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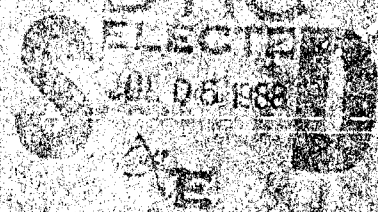
THE STORY-BOOK
A PICTURE OF THE FUTURE
CONVENTIONAL WAR IN CENTRAL EUROPE

BY

MAJOR COLONEL LESLEY F. OUTLAND, FA

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RED STORM RISING
A PRIMER FOR A FUTURE CONVENTIONAL WAR IN CENTRAL EUROPE
AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

Lieutenant Colonel LeRoy B. Outlaw, FA

Colonel Harold W. Nelson, FA
Project Advisor

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INTRODUCTION

Tom Clancy's Red Storm Rising has been hailed by many critics as a realistic portrayal of what a future conflict may be like between the forces of NATO and the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact. The book's cover proclaims it as a "chilling authentic vision of modern war." Tom Clancy develops a scenario in which the Soviet Union decides it must wage a preemptive war against NATO. Its aim is to deny NATO the ability to intervene against them in their intended subsequent conquest of critically needed oilfields surrounding the Persian Gulf. In the end, NATO is successful in denying the Soviet Union its objectives in Europe. Before reaching this conclusion, Clancy uses hi-tech, high seas and high drama to produce a global conventional conflict which has as the focus of its fighting the North German Plain of Central Europe.

Clancy's novel has been widely read in military circles. For the military professional it offers more than just a few hours of entertaining reading. It is replete with insightful, identifiable circumstances in a not unimaginable conflict for which we have spent our careers in preparation. This paper takes a critical look at Red Storm Rising, hereafter referred to as

RSR, and attempts to determine the degree to which it is a harbinger of how the Soviets may prosecute a future war in Central Europe. The focus of this study is the land campaign. My methodology will be to analyze selected characteristics and actions of Clancy's Soviets by comparing them with a historical model from World War II (actions by the Soviet Army and High Command which occurred primarily during the six month period from March 1943 through the conclusion of the Soviet counteroffensive at Kursk in August 1943) and contemporary theoretical studies that purport to describe Soviet doctrine and intentions.

The Significance of Kursk

The Soviets have studied extensively the lessons of their Great Patriotic War in developing their present and future doctrine.¹ For the Russians, the Battle of Kursk is special. It is considered by them to be one of the most important and decisive battles of that war. In the words of Marshal Konev, a general who played a major role in the battle, "The Battle of Kursk was a milestone in the development of the Soviet art of war. It will remain for centuries not only as a symbol of the insuperable might of the socialist state,...but also as an outstanding illustration of the advanced Soviet art of war."²

From the standpoint of geography, there are striking similarities between the boundaries separating the Wehrmacht and the Red Army at Kursk and the border between NATO and the Warsaw

Pact in Central Europe. In July 1943, the major opposing formations stretched from Kirov in the north and Kharkov in the south a distance of about 550 kilometers. The distance between Lubeck, East Germany, along the Baltic Sea and Passau, West Germany, vicinity of the juncture of the Austrian, Czechoslovakian and West German borders was about 600 kilometers. The Kursk salient from Orel south to Kharkov was about 350 kilometers and possessed a contour that is similar to the contour of the Inter-German Border(IGB). The length of the Inter-German Border from Lubeck to Hof, West Germany is 390 kilometers. These similarities enable one to look at the formations and maneuver patterns and draw some parallels about what is feasible in Europe. Of note is that the Soviets had two fronts located within the Kursk salient at the start of the battle. Along the IGB the Warsaw Pact is believed to be similarly configured.

