one can build rather than a final product unto itself. It has been written to provide access to those unclassified documents already available and encourage personnel to seek additional information from pertinent documents. It would be presumptuous to assume this analysis has reviewed all unclassified documents available, and Threat Managers should take note of additional primary and secondary source material which can help them.

1-2. PURPOSE.

This document is intended to provide Threat Managers with a starting point in the preparation of Threat Appendixes pertaining to regimental size Soviet tank and motorized rifle units. This paper is designed to aid in combat and training developments studies requiring Threat input and may be used to assist either service school instructors or tactical unit intelligence officers. This assessment has been prepared to serve as a starting point and should not be interpreted as the final effort by itself. Because of the unclassified form there are certain refinements which must be added prior to use in formulating a specific Threat relevant to combat and training developments study efforts. The thesis is sufficiently complete to enable wargamers and intelligence personnel to construct unclassified portrayals of Soviet units during various phases of tactical operations.

Furthermore, this paper is designed to clarify certain aspects of Soviet tactics, specifically whether the meeting engagement and the withdrawal are to be considered as separate categories of tactics. Traditionally, most US authors have included the meeting engagement as part of an offensive, while including the withdrawal as a form of defense. Within this study the meeting engagement has been placed into a category by itself. Although primarily offensive in nature, the meeting engagement can be planned for and utilized during all phases of tactical operations. Withdrawal has also been placed into a separate category.

1-3. SCOPE.

The preponderance of Threat analytical efforts in support of school studies has focused on the regimental level or lower. Thus, this study has surveyed echelons above regiment and placed the main thrust on regimental operations.

Within the source material there are several interchangeable terms used to describe various facets of Soviet tactics. A portion of each relevant chapter has been dedicated to defining pertinent terms to provide clarity. Other sections within appropriate chapters describe typical operational and special troops support for that phase of operations.

No information is of value unless it can be readily obtained by a potential user. Thus complete identifying data has been provided for all references listed in the bibliography. Persons reading this study will readily recognize there is an abundance of additional source material from which further information can be obtained. Readers are encouraged to provide full identification of additional source material to CACDA. The information cutoff date for reference material is 1 February 1979.

All references used in this research effort are unclassified. Where possible, primary source material, that written by Soviet authors, was used for analysis. Secondary source material, prepared by US, British, Austrian, German,

and Canadian authors, was studied to fill gaps or to corroborate Soviet works. The second chapter defines tactics and establishes the precedent for separate discussion of the meeting engagement and the withdrawal. The next chapter surveys echelons above regiment and suggests considerations when organizing units for combat. Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 discuss the meeting engagement, offense, defense, and withdrawal, respectively. The conduct of each phase of tactical operations is discussed, typical reinforcements are suggested, and appropriate terms are defined within each chapter. The concluding chapter reflects on potential organizational and technological changes which might impact on Soviet tactical doctrine, and provides relevant conclusions.

Within quotations from translations there are some apparent punctuation and grammatical errors. The original documents were not always available to ascertain what the author had actually written. Therefore, although a little awkward at times, the quotes appear as they are listed in the applicable translation.

Initially, one of the driving factors for this paper was to explain the effect of special conditions, such as desert or mountain environments, on combat operations. After careful consideration and extensive research it has been decided not to include this information. River crossings are really not considered special operations and are planned for whenever the situation so dictates. Also military

operations on urban terrain, called MOUT in US parlance, are planned for when necessary, rather than considered separately. There is no question that extreme cold, heat and mountains have effects on operations, but these are rarely gamed as they are not representative of the entire spectrum of tactics. Should you decide to conduct a wargame where MOUT, river crossings, or night operations are driving factors, there are several approved sources which describe these operations in great detail. Also, there are numerous Soviet documents which describe the effects of extreme cold, heat and mountains on the conduct of tactical operations.

Although hard to game, airborne forces both air dropped and air landed should be considered for employment within any scenario. Airborne forces utilization should be of primary interest within any study done to support US combat service support. Our trains, DISCOMs and COSCOMs will offer lucrative targets for Soviet airborne forces. Further, there are numerous approved studies and Soviet literature available to aid in wargaming such specific situations and this paper will not address them.

CHAPTER 2

SOVIET TACTICS - ANOTHER VIEW

2-1. TACTICS DEFINED.

TAKTIKA (VOYENNAYA) (military tactics) - A special field in the theory and practice of military art which studies the objective laws of combat and develops methods of preparing for combat and conducting it, on land, at sea, and in the air. Military tactics occupies a subordinate position with respect to operational art and strategy, acting in their interests, and serving to achieve the goals set for it by the operational art. Each Service and branch, by virtue of its intrinsic peculiarities, has its own theory and practice for the organization and conduct of combat and, consequently, its own tactics too, which are called Service tactics or branch (arms) tactics.¹

The Soviets clearly define their development of doctrine as a science which has three phases: strategy, operational art, and tactics. The study of foreign and domestic publications shows the thrust of tactics to be centered at division level and below. An interesting issue is the apparent discrepancy between American and Soviet authors as to the number of types of tactical operations conducted by the Soviets.

2-2. METHODOLOGY.

The purpose of this chapter is to resolve this discrepancy by explaining how the Soviets say they will conduct tactical operations, and compare this with how we say the Soviets will conduct tactical operations. In most US

documents dealing with Soviet tactics we credit them with conducting offensive, defensive, and retrograde operations. This section should prove the Soviets conduct meeting engagements, offensive, defensive, and withdrawal operations. Perhaps the differences might be minor, but they should place the meeting engagement in its proper role, that of the predominant form of Soviet combat on the modern battlefield.

2-3. THE MEETING ENGAGEMENT.

"The Soviets perceive three major types of offensive action: the meeting engagement which includes advance to contact; the breakthrough; and the pursuit."² This theme shows the meeting engagement to be included as a form of offensive combat. "The meeting engagement is perceived as the most common offensive action on the nuclear battlefield."³ One can hardly question the validity of the meeting engagement as a common form of combat when the rapidity of change and anticipated fluidity of modern combat are considered. Soviet Army Operations characterized Soviet offensive operations as the meeting engagement, attack of a defending enemy, and pursuit.⁴ US Army Field Manual 30-40 breaks the offense into the meeting engagement, engagement of defense, and pursuit.⁵ Another service school publication typifies the offense as including the meeting engagement, deliberate attack against a defending force, and pursuit.⁶

" . . . the meeting engagement . . . includes advance to

contact; engagement of defense and breakthrough; and the pursuit."⁷ This definition of phases of an offensive operation appeared in an earlier booklet from the same school. The most recent handbook on the Soviet Army contains the following definition of the offensive: "The Soviets classify offensive actions into three major types: the breakthrough, the meeting engagement, and the pursuit."⁸ Even manuals dealing with small unit tactics have also included the meeting engagement as a form of the offense.⁹ However, one report dealing with tank battalion tactics does treat the meeting engagement as a separate form of combat action. "The Soviets consider the meeting engagement to be the most important battalion operation and it frequently is the focus of training exercises."¹⁰

Perhaps we should change our terminology for this operation to the encounter battle, to align ourselves with the British, Canadians, and the Soviets.

VSTRECHNOYE SRAZHENIYE (BOY) (encounter battle) - A clash between opposing sides when they are simultaneously striving to fulfill assigned missions by means of offensive actions. An encounter battle may occur during a march (maneuver) or in the course of an attack mounted to repel enemy counterattacks or counterblows, and also when reserves or second echelons move up to counter-attack or to inflict counterblows when in defense. An encounter battle is characterized by obscurity of the situation and by abrupt changes in it, by the rapid movement to contact of the two sides and by the decisiveness and dynamic nature of their encounter, by rapid changes in march, approach-march and combat formations, by the swift build-up of effort from depth, by an intense struggle to

gain time and to seize and hold the initiative, and by the presence of open flanks, and free maneuver. Present-day sea and air battles are predominantly in the encounter battle category.¹¹

Although the offensive is a necessary ingredient once the meeting engagement has begun, it may be conducted during offensive or defensive operations. A review of Soviet writers' opinions of the meeting engagement is in order.

The Soviets draw heavily upon their experiences in "The Great Patriotic War," that portion of the Second World War fought by them.

The defending side, setting up powerful fire means, and also mobile and deep reserves and second echelons, introduced them for executing counterattacks and for inflicting counterblows with decisive goals. As a result of such actions, meeting engagements began to appear in both offensive and defensive operations at all stages and under the most highly varied conditions of a situation.¹²

The author continues to describe lessons learned from enemy combat:

In the offensive, meeting engagements appeared when repulsing enemy counterattacks and counterblows and when overcoming the tactical zone of his defense (troop offensive of the South-Western front in the direction of Kharkov in May of 1942); during the development of success in a strategic depth (meeting engagement and combat of the Voronezh front in the Belgorod-Kharkov operation in August, 1943, and the fourth guards tank army in the Sandomirsk-Silesian operation in January, 1945, and others); during pursuit (meeting engagements of the 38th and 3rd tank armies in November, 1943, toward Zhitomir and Kazatin); in repelling enemy attempts to break the internal or external front of an encirclement (meeting engagements of large formations of the 2nd and 6th tank armies in the Morsun'-Shevchenko operation, the fifth guards tank armies in the Eastern-Prussian operation, and others).¹³

He further explains the need for the practice of the meeting engagement to meet exigencies of the modern battlefield. The most frequent time this form of combat will occur is after initial penetration of a defense has occurred and maneuvering reserves will be encountered. The meeting engagement is applicable to both nuclear and non-nuclear battlefields.

"In defense, as experience of the last war shows, meeting engagements can occur chiefly during counterattacks and counterblows on advancing enemy groups."¹⁴ However, this will not be the only time for an encounter battle during the defense.

In contemporary conditions, meeting engagements in defense can occur not only during counterattacks against a penetrating enemy, but also when encountering an advancing enemy with subunits which have advanced to shut off breaches and breaks which have formed the combat deployment of troops, and to cover important positions and directions.¹⁵

He goes on further to state:

The variety of conditions of the appearance of meeting engagements depends not only on the form of combat action in which they appear, but also on the location of units and subunits in the combat construction of troops, which will influence the grouping of forces and equipment, the preparation for combat action, and the character of deployment and entry into combat.¹⁶

The meeting engagement appears to be a flexible form of combat with great historical perspectives, and readily adaptable to modern combat.

Small unit tactics also emphasize the meeting engagement as a separate and unique form of combat.

Meeting engagements, therefore, can occur during an offensive, as well as a defensive, operation. They also are possible when our troops are withdrawing, in which case the battalion will have to act as the rear guard, and often may be forced to attack a pursuing enemy in order to delay him at a certain line and gain time.¹⁷

Soviet tacticians also recognize that the meeting engagement will be a rapidly developing if not somewhat confusing situation. "The battalion's disposition often will not be that required for the concept of a meeting engagement, and re-disposition will take time that may not always be available."¹⁸

The defense also offers unique problems for the defender.

"The special features of the meeting engagement for the defense can include the enemy usually having superiority in forces and weapons, as well as the initiative in choosing the place and time of the attack."¹⁹ Other authors also emphasize the multi-faced approach to the meeting engagement for small units, again with emphasis on lessons learned in their last war. "Experience gained in the Second World War indicates that the encounter battle is not only an offensive active."²⁰ Although offensive action will be involved eventually, the encounter can take place during defensive operations. "An encounter battle can occur in the course of a defensive battle when the reserves and the second echelon are moving up for a counterattack, and also when airborne and sea landings are being engaged."²¹ Most available Soviet primary source material was published prior to the advent of airmobile operations of the type which can be

envisioned in a modern war. The possibility of encountering a heliborne assault, while occupying defensive positions, cannot be precluded. The traditional use of parachute forces also offers opportunities for encounters.

COL V. Ye. Savkin, a leading Soviet tactician, also includes the encounter battle as a separate form of action in combat;

The given principle of operational art and tactics finds its expression in practice in constant influence on the enemy with an uninterrupted build-up of the force of attacks, in anticipating the enemy in destruction by fire, in delivering attacks and executing maneuver, and in making use of favorable conditions of the situation for imposing one's will on the enemy in all forms of combat actions. In examining this principle it is important to direct attention primarily on its application in different forms of combat actions - in the offense, defense, and meeting engagement (or battle).²²

In Artillery In Special Conditions, COL S. N. Dudarev is careful to make distinction between supporting the encounter battle, as opposed to offensive or defensive operations, when operating in mountains, in the desert, and in northern regions. So, besides the Soviet maneuver commanders planning for separate operations, the supporting arms make plans to support encounter battles as a separate entity.

Thus, Soviet tacticians plan for the conduct of the meeting engagement during all phases of tactical operations. The preponderance of encounter battles will probably take place during the offensive, but meeting engagements during the defense are viewed as a distinct probability by the

Soviets. Heliborne forces, parachute troops, and naval assaults also offer additional chances for encounters during all phases of tactical operations. The meeting engagement is viewed by the Soviets as the preponderance of combat in a future war. Interestingly, a US publication has the following observation:

The Soviets define the meeting engagement as combat between opposing columns rapidly advancing towards each other. They predict it will occur:

- a. At the outbreak of hostilities when the enemy has been surprised and is attempting to deploy into forward defensive areas.
- b. During a breakthrough when the enemy's tactical reserve is deploying for a counter-attack or to 'plug a gap.'
- c. In the depth of the defense where the enemy's reserve is deploying to blocking positions.
- d. During an enemy withdrawal when he is flanked.
- e. In a defensive operation when the enemy axes of advance are identified or when a counter-attack is launched.²³

2-4. THE WITHDRAWAL.

This section presents US and Soviet views concerning the withdrawal. Some US publications include it as a portion of the defense, while the Soviets also view it as a separate form of combat.

OTKHOD (withdrawal) - An obligatory type of combat operation, associated with leaving occupied regions (lines, positions). A withdrawal is carried out for the purpose of extricating troops from strikes by superior enemy forces, permitting them to occupy positions more advantageous for subsequent offensive operations, saving time for concentration of forces in a given sector, shortening the front, etc. A

withdrawal may be made only with the permission of the senior commander.²⁴

Just from the definition alone, it is obvious the Soviets view the withdrawal as a flexible form of tactical operations. However, not all of US analysts take the same view. "Three types of defensive operations are employed in retrograde movements. They are the delaying action, the withdrawal, and the retirement."²⁵ This first effort at widest possible unclassified dissemination of Soviet tactics sees the withdrawal as a form of the defense. However, this view is modified slightly:

Local withdrawals are normal to an area defense and are employed to reduce vulnerability to nuclear fires, to canalize the enemy, and to regroup defensive forces. The Soviet rarely executes a general withdrawal, preferring to conduct delaying actions.²⁶

An earlier publication discusses the withdrawal as an integral portion of the defense:

Soviet doctrine stresses sudden disengagement, preferably during darkness. A rear guard covers withdrawal of the main force. Either a counter-attack or massed fires may be used to break contact, with withdrawal to previously prepared positions when possible.²⁷

A service school pamphlet mirrors the same interpretation:

Withdrawal plans are made when planning the defense. Enemy doctrine stresses sudden disengagement, preferably during darkness. A rear guard covers withdrawal of the main force. Either a counterattack or massed fires may be used to break contact to allow a withdrawal to previously prepared positions, when possible.²⁸

A later publication from the same school dealing with the Soviet conduct of the defense contains essentially the same view:

The Soviets view the withdrawal as a defensive measure to gain time to prepare for a counterattack. Whenever possible, withdrawal begins during the hours of darkness or reduced visibility. Contact is broken, a covering force and rear guard are established, and the main body occupies new defensive positions in the rear. The Soviets employ defensive fires and smoke and use armor forces to confuse and delay the enemy as much as possible. A counterattack can be expected as soon as the main body has time to organize and consolidate its forces.²⁹

However, not all US publications dealing with Soviet tactics place the withdrawal as purely a defensive operation. "While the withdrawal is usually associated with the defense, it is also used when shifting forces for the offense to another sector or to strengthen another sector which is considered especially dangerous."³⁰ Other publications, especially those dealing with small unit tactics, also treat the withdrawal as a separate form of combat:

Before a successful withdrawal can be made, disengagement from contact with the enemy is required. The Soviets withdraw only on orders of a senior commander. The purposes of a withdrawal by a tank battalion are:

- a. To occupy more advantageous terrain.
- b. To avoid enemy nuclear or conventional fires.
- c. To adjust a position to secure an exposed flank during a defensive battle.
- d. To regroup after a successful conclusion of a meeting engagement or after stubborn enemy resistance.
- e. To avoid encirclement.
- f. To shorten lines of communication.
- g. To free men and equipment for other operations.

The tenor of Soviet military writing on the withdrawal operation is that it is a useful tactic to free a force for a new mission but is not to be dictated by enemy pressure.³¹

The author envisions a modification of Soviet tactics in order to accomplish the withdrawal:

The tactics employed by the tank battalion in withdrawal operations show that the Soviets, though normally preferring to maneuver as one unit, are trained to move by bounds of companies or even platoons when the tactical situation requires.³²

Company level tactics are also espoused as using the withdrawal as a separate form of combat:

Soviet concepts allow withdrawal to avoid enemy nuclear strikes or to occupy a more advantageous position. In the defense the operation is carried out to reposition a unit's front towards a flank in response to enemy action or to reduce the length of a threatened supply line. During advance to contact, a withdrawal can be ordered when stubborn enemy opposition is met or at the conclusion of an unsuccessful meeting engagement.³³

The approval of a higher commander is necessary to conduct a withdrawal, and the enemy should not force the operation: "A withdrawal is usually carried out in face of enemy action. It is implied, however, that the enemy will not be allowed to dictate a withdrawal."³⁴ Another company-level tactics manual also stresses the multiple facets and complicated nature of the withdrawal:

Withdrawal operations are conducted for purposes of regrouping, occupying more favorable terrain, or due to enemy pressure. The mission of a withdrawing unit is to preserve its integrity, to conduct an orderly withdrawal to a designated area, and to be ready to execute offensive missions. The Soviets recognize the complicated nature of this operation and prefer to withdraw on multiple routes without occupying intermediate phase lines. Whenever possible, the Soviets will withdraw at night or during other conditions of limited visibility.³⁵

Another US paper assesses the meeting engagement as another area in which the withdrawal may be conducted by the Soviets:

The meeting engagement ends when one opponent adopts a new tactic such as, establishing a defensive position or withdrawing. According to the tactical situation the Soviets initiate a deliberate attack, a pursuit, or a withdrawal.³⁶

Although some of the earlier publications tended to place the withdrawal as a form of retrograde operations or within the conduct of the defense, there has been a trend to consider the withdrawal as a separate form of combat activity. A logical extension is to examine how the Soviets view the conduct of withdrawal operations.

The withdrawal has historical precedence within the minds of Soviet tacticians. "On the broad and mobile fronts of the Civil War, the enemy, after the first defeats, could withdraw his troops and reorganize a defense or even offense."³⁷ However, this lesson learned by the Bolsheviks was apparently ignored during the period prior to The Great Patriotic War:

In principle, our prewar theory allowed for the forced retreat of the troops in isolated sectors. However, the problem of withdrawal of large forces from under enemy strikes was not developed, either theoretically or practically.³⁸

The author further cites experience in their last war and the need to be prepared to conduct withdrawal operations:

During the war in individual sectors a situation may arise in which forces can be saved from inevitable defeat only at the cost of giving up conquered territory by means of a temporary withdrawal. Troops may be forced to withdraw as a

result of an unsuccessful defensive battle or an unprovided for offensive by individual groups. Sometimes the withdrawal will be premeditated so that the troops can gain a more advantageous position for subsequent active operations. Withdrawal has always been neglected in all armies. However, history has taught that armed forces which have not mastered the organized withdrawal cannot be considered as battle-ready, since such troops are most often defeated. The Russian army in the past has suffered most of its losses during withdrawal. Lenin taught that: ' . . . one who knows how to advance and has not learned how in certain difficult circumstances to adapt to it, to withdraw, will lose the war. Wars which have begun and ended with a victorious offensive are not evident from world history or if they have occurred, are exceptions.'³⁹

As is the case with most Soviet military theory books a considerable emphasis is placed on historical lessons learned and the need to be prepared for the future. Other Soviet military theorists view the withdrawal in a similar vein.

