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SPEARHEAD OF THE ATTACK:
THE ROLE OF THE FORWARD DETACHMENT
IN TACTICAL MANEUVER

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Spearhead of the Attack:
The Role of the Forward Detachment in Tactical Maneuver

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Introduction

The Soviets have long understood the prerequisites for achieving combat success at the operational and tactical levels of war. Among these prerequisites is the necessity for conducting efficient, rapid maneuver. Long-term Soviet belief in the utility of operational maneuver is well-documented in Soviet military works and, to an increasing degree, in Western analyses of Soviet operational techniques. Western appreciation of Soviet concern for tactical maneuver, however, is less mature. Most Western analyses portray Soviet tactical combat measures collectively as steamroller tactics, characterized by Soviet use of overwhelming, deeply echeloned concentrations of forces committed to combat in conjunction with massive amounts of fire support. Once this massive force has disrupted or destroyed enemy tactical defenses, then, and only then, do Soviet operational maneuver forces go into action, using maneuver to project forces deep into the enemy rear.

This Dr. Jekyll-Mr. Hyde characterization of Soviet offensive techniques postulates early reliance on concentrated forces attacking in basically linear fashion followed by wholesale reversion to artful, flexible operational maneuver. Centralized control, inflexibility, and commensurate de-emphasis of initiative characterize the early (penetration) phase, while just the reverse applies to subsequent (exploitation) phases. Understandably, most Westerners question whether the Soviet Army can adjust to meet the requirements of the exploitation phase.

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Close examination of contemporary Soviet military theoretical works and Soviet military practices (past and present) contradict this stereotypical view. The Soviets stress the utility of maneuver during all phases of offensive action and have, in fact, seriously considered the necessity for employing maneuver from the very onset of operations as they ponder the circumstances of how and when they would attack. In recent years the Soviets have increasingly emphasized the utility of an offensive after only limited preparations to exploit maneuver to the maximum.

This article examines Soviet views on tactical maneuver within its important operational context. The treatment proceeds from the assumption that the Soviets cannot successfully employ operational maneuver until they master techniques for the conduct of tactical maneuver. For, just as operational success directly depends on the achievement of tactical success, so also does operational maneuver depend for success on skillful conduct of tactical maneuver. One simply cannot exist without the other.

The most important functional entity tasked with performing the critical combat function of tactical maneuver is the forward detachment [peredovoi otriad]. This task-organized and tailored combat force has existed in theory since the 1930s and as an important combat entity since late 1942. In recent years it has assumed an even more important combat role in a variety of combat situations (offense, defense, meeting engagement, and pursuit) in the service of a wide variety of operational and tactical forces (army, corps, division, and regiment). Although

today the forward detachment is one of the most important elements of Soviet operational and tactical formations and a motive force in tactical combat, Western analysts have generally ignored its existence.

The Soviets describe the forward detachment as a:

reinforced tank (motorized rifle, naval infantry) subunit (unit) designated to undertake independent local missions during combat (operations). On the offense the forward detachment is employed for rapid penetration into the depths of the enemy defense, for securing important objectives (positions) and for fulfilling other missions; on the defense for operations in the security zone.'

The forward detachment differs fundamentally from other forces operating in advance of a main force since it performs a distinct combat function while other "advance" forces (advance guard, reconnaissance units) perform either reconnaissance or security functions. Essentially the forward detachment's offensive actions are pre-emptive in nature.

The Soviets defined the requirement for forward detachment operations in the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s. The concept evolved to full fruition in consonance with Soviet development of motorized and mechanized forces. During the Great Patriotic War, particularly after late 1942, the Soviets employed forward detachments to initiate and perpetuate deep operational maneuver. By war's end, virtually all Soviet forces, rifle, mechanized, and armor alike, at every level of command, employed forward detachments to spearhead operations. Forward detachments imparted momentum to the advance and acted as the critical linkage between forward operating mobile forces and less mobile follow-on forces.

In the immediate post-war years, the Soviets patterned forward detachment operations after the experiences of the war years. In 1960, however, the Soviets accepted the fact that a "revolution" had occurred in military affairs. Consequently, the classic role of the forward detachment changed. While operational maneuver, and operational art in general, diminished in importance on the nuclear battlefield, tank-heavy forward detachments offered the best means for operating to exploit nuclear strikes and clean up the carnage of nuclear combat.

In the late 1960s, when the Soviets began to reassess the nature of combat and conclude that conventional operations were again both likely and desirable, operational maneuver again became a major area of concern in the more classic sense. Simultaneously, the Soviets began reassessing the role tactical maneuver would play in the future. Inevitably, the forward detachment became a major area of concern.