At the time of Kursk, the outcome of the war in the east still remained in balance. The Soviets had handed the Germans a costly defeat at Stalingrad the preceding winter signaling a major turn in the fortunes of both sides. Yet, the strategic initiative had not yet passed to the Soviets. The Germans were still a formidable fighting force. The German Army in 1943, over 5,000,000 men, was the largest it would ever be. It was far from being beaten.³

On the other hand, Soviet capabilities, competence and confidence had increased to such an extent from the start of the war that Soviet actions can be analyzed when they were not yet totally advantaged, but certainly no longer disadvantaged. The

fall-winter campaign of 1942-1943 had ended with the opposing forces at a strategic stalemate. The year 1943 proved to be the swing year of the Russo-German War. Which way the tide would turn was not decided until the Battle of Kursk was fought.⁴

The Red Storm

The story begins in western Siberia when a band of Moslem extremists destroy a huge oil refinery complex which eliminates what Soviet experts believe is a third of the Soviet Union's crude oil production capability for as many as three years. The Politburo's remedy for the shortfall lies in the Persian Gulf. No major military obstacles bar Soviet troops from seizing the Gulf oilfields. The concern of the Politburo is that NATO would surely make armed reprisals against the Soviet Union at the hint of a Middle Eastern incursion. "To the majority of the Politburo, the situations logic is inexorable: NATO must be defeated before action in the Persian Gulf."⁵ They must execute Red Storm.

As described in the novel, "Red Storm was the plan for a mechanized attack into West Germany and the Low Countries. Constantly updated for changes in the force structures of both sides, it called for a two - to three week campaign commencing after a rapid escalation of tension between East and West... It called for strategic surprise as a precondition for success, and the use of conventional weapons only."⁶

In the hope of splitting NATO politically, the K.G.B. direct a massive disinformation campaign against the West. The Russian term for this is maskirovka. The centerpiece of their deception is a bomb plot supposedly planned by the West Germans to assassinate the entire Politburo. To lend the scheme credibility, a bomb actually kills a group of Russian children about to receive an award in Moscow. If the deception succeeds, NATO would collapse as an alliance, leaving the West Germans isolated in the European community and the expansion to the Persian Gulf uncontested.⁷

The maskirovka does not work. NATO holds firm. Red Storm is launched against Western Europe. "The remainder of the novel deals with the ebb and flow of battle as seen on the American side by such representative figures as a nuclear submarine commander, the captain of a frigate, a gruff naval aviator, and a young Air Force meteorologist, code named Beagle, who becomes a vital intelligence source in Soviet-occupied Iceland."⁸ The central figure in representing the Soviet perspective is a Russian four-star general who eventually becomes the commander of the Soviet land forces that are attacking in Central Europe. The action shifts back and forth from the land war, the war at sea and in the air, and to the exploits of Beagle in Iceland.

PARTY CONTROL OVER THE ARMED FORCES

It is a commonly accepted belief in the West that the major reason the Soviet Union enjoys its position as one of the world's

two superpowers is the size and strength of its military forces. An interest of mine in pursuing this project was to determine the amount of influence that the military has on the political-military strategic decisionmaking process in the Soviet Union and the degree to which the military in a time of conflict might have a dominant role in dictating the affairs of state. Given what I've reviewed about the nature of this relationship in the past and what we know about the Soviet Union now, the relationship as depicted by Clancy is certainly a plausible interpretation of how this could unfold in a future crisis.

Clancy's Soviet military leaders are unquestionably subordinate to their civilian leaders. One has to go no further for an illustration of this than to examine the process by which the critical decision to initiate a war against NATO was made. The military were outsiders. The Chief of the General Staff advised the CINC of Ground Forces that the political decision to wage war against NATO was already made before he was consulted. He asked the CINC Ground Forces rhetorically, "When was the last time the Defense Minister asked me for a substantive judgemental decision?"⁹

The decision was made by the Politburo. Clancy implies, however, that the real power of decision rested in the five men that made up the Defense Council, a decision-making body whose deliberations were privileged even from the full Politburo members.