And finally, about withdrawal. In making a withdrawal activeness also finds wide application. In the opposite instance, withdrawal is transformed into a panicky flight with all the consequences stemming therefrom. Individual counterattacks, the placement of fire barriers on the paths of the attacker or the pursuing enemy, the firm holding of consecutively occupied lines by rear guards, leading the enemy astray by diversions, setting up ambushes, obstacles, and destruction on the axes of the enemy attack - all these are forms in which the activeness of troops is manifested in a withdrawal.⁴⁰

Withdrawal must be conducted in an organized manner with the approval or direction of higher authority and for a specific purpose. The Soviets are painfully aware of the results of an ad hoc withdrawal.

General-Major V. G. Reznichenko, another leading Soviet tactician, has similar views on the purpose and conduct of the withdrawal:

Withdrawal is a form of combat action applied for the purpose of regrouping, occupying more suitable positions, or withdrawing one's own troops from under possible attacks of the enemy. Usually, the necessity of withdrawal appears in the course of defensive actions, when only by the temporary leaving of part of the territory is it possible to withdraw one's troops from under its attack of superior forces of the enemy, and set them in more profitable position. The necessity of withdrawal can appear with the unsuccessful outcome of meeting engagement and to get out of an encirclement.⁴¹

Although withdrawal appears to be most predominant during defensive operations, the author opines that offensive operations may have to be included in the withdrawal. However, speed of the operation and if possible a breaking of the contact offer advantages.

During active operation of the enemy the withdrawing troops are forced to counteract him with part and sometimes all of the forces, conduct persistent battle on suitable lines to delay the advance of the enemy, inflict losses on him, gain time, and create profitable conditions for going into the designated area. Although active, decisive combat actions by withdrawing troops is the basis of such a withdrawal, this method is less profitable. It is considered more expedient to accomplish withdrawal without occupation of intermediate lines and on as many routes as possible, in order to reduce the depths of columns and the time for accomplishing the withdrawal.⁴²

Proponents of a book for battalion-level tactics have their views of the withdrawal: "A withdrawal may be undertaken for the purpose of occupying more suitable lines or to

remove one's sub-units from under a possible enemy attack, especially one inflicted on the flank and in the rear of our sub-units."⁴³ Again, emphasis is placed on approval from higher echelons and the fact it may be conducted in a variety of circumstances.

In an attack, it is carried out when the enemy offers stubborn resistance in one sector, while in another sector circumstances are favourable for developing the attack or completing newly arising missions. A withdrawal may also be undertaken when the outcome of an encounter battle is unsuccessful.⁴⁴

The withdrawal also has application during the defense:

In carrying out a defensive operation, the necessity for a withdrawal may arise when moving the battalion from one sector to another threatened sector, for covering gaps formed in the defence as a result of enemy nuclear strikes, or to secure open flanks.⁴⁵

The withdrawal has other applications which have both offensive and defensive implications. "A withdrawal may also be undertaken during an encirclement battle. In this case, the withdrawal is carried out with the aim of reinforcing the defence in a threatened sector, or to break through the enveloping front."⁴⁶ Emphasis continues to be placed on the preplanned utilization of the withdrawal to effect favorable conditions for the tactical commander.

"In a number of situations, especially in the defence, withdrawal may be carried out deliberately for the purpose of shortening the front, and to release forces and weapons."⁴⁷ It appears the Soviets feel the withdrawal can be conducted

during all phases of tactical operations, although the preponderance of cases should occur during the defensive.

2-5. CONCLUSIONS.

The meeting engagement is viewed by the Soviets as a separate form of combat which can take place during offensive and defensive operations. We should realign our thinking and relevant publications and take the same view as the Soviets. The meeting engagement or encounter battle can take place under the following circumstances:

- . At the initiation of hostilities when the enemy is moving into defensive positions.

- . After a rupture of initial positions has occurred and reserves are being redeployed.

- . Against hastily prepared positions in the depths of a defense.

- . Against reserves moving to assist pursued forces.

- . In the defense when a counterattack has been initiated.

- . with the introduction of heliborne, parachute, or sea-landed forces into the battlefield.

The withdrawal also has application as a separate form of combat and is viewed as such by the Soviets. Most times the withdrawal will be conducted in a defensive mode, but it definitely has application during the offensive and meeting engagement. We should take the same view and correct

our doctrinal publications. The withdrawal can occur when:

- . Conducting economy of force measures.
- . To gain time.
- . To realign or "tidy-up" the battlefield.
- . To make available forces for introduction into the fray in other areas.
- . To occupy more favorable terrain.
- . To avoid contact with a vastly superior force.
- . To shorten lines of communication or frontages.
- . To terminate a meeting engagement.
- . To reorganize or regroup forces.
- . To avoid encirclement.

2-6. ENDNOTES.

¹A. I. Radziyevskiy, ed., Dictionary of Basic Military Terms. Translated by the DGIS Multilingual Section, Translation Bureau, Secretary of State Department, Ottawa, Canada, and published under the auspices of the USAF. (Washington: GPO, 1976), p. 218. (Cited hereafter as Radziyevskiy, Dictionary.)

²Military Operations of the Soviet Army (MOSA). (Arlington: USAITAD, 1976), p. 13. (Cited hereafter as MOSA.)

³Ibid.

⁴Soviet Army Operations (SAO). (Arlington: USAITAC, April 1978), p. 3-7. (Cited hereafter as SAO.)

⁵Handbook on Soviet Ground Forces (FM 30-40). (Washington: GPO, 1975), p. 5-7. (Cited hereafter as FM 30-40.)

⁶Soviet Tactics in the Offense (FT 100-3, VOL IV). (Fort Leavenworth: USACGSC, July 1978), pp. 2, 7, and 40.

⁷The Enemy Force (RB 30-1). (Fort Leavenworth: USACGSC, 1975), p. 2-7. (Cited hereafter as RB 30-1.)

⁸Handbook on the Soviet Armed Forces (DDB-2680-40-78). (Washington: DIA, February 1978), p. 8-15.

⁹Soviet Tank Company Tactics (DDI-1120-129-76). (Washington: DIA, May 1976), p. 31, and The Soviet Motorized Rifle Company (DDI-1100-77-76). (Washington: DIA, October 1976), p. 5. (Cited hereafter as DDI-1120-129-76 and DDI-1100-77-76.)

¹⁰Soviet Tank Battalion Tactics (DDI-1120-10-77). (Washington: DIA, August 1977), p. 11. (Cited hereafter as DDI-1120-10-77.)

¹¹Radziyevskiy, Dictionary, p. 51.

¹²V. G. Reznichenko, ed., Tactics. Translated by the USAF. (Wright-Patterson AFB: 1967), p. 130. (Cited hereafter as Reznichenko, Tactics.)

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid, p. 132.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷G. I. Garbuz, D. F. Loza, and I. F. Sazonov, The Motorized Rifle Battalion in Battle, 2d ed. Translated by Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence. (Washington: 1978), p. 55.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 57.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 58.

²⁰P. I. Konoplya and N. A. Maykov, The Tank Battalion in Combat, Chapters 3, 4, 5. Translated by the Multilingual Services Division, Translation Bureau, Department of the Secretary of State, Canada. (Ottawa: October 1974), p. 32. (Cited hereafter as Konoplya, TBIC, 3. 4, 5.)

²¹Ibid., p. 34.

²²V. Ye. Savkin, The Basic Principles of Operational Art and Tactics. Translated and published under the auspices of the USAF. (Washington: GPO, 1976), p. 249. (Cited hereafter as Savkin, Principles.)

²³Soviet Tactics: The Meeting Engagement (DDI-1100-143-76). (Washington: DIA, December 1976), p. 1. (Cited hereafter as DDI-1100-143-76.)

²⁴Radziyevskiy, Dictionary, p. 150.

²⁵MOSA, p. 25.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷FM 30-40, p. 5-19.

²⁸RB 30-1, p. 2-17.

²⁹Soviet Tactics in the Defense (PT 100-3, VOL V). (Fort Leavenworth: USACGSC, July 1978), p. 28.

³⁰SAO, p. 4-18.

³¹DDI-1120-10-77, p. 45.

³²Ibid., p. 48.

³³DDI-1120-129-76, p. 53.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵DDI-1100-77-76, p. 10.

³⁶DDI-1100-143-76, p. 9.

³⁷V. D. Sokolovskiy, ed., Soviet Military Strategy, 3d ed. Translation, commentary and analysis by Harriet Fast Scott. (New York: Crane, Russak and Co., Inc., 1975), p. 123.

³⁸Ibid., p. 133.

³⁹Ibid., p. 296.

⁴⁰Savkin, Principles, p. 251.

⁴¹Reznichenchko, Tactics, p. 242.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³P. I. Konoplya and N. A. Maykov, The Tank Battalion in Combat, Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9. Translated by the Multilingual Services Division, Translation Bureau, Department of State, Canada. (Ottawa: October 1974), p. 79. (Cited hereafter as Konoplya, TBIC, 6, 7, 8, 9.)

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 80.

⁴⁷Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

ECHELONS ABOVE REGIMENT

3-1. GENERAL.

A review of units larger than regimental size is essential in order to postulate what regiments may be doing in specified situations. Soviet commanders weight main attacks and primary defensive sectors with operational, and special troops support. Thus, one must examine the structure of larger units in order to determine what is available for apportionment to lower units. The Front commander will determine what support he will provide to his various armies. In turn, the Army commander must consider what support he has received, examine his organic assets, and then provide support among his divisions. Then, the Division commander must critically look at the support he has received, also balance this against his intrinsic forces, and then make necessary allocations to the regiments. A factor to bear in mind is the Soviets do not practice cross attachment as we sense the term, rather they provide reinforcements. So, a Soviet commander does not have to give up a portion of his forces in order to gain a complementary arm. Let us establish the premise that the Soviets practice and preach combined arms warfare. Soviet and US forces prepared after-action reports of fighting in the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

3-2. FRONT.

FRONT (Front) - (1) The highest strategic formation of armed forces. It may include units, formations, and major field forces or strategic formations of ground troops, air forces, and sometimes, even naval forces (river flotillas, etc.);

...
American Editor's Note on Soviet Nomenclature and Terms. A number of Soviet terms have no exact English equivalent. The terms listed below are those used frequently in this dictionary.

...
Front - Highest level of an ob''yedineniye. A front may be formed from major field forces (strategic formations, soyedineniya, and units from the various Services of the armed forces). 'Front' may also be used as an adjective when referring to units organic to a front.

Ob''yedineniye - Major Field Forces or Strategic Formation. An operational and organizational entity in the different Services of the armed forces, an ob''yedineniye is formed from various service branches (or arms) for the purpose of conducting military operations.

Soyedineniye - Formation. The highest level of military organization: Corps, Division, or Brigade level equivalent. It may be formed from a single branch of various branches and Services, including naval squadrons.

...
A Front is a wartime organization without a fixed structure and will be comprised of various operational and special troops support units. A preponderance of what we would call combat service support troops will have to be activated from the reserves. The best equivalent peacetime unit would be a group of Soviet forces, such as Group of Soviet Forces Germany (GSFG), or one of the 16 military districts within the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

Units from other members of the Warsaw Pact could also be included in a Front.

Front-level staffs are planned only for the Soviet Army. Until 1968, the Headquarters for the Southwest Front was to have been formed from parts of MOD Prague and the headquarters of Military District Tabor. Since then, plans are to form this headquarters strictly from CGF assets. In 1971/1972, however, Czech officers were again assigned to the Southwest Front Staff, probably for psychological reasons.

Thus, the addition of non-Soviet forces into Fronts would have to be considered in formulating force structures. The Northern Group of Forces (NGF), Central Group of Forces (CGF), from Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, could be Fronts as well as GSFG. So at least four Fronts would be immediately available for the first echelon of a Theater attack against NATO, and the three most western military districts of the USSR (Baltic, Belorussian, and Carpathian) could serve as the Theater's second echelon Fronts.

Figure 1 is a diagram of a "Type" Front. Bear in mind each Front could be organized differently, and many support units would have to be activated from the reserves prior to their commitment into battle. The main point is the availability of artillery, engineer, air defense, signal, chemical, and other units to reinforce the subordinate Armies. Also, the availability of airborne units, organic

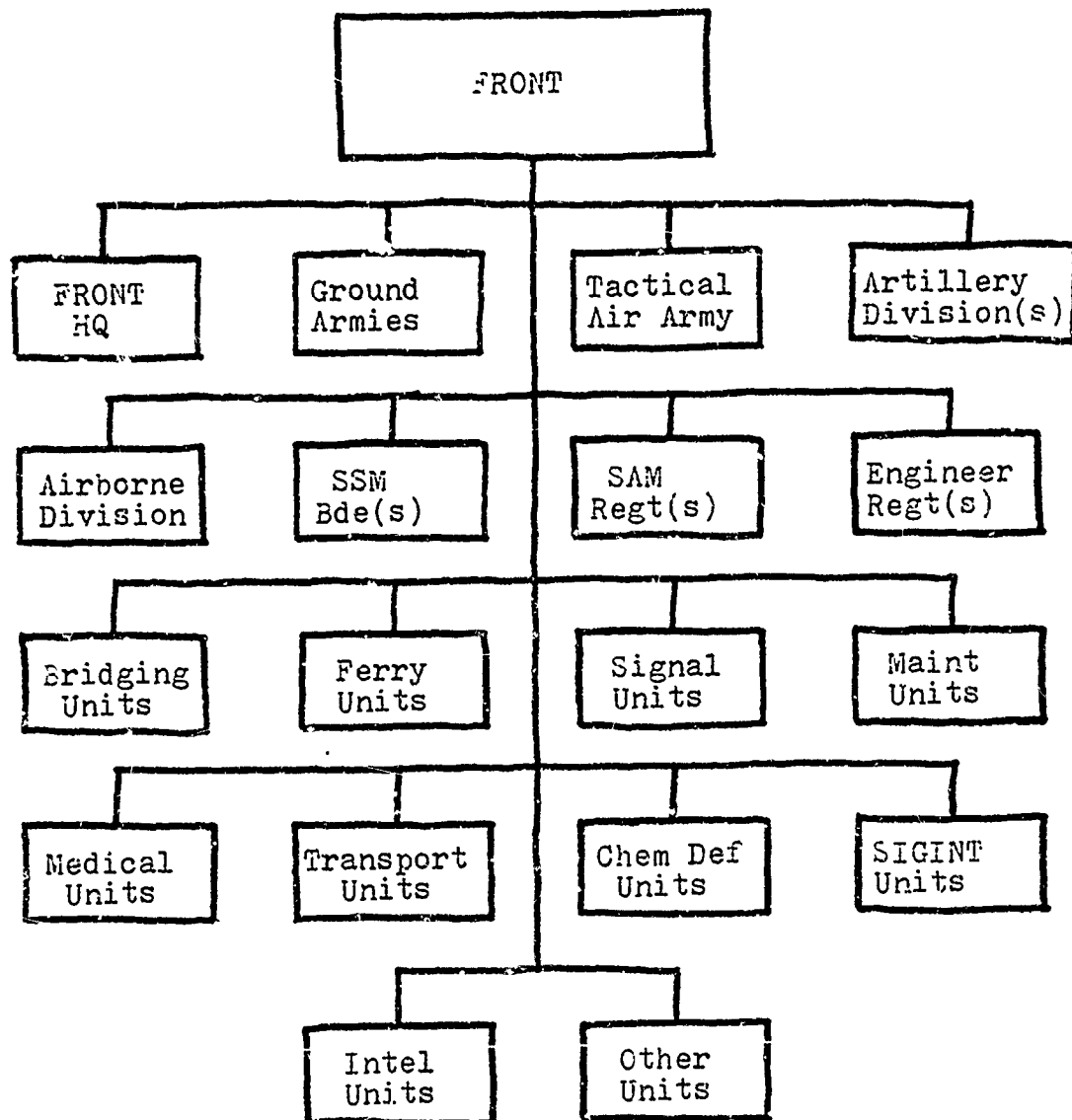


FIGURE 1

high performance and rotary wing aircraft must be taken into consideration when organizing the Armies for combat.

Approved scenarios should be used for gaming to ascertain which Front is to be played, and what assets they have for allocation to the Armies. For example, GSFG has an artillery division which supports it as a matter of routine, and the same is true with the 16th Tactical Air Army, which provides reconnaissance, fighter, fighter-bomber, and bomber aircraft. A review of the missions assigned to subordinate Armies should provide a basis for reinforcement of the Armies with appropriate support. Mission and terrain analysis should help determine the number of sorties allocated to the Armies from Front's Tactical Air Army. It would not be unusual to reinforce the main strike Army, or Army in the primary defensive sector, with one-third to one-half of the available Front artillery. The same proportion could hold true for air defense artillery, engineers and chemical support. Engineer support allocation would have to be based upon the mission and especially on the terrain facing the Army. Supporting Armies of the Front would receive smaller portions of appropriate reinforcements.

Most standard scenarios have already allocated support to Armies from the Front. Care must be taken, however, to avoid using a "Cookie Cutter" approach. In other words, don't take available assets and simply apportion them

equally to subordinate units. The Soviets take into consideration the same factors we do when planning combat operations, ie: Mission, Enemy, Terrain, Time, and Troops (METTT) available. Thus it is imperative to analyze the mission and perform a terrain analysis prior to allocating support to subordinate elements. This same procedure holds true for the reinforcement process down to company level. What is best for one unit may not be the best for an adjacent unit. Just because one Army receives an entire artillery regiment does not mean that each Army should receive a regiment. Also, do not forget to include special troops support with the operational troops support. Repair, transportation, POL and ammunition are just as important to the Soviets as they are to us. Again, analysis must be performed prior to assignment of augmentation to lower levels. As an example, additional artillery support might entail additional transportation support in order to haul the required amount of ammunition. The mission of the artillery and the amounts of ammunition to be expended in preplanned artillery fires will drive the ammunition hauling requirement more than just the number of artillery tubes. In other words, develop a thorough operation while organizing a unit for combat.

A Front is capable of independent operations within the theater of operations, but the Fronts will probably work in conjunction to satisfy the strategic mission assigned to the theater. To repeat, missions will vary

from circumstance to circumstance. Don't fall into the trap of always assigning the same missions to the same type units. Bear in mind that Front objectives will be both immediate and followup. The immediate objective for the Front will be the followup objective for the Army. This step down process holds true through battalion level.

Another major consideration is whether the planned battle will be nuclear or non-nuclear. This has a tremendous impact on the missions and widths of zones of attack assigned to Armies. There also is a strong impact on the width and depth of assigned defensive sectors.

Also, the play of electronic warfare will have an impact on organizing the forces for combat. The same considerations for other force allocations are valid for the distribution of radio-technical troop assets to lower levels. The integration of jamming with the physical destruction of facilities by artillery is called radio-electronic combat. The Soviets plan to neutralize our command and control communications by jamming one-quarter to one-third of our critical nets and destroying an additional one-quarter to one-third of our command and control facilities. Thus, if they can incapacitate fifty percent of our necessary communications links, they feel they have effectively destroyed our command and control capabilities. The integration of radio-electronic combat into all war-games is an essential task. This is another area which

must be carefully planned when making allocations to subordinate units.

3-3. ARMY.

ARMIYA (army) - (1) An operational grouping of one or another Service of the armed forces, consisting of several formations of various branches and special troops, and intended for the conduct of operations (combat activities); (2) ground troops (forces); (3) sometimes the word army is used to designate the armed forces of a State, e.g., the Red Army or the Soviet Army.⁴

Ground Armies within the Front can be of two types, either Tank or Combined Arms. As is the case with Front, there is no fixed structure for an Army and some special troops support must be mobilized from the reserves. An Army will usually have from three to five Divisions, along with appropriate operational and special troops support. A type Army is illustrated in Figure 2. The Tactical Air Army will not be discussed in this paper.