The Counter-Revolution in Military Affairs: 1971-1985

Simultaneous with Khrushchev's removal from power in 1964, evidence began appearing to reflect the Soviet military's discomfort with recent doctrinal trends. Although probably not altogether happy with the reduced stature of the ground forces during the revolution in military affairs, Soviet military theorists had temporarily accepted the validity of that revolution as long as the United States retained clear nuclear superiority. As U.S. nuclear superiority began to wane, however, and as the U.S. shifted from the strategy of massive retaliation to flexible response, the conventional option became, at first, a faint hope.

The transformation in Soviet military thought to a renewed belief that war could be kept conventional took many years to fully mature. It first required that the Soviets checkmate U.S. nuclear capabilities at each level (strategic, theater, and tactical) and then, as the world wearied of the specter of nuclear war, political conditions for a reduction of these arms could occur, followed perhaps by their partial or full abolition. This development would cast the specter of warfare back into the conventional realm where the Soviets were far more capable and, hence, more comfortable. The Soviets recognized as well that operating on nuclear battlefields as postulated made little military sense given the enormous problems, uncertainties, and collateral damage associated with even limited nuclear exchanges. Implementation of this blueprint would take many years, if not decades. In the meantime, the Soviet military sought to fashion strategic, operational, and tactical

combat techniques which would make any opponent's decision to use nuclear weapons ever more difficult.

This movement toward a conventional option was paralleled by renewed Soviet concern for the operational level of war in general, and operational art in particular, which, in its turn, was reflected by a vast increase of writings on the subject. The literary offensive began most prominently with publication of General P. Kurochkin's study The Operations of Tank Armies (1964) and with Questions of Strategy and Operational Art 1917-1940 (1965), the latter including a preface by Chief of the General Staff Marshal M. V. Zakharov which resurrected the memory and writings of many of the purged theorists of the 1920s and 1930s as well as their concepts of deep battle and deep operations.²

Throughout the late 1960s and the 1970s the steady trickle of articles on operational and tactical maneuver in an increasingly conventional environment ultimately became a flood. These were accompanied by detailed studies of operational experiences in which operational maneuver had played a critical role. By 1980 the concept of using operational maneuver groups, contemporary versions of the former mobile groups, was fully developed, although the Soviets did not apply a specific name to the new mobile groups. Terminology in F. D. Sverdlov's 1967 book, Maneuver in Land Warfare, referring to "maneuver by operational groups" finally received clearer definition in several Polish articles in the 1980's which directly addressed operational maneuver groups [OGM in Polish].³ Regardless of the formal name applied to operational maneuver forces, definition of their function was

complete; and specific work on their contemporary role was well underway by the end of the 1970s and would be further refined in the future. The hiatus in operational maneuver caused by the revolution in military affairs was clearly over.

Soviet ground force strength and the composition of the force structure reflected this trend. Within the expanding ground forces, formations and units have grown in size and improved in that combined arms balance so necessary to conduct conventional operations. Tank armies and divisions have received new complements of mechanized infantry; all divisions have increased in manpower, tank, and artillery strength, and in mobility; and the logistical structure has been streamlined to better support sustained deep conventional operations.⁴

A wide variety of supporting functional units has evolved to fulfill the dreams of those who created the concept of deep operational maneuver in the 1930s. Air assault battalions and brigades provide a new vertical dimension to both operational and tactical maneuver and may be supplemented in the future by even larger, more capable divisional-size air assault corps. Air assault units may be more fully integrated into tactical formations as well. Diversionary brigades add a new dimension to deep operations by further threatening the viability of potential enemy rear areas. These brigades represent an attempt to replicate the extensive partisan and diversionary operations of the Second World War, which by 1944, materially assisted operations by operational maneuver forces. Creation of assault helicopter formations as flying artillery

or tanks assist more traditional aviation units in providing necessary air protection for deep operating forces.

Along with these structural changes, the Soviets have experimented with new types of forces modeled closely, in their combined arms mix, after the former mobile groups. Re-publication in 1985 of General P. A. Rotmistrov's 1946 speech to GDFG describing the rationale for converting tank armies to mechanized armies signals the Soviet belief that they face a force structuring problem similar to that faced in 1946--namely to create a balanced combined arms force to replace the former armor-heavy force, one which can cope with warfare in a age of high technology weaponry, on an urbanized and forested battlefield in central Europe, as well as in other varied regions of the world. Re-publication of Rotmistrov's speech, in all likelihood, signifies that the process is well underway, if not nearly complete. This restructuring is likely to reach down to regimental and battalion level as the Soviets provide these units and subunits with a combined arms mix more suited for their increasingly independent role in operations.