Clancy's implication with respect to the power of this committee is well grounded in historical precedents. There existed

in the Soviet Union during the Second World War the State Defense Committee. This committee exercised general control over the total Soviet War effort. Its authority reigned supreme over all military, police, economic, administrative and Party organizations and hierarchies. The committee was small, consisting initially of five and later of eight members. "Its decisions, from which there was no recourse, were often made by the chairman alone [Stalin] or by individual members alone. Its rights and powers were nowhere clearly defined and thus, in fact were limitless...Neither in the initial stage of the war nor in the later stage was there even one professional military leader in this body."¹⁰ The State Defense Committee was, first and foremost, a civilian body reflecting clearly the effort to preserve the superiority of political over military authority at a time when the potential danger of encroachment by the military into the preserves of the politicians was very great.¹¹

The State Defense Committee was the predecessor of the current day Defense Council.¹² Its members are appointed according to the Soviet Constitution of 1977, by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, for the purpose of advising and making recommendations on defense to the Politburo. The council is chaired by the General Secretary of the Party and is believed to consist of 10 to 12 members. Members are either full or candidate members of the Politburo or the Secretariat of the Central Committee or the Council of Ministers. All but one, the Chief of the General Staff are civilians.¹³

The composition of the Defense Council indicates how closely the Party leadership exercises its control over decision-making or even recommendations on defense issues. These include military doctrine, strategy, force levels, weapons and their allocation within the forces, and, in broad terms, arms control. The final decision-making on defense issues and the role of the Armed Forces is taken in the Politburo, usually after debate in the Defense Council. Military access, except through approved channels, to the decision-makers on defense issues is thus very limited and tightly controlled by the Party.¹⁴

In matters relating specifically to military operations and capabilities, the influence of the military leadership is more significant. As an example, it was decided that hostilities would commence in four months. This was in part to allow the KGB and the politicians to implement their maskirovka against the West, but also to allow the Red Army a full four months preparation time to get ready for combat. The Chief of the General Staff advised the Defense Minister that the military needed the time. The Politburo deferred to the military's request.

Without judging the merits of a decision to wait four months to attack or to attack 'out of the blue' the characterization by which this decision was made could certainly be called into question. The Soviets consider strategic surprise of critical importance to a successful attack on the West. One can posit that a military recommendation of this nature would generate as heated a discussion between the party leadership and

the military as that which occurred between the military leaders when they convened to be briefed on the matter. Such was not the case. What Clancy has us believe is that the Soviets feel they can deceive the West for four months as to their true intentions. We can only hope that he is wrong.

Notwithstanding, however, Kursk has shown us that in a somewhat analogous situation the military leaders had the credibility with party leaders to influence such a decision.

The Germans and the Soviets faced similar dilemmas in the spring of 1943. The activities of the preceding winter which followed the Nazi defeat at Stalingrad had come to an end. A strategic lull in the fighting existed across the entire Russian front. The opposing forces each had a salient that projected deep into the territory of the opposing army. The Germans were arrayed around the city of Orel, the Russians had the city of Kursk at the center of their salient. Each opposing force presented a lucrative target for the other. Each had a leader who had a strong penchant for going on the offensive. The senior military leadership, primarily in the person of Zhukov, was successful in prevailing upon Stalin the need for initially going on the strategic defensive. Able German generals, primarily Guderian and later Manstein were not successful in dissuading Hitler from going on the offensive.¹⁵

My conclusion is that Clancy gives a good account of the decisionmaking process at the highest levels of government and accurately reflects the political-military interface. Clancy is less credible in showing the strategic-operational interface from

the Supreme High Command or Stavka to the theater command or High Command of Forces (HCF) and from the HCF to the front and army command levels.