A Tank Army may have from two to four tank divisions, and at least one motorized rifle division. A Combined Arms Army has a reverse ratio, with two to four motorized rifle divisions, and usually a tank division. The listing of units at Figure 3 shows the different combinations of divisions within GSFG.

The designations, 'Guards Army,' 'Guards Tank Army,' and 'Shock Army' have only historical (honorific) significance, and have

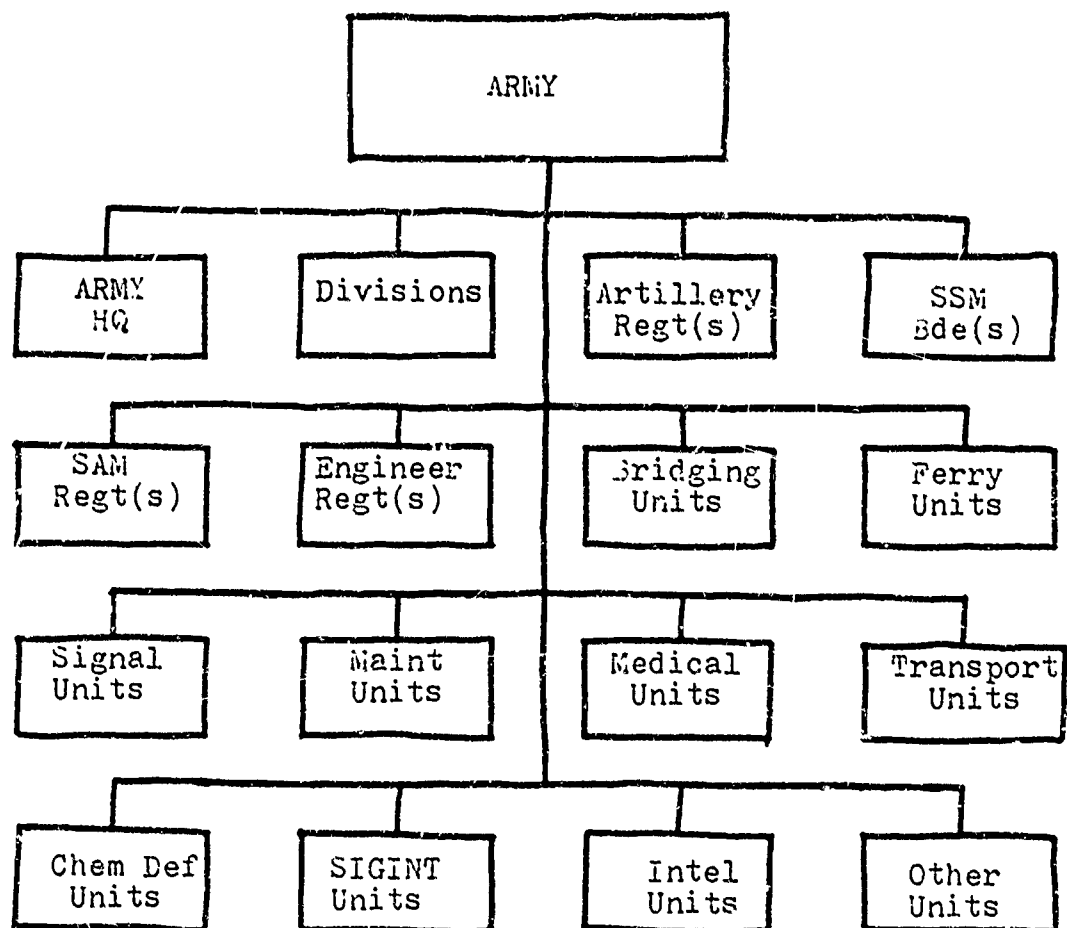


FIGURE 2

Selected Elements of Group of Soviet Forces Germany

1st Guards Tank Army

6th Guards Tank Division

7th Guards Tank Division

9th Tank Division

11th Guards Tank Division

27th Guards Motorized Rifle Division

2d Guards Army

16th Guards Tank Division

21st Motorized Rifle Division

25th Tank Division

94th Guards Motorized Rifle Division

3d Shock Army

10th Guards Tank Division

12th Guards Tank Division

47th Guards Tank Division

207th Guards Motorized Rifle Division

8th Guards Army

20th Guards Motorized Rifle Division

39th Guards Motorized Rifle Division

57th Guards Motorized Rifle Division

79th Guards Tank Division

20th Guards Army

6th Guards Motorized Rifle Division

14th Guards Motorized Rifle Division

35th Motorized Rifle Division

(Extracted from page 62, The Warsaw Pact Armies.)

FIGURE 3

nothing to do with the organization or function of the armies. The term 'Guards' does not refer to an elite unit with special training and equipment. The designation is given to units for traditional reasons or for special recognition of achievement in training or political orientation.⁵

The preponderance of Soviet units earned their "Guards" designation during "The Great Patriotic War." It was used as a morale builder and frequently in conjunction with large numbers of the unit becoming members of the Communist Party, to ensure loyalty to "Mother Russia."

An Army is capable of independent operations, but most of the time it will operate as part of a designated Front. Historically, the Soviets used an "Army Corps," which was a combined arms unit of at least two divisions, which could operate as a subordinate unit of an Army, or perform independent missions. It could be formed with appropriate operational and special troops support, to carry out special missions in a particular sector. There is no known Army Corps in existence today, and its use in a future war is questionable.

Most approved scenarios have already designated which Army will be played, what its mission will be, and provided the appropriate slice of operational and special troops support. The steps in allocating support to divisions are the same as allocating to the Army. Beware of the "Cookie Cutter"! Remember, the followup objective for the Army is

the Front's immediate objective, while a Division's follow-up objective is the Army's immediate objective.

Usually, Combined Arms Armies lead a Front attack, with the Tank Army or Armies in the Front's second echelon as an exploitation force. The same general array may hold true for the defense as well, due to second echelon Armies being used as the Front's counterattack force. Do not, however, get hung up with "Always." Be flexible, and plan according to the factors of METTT. Within a Combined Arms Army the forward element is usually a motorized rifle division, with a tank division retained as an exploitation or counter-attack force. Again, this is not a hard and fast rule and each specific situation will have to be judged on its own merit.

Consideration must be given to the formation of an Army Artillery Group (AAG). The purpose of such a group is to provide centralized control of artillery assets for a specific purpose or period of time. Long range artillery pieces such as multiple rocket launchers and M-46 130mm Field Guns would be ideally suited for such a grouping. The probable introduction of rocket assisted projectiles (RAP) will make almost any artillery piece suitable for this mission. The decision to form an AAG may be specified in the scenario, or made by the gamer.

3-4. DIVISION.

DIVIZIYA (division) - The basic tactical formation of the various service branches (arms), consisting of several units and subunits. In foreign armies, a ground forces division consists of brigades, combat groups, individual battalions, and other units and subunits of various branches and special troops.⁶

Soviet Army Divisions include Tank, Motorized Rifle, and Airborne. This study will highlight the use of Tank and Motorized Rifle Divisions. Although there are a lot of mechanized infantry carriers in the Soviet Army, the preponderance of their armored personnel carriers are wheeled vehicles. The official scenario should provide the TOE of the unit being played and the appropriate vehicles to be gamed. As a rule of thumb, plan for GSFG units to have one regiment equipped with infantry combat vehicles (BMPs) in each motorized rifle division, with the other two motorized rifle regiments having armored personnel carriers (BTRs). The Tank Divisions within GSFG have BMP equipped troops within the motorized rifle regiment. Soviet units outside GSFG may have older APCs and the above ratio may not be appropriate. The approved scenario or the DIA Organization Guide must be used to determine exact amounts of equipment, by type, to be used. For information purposes, Figures 4 and 5 are type Tank and Motorized Rifle Divisions. Numbers of tanks, APCs or Armored Infantry Fighting Vehicles (AIFV), and numbers and types of artillery pieces will vary widely throughout the Warsaw Pact. Stick to approved sources

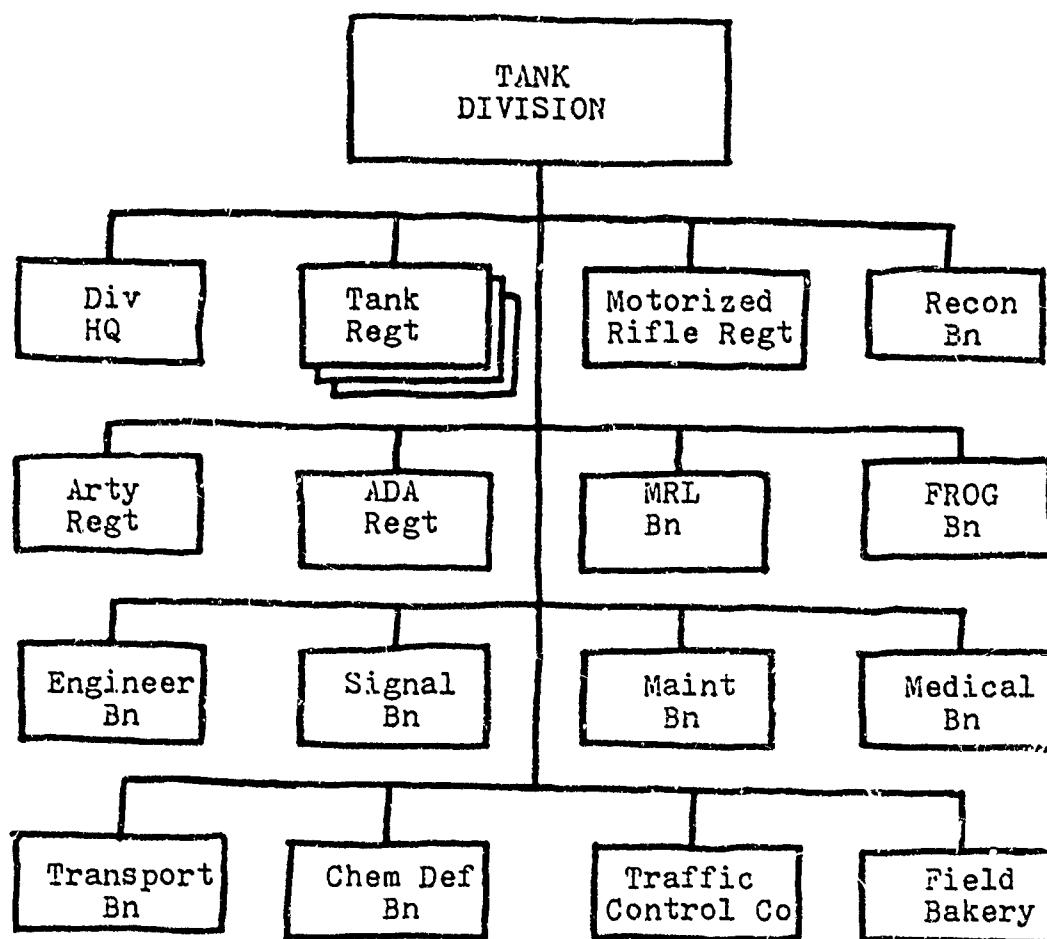


FIGURE 4

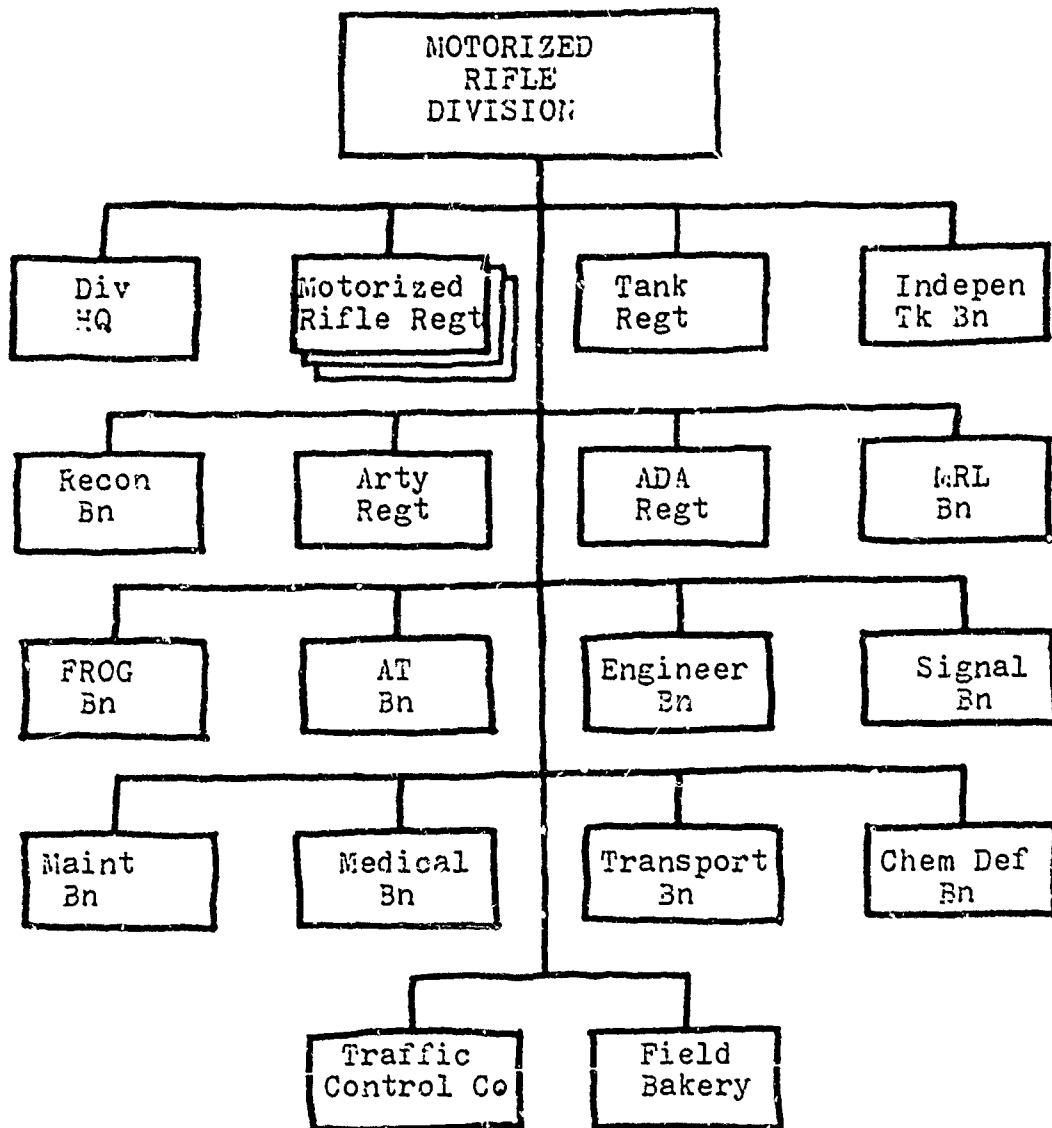


FIGURE 5

for determining types and numbers of combat vehicles to be gamed. As an example, the type and quantity of artillery pieces will vary between Tank and Motorized Rifle Divisions.

Usually, standard, approved scenarios provide the gamer with the division organization and the portion of Front and Army reinforcements to be gamed. The critical decision then is to further allocate the assets received from higher headquarters and disperse organic elements to organize the division for combat. The factors of METTT are just as applicable to this process as they were to previous considerations. The zone of action for the division, or sector in the defense, is usually given in the scenario, and the gamer must assign boundaries, called dividing lines, for the regiments.

A prime consideration at division level is whether or not to form a Division Artillery Group (DAG). Long range artillery from Front and Army, as well as organic multiple rocket launchers, are ideally suited for this mission. If you form a DAG mix the artillery calibers to avoid presenting a unique signature. The FROG battalion is usually controlled separately by the division commander, due to its long range nuclear capability. The capability of the Soviets to mass their artillery fires allows for dispersion of firing elements throughout the battlefield. Most computer assisted wargames have limited terrain available, although this problem is being corrected. The formation

of a DAG may stop a lot of artillery fire from going into the terrain being gamed, but this is acceptable, as long as proper missions have been assigned to the DAG, and regimental artillery assets are available to provide indirect fire support. Also, artillery from second echelon divisions of the Army might be made available to the division commander for his employment during a specified period.

The following is a short listing of division operational capabilities:

Tank Division

Offense

- . Attack as a first echelon division of a Tank Army to penetrate enemy defensive positions.
- . Operate as the exploitation force of a Combined Arms or Tank Army to exploit gaps in enemy formations.
- . Attack as a first echelon division of a Combined Arms Army whenever the enemy is weak and good terrain is available.
- . Conduct pursuit operations, whenever the enemy is withdrawing, to destroy the enemy and secure Army objectives.

Defense

- . Conduct mobile counterattack operations from positions within or behind the Army's second echelon.
- . Defend in place to gain time to mass forces for continuing an attack.⁷

Motorized Rifle Division

Offense

- . Attack as a first echelon division of a Combined Arms or Tank Army to penetrate opposing defensive positions.

- . Attack as a second echelon division of a Combined Arms Army to maintain the momentum and engage enemy reserves.
- . Operate independently for brief periods against weak or isolated enemy targets.
- . Operate as Front Reserve.

Defense

- . Defend a zone in the main defense belt of the Combined Arms Army to destroy and canalize the attacking enemy force.⁸

Both types of ground divisions have a sufficient mix of operational support and special troops support to enable them to undertake independent operations for limited periods of time. Usually, however, they operate as an integral part of a Tank or Combined Arms Army. If a division were to be assigned an independent mission for a sustained period, additional reinforcements would have to be provided from either Front or Army assets.

Within Tank Divisions assigned to GSFG, each Tank Regiment has an organic Motorized Rifle Company. This may be increased to a battalion size unit, or it could be a special mission unit. Be sure to check approved TOEs prior to organizing your force for the game. Tank Divisions tend to be used for exploitation and counterattack forces, although this is not a hard and fast rule. Motorized Rifle Divisions possess more fire power than Tank Divisions, especially indirect means, and are ideally suited for leading attacks or to be the first echelon in Army defensive

positions. However, Tank units are capable of defending. Whenever organizing a force for combat, think combined arms!

The following is a sequence for planning and organizing the force for combat which is not all inclusive, but might prove useful in preparing for the wargame:

a. Mission Analysis.

- (1) Determine mission.
- (2) Determine troops available.
 - (a) Organic.
 - (b) Front.
 - (c) Army.
 - (d) Other.

b. Analyze terrain.

- (1) In the Offense.
 - (a) Determine at least two routes of advance for the Division, preferably three or four.
 - (b) A Division will be responsible for an entire zone of action, but need not occupy the entire zone.
 - (c) Where are likely locations for the enemy's:
 1. Covering Force?
 2. Main Battle Area?
 3. Command and Control?
 4. Logistics facilities?
 5. Artillery?
 6. Reserves?

7. Obstacles?
 8. Cover and concealed withdrawal routes?
 9. Likely points for counterattacks?
 10. Killing zones?
 11. Key axial and lateral routes?
 12. Lines of Communication?
 13. Boundaries?
 14. Strongpoints?
 15. Battle areas/positions?
 16. Overwatch positions?
 17. Alternate/supplemental positions?
 18. Nuclear delivery means?
 19. EW assets?
 20. Airfields?
 21. Forward Observers?
 22. Any other known locations or exploitable weaknesses?
- (d) Ascertain canalizing terrain.
- (e) Determine natural/manmade obstacles to movement.
- (f) Analyze rivers/streams which will have to be crossed, in order to assess engineer support requirements.
- (g) Choose key terrain.
- (h) Analyze road and rail networks to determine logical chokepoints for lines of communication.
- (i) Determine areas where you will be vulnerable to flank attacks and/or ambushes.