Soviet concern for tactical maneuver has both paralleled and reflected a renewed concern for operational maneuver. Since the early 1970s, the Soviets have tasked forward detachments with performing a wide array of traditional conventional missions while adding those suited to a potentially nuclear environment. As Colonel V. Savkin wrote in 1974:

The conduct of combat operations by subunits without the use of nuclear weapons demands concentration of large quantities of conventional means of destruction on main axes and is characterized by successive defeats of the

enemy. In such conditions, units and subunits must constantly be ready for operations with the use of nuclear weapons.⁵

Soviet descriptions of forward detachment missions have remained relatively constant since 1971. The frequency of articles and studies on forward detachment operations, both historical and contemporary, have markedly increased; and the recommended composition of the forward detachments has subtly changed as the Soviets have shifted from the 1960 reliance on tank-heavy forces to a better combined arms balance.

During the 1970s, while most Soviet theorists publically maintained the nuclear context for operations, especially in their major published works, the amount of space devoted to conventional "type" operations expanded. Articles on distinctly tactical themes often discarded the nuclear context entirely. The two books most often quoted in the West set the trend in motion. A. A. Sidorenko's 1970 work Nastuplenie [The offensive] described operations within a nuclear context but, in doing so, covered techniques equally applicable to a high intensity conventional environment. Sidorenko articulated forward detachment missions already sketched out in the 1960s. Unfortunately, Western analysts then, and to some extent now, have seized on the nuclear aspect and missed the point.

V. Ye. Savkin's 1972 study, Osnovnye printsipy operativnogo iskusstva i taktiki [The Basic principles of operational art and tactics], legitimized the realm of operational art after its neglect in the 1960s. Using intensive study of Great Patriotic War operational and tactical techniques, Savkin focused new attention of conventional

matters, although carefully maintaining the nuclear context, Savkin clearly described forward detachment missions, past and present, and noted, "New means of warfare and a qualitatively different nature of troops create more favorable conditions for wide use of such podrazdeleniya [subunits] and substantially increase their combat capabilities."⁶ Propnetically, Savkin noted the feature which, in the future, would become the distinguishing factor between designated operational and tactical maneuver forces and main force units, given that all were now mobile. He wrote, "The difference in composition of troops operating on the axes of the main attack and on other axes probably will be less sharply expressed than was formerly the case. The main troop grouping will be distinguished more in the qualitative sense than in numbers." [emphasis added]⁷

In April 1972 Savkin published an article on maneuver in the journal Voennyi Vestnik [Military Herald] which precipitated responses later in the year. This series of articles reviewed all aspects of maneuver in contemporary war. After mandatory reference to nuclear war, a group of distinguished theorists, including Sverdlov and Reznichenko, surveyed maneuver in a distinctly conventional manner. During the exchange a new term emerged--protivoiadernnyi manevr [antinuclear maneuver]--which Sverdlov defined as "the organized shifting of subunits with the aim of withdrawing them out from under the possible blows of enemy nuclear means, to protect their survival and subsequent freedom of action to strike a blow on the enemy. Therefore, antinuclear maneuver is also one of the forms of maneuver."⁸ The defensive aspect of this maneuver was

complemented by offensive measures "to rapidly disperse subunits or change the direction of their offensive,...and conduct other measures related to defense against weapons of mass destruction."⁹

Antinuclear maneuver had other facets as well which would become apparent as the decade progressed. In fact, operational and tactical maneuver techniques themselves, as they emerged over the decade, were specifically designed as types of antinuclear maneuver. A force which employed them skillfully could seriously inhibit an enemy's ability to employ nuclear weapons, even if it wished to, an intention the Soviets already seriously questioned. Thus, by 1987 V. G. Reznichenko was able to write on this important theme:

The continuous conduct of battle results from the growing combat capabilities of forces, the nature of contemporary operations which develop in great depth and the demands of operational art as expressed in tactics. Continuous operations guarantee the achievement of objectives in a short time with less expenditure of forces and weapons; deprives the enemy of the time and capability for re-establishing the combat worthiness of his force, for carrying out the maneuver of reserves, for regrouping and striking blows, for supply of materiel means, and for organizing opposition on new positions; and assists in the destruction of the enemy in detail.