THE SOVIET STRATEGIC COMMAND AND CONTROL STRUCTURE

The Soviet hierarchy of command emanates from the Defense Council. It is the organ which unifies the civilian and military leadership of the Soviet Union to insure centralized political direction of military efforts.¹⁶

The Defense Council controls the military through the Supreme High Command or SHC. The General Secretary is the Supreme High Commander. The Supreme High Command consists of the "supreme organ of military leadership," Stavka VGK or HQ SHC and the "working organ" of the SHC, the General Staff.¹⁷ The VGK, the General Staff and the High Commands of Forces (HCF) in theaters of military operations (TVDs) control military operations. Soviet strategy, as defined by a United States Army Intelligence Agency's (USAIA) Soviet Battlefield Development Plan (SBDP), concerns military activities at the national and international levels and within Theater of War (TV) and TVD levels.¹⁸

A definition of these terms, as provided in the SBDP, is useful in facilitating further understanding in this area.

"A theater of war (TV) is a broad, geographically-oriented designation. It is generally equated by the Soviets to a particular continent or ocean. A continental theater of war

includes the land, air space, and associated internal waterways...[It] does not have precise boundaries because it is a geopolitical reference with no strategic commands historically associated with the concept...A theater of war consists of one or more TVDs, hence, from a Soviet perspective the term 'theater' should not be used interchangeably with TVD."¹⁹

"A theater of military operations(TVD) is a geopolitical reference and strategic military territorial designation, but not a command echelon. TVDs in general are geographically distinguished as continental, oceanic, or intercontinental...As military territorial designations, TVDs have clearly defined borders. A TVD may include a military headquarters (the high command of forces---HCF) which serves as an intermediate command between the GS and the principle operational troop formations (fronts and fleets). A TVD may not have a high command and operations therein would be controlled directly by the GS or its designated agents(operations groups)."²⁰

The above definitions and concepts as they pertain to TVs and TVDs are not universally embraced by Soviet analysts but represent a fair portrayal of the consensus of theory I've reviewed on the subject. It also represents the views of the Department of Defense as recorded in the 1987 edition of Soviet Military Power.

The beginnings of this system were set in place by Stalin in the first few months following the onset of the German invasion of Russia. Stalin formed the State Defense Council as has been stated, also known as GOKO. Directly subordinate to

GOKO was Stavka, an operational military staff. At the onset of hostilities it was totally military and run by the Chief of the General Staff. Within a month it was reorganized to include Stalin and several key Party members. Among the prominent Army leaders was the heralded General G.K. Zhukov.²¹

At the time of Kursk, command and control the Army was technically exercised by Stavka directly to the front commanders. The Soviets had experimented in the early years of the conflict with an intermediate command between Stavka and the fronts, but incompetent and inexperienced generalship caused Stalin to abandon this practice. In actuality, much of the direction of the Army was provided by Stavka representatives to the front who acted as agents of the Supreme High Command. In this capacity, these representatives, primarily Zhukov, who was Deputy Supreme Commander to Stalin and General Vasilevskii, then Chief of the General Staff, coordinated the actions of the fronts in planning, preparing and carrying out vital operations with the power to take important decisions and to give the requisite instructions.²²

The success of the Stavka representatives, first in the person of Zhukov at Stalingrad, then Zhukov and Vasilevskii at Kursk, eventually led to the reestablishment of a permanent intermediate command between Stavka and the fronts at the end of the war.²³

Clancy's European Theater of Operations

As has been stated, Clancy's Soviet attack is focused on the North German Plain, a likely strategic direction into the West. It becomes evident when one examines a map of Germany that the attack is limited to this area. Little indication is given that there are forces arrayed along the entire length of the InterGerman Border(IGB), Czechoslovakia, or perhaps threatening the Austrian frontier as well. As a consequence, the likely scale of an invasion to Central Europe is not convincingly depicted and the scope of the responsibilities of the commander of these forces, CINC West, is misrepresented.