- (j) Ascertain terrain which offers masking for friendly and enemy employment of attack helicopters.

(2) In the Defense.

- (a) Determine enemy routes of advance, avenues of approach, into your defensive sector. Figure two levels down, if you are the division commander, look for battalion size avenues of approach.

- (b) Where are likely locations for the enemy's:

1. Objectives?

2. Locations?

- Command and Control
- Logistics facilities
- Artillery
- Nuclear delivery means
- EW assets
- Airfields
- Assembly areas
- Forward observers
- Overwatch positions
- Other, as suitable

- (c) Look at the terrain from a Blue point of view. In other words, look at the terrain as if you had to attack into your own positions. This will aid in determining where to place obstacles, minefields, etc.

- (d) Determine terrain which affords covered and concealed observance of avenues of approach into your positions.

- (e) Choose terrain which can support battalion size strong points.

- (f) Look for subsequent terrain for an in-depth defense.

- (g) Ascertain locations for platoon size ambushes along avenues of approach.

- (h) Determine other locations necessary for building an all-around defense.

c. Determine enemy strength.

- (1) In the offense this will be necessary to know in order to determine the necessary forces to attack Blue positions.
- (2) In the defense this will allow you to adjust your organization for combat and force disposition, in order to meet an anticipated attack. It will also aid in the structuring of reserve forces.

d. Assign objectives and dividing lines for the offense, dividing lines in the defense.

e. Based on your assessment, organize the division for combat and allocate necessary forces to the regiments.

f. Based on your organization for combat and missions assigned to subordinates, prepare a supporting artillery plan. Don't forget to use smoke, where appropriate.

Detailed information on what might constitute typical or type reinforcements to regiments will be provided in the following chapters.

3-5. DEFINITIONS. All definitions are taken from Dictionary of Basic Military Terms, by A. I. Radziyevskiy. The number prior to the definition refers to the entry item within the dictionary.

48 AVTOMOBIL'NYYE VOYSKA (motor transport troops) - Special troops intended to transport troops and miscellaneous material by motor vehicle. Motor transport troops are organized in units and subunits.

72 ARMEYSKAYA ARTILLERISDAYA GRUPPA (army artillery group) - An artillery group directly subordinate to an army commander, and intended to perform fire missions in the interest of the army operation as a whole.

73 ARMEYSKAYA ARTILLERIA (army artillery) - Organic army artillery, directly subordinate to the army commander.

86 ARTILLERIYSKAYA GRUPPA (artillery group) - A temporary grouping consisting of several artillery units or subunits

under one command for the purpose of executing missions in combat. The composition of an artillery group is determined in each case by the situation.

158 BLIZHAYSHAYA ZADACHA (immediate objective) - That part of the overall combat mission of troops in an offensive operation which must be accomplished first. Depending on the situation, an initial objective may be to annihilate the enemy's means of nuclear attack, break up his basic grouping, or to take possession of regions, lines, or positions, the capture of which will ensure successful execution of a future (the next) mission.

242 VVOD V BOY (commitment to combat) - An organized movement forward, deployment and engagement of units of the second echelon and combined-arms reserve in order to increase the effort along a given axis, to develop the success achieved by the first echelon, to replace the troops of the first echelon when the latter has lost its combat effectiveness as a result of enemy nuclear attack, and also to fulfill new combat missions.

243 VVOD V SRAZHENIYE (commitment to battle) - An organized advance of a formation of the second echelon (combined-arms reserve) of a front (army) into the first echelon, and their deployment in the course of the operation to increase the effort along the axis of the main attack, to develop the success achieved by the first echelon, to take possession of important areas, or to carry out other missions.

344 VOZDUSHNYY DESANT (airborne assault) - Troops airlifted to the enemy rear to conduct combat activities there. According to its scale, an airborne assault may be tactical, operational, or strategic. The assault may be effected either by parachute or from landed aircraft, or by a combination of both.

376 VTOROY ESHELON (second echelon) - The part of an operational formation or combat formation of troops which is not directly participating in an engagement (battle) at a given moment, but which is intended to be used to build up the force of a strike during an offensive, to increase the stability and aggressiveness of defense, and to replace troops of the first echelon in the event that the latter sustains heavy losses. The existence of a second echelon creates favorable conditions for building up strength, carrying out a maneuver, or rapidly transferring effort from one sector to another during an operation (battle). In contrast to a combined-arms reserve, combat missions for a second echelon are assigned at the same time as those for the first echelon.

436 GLAVNYY UDAR (main strike) - The aggregate of nuclear strikes and coordinated strikes dealt by main elements of naval forces in the sector or region of decisive importance for putting the enemy to rout and completing the combat mission. The main strike is delivered in accordance with the purpose of the operation or battle and the specific conditions of the situation.

469 DAL'NEYSHAYA (POSLEDUYUSHCHAYA) ZADACHA (followup objective) - The portion of the overall combat mission in an offensive operation (or combat) carried out on completion of the initial mission. Envisaged in the followup mission are the destruction of any further nuclear attack capability manifested by the enemy, the destruction of his reserves, and attainment of the goal of the operation (combat).

470 DAL'NOBOYNAYA ARTILLERIYA (long-range artillery) - Artillery with a great firing range, predominantly gun artillery, used to neutralize and destroy important targets located beyond the range of howitzer artillery and mortars.

507 DIVIZIONNAYA ARTILLERIYSKAYA GRUPPA (DAG) (division artillery group) - Artillery at the direct disposal of the division commander, consisting of more than one battalion, created for the duration of combat to fulfill missions on behalf of the division, and united by a common command. A division artillery group is made up of division artillery and attached artillery, and bears the division's number. The main purpose of a division artillery group is to support regiments with fire, and to engage the enemy's tactical weapons, artillery, and mortars.

574 ZAMYSEL OPERATSII (BOYA) (concept of an operation (or battle)) - The idea expressing the basic thought and content of the decision of the commanding general (or commander). The concept of an operation (or battle) includes: the objective to be attained in the forthcoming operation (or battle) and the method of attaining it; the zone (or sector) of concentration of the main efforts of the troops and the grouping of forces and facilities by sector; a possible maneuver of forces and weapons in the course of the combat activities, and the measures necessary to ensure timely completion of the operational (or combat) mission.

742 KONTRATAKA (counterattack) - An attack undertaken by defending troops against an attacking enemy for the purpose of putting him to rout (or destroying him) and achieving complete or partial restoration of the position lost by the defending troops. A counterattack is usually mounted by the second echelons and reserves of units and formations, and also by part of the forces of the first echelon from sectors not under attack.

810 LETNYY RESURS (sortie rate) - The number of sorties of a strategic formation (formation, unit) which may be planned for (or assigned to) an operation or combat mission, expressed in army sorties, division sorties, regimental sorties, or individual aircraft sorties.

952 OBESPECHENIYE OPERATSII (BOYA) (support of an operation (or battle)) - The aggregate of mutually-coordinated measures taken by the command, staffs, and troops (or forces) for the purpose of creating the most favorable conditions for combat operations, both in the preparatory stage and in the course of an operation (or battle). The nature of such measures is determined by the actual situation and by the missions assigned to the troops. The basic types of operational support, applicable to all services, are: reconnaissance; protection of troops (or forces) and rear installations from weapons of mass destruction; engineering support; camouflage; radio-electronic countermeasures; and topogeodesic, hydrometeorological, and rear support.

1016 OPERATIVNYYE REZERVY (operational reserves) - Combined-arms formations, and also formations (or units) of various service branches (or forces), used to carry out missions which arise suddenly in the course of an operation. Operational reserves are part of an operational order of battle of major field forces.

1027 OPORNYI PUNKT (strong point) - That part of a defensive position which is most fortified, contains the most weapons, and is most reinforced with obstacles, and which is equipped for all-round defense, primarily against tanks. A strong point is the main defensive position, and is organized in the most probable sector of enemy attack. Strong points are equipped with trenches, communication trenches, shelters, and other defensive structures. They must be well camouflaged, and connected to each other frontally and in depth by a unified fire and obstacle plan.

1029 ORGANIZATSIYA OGNIA (organization of fire) - Implementation of measures ensuring completion of fire missions in accordance with the concept of the operation (or battle), including the assignment of forces and weapons to deliver fire; coordination of fire with troop operations as regards mission, place, and time; all-round support of the conduct of fire; and also establishment of a procedure governing calls for fire, opening fire, and cessation of fire.

1076 PERVYY ESHELON (first echelon) - That part of an operational order of battle or combat order of troops which is in the first line or in close contact with the enemy, and is used to carry out specific missions.

1102 PLAN OPERATSII (operation plan) - An operational document formulated by the staff of a major field force jointly with the chiefs of service branches, special troops, and services, on the basis of a decision by, and on the instructions of the commanding general. Indicated in an operation plan are the grouping of enemy forces and facilities, and the possible nature of his activities, the initial and subsequent missions of the major field force, their depth, the time limits for their completion, and the rate of advance; the sectors of the main, and other, thrusts; the objectives to be destroyed by nuclear weapons at the outset and in the course of the operation; the operational structure, the missions of the troops, and the dividing lines between them; adjacent units and their missions; the disposition of the control posts. Also determined in an operational plan are the distribution of nuclear munitions, of reinforcements and air support, the ratios of forces and weapons, and also the distribution of materiel resources.

1135 PODDERZHIVAYUSHCHAYA ARTILLERIYA (supporting artillery) - Artillery which, while remaining subordinated to the senior artillery commander, carries out fire missions assigned by the commander of the combined-arms formation (or unit) being supported. Artillery temporarily drawn from second echelons to support combat operations of units or formations of the first echelon is also regarded as supporting artillery in relation to such units or formations.

1287 RADIOTEKHNICHESKIYE VOYSKA (radio-technical troops) - Special troops intended to conduct radio-technical reconnaissance of the land, sea, and air enemy, to create interference with his radio-technical facilities, and to ensure radio remote control of weapons and airborne vehicles. Radio-technical troops consist of units (or subunits), and constitute part of the various Services, service branches, and special troops.

1312 RAZGRANICHITEL'NYYE LINII (dividing lines) - Hypothetical lines on the terrain, constituting the boundaries between the zones (or areas) of action of adjacent major field forces or strategic formations (or formations, units, subunits). Dividing lines are defined (or changed) upon assignment of missions.

1344 REZERVNYYE VOYSKA (reserve troops) - Military echelons not included in the composition of fronts, fleets, major field formations or strategic formations of national air defense forces, or strategic missile forces. Under modern conditions, the role and importance of reserve troops has increased considerable in comparison with the past.

1345 REZERVY (reserves) - (1) Human and material resources which may be used in a war as a whole, or in an operation (or battle); (2) part of the operational structure of a major field force or strategic formation, or part of the combat order of a formation (or unit).

1356 RODA SUKHOPUTNYKH VOYSK (branches of the ground forces) - Components of the ground forces, differing from one another in their organization, armament, and role in combat. In each branch, subunits, units, and formations have the same basic armament, and the appropriate organization and tactics. The branches are missile troops and artillery air defense troops, motor rifle troops, tank troops, and air-assault troops. Besides the branches, the ground forces also include special troops, namely: engineer, chemical, communications, radio and radio-technical, motor-transport, highway, and others.

1443 SREDSTVA USILENIYA (reinforcements) - A subunit, unit, or formation, not organic to a unit, formation, or major field force or strategic formation, respectively, but attached to it by higher authority for a certain time to reinforce it quantitatively and qualitatively, thereby ensuring more successful accomplishment of missions in an operation (or battle).

1521 TEATR VOYENNYKH DEYSTVIY (theater of operations) - A particular territory, together with the associated air space and sea areas, including islands (archipelagos), within whose limits a known part of the armed forces of the country (or coalition) operates in wartime, engaged in strategic missions which ensue from the war plan. A theater of operations may be ground, maritime, or inter-continental. According to their military-political and economic importance, theaters of operations are classified as main or secondary.

1522 TEATR VOYNY (theater of war) - The territory of any one continent, together with the sea areas adjoining it and the air space above it, on which hostilities may develop (for example, the European theater of war). A theater of war usually includes several theaters of operations.

1610 TSEL' OPERATSII (BOYA) (goal of an operation (or battle)) - The end result which must be attained in a given specific operation (or battle). The goal of an operation (or battle) is the utter defeat of the enemy main opposing grouping. To this may be added, in the case of an offensive, the taking of an important area or line, thus ensuring further development of the offensive; and in defense,

frustrating the enemy attack, holding occupied areas, and creating conditions for going over to the offensive.

1635 ESHOLONIROVANIYE VOYSK (SIL I SREDSTV) (echeloning of troops (forces and facilities)) - Deployment of units, formations, and major field forces or strategic formations in depth (in the case of aviation, also by altitude), in accordance with the concept of the plan for the impending combat operations or maneuver.

3-6. ENDNOTES.

¹Radziyevskiy, Dictionary, p. 230.

²Radziyevskiy, Dictionary, p. v.

³William J. Lewis and Friedrich Wiener, The Warsaw Pact Armies. (Vienna: Carl Uberreuter Publishers, 1977), p. 62. (Cited hereafter as Lewis and Wiener, WP Armies.)

⁴Radziyevskiy, Dictionary, p. 10-11.

⁵Lewis and Wiener, WP Armies, p. 60-61.

⁶Radziyevskiy, Dictionary, p. 68-69.

⁷SAO, p. 2-12.

⁸SAO, p. 2-13.

CHAPTER 4

THE MEETING ENGAGEMENT

4-1. GENERAL.

Chapter 2 establishes the basis for considering the meeting engagement as a separate form of combat. The Soviets view the meeting engagement as the predominant form of combat on the modern battlefield. "Therefore, the encounter battle is the most frequently used form of combat, particularly for tank sub-units."¹ Widely dispersed forces in a rapidly changing combat environment will facilitate meeting engagements at various stages of the overall battle. In a nuclear environment the meeting engagement takes on additional importance due to the large number of gaps which will probably be created in defensive positions. Chapter 2 also describes various conditions under which the Soviets feel a meeting engagement can be anticipated. In anticipation of a meeting engagement, the Soviets will array their forces in such a manner to be able to take advantage of the situation.

A reduction of the organization time for destroying an enemy in the meeting engagement can be achieved by the decision of a number of questions ahead of time. Thus, when organizing a march in the expectation of a meeting engagement, the commander, on the basis of available data about the situation, can determine possible points of encounter with enemy and conditions for troop maneuver during deployment and in the course of the

fight, and, proceeding from this, outline action during the encounter with the enemy at one point or another and the corresponding formation of the march order.²

Detailed planning is usually not a characteristic of the meeting engagement. The Soviets feel that surprise and speed are essential ingredients for victory in the engagement, rather than lengthy plans. "Thus, the nature of the encounter battle demands skill to analyze the combat mission quickly and correctly under any circumstances, and the ability to determine the battalion's role in the execution of the overall unit mission."³ Also, the fluid situation would preclude using any plan which tried to cover all possible situations. The engagement will be characterized by rapid changes in the situation and speed truly becomes the essence of maneuver, as seconds and minutes become important ingredients in the mixture of battle. The Soviets also feel a unit can initiate a meeting engagement when outnumbered and win. "Satisfaction of all these requirements will permit achieving success in a meeting engagement and often may lead to the utter defeat not only of equal forces but even of superior forces."⁴ Rapid, violent execution by a smaller, highly trained force can overcome a much larger force. It will be difficult to maintain an exact picture of what is taking place on the battlefield as the meeting engagement unfolds. Therefore, a unit which is well-trained to conduct the meeting engagement will have an advantage.

Chapter 2 deals with only one form of the meeting engagement; in actuality there are three forms. The difference is in the level of organization for execution. Regiments and Divisions conduct meeting engagements at the tactical level. Armies conduct meeting encounters at the operational level, and Fronts conduct encounters at the strategic level. This chapter will concentrate on the tactical execution of the meeting engagement by a regimental size force.

The essence of the meeting engagement is when two opposing forces are trying simultaneously to fulfill their own objectives and enter into battle with each other. The meeting engagement ends, from the Soviet perspective, when one of the opposing forces assumes another form of combat, such as defending or withdrawing. If their opponent does this the Soviets will then execute an attack, a pursuit, or a withdrawal. Their action will be based on the previously mentioned factors of METTT.

The outcome of the fight for the initiative determines the final result of the entire battle. As soon as one enemy gives up the initiative and changes to defense or begins to withdraw, the meeting engagement immediately loses its specific character and grows into other forms of combat action - into defense for one side and offense against the defending troops for the other, or into withdrawal for one and pursuit for the other side.⁵

4-2. CONDUCT.

The exact formation of troops at the initiation of the meeting engagement will vary from situation to situation.

To try and capture the meaning and execution of the meeting engagement, a short scenario will be used.

A Motorized Rifle Regiment of a Motorized Rifle Division has been assigned the mission of being an advance guard for the division in an advance to contact. To assist the regimental commander in the execution of his mission the division commander reinforced the regiment with a tank battalion from the division's tank regiment, one battalion of self-propelled 152mm howitzers, one battery of SA-6 air defense artillery SAMs, one bridging company from Army assets, one engineer company, one motor transport company, and one chemical defense company.

Figure 6 is a diagram of a Motorized Rifle Regiment. Figure 7 is a diagram of a Tank Regiment, which is also capable of conducting the same mission, but would have to be reinforced with motorized rifle assets. Be sure to check approved TOEs in the scenario to ensure the proper unit organization and equipment are portrayed in the wargame. The following listing of equipment is considered to be representative of several Warsaw Pact armies.

The regimental commander received copies of the division's operation and reconnaissance plans. He gathered his staff together and posted the division's boundaries on the map and plotted the reconnaissance zones and routes planned for the division's reconnaissance battalion. He noted the reconnaissance battalion was going to establish three

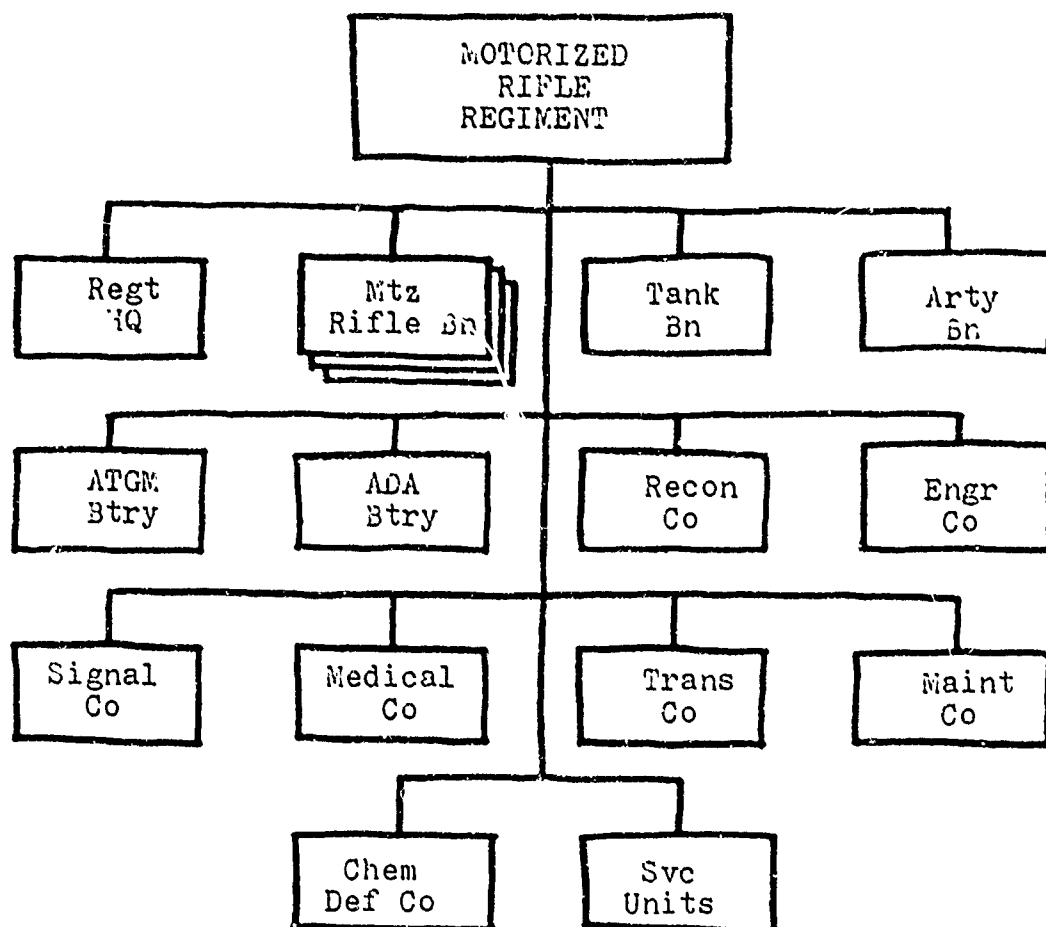


FIGURE 6

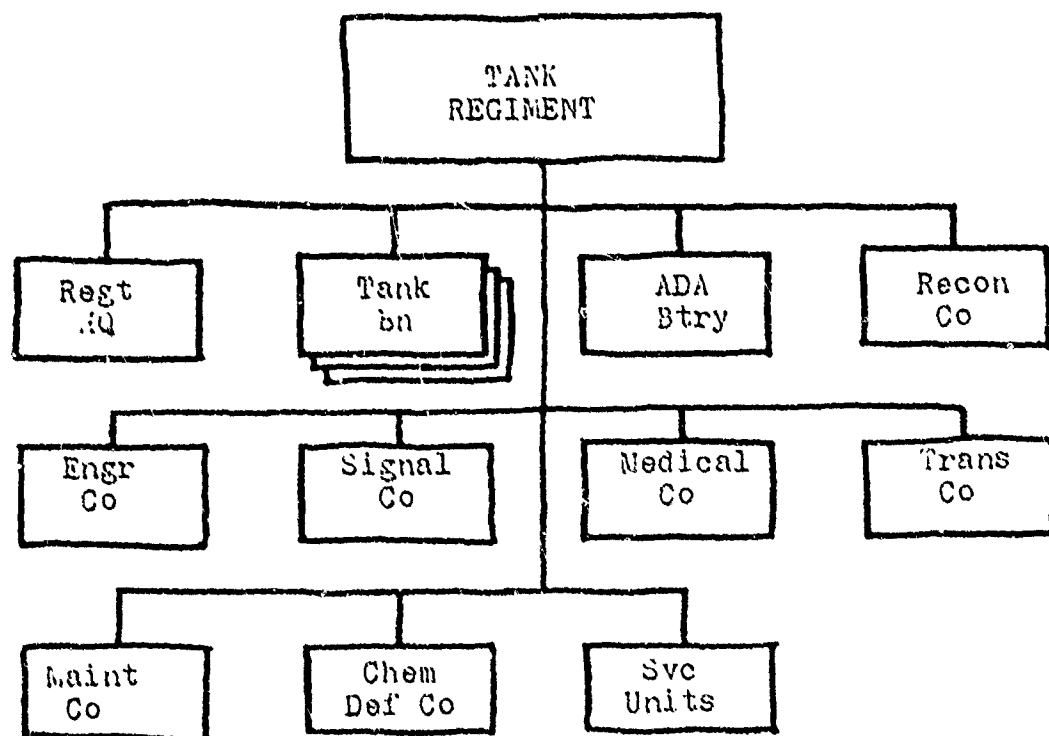


FIGURE 7

reconnaissance detachments, each reinforced with engineers and chemical reconnaissance elements, to proceed along three main routes in the division's zone of action. Along each reconnaissance route there were points of interest which would have to be reconnoitered by reconnaissance patrols from the respective detachments.

The operation plan indicated a surprise attack across the international boundary at H-hour, D-day. The intelligence situation was vague, and the exact location of the enemy's main battle area could not be determined. The regimental commander hoped he could proceed rapidly through the enemy's covering force area before they could occupy battle positions and battle areas. The regimental commander concurred in the analysis of three major routes within the division's zone of action, but was concerned over areas between the reconnaissance routes which offered many suitable locations for platoon and company size battle positions. He also noted several areas which could impede their progress if the areas were reinforced with obstacles. Of special interest were the numerous small villages and many bridges across minor and major waterways. Properly covered by fire and with the bridges destroyed his mission would not be an easy one. He also noted in the operation plan the division was conducting a secondary attack in support of the Army, which had been designated the main attack force for the Front. The assigned division zone of action varied from

22 to 26 kilometers in width. He also noted the division on the left flank, which was conducting the Army's main attack, had a zone of action from 12 to 14 kilometers in width. The right flank division of the Army, also conducting a secondary attack, had a zone of action similar to his own.

He checked the offensive fire plan and noted the division commander had formed a DAG to fire preparatory fires and provide long range fires to support his regiment. He noted the DAG included two battalions of 122mm MRL, one battalion of 130mm M-46 field guns, and two battalions of 152mm howitzers. He also noted he had received second priority for attack helicopters, with first priority going to the Army's main attack division. The division had received four reconnaissance sorties and eight fighter-bomber sorties for the first day of combat. The division commander had instructed his intelligence staff to make plans for targeting suitable items for destruction by the fighter-bombers. He especially wanted to destroy any enemy nuclear delivery means or stockpiles of nuclear munitions. He also wanted key bridges over major waterways reconnoitered to ensure they would be standing when critical crossings had to be made.

The regimental commander was disappointed in the lack of knowledge concerning enemy dispositions, but he felt the value of surprise in conducting the attack outweighed the

lack of intelligence. He would have to ensure thorough tactical reconnaissance and march security for all elements. He then called on his reconnaissance company commander and informed him of his plans for the company to conduct a zone reconnaissance with emphasis on locating any enemy units between routes reconnoitered by division elements. He also told the reconnaissance chief he would receive an engineer platoon and a chemical reconnaissance platoon to aid in accomplishing his mission. He informed the company commander he might be operating out of range of supporting artillery and would not be under an air defense umbrella, so stealth would have to be employed in gathering terrain reconnaissance. He told the company commander to organize his forces for the mission and to operate no more than twenty to thirty minutes in front of the regiment's leading elements. He was to maintain contact with division reconnaissance elements and stay about 10 to 20 kilometers behind them.

The reconnaissance leader annotated his map and decided to establish one reconnaissance detachment and one reconnaissance patrol. He constructed the elements as shown below:

Reconnaissance Patrol	Reconnaissance Detachment
1-BMP-R	1-BRDM-2U (Command)
1-BRDM-2	2-BMP-R
1-Motorcycle	2-BRDM-2
1-BRDM-Rkh (Chemical Recon)	2-Motorcycles
1-BTR-152 (Engineer)	2-BRDM-Rkh
	2-BTR-152

The reconnaissance company commander then briefed his subordinate officers on the concept of the operation and

began preparation of his reconnaissance plan. He instructed his subordinates to fully arm and fuel all vehicles and to await further instructions. He noted there would be a twenty minute artillery preparation on known and suspected locations, so he wanted to ensure his elements would not be near any preplanned fires.

The regimental commander then called in his artillery chief, battalion commanders, and the remaining members of the regimental staff. He briefed them all on his concept of the operation, available intelligence, and designated the 1st battalion to be the regimental advance guard. He wanted the advance guard to send forward an advance party and a combat reconnaissance patrol. He instructed the 2d battalion commander to dispatch two flank security detachments to protect the main body. He also instructed the 3rd battalion commander to designate a rear guard to protect the main body. He pictured the regimental march column to look like Figure 8. He provided appropriate reinforcements to the battalions and his organization is shown at Figure 9. He instructed the 1st battalion commander to have the combat reconnaissance patrol about five to ten kilometers ahead of the advance party. He also wanted the advance party not more than 10 kilometers ahead of the advance guard. He also wanted the advance guard to be no more than 15 kilometers ahead of the regimental main body and the rear guard to be no more than five kilometers behind the

REGIMENTAL MARCH COLUMN

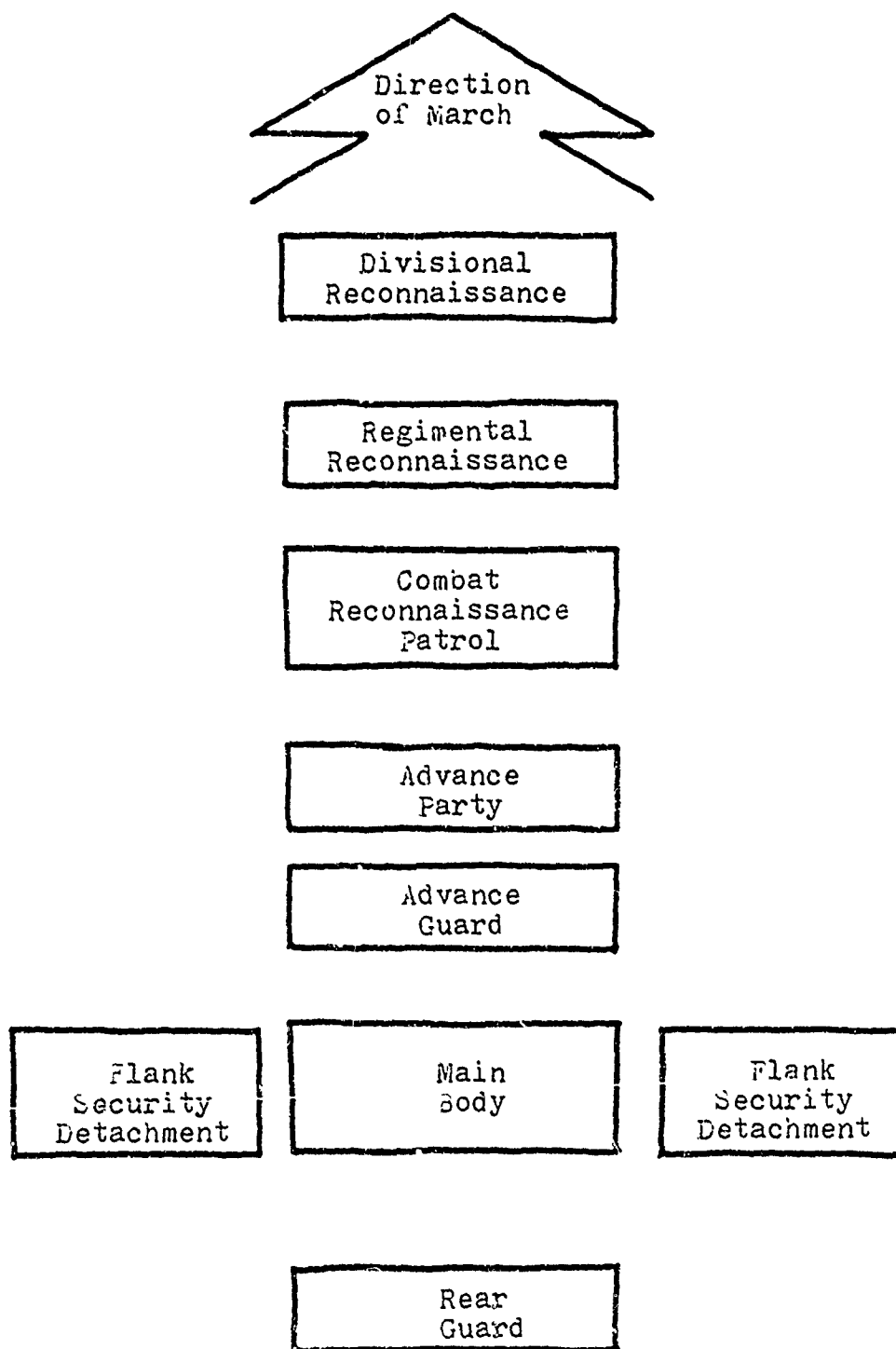


FIGURE 8

REGIMENTAL ORGANIZATION FOR COMBAT

Combat Reconnaissance Patrol
1-Motorized Rifle Platoon
2-Tanks

Advance Party
1-Motorized Rifle Company (minus one platoon)
1-Tank Platoon (minus two tanks)
1-Engineer Squad
1-Chemical Reconnaissance Squad
1-Mortar Battery
1-SP Artillery Battery (with observers)
1-Antitank Platoon
1-Air Defense Section (2-ZSU-23-4)

Advance Guard
1-Motorized Rifle Battalion (minus one company)
1-Tank Company (minus one platoon)
1-Engineer Platoon (minus one squad)
1-Chemical Reconnaissance Platoon (minus one squad)
1-SP Artillery Battalion (minus one battery)
1-Antitank Battery (minus one platoon)
1-Air Defense Platoon (minus one section)
1-Bridging Company
1-Transportation Platoon
1-Maintenance Platoon
1-Medical Platoon

Main Body
Remaining elements of regiment
(minus Flank Security Detachments and
Rear Guard)

Flank Security Detachment (two)
1-Motorized Rifle Platoon
2-Tanks

Rear Guard
1-Motorized Rifle Platoon

FIGURE 9

regimental main body. He weighed the advantages and disadvantages of moving along multiple routes in a broad advance to contact, but decided the center route in the division zone offered the best cover, concealment, and potential for a rapid rate of advance. He coordinated with the division commander, and it was decided the advance guards of the following two motorized rifle regiments would be on the extreme two routes, while the division reserve would follow on the center route. In this manner, the division commander could rapidly react to the situation as it developed. He dismissed the conference and asked it be resumed in two hours after all preliminary plans had been formulated. In less than twenty-four hours the regiment would cross the border.

The regimental commander looked at his planning map and noted he had reinforced each of the two motorized rifle battalions in the main body with a tank company. He was going to save the tank battalion he received from division as an exploitation force. He had decided to use his available artillery as accompanying artillery and provided one battalion for the advance guard and would leap frog the remaining battalion along the regimental march route in order to provide continuous indirect fire coverage for the regiment. He had his bridge assets well forward in the main body to rapidly assist elements which would need their help. He had decided to mix his SA-9s with the SA-6s provided by the division in order to provide in-depth, complementary coverage

along the march route. He had the ZSU-23-4s well forward in the column to provide leading elements as much air defense coverage as possible. He also had provided supply, maintenance, medical and transportation support to leading elements. He was satisfied with his plan and looked at the latest weather forecast. The following morning should see extensive fog, especially in low lying areas, for at least the first three hours after the Beginning of Morning Nautical Twilight (BMNT). If the forecast held true it would help him in his mission. The subordinate commanders and staff returned and briefed him on their plans to implement the operation. He was pleased with their plans and told the 4th battalion commander to accompany him with other command post units to advise and assist him, as all of the tank battalion had been used to reinforce the three motorized rifle battalions. The intelligence officer provided some indications of enemy reconnaissance locations and the commander instructed the artillery chief to target these locations. He instructed the reconnaissance company commander to cross the border three hours prior to BMNT. The artillery preparation would be from 20 minutes prior to BMNT until BMNT. At the conclusion of the preparatory fires the regiment would be moving and cross the border. He advised the reconnaissance chief of two locations where long range patrols from division had enemy battalions under observation. He announced the sign and countersign for the operation and dismissed his subordinates.

Six hours prior to BMNT the division reconnaissance elements crossed the border and began their work. They ventured almost 12 kilometers west before they located the first enemy cavalry units. The locations were noted and plotted as targets by the division's Chief of Rocket Troops and Artillery. The regimental reconnaissance commander noted the locations and informed his subordinates. Three hours prior to BMNT the regimental reconnaissance elements began their westward trek. They cleared the first ten kilometers in about two and one half hours and reported their findings to the regimental commander.

The artillery preparation started on time and lasted for exactly twenty minutes. The regiment began to move during the preparation and crossed the border at the appointed time. The regimental reconnaissance chief had spotted an enemy platoon astride the regimental march route which had been emplaced since the passage of the divisional reconnaissance elements. The location was noted, passed to the artillery personnel for targeting and an observation post detached from the regimental reconnaissance detachment to keep the enemy under observation.

The advance guard commander had heard the transmission from the reconnaissance detachment and alerted the advance party commander to the enemy's location. The advance party commander instructed his artillery battery commander to prepare to fire in support of an attack from the march. He

felt he had sufficient combat power to rapidly overwhelm the enemy force. About twenty minutes later the artillery began to impact on the enemy platoon, and the advance party swept over the location losing two tanks and one BMP. They had destroyed one enemy tank and one enemy APC. He called the results of their first skirmish back to the advance guard commander. The regimental commander monitored the transmission and annotated his map.

A motorcycle rider appeared from the dense fog and passed a message to the regimental commander. The division's Radio Reconnaissance Company had intercepted a message indicating an enemy battalion was moving towards the regiment's march route. This information had been confirmed by the long range reconnaissance patrol observing the enemy force. The regimental commander alerted his forces to the possibility of another skirmish.

The combat reconnaissance patrol reported they had found an estimated company size enemy unit in position astride the regimental march route, and it could not be bypassed. The advance guard commander decided the advance party was not strong enough to tackle this force, so he instructed his leading commander to assume positions to the front of the enemy and provide a base of fire while he led his forces in from the southern flank to clear the position. Appropriate coordination was made with the accompanying artillery commander and with DAG. About thirty minutes

later the battle started, and the advance guard was successful. However, they had taken heavy casualties and had lost 10 tanks and 13 BMPs. He estimated the enemy casualties to be 4 tanks and 2 APCs. The advance guard was regrouping when the regimental commander instructed the 2d battalion commander to assume the mission as the advance guard for the regiment. It took about thirty minutes for the new advance guard to reach the battle site. During this time, the regimental reconnaissance commander called back and stated they had been bypassed by an enemy force. He did not know the size, but estimated it to be at least a battalion.

The regiment started to move again, and the commander informed all subordinates about the approaching enemy force. Suddenly, the combat reconnaissance patrol commander called to say he had been taken under fire by an enemy force, and he had lost half of his element. He could see enemy reconnaissance elements moving towards his location, but he no longer had any long range direct fire weapons systems to engage them. The artillery units took notice, began their planning sequence, and the mortars responded with smoke to protect the remnants of the patrol. The advance guard commander told the advance party to go off of the march route and attempt to find out the depth and width of the approaching enemy force. The regimental commander asked division for attack helicopters, but the fog was still too thick for their

employment. Meanwhile, both division and regimental reconnaissance elements had been taken under fire and suffered losses amounting to about one half of their vehicles. A divisional reconnaissance detachment had radioed back they had found two enemy battalions in prepared positions blocking the regimental march route about 22 kilometers west of the border. It appeared the main battle area had been found.

About twenty minutes after the patrol had reported contact, the advance party passed to their south and began to reconnoiter the enemy force. They had seen two enemy APCs which were quickly destroyed. They assumed positions on a hill to the south of the march route and began to observe enemy activity. The advance party commander determined there were at least three enemy companies moving towards the east. The regimental commander decided to leave the advance party on the hill, reinforce the patrol with the advance guard, and send his remaining reinforced motorized rifle battalion to the north to hit the enemy force on the flank. In this manner he would have flanking fire from the advance party, a base of fire from the advance guard, and a flank maneuver by his other battalion.

About thirty minutes later the advance guard commander reported they had been engaged by the attacking enemy force and he was being supported by the advance party. Artillery had begun to fall on the enemy and the 3d battalion was about 45 minutes away from the fray. The enemy force halted

for a few minutes due to the effective flanking fire and began to maneuver to escape the withering fire. A following enemy company had moved towards the north to try and bypass the advance guard. Suddenly, the enemy company was taken under fire by the 3d battalion which had reached the battle site. Now, both the advance guard and the 3d battalion from the main body were rapidly attacking the enemy force. The remainder of the battle lasted about twenty minutes and the enemy began to withdraw. The regiment had been successful, but had taken heavy casualties. The regimental commander began to ponder his next move.

4-3. OPERATIONAL SUPPORT.