If we accept SBDP being correct in portraying the structure for strategic command and control, then Clancy's CINC West would be in charge of operations in the Western TVD. This is the same position reported to be held by Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov. Though replaced in September 1984 as the Chief of the Soviet General Staff, he remains a powerful and influential figure in the Soviet military.²⁴ Clancy describes CINC-West similarly saying he has "the point command headquarters in Berlin, the single most powerful military command in the world."²⁵

The Western Theater of War is believed to include the European landmass and nearby islands, the associated air space, the Baltic and Mediterranean Seas, and portions of the Arctic and North Atlantic Oceans.²⁶ It contains three continental TVDs of which the Western TVD is the most important.²⁷ The Western TVD includes the NATO Central Region, the Baltic approaches, the

include that which would exist between Stavka and the HCF represented by CINC-West. While I don't disagree that there is a high degree of centralized control built into the Soviet command structure, the extent to which Clancy constrains the authority of the HCF is misguided.

Clancy relates a vignette in which a division commander asks General Alekseyev, who at the time was deputy CINC-West, for a regiment from the tank division of the OMG. The regiment is needed in order to maximize a breakthrough opportunity. Alekseyev passes this on to the theater commander who informs him that he is not able to do this. He must first ask Stavka for permission. OMG's, he says, are to remain intact until the breakthrough is achieved, orders from Moscow. Alekseyev thinks to himself, "The Soviet command structure: to deviate from the Plan, even a Theater commander had to get permission!"³¹ By the time permission was received from Moscow, the attack had been delayed ninety minutes and was ultimately unsuccessful.³²

Hines and Peterser tell us that the HCF at the theater of military operations level is designed to meet the need for a theater level perspective over the conduct of strategic operations. "The CINC of an [HCF] would bring to bear additional forces...and fire support...and as necessary, reallocate the resources engaged to add weight to those operational directives expected to offer most promise for strategic success. As a front commander would with armies, the [HCF] CINC would choose to have some fronts...fight their own battles without significant external forces while he would marshal operational and strategic

reserves on selected directions for rapid execution of the [TVD] strategic operation directed toward winning the war."³³

This view of the authority of the HCF was also expressed in an earlier writing by analyst Yossef Bodansky. He wrote "that the developments in the front have resulted in the need to impose a supreme command authority on the supra-units and formations in order to coordinate their respective military operations and achieve a higher-level unified and coordinated military operations. This role was performed during most of the Great Patriotic War by the representatives of the 'Stavka' of the Supreme High Command. The Soviets emphasize the role and command authority of Marshal SU G. K. Zhukov as the most important precedent."³⁴

A celebrated example of Marshal Zhukov exercising this type of authority occurred during the battle of Kursk. "Zhukov was preparing a defensive operation involving simultaneous action by six Fronts near Kursk. The enemy delivered two powerful blows, one in the north and one in the south. Zhukov was at the command post of the Central Front. He ordered two other Fronts to deliver flank attacks while he co-ordinated the actions of all three fronts. One continued defending: the other two went on the attack. At that moment a message arrived concerning the enemy's second, more powerful attack in the south where another Stavka VSK representative, Marshal Vasilievskii, was directing three fronts. Zhukov appeared there immediately, stabilised (sic) the defense of two Fronts and directed a counter-attack by the third Front. All this happened in the space of seven days, between 5

and 13 July 1943."³⁵

In reallocating forces to mount the counterattack, Zhukov had stripped two armies from the Steppe Front which was positioned for the Soviet counter-offensive. If the Stavka representative, who was the precursor of the HCF in its current form, can redirect the forces and missions of fronts, one would expect a present day HCF to be able to move a regiment within its TVD without the approval of Stavka.

Clancy is correct in depicting a HCF in the form of the CINC-West figure in the structure of Soviet strategic command and control. However, by limiting the authority of his position, he misses one the purposes the Soviets had in mind when they reestablished the HCF as an intermediate headquarters between Stavka and the fronts.