In the scenario above, the commander provided for reconnaissance, security, engineer support and rear support. Had the scenario been portrayed in a Nuclear, Biological, or Chemical (NBC) environment, the commander would have to consider measures for protection from weapons of mass destruction. He did, however, provide chemical reconnaissance elements to alert him to any change in the situation. He also took the available forces and organized them into combined arms elements to accomplish the mission.

Not covered in the scenario, but a crucial part of any operation, is the use of camouflage by all elements. Some Soviet vehicles have been seen with camouflage paint patterns, and they will make all attempts to maximize the use of local vegetation. Camouflage nets will also be used

for halted units, especially artillery firing sites, command posts, and rear units.

The scenario will have to be carefully evaluated and measures taken to ensure that mutually supportive measures are taken to plan for a successful operation. A lot of what will be done is limited by the type of support available and the time available to conduct the wargame. The previous scenario is only illustrative and by no means the only way of ensuring support for an operation.

4-4. SPECIAL TROOPS SUPPORT.

Again, the utilization of special troops will vary from situation to situation. In this case a type utilization of chemical, engineer, motor transport, and radio-technical troops was shown. A detailed march plan would have to be formulated and the traffic control elements from within the division and regiment would be utilized extensively. The use of traffic control troops and march planning is detailed in readily available publications. Highway troops would only be used by elements higher than regiment and will not be included in this paper. Communication troops could also be played and their use must be considered in planning the operation.

4-5. DEFINITIONS. All definitions are taken from Dictionary of Basic Military Terms, by A. I. Radziyevskiy. The number prior to the definition refers to the entry item within the dictionary.

1 AVANGARD (advanced guard) - A detachment preceeding at a fixed distance ahead of the main body of a marching formation (unit) in order to protect the troops making the march, to safeguard them from surprise attack by hostile ground forces, and to ensure suitable conditions for the main body to deploy and enter the battle.

95 AR'YERGARD (rear guard) - March protection element, intended to safeguard troops moving from the front to the rear. The strength, composition, missions and distance of a rear guard (from the main body) will depend on the size of the main body column being guarded and on the situation.

99 ATAKA (attack) - The most important element in the tactical activities of air, naval and ground forces, constituting a combination of swift maneuver and fire (strike) aimed at enemy personnel and weapons for the purpose of their annihilation. An attack by ground forces is carried out immediately following nuclear and conventional weapons strikes, and is culminated by the utter defeat of the enemy and by capture of his defensive areas and structures. An air attack is a rapid action by aircraft against the enemy for the purpose of firing or striking at close range. Annihilation of hostile aircraft in the air during an air attack is accomplished by fighter aviation. A torpedo (missile) attack is the maneuvering of a warship (aircraft) for the purpose of assuming a favorable position and firing torpedoes (missiles) at the target.

832 MANEVR (maneuver) - A transfer of troops or naval forces, or a redirection of weapons (redistribution of material and technical facilities), for the purpose of gaining an advantage over the enemy under conditions for conducting military operations. As a result of a maneuver, a favorable grouping of men and equipment is created in a given sector or theater of operations. According to its scale, a maneuver may be strategic, operational, or tactical.

954 OBESPECHENIYE FLANGOV (STYKOV) (security of flanks (or of limiting points)) - Operational (or tactical) measures to forestall surprise strikes by the enemy on open flanks (or limiting points), and to ensure successful repulse of these strikes in the course of accomplishing the main mission. Flank security is achieved by conducting uninterrupted reconnaissance, and by maintaining the forces and weapons assigned for this purpose in a constant state of readiness.

1047 OTRYAD ((1) & (2) detachment; (3) flight) - (1) A temporary unification of ground troop (or naval) units or sub-units (sometimes even individual servicemen) for completion

of a particular or special mission (security, seizure of a beachhead or bridgehead, reconnaissance, setting obstacles, etc.); (2) in frontier troops, a military unit; (3) in the air force, a tactical subunit.

1050 OTRYAD OBESPECHENIYA DVIZHENIYA (OOD) movement-support detachment) - A temporarily-created group of engineer subunits (mostly road engineer subunits), together with chemical and radiological reconnaissance subunits, assigned by a combined-arms formation or unit to support the movement of troops. A movement-supported detachment carries out reconnaissance, removes obstacles from the route to be used, organizes by-passes around debris and obstacles, marks the route, and also does a limited amount of road repair work.

1060 OKHRANENIYE (security) - A type of support for combat operations of troops (or naval forces), effected in order to forestall surprise enemy attacks, and to prevent enemy reconnaissance from penetrating areas occupied by friendly troops (or naval forces). Security also ensures friendly troops time and advantageous conditions for deployment and entering battle. Security on the march, at the halt, and in battle, are called: "march security," "bivouac security," and "combat security," respectively.

1087 PEREDOVOY OTRYAD (forward detachment) - (1) A detachment of troops consisting of a tank (or motorized infantry) subunit (or unit), reinforced by subunits of special troops. In offensive combat, a forward detachment is put out ahead of a combined-arms unit (or formation) to seize and hold important lines and objectives, major road junctions, mountain passes, bridgeheads on the opposite bank of a river, pending arrival of the main body. In defensive combat, a forward detachment is sent out to conduct defensive actions in the security zone. (2) Part of an amphibious assault force used to seize a beachhead on the enemy coast and to support the continuing landing. The forward detachment of an amphibious assault force is usually subdivided into the forces making the first assault and the main body of the forward detachment.

1104 PLAN RAZVEDKI (reconnaissance plan) - A staff working document, setting out the organization of reconnaissance for a definite period of time. A reconnaissance plan is a component part of an operation (or battle) plan, and is set out in writing or graphically (on a map). Reflected in a reconnaissance plan are the goal and missions of reconnaissance, who is to carry it out, and time limits for completion of the missions, the deadlines and procedures for rendering reconnaissance reports (the data obtained), and the reserve of reconnaissance forces and facilities.

When necessary, reconnaissance plans indicate the methods to be used to complete reconnaissance missions, and the procedure for preparing reconnaissance elements and supporting their activities.

1169 POLOSA RAZVEDKI (reconnaissance zone) - A zone of terrain at the disposal of the enemy, bounded to the right and to the left by hypothetical demarcation lines within which reconnaissance must be conducted by the forces and facilities of a major field force (formation, unit). It is usually to assign a reconnaissance zone which is wider than the zone of action of the entire major field force (formation, unit), and no less deep than the depth of the operational (or combat) mission of the major field force (formation, unit).

1185 POKHODNAYA ZASTAVA (march security patrol) - An element of march security. The march security patrol is detailed from the advance guard, or directly from subunits (or units) for which security is provided. A march security patrol may be in the forward or flank category.

1186 POKHODNOYE OKHRANENIYE ((1) march security; (2) screening of ships in passage) - (1) The safeguarding of troops on the march, this being accomplished by advance guards, rear guards, detachments, outposts, and patrols. (2) The screening of ships during passage by sea, either singly or in formation, such protection being organized to include timely detection of enemy presence; appropriate warning of the escorted ships; repulsing enemy attacks; and the use of reconnaissance counter-measures. The screening force is a component part of the cruising formation and may consist of several screens: an outer one, for warning, and interference with enemy forces; and an inner one, for repulsing attacks by enemy forces which have penetrated the outer screen.

1187 POKHODNYY PORYADOK ((1) march formation; (2) tactical formation (of warships)) - (1) A troop formation, consisting of columns, for use on a march. It must ensure the following: high speed of advance and maneuver; rapid deployment for combat; the least possible vulnerability to the effects of enemy weapons of mass destruction; conservation of strength of personnel and vehicles; and ease of troop control. (2) The mutual positioning of warships in passage, as a group, by sea, ensuring their safety, rapid reforming into a battle formation, and ease in controlling forces.

1297 RAZVEDKA (VOYSKOVAYA) (troop-unit reconnaissance) - The acquisition of intelligence information concerning the

location, grouping, composition, numbering, armament, combat capability, and intentions of the enemy, as well as the nature of his activities with respect to an operation (or battle).

1299 RAZVEDKA MARSHRUTOV (route reconnaissance) - Measures taken to study the roads (cross-country routes) in a zone of impending action, and to determine their state, traffic capacity, vulnerable sectors, camouflage conditions, degree of demolition and contamination, and the availability of materials for road and bridge repair, so as to ensure the movement of troops, and combat and other materiel.

1300 RAZVEDKA MESTNOSTI (terrain reconnaissance and intelligence) - Measures taken for the collection and refinement of information on the character and peculiarities of the relief, hydrography, built-up areas, roads, soil, and plant cover, and the degree to which these conditions affect the arrangement and combat operations of friendly and enemy troops; on the presence and character of natural cover and obstacles; on the protective features and passability of the terrain; on conditions for orientation, camouflage, and observation; etc.

1304 RAZVEDYVATEL'NAYA GRUPPA (reconnaissance group) - An element of troop reconnaissance sent out by formations or units to conduct reconnaissance of the enemy and terrain in mobile types of combat, on the march, and in a defensive situation when there is no contact with the enemy.

1308 RAZVEDYVATEL'NYY DOZOR (reconnaissance patrol) - A reconnaissance element which is sent out from a reconnaissance detachment to the front, to the flanks, or to the rear, for the purpose of conducting reconnaissance of the enemy and the terrain.

1309 RAZVEDYVATEL'NYY OTRYAD (reconnaissance detachment) - An element of troop-unit reconnaissance sent out by formations and major field forces or strategic formations to conduct reconnaissance of the enemy and the terrain in mobile types of combat, on the march, and also in defence. A reconnaissance detachment is made up of reconnaissance subunits or motor rifle (or tank) subunits, from company to battalion strength, and reinforced by artillery, tanks, field engineer subunits, and chemical subunits. A reconnaissance detachment is assigned a reconnaissance zone or axis.

1512 TAKTICHESKAYA RAZVEDKA (tactical reconnaissance) - A component part of military reconnaissance. It obtains such information about the enemy, terrain, weather, and the

area of impending action as is needed to support the combat operations of troops. Tactical reconnaissance is organized by the commanders and staffs of formations, units, (subunits) of all service branches to the depth of their own combat mission, or to the depth of the entire disposition of enemy combat formations.

4-6. ENDNOTES.

¹Konoplya, TBIC, 3, 4, 5, p. 33.

²Reznichenko, Tactics, p. 139.

³Konoplya, TBIC, 3, 4, 5, p. 39.

⁴G. I. Garbuz, D. F. Loza, and I. F. Sazonov, The Motorized Rifle Battalion in Modern Combat. Translated by Translation Consultants Ltd., for Redstone Arsenal and the Foreign Science and Technology Center. (Charlottesville: 1972), p. 18.

⁵Reznichenko, Tactics, p. 133.

CHAPTER 5

THE OFFENSE

NASTUPLIENIYE (offensive) - A basic type of combat operation, of decisive importance in attaining victory over the enemy. An offensive is conducted in order to secure the prompt and utter defeat of an enemy occupying defensive positions, and in order to take important areas (or objectives). This is achieved by breaking up enemy main groupings and weapons of mass destruction by using nuclear and conventional weapons, energetic attacks by ground forces with high speed and to great depth, coordinated with aviation and airborne assault forces, bold movement by the latter onto enemy flanks and rear, and destroying him piece by piece.¹

5-1. GENERAL.

Most writers of Soviet tactical doctrine claim the offensive is the only way to achieve a decisive victory. COL A. A. Sidorenko states: "The offensive is the only type of combat actions of the troops, the employment of which attains the complete rout of the enemy and the seizure of important objectives and areas."² In other words, the defense may be used when it is advantageous, but the offensive assures a rapid and thorough destruction of the enemy.

Ideally, in an offensive, the advancing troops will bypass heavily defended areas and seek gaps between enemy units or conduct attacks from the march against weakly defended positions to proceed into the enemy rear. However, the Soviet commander may be forced into conducting a breakthrough.

In many publications the word breakthrough is synonymous with a rupture of enemy positions. In the remainder of this chapter the word breakthrough will be used only to connote a specific type of offensive operation. The breaking through of enemy positions by attacks from the march will be referred to as a rupture of enemy defenses.

The breakthrough is the most discussed form of Soviet offense within US Army doctrinal publications, but it is probably the least understood form of Soviet tactics. The classic Soviet breakthrough conjures up visions of massed artillery, tanks, and APCs in order to literally overwhelm the defender. The introduction of nuclear weapons altered the Soviet philosophy for the conduct of the breakthrough. It is the least preferred of Soviet offensive operations due to the massive coordination problems, plus the vulnerability of massed ground forces to destruction by nuclear weapons. Perhaps COL Sidorenko states this changed philosophy the best:

In the period of World War II, essentially the only method for intensifying the efforts of the first echelon was the commitment and engagement of rifle and armored chasti and soyedineniya of the second echelons or reserves, or by the maneuver of troops from other axes supported by artillery and aviation. This attained the creation of high densities, a numerical superiority over the enemy in men and materiel, and successful development of the attack into the depth. Under modern conditions nuclear weapons are the chief means of destruction. The means for their delivery possess wide capabilities for maneuver and can deliver powerful strikes where and when it is necessary and advisable. By employing

nuclear weapons one can in a short time achieve the effective destruction of the enemy and rapidly change the ratio of men and materiel, thus changing the situation in one's favor. This will ensure the successful development of the attack by the first echelon at higher rates. Moreover, the delivery of nuclear strikes permits one to avoid a dangerous concentration of troops and an inevitable compacting of combat formations involved with the commitment of fresh forces from the depth and their execution of maneuver under difficult conditions of the ground situation.³

Soyedineniye - Formation. The highest level of military organization: Corps, Division, or Brigade level equivalent. It may be formed from a single branch of various⁴ branches and Services, including naval squadrons.

Chast' - Unit. Any administrative, line, or housekeeping unit of regimental size or smaller that is administratively self-contained and has its own designation, number, and banner. It is the basic tactical (combat) and independent organizational unit up to, and including the regiment. Each consists of subunits.⁵

Thus, during the conduct of a breakthrough, the maneuver forces exploit the success of the fire support. This maxim is applicable in either nuclear or non-nuclear warfare.

The pursuit is the final form of offensive action and has one goal, the ultimate destruction of the enemy force. The remainder of this chapter is an explanation of the various phases of offensive operations. To again place the breakthrough in its proper perspective a final quote from COL Sidorenko is offered:

Troops attacking in a different way will overcome the enemy's defense, not by "gnawing through" on narrow sectors and solid front, as was the case in past wars, but simultaneously across a broad front, along axes, from the march, at high tempos, right after nuclear

strikes, taking advantage of breaches, intervals, and gaps in the enemy's combat deployment, and by wide employment of maneuver.⁶

5-2. CONDUCT.

There are two methods of transfer to the offensive, either from the march or from a position in contact with the enemy. If these methods fail to rupture the enemy's positions, or if the enemy has constructed a formidable, in-depth defense which cannot be readily bypassed, a breakthrough must be conducted to force a gap in the enemy's formation. Successfully breaking through the enemy's defenses may lead to a pursuit. Assuming the defense as part of an offensive is a viable tactic and is usually referred to as the hasty defense. This portion of defensive combat will be covered in the next chapter.

a. From the March.

An advance to contact is conducted in march column and may result in a meeting engagement or an attack from the march. A typical regimental march formation was discussed in the previous chapter. The composition of the march column will vary depending upon the mission and the troops available. However, the previously discussed regimental march column is considered to be representative.

The scenario within the last chapter describes a regiment which made two attacks from the march prior to conducting a meeting engagement. An enemy location is chosen for

an attack either prior to or during the march. The leading reconnaissance elements attempt to locate enemy forces and bypass strong points of enemy resistance. When a position is found which cannot be readily bypassed the reconnaissance elements try to ascertain the strength of the force and the width and depth of the position. They may also be used to observe the position to report any changes in status. The advance guard may be used to provide supporting direct fires from the front of the position to fix the enemy, while a part or all of the regimental main body maneuvers to the flanks or rear, or both, of the position to conduct an assault. They will attempt to rupture the position and proceed into the enemy rear.

At a predetermined distance from the objective, the regimental march column will break into battalion march columns, then company march columns, then platoon march columns and finally into an assault line. The regimental forces will assault the objective using the maximum amount of direct fire. The assault position line from which the regiment's subordinate elements assault the objective is usually no more than one to two kilometers from the objective and it normally will be the last covered and concealed area nearest the objective. In wide open terrain smoke will be used to mask maneuvers into the assault formation.

Small unit formations for the assault, and distances between tanks and BMPs are well described in DIA manuals

covering battalion and company tactics. Artillery organization and sequencing of fires are well articulated in several approved foreign intelligence documents. The Soviets have also written numerous books which cover these details in depth. Voyenni Vestnik, (Military Herald) frequently describes field problems and on occasion poses a problem for the readers to solve. Working these problems and checking the answer in following issues is a good way of validating knowledge of Soviet tactics. Soviet Military Review, is another periodical which frequently discusses field problems and shows the means applied by Soviet commanders to solve training problems. The magazine is written for use by persons outside the USSR, and was not published in Russian until the first issue of 1978. It contains considerably more propaganda than does Voyenni Vestnik.

The Soviets employ two types of reserves, combined arms and specialized. Examples of the latter might be an engineer reserve or an antitank reserve. The size of a reserve varies with the situation, but a combined arms reserve of a platoon for a battalion, a company for a regiment, and a battalion for a division might be good planning factors. The motorized rifle division has an organic independent tank battalion which makes an excellent combined arms reserve for that division. Within motorized rifle units, the antitank battalion at division, the antitank battery at regiment, and in BTR equipped units the antitank platoon at battalion level, are

well suited for antitank reserves. In the scenario for the meeting engagement within Chapter 4, the regiment's anti-tank battery was deployed well forward to meet contingencies. This unit possesses accurate long range fires, is highly mobile, and can be employed under many different circumstances.

Battalion is the lowest level which may retain a reserve or attack with two echelons. Company and platoon attacks are almost always conducted without a reserve. More than one line may be used in the company attacks, but the closeness of the lines is viewed as adding depth, rather than the use of a second echelon. The difference between a second echelon and a reserve is the second echelon has been included in the operation plan with an assigned mission, while the reserve will be employed to resolve unforeseen circumstances.

A regimental zone of action, indicated by boundaries, can vary from five to eight kilometers in a main attack to 10 to 15 kilometers in a secondary attack. The regiment will have at least one march route within the zone, but two march routes are preferred, especially under NBC conditions. Whether the regiment eventually attacks with three reinforced battalions abreast, or two up and one back, depends on the width of the assigned zone, the strength of the attacking and defending units, and if the commander desires depth to his attack. Again, nuclear warfare will stretch these frontages to avoid losing more than one battalion to a single

strike. Also, the regimental antitank battery or accompanying artillery may be used to provide a base of fire, or in US terminology to provide overwatch. BMPs may also be assigned a similar mission.

The formation of a regimental artillery group (RAG) is based on the amount of artillery made available to the regimental commander, or upon direction of the division commander. Usually a RAG will be formed from two to four battalions of artillery to provide centralized control for a specified period or to perform a specific mission, then the RAG will be dissolved and units returned to their normal headquarters. Motorized rifle regiments have an organic artillery battalion and each subordinate motorized rifle battalion has a mortar battery. Tank regiments do not have this capability, but they have a unique use for their tank guns. About fifty percent of the Soviet tank's unit of fire consists of high explosive fragmentation rounds.⁷ Soviet tank gunners are taught and practice indirect fire gunnery. When fired in an indirect mode, the smoothbore guns of today's Soviet tanks are not as accurate as the older rifled guns. However, a tank unit possesses the capability to provide suppressive fire with their main guns. This indirect fire, or fire from beyond the maximum effective range for direct fire, is not accurate enough for pinpoint engagement of hard targets, but can provide an impressive volume of fire to suppress ATGM gunners or dismounted troops.

Soviet doctrine calls for direct fire of artillery whenever feasible. By directly observing the impact of the rounds an area target can be neutralized faster, with less expenditure of rounds, than can unobserved or trajectory fire. Also, Soviet artillery pieces possess an antitank capability for self-protection.⁸ Most of these antitank artillery rounds are HEAT.

The amount of artillery rounds to be placed on a target is subject to the following considerations:

1. The gun/howitzer caliber.
2. The gun-target range.
3. The type of target.
4. The size of the target.
5. The degree of damage desired.

The Soviets have charts which list how many rounds of what type have to be fired into each hectare of the target to achieve specified results. There are many different ways to conduct artillery fire and some of the pertinent definitions are included at the end of this chapter. So, an analysis of the target and the available artillery is necessary prior to firing at a target.

The Soviets see the attack from the march to be the predominant form of offensive combat. The march column is appropriate for the meeting engagement, attack from the march, pursuit, and perhaps within other forms of combat.

b. From Direct Contact.

This situation can take place when an attack has been stalled and the offensive is being resumed, or when a battle started in a defensive mode and the decision has been made to assume an offensive posture. It will be undertaken to rupture the enemy's formation and enter his rear area. It probably will be accompanied by a short artillery preparation and the initial formations will depend on troop dispositions prior to beginning the attack. The attack could be started by a second echelon force passing through or near the defending troops. Usually, the attack is initiated by forces from behind or adjacent to the initial defensive positions. Troops from within the defensive positions can support the attackers with direct fire. The attacking troops are marshaled in attack positions near the defensive position. The attack positions should provide cover and preclude enemy observation to retain the element of surprise. The assault will be similar in form to the attack from the march described above.

There are other factors which must be considered when planning an attack, primarily whether or not the infantry will remain mounted. Since the introduction of the BMP there has been considerable discussion concerning the conduct of an assault by infantry accompanied by tanks. Dismounting the infantry slows the attack, leaves the infantry vulnerable to artillery fire, and the tanks could outrun them. So, the preferred method of conducting an infantry

assault is to remain mounted to continue the speed of the offensive. The following list presents some situations when a dismounted attack might prove beneficial:

1. When there are obstacles which cannot be cleared by mechanical means.
2. When the enemy position's antitank weapons have not been sufficiently neutralized by indirect fire.
3. When there are entrenched enemy infantry on the objective which must be cleared.
4. When the position must be consolidated or held for a following force.
5. When there is a desire to maximize firepower such as the use of hand grenades and flamethrowers.

Another consideration when planning the attack is what types of maneuver the attacking force will use. At the tactical level the ways to conduct the attack are, frontally, from the flank, or by use of an envelopment. The flank attack and envelopment can be combined to make a fourth form of maneuver. The frontal attack is rarely used due to its inherent disadvantages. However, it should not be totally excluded from consideration as the enemy force could be vulnerable from the front.

c. Breakthrough.

The concept of the breakthrough has changed since the introduction of nuclear weapons. The advantage of using a single weapon to create a gap in an enemy's defense is quite

obvious. However, the classic breakthrough had units massing on limited frontages which would leave the attacker vulnerable to a nuclear strike.

A breakthrough is an operational form of combat and is controlled by Army elements or higher. The divisions and regiments execute portions of the breakthrough, but it is planned by the Army staff. There would be sufficient artillery available for an Army to support one breakthrough in its zone. Ideally, the Soviets would like to have an artillery density of at least 60 tubes per kilometer of breakthrough area. The division conducting the breakthrough would narrow its frontage to about four kilometers and use at least two-thirds of its combat power in that narrowed area. The remainder of the division would conduct economy of force measures in the rest of the zone. The attacking forces would not stay massed for prolonged periods, but would assemble in dispersed staging areas. Once the artillery preparation had begun the units would begin to concentrate in the breakthrough area. The units would be echeloned in depth and three echelons would not be uncommon. Once the forces had succeeded in breaking through the enemy's defense and into his rear area thoughts would be given to commencing pursuit operations.

Creating a sufficient density of artillery for breakthrough operations is a relatively easy task. All mortars within motorized rifle battalions are considered artillery

and they would be used in preparatory fires. This paragraph will discuss a motorized rifle division of a combined arms army. The army consists of three motorized rifle divisions in the first echelon and a tank division in the second echelon. Within the division there would be 54 120mm mortars available. The organic artillery regiment has 36 122mm howitzers and 18 152mm howitzers. The three motorized rifle regiments have an additional 54 122mm howitzers. The Front commander would provide a minimum of 54 additional artillery pieces, probably 36 130mm field guns and 18 152mm howitzers. The Army commander could add 18 130mm guns and 18 152mm howitzers from his artillery regiment, or additional pieces if more than one regiment was available. The Army commander could also provide 72 122mm howitzers from the second echelon tank division, 54 from the artillery regiment and 18 from the motorized rifle regiment, and additional mortars. Mortars from the tank division will not be counted in this case. Thus, there are a total of 324 artillery pieces to fire into a four kilometer breakthrough area with a density of over 80 artillery pieces per kilometer. This density could be increased by adding additional Front or Army artillery. The artillery would remain dispersed and would mass their fires into the breakthrough area. Ideally, when the assault began the area would be devoid of antitank weapons and infantry personnel would not have recovered from the fire preparation. This may not occur, so the attacking force will rapidly

converge into the designated area, arrayed in depth to sustain the momentum, and proceed with the assault.

Once the breakthrough has met with initial success, units will hold the shoulders of the penetration and each following unit will attempt to widen the gap. The leading units will destroy the enemy's reserves and logistical areas. The penetrating unit will probably go into a march formation to be prepared for a meeting engagement with enemy reserves moving towards the area of the breakthrough. If the enemy withdraws pursuit operations must also be considered.

Remember, there is a lot of planning that must take place for a breakthrough. Tremendous amounts of ammunition are required for the artillery units and fire planning itself will take a long time. It is the least preferred of all offensive operations and will be undertaken only when other means have failed to create a rupture in the defense, and when the enemy's defense has created a linear element which cannot be bypassed. It is the worst case for us, but will not occur that often.

d. Pursuit.

Once a rupture has been effected in the enemy's defense, or a successful breakthrough has been accomplished, the attacking units will continue the attack into the enemy rear. If the enemy starts to withdraw, either voluntarily or as a result of combat action, the time is right to start a pursuit. A pursuit is a viable option if the enemy withdraws

at the end of a meeting engagement. The remainder of this section will address tactical pursuit operations conducted by a regiment.

There are three forms of pursuit - frontal, parallel, and combined. The frontal pursuit is frequently called the direct pursuit, and constant pressure is kept on the rear of withdrawing enemy forces. Parallel pursuit means the pursuing force travels on routes parallel to the withdrawing enemy force, outdistances part of his forces, cuts off a portion of the force from the flank and defeats it in detail. Combined pursuit is no more than using a portion of the pursuing force to maintain pressure on the rear of the withdrawing enemy, while a larger portion of the force conducts a parallel pursuit.

Special organizations may be formed for the pursuit to ensure the enemy withdrawal is slowed, as speed of execution is vital for the pursuer. Nuclear weapons, extensive use of artillery, attack helicopters, close air support, and airborne operations are all ideally suited to slow down or isolate a withdrawing enemy. Attacks against isolated enemy forces are usually conducted from the march.

Planning plays a key part in pursuit operations. Careful consideration must be given to proper route selection and providing sufficient and appropriate units to the pursuing force. The pursuers must always be on the alert for a potential meeting engagement and reconnaissance and

security forces play a key role. Pursuing forces must be alert for potential enemy counterattacks.

The pursuit should be stopped when one or more of the following conditions apply:

1. Destruction of the enemy is completed.
2. The enemy has reconstituted a strong defense.
3. The pursuers have outdistanced essential support.
4. The pursuing force has penetrated quite deeply and has become vulnerable to destruction.
5. Any other situation where it does not appear the pursuers possess a marked advantage.

The authority to stop a pursuit must come from higher headquarters, but the pursuing commander may recommend termination at any time.

5-3. OPERATIONAL SUPPORT.

Planning for offensive operations centers around organizing effective combined arms units reinforced with complementary forces to maximize their combat effectiveness. Within a motorized rifle regiment it is typical practice to provide a tank company to each motorized rifle battalion in the first echelon of the regiment. The remaining tank company could be a reserve force, or used to reinforce the third motorized rifle battalion. If additional tanks are provided from divisional assets, the reinforcement of the third battalion would be almost automatic. The motorized

rifle battalions usually provide a tank platoon to each first echelon company, and can keep the third tank platoon as a reserve, or reinforce the third company. Battalions performing essential missions may be given an artillery battalion to aid in the accomplishment of their mission.

An attack from the march has the same support problems as discussed for the meeting engagement. Attack against a force in contact requires careful planning and selection of attack positions. Selection of routes of advance through or around defending forces is also critical. Extra engineers may be necessary to overcome friendly obstacles.

In the breakthrough it is critical to provide enough artillery and ammunition to accomplish the job. Assembly areas and routes into the breakthrough area must be carefully selected to avoid compromising the operation.

Pursuit operations have to be planned carefully and the pursuing forces must be provided essential support. It might be more advantageous to equip a second echelon force for the pursuit and allow the first echelon to regroup.

5-4. SPECIAL TROOPS SUPPORT.

Each facet of the offensive has unique requirements for support. All phases of the offensive will be concerned with ensuring the proper amounts of POL and ammunition are made available. The breakthrough would cause transportation units to carry more ammunition than POL, while the reverse

would be true during a pursuit. A fast moving regiment in the pursuit would need extra signal support to ensure communication over extended ranges. Traffic control troops are essential for any march formation to avoid traffic jams and to ensure the march plan proceeded according to schedule. The radio-technical troops can provide intelligence to assist the commander, and chemical troops can be invaluable in an NBC environment. All of these factors must be considered when organizing the force for combat.

5-5. DEFINITIONS. All definitions are taken from Dictionary of Basic Military Terms, by A. I. Radziyevskiy. The number prior to the definition refers to the entry item within the dictionary.

188 BOYEVOY KOMPLEKT (unit of fire) - The supply-and-accounting unit adopted for operational and tactical planning with regard to materiel and technical support required by troops (aviation) in order that a particular combat mission may be accomplished.

689 ISKHODNYY RAYON (attack position) - An area of terrain allocated to troops for occupation by them prior to going over to the attack from a position of close contact with the enemy. An attack position is prepared in accordance with the concept of the operation (or battle) and the operational formation (or order of battle) of the attacking troops, and is organized in the engineering sense so as to conceal their presence, to facilitate their deployment and transition to the attack, and to protect them from all the weapons at the enemy's disposal.

690 ISKHODNYY RUBEZH (assault line; line of departure) - A prearranged line from which a unit or formation proceeds to fulfill a combat mission (a march, an attack, etc.). An assault line or line of departure is defined by clearly visible landmarks (on the terrain or on a map).

853 MASSIROVANNYY OGON' ARTILLERII (massed artillery fire) - Fire from all, or the greater part of, the artillery of a combined-arms formation, delivered simultaneously against

the most important enemy grouping or objective for the purpose of inflicting considerable damage upon the enemy in the shortest possible time.

866 METODICHESKIY OGON' (deliberate fire) - Fire conducted with a constant time interval between rounds. The purpose of deliberate fire is to hold the target in a suppressed state between fire onslaughts, or to maintain the necessary smoke concentration after fire onslaughts when firing smoke projectiles. Deliberate fire may also be conducted independently for the purpose of exhausting the enemy.

927 NASTUPATEL'NAYA OPERATSIYA (offensive operation) - The aggregate of nuclear strikes, coordinated and interrelated with regard to target, time, and place, and the vigorous, offensive actions of the troops of a front (or an army), accomplished in accordance with a unified concept for the attainment of operational or strategic goals. The general purpose of an offensive operation is to destroy enemy means of nuclear attack, break up enemy main groupings, and seize regions of operational or strategic importance. According to its scale and the forces and weapons involved, an offensive operation may be an army operation or a front operation, but in either case it will be conducted by ground troops in coordination with the other Services.

967 OBKHOD (deep envelopment) - A troop maneuver in depth which is performed in tactical (or operational) coordinated action with troops advancing from the front. Deep envelopment is used for the purpose of inflicting decisive, surprise strikes on enemy flanks (or flank) and rear.

976 OGNEVAYA PODGOTOVKA ((1) preparation fire (softening up); (2) weapons training) - (1) Powerful prepared strikes with artillery and aviation delivered prior to the start of an attack, for the purpose of neutralizing and destroying the most important enemy installations which are not to be destroyed by nuclear weapons, and for the purpose of rendering the enemy incapable of offering organized resistance to the advancing troops; (2) a subject in the training curriculum for personnel of subunits and units of the armed forces.

980 OGNEVOYE NABLYUDENIYE (neutralization fire) - Fire by single rounds or bursts at will, conducted during the intervals between concentrated fire against the same target, but with considerably less density. The purpose of fire observation is to keep the target neutralized.

981 OGNEVOY VAL (rolling barrage) - A method of artillery support for troops on the offensive, consisting of successive shifts of high-density fire from one firing line to

another, ahead of the combat formations of advancing troops. A rolling barrage may be single or double.

982 OGNEVOY NALET (concentrated fire) - Method of conducting artillery fire for the purpose of destroying enemy personnel, weapons, and combat materiel, envisaging a high density of fire during a short interval of time. As a rule, concentrated fire begins with fire from more than one weapon, with a subsequent transition to deliberate fire, reckoned on the basis of expending the assigned amount of ammunition in a predetermined period of time.

1058 OKHVAT (close envelopment) - A troop maneuver accomplished in tactical and fire coordination with the troops acting from the front. Close envelopment is used for the purpose of inflicting decisive and sudden strikes on enemy flanks (or flank) and rear.

1156 POLKOVAYA ARTILLERIYSKAYA GRUPPA (PAG) (regimental artillery group) - Artillery consisting of more than one artillery battalion, at the direct disposal of a regimental commander, assigned at the time of a battle to carry out missions on behalf of the regiment, and unified by a common command.

1200 PRESLEDOVANIYE (pursuit) - An attack on a withdrawing enemy, undertaken in the course of an operation (or battle) for the purpose of finally destroying or capturing his forces. Destruction of a withdrawing enemy is achieved by hitting his main body with strikes from missile units and aircraft; by artillery fire; by relentless and energetic parallel or frontal pursuit; by straddling his withdrawal route; and by the pursuing troops attacking his flank and rear. Pursuit is conducted in march or approach-march formation (or in combat formation). For deep penetration into the enemy's withdrawal route, tank troops are used in the first instance, but airborne assault forces may also be employed.

1212 PRORYV (breakthrough) - A method of offensive action used when conducting an offensive operation (or battle), directed toward penetrating a continuous front, which is prepared in the engineering sense, echeloned, and occupied by enemy defense troops, by making breaches (gaps) in it for the purpose of subsequent maneuver into the depth or toward the flanks.

1336 RASKHOD BOYEPRIPASOV (ammunition expenditure) - The number of projectiles (or bombs, mortar rounds, bullets) allotted for, or actually expended on, the fulfillment of a particular fire mission. However, for a considerable

number of fire missions performed during a specified period of time (for example, in the course of an air bombardment, in preparatory fire, in a day of combat), ammunition expenditure is expressed in units of fire.

1358 RUBEZH ATAKI (assault position line) - A sector of terrain, designated by the commander of a formation (unit, subunit), from which the troops begin their attack on the enemy.

1364 RUBEZH RAZVERTYVANIYA (deployment line) - The sector of terrain on which troops deploy from march formation, or approach-march formation, into combat formation.

1365 RUBEZHI REGULIROVANIYA (control lines) - Terrain lines, designated in advance by the senior commander, which the troops must reach or go through at a certain time and in a certain formation.

1581 FLANGOVYY UDAR (flank attack) - An attack directed at the flank of an operational (or combat) or march formation of troops. A flank attack is one of the types (methods) of maneuver.

5-6. ENDNOTES.

¹Radziyevskiy, Dictionary, p. 132.

²A. A. Sidorenko, The Offensive. Translated by the United States Air Force. (Washington: GPO, 1976), p. 1. (Cited hereafter as Sidorenko, Offensive.)

³Ibid., p. 148-149.

⁴Radziyevskiy, Dictionary, p. v.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Sidorenko, Offensive, p. 221.

⁷DDI-1120-129-76, p. 8.

⁸A. N. Latukhin, Modern Artillery. Translated by the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, for the Foreign Science and Technology Center. (Charlottesville: FSTC, 1971), p. 16 and p. 111.

CHAPTER 6

THE DEFENSE

OBORONA (defense) - A type of combat operation conducted for the purpose of repulsing an attack mounted by superior enemy forces, causing heavy casualties, retaining important regions of the terrain, and creating favorable conditions for going over to a decisive offensive. Defense is based on strikes by nuclear and all other types of weapons; on extensive maneuver with fire, forces, and weapons; on counterattacks (or counterstrikes) with simultaneous stubborn retention of important regions which intercept the enemy direction of advance; and also on the extensive use of various obstacles. Defense makes it possible to gain time and to effect an economy in forces and weapons in some sectors, thereby creating conditions for an offensive in others.

6-1. GENERAL.

The defense may be assumed by the Soviets at any time it would be advantageous for them, or they may be forced into it as a result of losing a meeting engagement or an offensive action.

The purpose of defensive actions is to repel the attack of superior enemy forces, to inflict considerable losses on the enemy, to hold occupied positions and to create conditions for transition to the offensive - derived from the factor of inequality of forces. The defenders try to make up for a lack of forces and means by selecting tactically suitable terrain and fortifying it.²

The two forms of the defense to be discussed are the hasty defense, as part of the offense, and the deliberate or pre-planned defense. Soviet military history is replete with

examples of classic defensive operations. The battles of Kursk, Leningrad, and Stalingrad are used today as examples of tenacious defense.

Any form of defense should be viewed as an expedient until offensive operations can be resumed.

Recognizing the attack to be the basic and decisive form of armed conflict, Lenin also devoted much attention to the defense, but he viewed it not as a goal in itself, but as temporary actions forced by the situation and subject to the overall interests of defeat of the enemy.

. . . M. V. Frunze noted that only the one who finds within himself the resolve to attack will win. A side which only defends is inevitably doomed to defeat. . . . At the same time, Frunze recognized the possibility, under certain conditions, of shifting to the defense, and sometimes to a withdrawal, viewing it as one of the aspects of a future attack.³

A defensive operation should not be viewed as a lethargic effort designed solely to stop an invading force. It is a dynamic operation filled with counterblows, counterattacks, and counterpreparation artillery fires.

Here the combat situation can change even more often and more abruptly than earlier in favor of now one, and now the other side. As a result, none of them are guaranteed that they will not be forced not only to exploit but also to consolidate success, not only to inflict blows, but also to parry the enemy's blows. And this presupposes, depending on the situation, the use of various types of combat operations, switching from one to the other, for example, from the offensive to the defensive, and vice versa.⁴

All units with a second echelon or reserve plan for the conduct of counterattacks, which may be executed with the permission of the next higher headquarters.

A first echelon battalion may receive a single mission - to hold the area of defense; a second echelon tank battalion, however, may be assigned other tasks, in addition to its basic mission for the defence of a position in depth, such as the preparation of counterattacks in two or three sectors, in cooperation with adjacent units, for the purpose of defeating enemy forces that have penetrated into the defence, and the preparation of one or two firing lines for the repulse of an attack by infiltrating enemy tanks.⁵

The defense can be strategic, operational, or tactical in nature. This paper will, as has been done in previous chapters, concentrate on a regimental size force conducting a tactical defense.*

6-2. CONDUCT.

a. Hasty.

If a combat action has ended unfavorably, there are two choices for the commander, either to defend or to withdraw. In an offensive there may be times when it is advantageous to temporarily assume the defense. A few of these situations are as follows:

1. To destroy counterattacking forces from important terrain positions.
2. To provide support for other forces, such as at river crossings or to clear obstacles.
3. To gain time.
4. To hold positions.

*The DIA manuals concerning battalion and company level tactics are excellent sources for additional information.