THE SOVIET OFFENSIVE AGAINST CENTRAL EUROPE

The Soviets launch an offensive against NATO that is not successful in bringing about its capitulation. In creating an image of the Soviet invasion Clancy sprinkles his text with doctrinal terminology that strikes a familiar chord with anyone who has a passing knowledge of Soviet doctrine. He cites places and events from the Great Patriotic War which lend an air of authenticity to the battle as it unfolds. When one finishes reading this saga it is hard not to feel a certain pride in NATO's achievement against considerable odds. If only the Russians would read this book! They would harbor no further thoughts

about taking on the West in armed conflict.

But what were the odds? Under what conditions did the Soviets attack? I advise the military professional to use caution in drawing conclusions about Soviet land capabilities based on this Red Storm rebuffed.

Consider some of these circumstances. The Soviets are not successful in achieving total surprise. The West doesn't know why they are coming, but they know they are coming. NATO's defenses are in place, even if not totally prepared. The Soviets initial attack is launched in two operational echelons despite the fact the NATO's doctrine of forward defense might dictate otherwise. Only limited tactical breakthroughs are achieved by the Soviets even though the main attack is directed against what many defense analyst believe is NATO's most vulnerable defensive sector, the North German Plain. Conditions were never favorable for the employment of an operational maneuver group(OMG). The Soviets never get into NATO's strategic rear.

The Soviets are artificially constrained by the shortage of a critical resource, fuel. The battlefield never gets 'dirty'. Nuclear weapons are not used by either side which, initially, is probably a correct assumption by Clancy. Chemical weapons were not used by the Soviets which, despite the protestations of the East Germans, is by no stretch of the imagination a certainty. However, the lion's share of the credit for NATO's success, in my view, must be give to its technological edge. Two principal assets in the land campaign were the F-19A Ghost rider-Frisbees, Clancy's name for the Air Force's newly designated B-2 stealth

bomber, and NATO's antitank guided missiles(ATGMs).

FOFA worked. Soviet mass and numerical superiority were neutralized. Given all these circumstances, one must question how it would have been possible for NATO to fail. Should a war break out in Europe, we can only hope that the conditions are this favorable for the West.

The aforementioned is by no means intended to denigrate the quality of Clancy's great work. Rather it is stated to identify some qualifiers that must taken into consideration when assessing Clancy's depiction of several aspects of Soviet doctrine and execution in the passages that follow.

Surprise

The fact that the Soviets don't achieve total surprise in RSR, in no small measure sets the terms of the battle. Clancy discusses correctly the importance the Soviets place on surprise in chapter three. Alekseyev states, "all our plans depend heavily on surprise, no?"³⁶ He also hits the nail on the head when he draws attention to the risk the Soviets are taking when he confronts his superiors with the question, "But if we wait over four months [before attacking] - how can we be assured of strategic surprise?"³⁷ The only assurance Alekseyev gets is that the political leadership has promised it.

Frederick Hogarth addresses this subject in an award winning 1986 essay. He writes, "The scenario for a surprise attack in the Central Region is based on a rolling start which

finds the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany (GSFG) in forward positions at the completion of a major exercise, or in the relaxation following the climax of an artificially induced period of political tension, with 250,000 troops in perhaps 20 divisions of which half would be tank."³⁸

Hogarth could have taken this scenario from Clancy's RSR or the reverse could apply, so similar are their models. He further states that "The threat in Western Europe then, in, brief, appears to be the Soviet ability to mount a surprise attack which could pierce NATO defences overnight, and then steer very fast armoured thrusts to their strategic targets in the next two days." ³⁹

Hogarth advises us that "surprise is a Soviet principle of war: surprise must be expected."⁴⁰ Unfortunately for the Soviets in RSR, Clancy tends to favor a supposition also expressed by Hogarth. That is that "NATO and national governments insist that modern electronic equipment and satellite reconnaissance will always give ten days notice"⁴¹ of any Soviet intention to attack the Central Region.

Echelons in the Attack

As the Soviets form for their initial ground attack in RSR, NATO counters with Operation Dreamland. Operation Dreamland is an attack of Stealth technology attack fighters penetrating undetected across the ICB to counter the Warsaw Pact second echelon. This description by Clancy can be likened to the U.S.'s

concept of FOFA or follow-on forces attack. FOFA is not yet an accepted NATO doctrine, but certainly could be in a future war.