5. To secure conditions favorable for a decisive offensive.

6. To regroup after receiving effective NBC, artillery, or air strikes.

If the defense has been assumed as an adverse result of either an offensive action or a meeting engagement the form of the defense cannot be predicted. Troops would dismount their infantry carriers and provide cover for the withdrawal of their vehicles to defilade positions. Tanks would move into defilade positions and provide protective fire. The initial portions of such a defense would be confusing at best. The commander would try to assess the situation as best he could and attempt to bring some cohesion to the defense. The longer the unit stayed in the defensive mode the more the position would resemble a deliberate defense. The difference between the latter stages of a hasty defense and the beginning of a deliberate defense is a matter of degree, rather than design. The more time given to the defenders, the more obstacles and mines would be emplaced. Given sufficient time the troops would be dug-in and vehicles provided with cover and camouflage. The key factor in the structure of a hasty defense would be the amount of time given to the unit to prepare its positions. Another factor would be the amount of support made available to construct the defensive positions.

Assuming a defense as part of an offensive will be characterized by prior planning and a cohesive structure. Infantry troops will be in trenches or bunkers in front of their carriers and tanks will be integrated into the anti-tank defense, firing from concealed positions. Based on the amount of artillery made available and a need for increased antitank fires, accompanying artillery may be dug in and used in a direct fire antitank role. Antitank artillery and ATGMs will be in covered positions and used to destroy the enemy at long ranges. Defensive artillery barrages and counterpreparations will be planned to aid the defenders. Obstacles and minefields will be emplaced, both by engineers and the troops themselves.

Engineers play a key role in the defense. Soviet divisions have both mechanical minelayers and trenching machines to aid in creating the defensive position. Several Soviet books are available which go into great detail on how to prepare individual and unit positions for the defense. Camouflage and deception play an important role in the defense and engineers may be called upon to aid these efforts. The Soviets, given sufficient time, will create dummy defensive positions to confuse the enemy.

A security zone may or may not be established in front of the defensive positions. If established, platoon and company size combat outposts will be established by first echelon battalions of first echelon regiments. These are

designed to deceive and confuse the enemy force. Also, reconnaissance detachments and patrols may be used to provide earlier warning and detect the enemy's main thrust. Ambush positions consisting of platoon size antitank elements may be used throughout the security zone to confuse the enemy and kill him. About three to five kilometers in front of the main defense belt, forward positions will be established. These will be platoon and company size positions designed to confuse the enemy as to the actual location of the defense, cause him to deploy prematurely, to detect the main effort of the enemy, to kill him, and to eliminate any reconnaissance in force. These positions are usually established by second echelon battalions from the first echelon regiments. The security zone may extend out as far as 30 kilometers in front of the main defense belt.

The main defense belt is occupied by first echelon divisions of the first echelon armies and can be up to 15 kilometers in depth. Usually, a division defends with two reinforced regiments in the first echelon, each having a sector of 10 to 15 kilometers in width, and a reinforced regiment in the second echelon occupying defensive positions across the width of the division's assigned sector. Based on the width of the sector, the troops available, and the terrain, a first echelon regiment could defend in a single echelon. Regiment makes provisions for combined arms and antitank reserves. Assuming the defense as part of an

offensive is not as elaborate as a deliberate or preplanned defense and the principle factors driving the preparation and structure of the defense are the time and support available to construct the positions.

b. Deliberate.

A deliberate defense is characterized by extensive planning and engineer preparation. The essence of such a defense is a series of mutually supporting, prepared, defensive positions. The more time and materiel devoted to the preparation, the more difficult it will be to overcome the defense. The Soviets feel an outnumbered force, given sufficient time to prepare its positions, can defeat a vastly superior attacking force. The array of such a defense is the same as described in the previous section.

More time is usually allocated to the preparation of a deliberate defense than is allocated to assuming a defense as part of an offensive. Such a defense will be well structured and significant numbers of antitank and anti-personnel obstacles will be encountered. The Soviets will cover their obstacles with direct and indirect fires. They will try to create fire pockets or fire sacks within the context of the defense. These areas will be gaps or salients into which there will be planned extensive artillery and antitank fires. A good way of setting up such a pocket or sack is to portray a linear defense and use a dummy position in the middle. The third unit is positioned behind or on

the flank of the dummy position. The defending unit will try to canalize the attacker into the killing area.

The battalion defensive position is a series of smaller company and platoon size positions. Gaps between units are common and minefields and other obstacles may be found in the gaps. The gaps will also be covered by direct and indirect fires. Each position must be capable of firing onto and in support of adjacent positions.

The mission of the first echelon battalions of the regiment is to halt any enemy force, and if necessary to restore positions with a counterblow. The second echelon battalion of the regiment is to contain any penetration and by itself, or in conjunction with the reserves, to eject any enemy penetration and restore the continuity of the defense.

Remember, the defense is a temporary measure to be used only until an offensive can be mounted. Hence, plans to assume an offensive will be updated constantly by all commanders and staffs. The tempo of combat will vary from sector to sector, with some units conducting counterattacks, while others are conducting counterblows. Also, ambushes may be set up by tank platoons adjacent to routes into the defensive positions. So, an attacker may be subjected to frontal and flanking fire from a number of different positions. Attack helicopters will be used to destroy enemy forces, and may be employed in conjunction with tank ambushes.

6-3. OPERATIONAL SUPPORT.

The selection of terrain for the defense is of extreme importance to the defender. Commanders and staffs will make extensive use of map and personal reconnaissance to pick the best possible location from which to defend. Anti-tank weapons may be sited individually, but as an integral part of the antitank defense. Tanks may be sited individually within the scheme of the defense or as small units to provide flanking or ambush fires. Gaps and fire pockets or fire sacks will be covered by direct and indirect fire. The defenders will need extensive amounts of ammunition and a lot of it may be pre-stocked near defensive positions. Highly mobile antitank and combined arms reserves must be located in areas where they can proceed rapidly to potential areas of employment.

The engineers are key to the success of the operation and may need additional support for emplacement of mines and other obstacles materiel. Individual units will perform a lot of engineer preparation themselves, but mechanical aids should be made available wherever possible to speed up the construction of the defense. Forward elements will be prepared first and then second echelon elements. When time permits, alternate and switch positions will be prepared to aid in assisting the conduct of counterblows and counterattacks.

6-4. SPECIAL TROOPS SUPPORT.

As discussed in the previous section, judicious use must be made of available transportation to ensure all needed materiel can be made available to the defending forces. The important role of the engineers has been discussed previously. Extensive use will be made of wire communications for security and continuity reasons. The radio-technical troops can aid the commander if they can determine the area of the enemy's main effort or disrupt the enemy's command and control by jamming. Radio-electronic combat can be especially useful in the defense.

6-5. DEFINITIONS. All definitions are taken from Dictionary of Basic Military Terms, by A. I. Radziyevskiy. The number prior to the definition refers to the entry item within the dictionary.

562 ZAGRADITEL'NIY OGON' (barrage fire) - A type of artillery fire consisting in laying a fire barrage (frontal or flank) on a preselected line (or lines) in order to interdict movement by enemy infantry or tanks. Barrage fire is arranged beforehand, and is conducted at a definite rate for a certain period of time.

585 ZASTAVA (outpost) - (1) The means of guarding troops on the march (march security detachment) and in static deployment (guard outpost). (2) A subunit of border troops (company of border troops) guarding a specific sector of the state frontier.

742 KONTRATAKA (counterattack) - An attack undertaken by defending troops against an attacking enemy for the purpose of putting him to rout (or destroying him) and achieving complete or partial restoration of the position lost by the defending troops. A counterattack is usually mounted by the second echelons and reserves of units and formations, and also by part of the forces of the first echelon from sectors not under attack.

751 KONTRPODGOTOVKA (counterpreparation) - A pre-planned, brief, powerful, surprise burst of fire delivered by a defender against enemy groupings which are preparing for an

offensive and, in particular, against enemy missile launching positions, radio-technical facilities, fuel and ammunition dumps.

752 KONTRUDAR (counterblow) - A blow inflicted by troops for the purpose of destroying an attacking enemy, restoring a lost position, and creating conditions for going over to the attack. A counterblow is the most important act of defensive engagement, expressing the active and mobile character of present-day defense. During a defensive engagement, several consecutive counterblows may be delivered in one or more sectors.

823 LOZHNYI RAYON OBORONY (dummy defense region) - An area of terrain partially equipped with dummy defensive structures, but not occupied by troops.

960 OBORONITEL'NAYA OPERATSIYA (defensive operation) - The aggregate of battles fought in individual sectors for the purpose of disrupting an enemy offensive still in preparation or already begun, and also for the purpose of gaining time, and creating favorable conditions for going over to the attack. A contemporary defensive operation is based on the use of nuclear strikes and strikes with all other types of weapons, on the extensive use of maneuver with fire, forces and weapons, and on counterattacks, imparting an aggressive and decisive character to the defense.

961 OBORONTIEL'NAYA POZITSIYA (defensive position) - A sector of terrain intended for conducting a defensive battle by motorized rifle and tank subunits (or units). Defensive positions have strong points prepared by engineers, disposed at intervals of 1-1.5 kilometers, with firing lines for tank subunits and antitank weapons, trenches for various weapons, shelters for personnel, and with other defensive structures. Various obstacles and dummy objects may also be set up at defensive positions.

1084 PEREDOVAYA POZITSIYA (forward position) - A position that is set up in front of the forward edge in individual sectors for the purpose of misleading the enemy concerning the true location of the forward edge of the defense, to safeguard units (or subunits) of the first echelon from surprise attack, to repulse enemy reconnaissance in force, and compel him to deploy his main body prematurely. Subunits from regiments of the first echelon are usually assigned to defend forward positions.

1121 PCDVIZHNYI ZAGRADITEL'NYY OGON' (PZO) (rolling barrage) - A type of artillery fire used in defense. A rolling barrage consists in successive shifts of a powerful curtain

of fire from one preselected, observed line to another, during an enemy tank attack.

1134 PODGOTOVLENNAYA OBORONA (prepared defense position) - A defense fully prepared in the engineering sense, and occupied by troops. It is characterized by the following features: an organized fire plan, based on nuclear-missile strikes, supplemented by air strikes and artillery fire; thoroughly-organized coordination between forces and weapons; and stable control.

1144 POZITSIYA (position) - A sector of terrain either organized or not - in the engineering sense - for occupation by troops. Positions occur in the following categories: forward, primary, switch, assembly, launching, firing, temporary, alternate, dummy, etc.

1164 POLOSA OBESPECHENIYA (security zone) - A zone created ahead of the forward edge of defending troops. A security zone is created when there is no close contact with the enemy, and usually consists of several positions, covered by obstacles and defended by the troops in action in the security zone. The depth of a security zone depends on the concept of the defense, the nature of the terrain, and the availability of time for its preparation.

1182 POSPESHNO ZANYATAYA OBORONA (hasty defense) - A defense created by troops in the course of combat operations. At the beginning of its organization, such a defense is characterized by: incomplete readiness and consequent reduced stability; an insufficiently developed and organized fire plan; hurriedly-organized coordination; insufficient development of the system of engineer structures; weak exploitation of the terrain; and insufficiently stable control. A hasty transition to defense, under modern conditions, may stem from the need to repulse counterstrikes by superior enemy forces in the course of offensive operations as a result of an unsuccessful meeting engagement (or battle); the efforts of a defender to halt, with his reserves, further advance of enemy troops which have broken through on some intermediate line; and also, in a withdrawal, when the retreating side, defended by rear-guard elements on an intermediate line, tries to extricate the main body under attack.

1184 POSTROYENIYE OBORONY (structure of a defense) - A troop structure, a fire plan, and engineer organization of the terrain. The structure of a defense must be in accord with the concept of the operation (or battle) and the plan of conducting it. The organization of a defense must be deeply echeloned, ensuring wide maneuver of forces and facilities,

both frontally and in depth, ensuring concentrated and effective use of nuclear missiles and other weapons against the most important groupings of the attacking enemy, and delivery of counterstrikes (or conduct of counterattacks) by second echelons and reserves.

1225 PROTIVOPKHOOTNYYE ZAGRAZHDENIYA (anti-personnel obstacles) - Artificial obstacles erected on the battlefield, mainly in sectors of the terrain which are not traversible by tanks, for the purpose of impeding movement by enemy infantry, and inflicting casualties. Anti-personnel obstacles include mine fields, barbed-wire, hidden obstacles, concertina wire, log obstacles intertwined with barbed-wire, and strengthened with land mines, etc.

1231 PROTIVOTANKOVAYA OBORONA (PTO) (anti-tank defense) - The sum total of measures used to ensure success in combatting tanks, including a fire plan conducted by anti-tank weapons, used in conjunction with obstacles for the purpose of repelling enemy tank attacks in a defense. Anti-tank defense is organized throughout the entire depth of an operational defense, primarily in the sectors of probable tank approach. An anti-tank plan includes company strong points containing anti-tank weapons; tank ambushes; firing lines prepared for occupation by tank troops and by anti-tank reserves; tanks of second echelons and of reserves, (anti-tank reserves); artillery located in sectors of probable tank approach; and anti-tank obstacles.

1233 PROTIVOTANKOVYYE ZAGRAZHDENIYA (anti-tank obstacles) - Artificial obstacles set up on the battlefield for the purpose of stopping or slowing an advance by enemy tanks, and rendering them unserviceable. Anti-tank obstacles make it easier to inflict strikes on enemy tanks with artillery fire and other anti-tank weapons. The main types of anti-tank obstacles are the mine field and the fougasse. Also used are ditches, escarpments, counter-scarps, (steel-beam) post obstacles, abatis, landslides, and flooded or marshy terrain; and in wintertime, besides, snow banks and icy slopes. As a rule, anti-tank obstacles are covered by artillery, mortar, and machine-gun fire.

1397 SISTEMA ZAGRAZHDENIY (obstacle plan) - The aggregate of various engineering obstacles (mine fields, mined sectors of roads, individual objects prepared for demolition, obstacle concentrations, obstacle zones, etc.), created for the purpose of hindering enemy advance, delaying him while repulsing his counterstrike, inflicting losses on him, and creating conditions for defeating his troops with nuclear and other weapons.

1401 SISTEMA OGNIA V OBORONE (defensive fire plan) - A combination of pre-arranged fire strikes on the approaches to a defense, and the creation of zones of continuous multi-tiered fire of all types ahead of the forward edge, on the flanks, and in the depth, of the defense, and also concentration of fire, in brief periods of time, on any threatened axis or sector. A defensive fire plan is formulated in accordance with the concept of the operation (or battle), taking into account nuclear and chemical attacks, and envisaging close coordination of fire from all types of weapons and air support, in conjunction with obstacle plans, and natural barriers.

1508 TAKTICHESKAYA GLUBINA OBORONY (tactical depth of a defense) - The strip of terrain which is occupied and defended by divisions of the first echelon of an army.

6-6. ENDNOTES.

¹Radziyevskiy, Dictionary, p. 135.

²Reznichenko, Tactics, p. 207.

³Savkin, Principles, p. 241-242.

⁴V. M. Fedulov and V. V. Turchenko, Defensive Operations During An Offensive. Translated by Leo Kanner Associates for The Foreign Science and Technology Center. (Charlottesville: FSTC, 1974), p. 13.

⁵Konoplya, TBIC, 6, 7, 8, 9, p. 64.

CHAPTER 7

THE WITHDRAWAL

7-1. GENERAL.

Chapter 2 establishes the withdrawal as a separate form of combat which is applicable within the meeting engagement, the offensive, or the defense. Soviet military history contains many references to the advantage of conducting a well organized withdrawal. COL Savkin borrows a phrase from Generalissimo A. V. Suvorov, which illustrates the historic significance of the withdrawal:

Suvorov wrote to Baron Kray that "there is no shame to concede a post to an enemy superior in numbers. On the contrary, herein lies the military art of withdrawing in time without losses. A stubborn resistance to hold any post would cost dearly, while subsequently it would still have to be given up to a superior enemy. A post which has been conceded can be occupied again, while the loss in personnel is irreversible. Often, one man is more costly than the post itself.

COL Sidorenko stresses the multi-faceted nature of the withdrawal:

It is believed that withdrawal operations may be conducted for various purposes: to exhaust attacking enemy troops and inflict losses on them; to avoid combat under unfavorable conditions and place the enemy in a disadvantageous position; to create the opportunity to take advantage of one's own forces or a portion of them on other sectors of the front; to win time for bringing up additional forces from the depth, organize defensive positions in the rear, regroup troops, and prepare

an attack; and to draw the enemy into certain areas where he can be destroyed by nuclear weapons and counterattacks.²

The withdrawal and the hasty defense are the only forms of combat which may be used after an unsuccessful meeting engagement. Deception operations could incorporate a withdrawal to mask unit locations or to disguise friendly combat operations.

US Army analytical efforts seldom use a withdrawal by Soviet forces within a simulation scenario. Therefore, a detailed explanation on how to conduct a withdrawal has not been included in this paper. The following section provides general concepts for the conduct of the withdrawal.

7-2. CONDUCT.

"Organization of a withdrawal begins only after receipt of an order from the superior commander."³ The withdrawal may be made when in or out of contact with the enemy. When not in contact with the enemy it may be viewed as another tactical march and conducted accordingly. Conduct of a withdrawal when in contact with the enemy becomes a much more difficult task. The first step, after organizing the force for the withdrawal, is to break contact with the enemy.

Contact with the enemy should be broken during periods of limited visibility to minimize detection of the withdrawal. When breaking contact artillery fire and smoke may be used to preclude observation of the friendly units. Several covered and concealed routes should be used to allow

the units breaking contact to conduct a rapid and simultaneous egress.

Security elements are key to the successful conduct of a withdrawal. Flank security detachments and rear guards will be formed to protect the withdrawing force. A comprehensive plan must be prepared to ensure all units understand the sequence of the operation. Mutual protection between security elements and withdrawing forces is essential to a successful withdrawal.

7-3. ENDNOTES.

¹Savkin, Principles, p. 245.

²Sidorenko, Offensive, p. 167.

³Reznichenko, Tactics, p. 242.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS

8-1. TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

Soviet tactical doctrine includes four forms of combat action - the meeting engagement, the offense, the defense, and the withdrawal. The meeting engagement or the withdrawal may occur during portions of offensive and defensive operations. The withdrawal may be used to terminate an unsuccessful meeting engagement.

The Soviets consider the evolution of tactics to be a dynamic and scientific process. The refinement of Soviet tactics is a continual procedure, as described by COL Savkin:

The principles of operational art and tactics bear a historical character. A change in objective reality, primarily in the material basis of battle or operation, leads to a change in principles, to discarding outmoded ones and developing new ones.

Thus, the study of Soviet tactics should be an active and continuous process to keep pace with their evolving tactical doctrine.

8-2. TECHNOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

The advent of the nuclear age had an immense impact on the development of Soviet tactical doctrine. The introduction of nuclear weapons altered Soviet concepts for conducting combat operations. The fielding of technologically

superior weapons by any army could impact on the evolution of Soviet tactics.

Changes in technology have also impacted on Soviet Army organizational structure. The dismounted infantryman was the base of the Soviet Army during World War II. Today, the Soviet Army is a highly mechanized force capable of conducting armored warfare in several parts of the world.

Improved technology has caused changes in Soviet tactics in the past, as stated by General-Major Reznichenko:

Examination of basic principles of contemporary tactics shows that they differ from tactics of past wars, including tactics of the period of the Great Patriotic War. In the development of tactics, just as in operational art and strategy, there has indeed occurred a revolution which was caused by the wide application of nuclear weapons and means of their delivery and also by the use of other of the latest achievements in science and technology in military affairs.²

Thus, one must stay attuned to developments in military weaponry which impact on the evolution of Soviet tactics.

8-3. ENDNOTES.

¹Savkin, Principles, p. 278.

²Reznichenko, Tactics, p. 252.

APPENDIX A

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