The commander of the mission evaluates the picture on his low light television targeting system and thinks, "This can only be the second echelon of the army deployed to attack NATO."⁴² By implication, Clancy has us believe that the Soviets will attack NATO with a standard two echelon attack. This is not a given. The Soviets may attack in two echelons, they may not.

Soviet echelons exist at all levels of command starting with a platoon. My interpretation of the echelon that Clancy is making reference to is the second echelons that would be included in the three fronts which constitute the theater or strategic first echelon of the Western TVD.

Graduates of U.S. military schools have long had it instilled in them that the Soviets attack in a two echelon formation. What is sometimes overlooked in analyzing Soviet actions in World War II is that we are not locked in to always attacking in two echelons. It is situation dependent.⁴³

This was the situation as the Soviets launched their counteroffensive after repulsing the German attack from the north of Kursk. "The Germans had reinforced the Orel salient, though not to the extent and depth that the Soviets had done at Kursk. As a result, the Soviets realigned their attacks to proceed in three echelons."⁴⁴ If the force opposing the Soviets are defending in depth, they are more apt to attack in a multiechelon formation.

The Soviets took a different approach with their

counteroffensive launched against the repulsed German attack from the south of Kursk. The two fronts involved in this action, the Voronezh and the Steppe Front attacked basically in a single echelon. "The Steppe Front had all of its armies up front in order to generate maximum power for the initial blow. There was no second echelon nor was there an echelon to develop success."⁴⁵

The Soviets do not expect in a surprise attack that NATO will have the time to muster a defense in depth. Hogarth states that "In this scenario the immediate relevance of NATO plans to harass the Warsaw Pact follow-on forces is questionable, for second echelon forces would be merged with the first echelons in a broad frontal attack across the North German Plain, while the OMGs, each consisting of a tank division, an airborne assault brigade and a mechanized infantry division, would slash between formation boundaries and exploit the gaps created by the absence of substantial number of troops caught out of position.

In RSR the Soviets know that NATO is mobilizing, but the head of the KGB believes they are too late. If they act on their belief that NATO's defences are not in place, then current theory tells us that they'll attack as one echelon.⁴⁶

CONCLUSION

The title of this paper accurately conveys the value of Red Storm Rising for the military professional or interested analyst. If you desire a thought provoking and thoroughly integrated

depiction of the Soviets on the modern battlefield, this should be a book of choice. In the process of researching and/or trying to substantiate the validity of Clancy's model, one will necessarily expand upon his base of knowledge of the Soviet system. This in my view is the greatest offering of RSR.

In those areas in which I chose to write, I challenged some of Clancy's characterizations. In particular, I thought his nature of Soviet command capability was flawed. My research led me to believe that in a future war CINC-West would have a much more authority than Clancy gives him. As the commander of a HCF, he is essentially a Stavka forward, yet Clancy doesn't portray him that way. His responsibilities would encompass more than just the North German Plain in an attack on Central Europe. This would be the case even if the North German Plain were the area of the main attack.

Is RSR a harbinger of a future war in Central Europe? It could very well be. If, in some future war, the Soviets were to launch an attack against the West, the most critical factor in determining their success would be their ability to achieve strategic surprise. Absent this, they would not be able to fully exploit their offensive doctrine. Their firepower and formations would falter just as Clancy's Soviets in Red Storm Rising.

These Soviets played into the strengths of the West. Soviet strengths, because of the constraints of this scenario, were not able to be brought to bear on the field of this battle. Most particularly, I'm referring to the quick, deep-penetrating

strikes of the OMGs.

This look at RSR has been limited in scope. The realm of possibilities for further exploration and development is bountiful. I encourage anyone with the desire to expand one's professional knowledge of NATO's greatest adversary against a setting that enables great illumination of thought to do so.

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