The continuous conduct of battle at a high tempo creates unfavorable conditions for enemy use of weapons of massive destruction. He cannot exactly determine targets for nuclear strikes and, besides, will be forced to shift his nuclear delivery means often.¹⁰

This restatement of antinuclear maneuver captured the essence and overall rationale of Soviet operational and tactical maneuver concepts and techniques in the late 1970s and 1980s.

The following year (1973) the Soviets published a major study of troop control during the Great Patriotic War which analyzed control and coordination of large forces at the operational and tactical levels of combat, in particular focusing on detailed aspects of troop control during high speed operations of mobile groups and forward detachments.¹¹

In a 1974 article, Colonel V. Savkin again reviewed facets of contemporary maneuver. After two paragraphs on nuclear warfare, throughout the remainder of the article, Savkin clearly distinguished between nuclear and conventional warfare but noted that the destructiveness of advanced conventional weaponry required resort to many of the maneuver techniques required by nuclear war itself.

While analyzing the nature of contemporary war, it is necessary to remember that science and technology are developing at a stormy pace; and, in all armies, new and new types of weapons are appearing. This demands a creative approach to the study of its [battle's] theory and to mastery of the artful use of theoretical precepts into reality.¹²

In 1977 there appeared the first of two major studies on armored warfare which would appear in the decade, General A. I. Radzievsky's Tankovi udar [Tank strike]. This classic detailed study of tank army operations during the Great Patriotic War exhaustively examined all aspects of operational and tactical maneuver during the war. Two years later Marshal O. A. Losik published an even more detailed work on the same subject. Both works covered in detail the traditional operations of forward detachments in a wide range of operations. In his preface and conclusion, Radzievsky noted:

Contemporary offensive operations will also be characterized by decisive aims, large scale, maneuverability, and dynamic

combat operations. Indeed, therefore, the study of experience of the combat use of tank armies in the Great Patriotic War today has important meaning...in particular, the experience of using tank armies to achieve the decisive aims of an operation in a short period.¹³

Losik, as commandant of the Malinovsky Tank Academy, appropriately noted:

History teaches that the more the military cadre works out in peacetime on the basis of new concepts of military art, and the more detailed and carefully they examine theory by experience and operational training and especially by real combat experience, the closer that theory relates to actuality and to new demands.¹⁴

As Radzievsky and Losik prepared and published their major works, a steady stream of articles on operational and tactical maneuver appeared in a wide range of Soviet military journals, responding to Losik's counsel and, more important, indicating the path of developing Soviet military art. In the center of that path lay concepts for operational and tactical maneuver which Soviet theorists obviously viewed as answering the military problem of escaping from the strangle hold of nuclear war.

In 1977 the journal Voennyi Vestnik published a new series of articles on the theme of maneuver as it related to high tempo operations. The authors concluded that only constant maneuvering could produce high tempos and success in a nuclear environment and added, "One must not, however, rely only on nuclear weapons."¹⁵ The authors singled out forward detachments as a key maneuver element, stating:

An important role in the achievement of a high offensive tempo can be played by forward detachments, prepared and aimed at specific objectives, whose composition expediently includes tank and motorized rifle subunits on BMPs with reinforcements. By

their daring and enterprising operations and skillful envelopment of strong points, they can rapidly fulfill the mission.¹⁶

Forward detachments operated in conjunction with tactical air assaults which secured command posts, launch and firing positions, and assisted the continuous advance of the main force. Combat helicopters in close communications with other forces, provided a new means of air support.

As if to emphasize the growing dual nature of combat, a 1977 article on postwar tactics of the Soviet Army categorically stated, "There appeared from the beginning of the 1960s [according to the author, the most recent period] views on the conduct of offensive battle not only with the use of nuclear weapons but also with conventional means of destruction."¹⁷ Later in the same article, he again stated, "Consequently in the 1960s, the tactics of offensive battle were worked out both with the use of nuclear weapons, and with the use of only conventional means of destruction." In both instances offensive battle required "non-stop penetration of prepared enemy defenses at high tempo",...and the firepower and secondary mobility of assault units themselves.¹⁸

By the end of the 1970s, Soviet views on tactical air assaults had matured to a point where the air assault force itself could send out a forward detachment or function as a forward detachment in its own right. A 1980 assessment noted:

If, in the war years or in the first postwar years, it was considered that an air assault could occupy a defense and firmly hold strong points (positions), not taking into consideration losses, until the arrival of the main force, then subsequently, with an increase in the maneuver capabilities of subunits, it became more active. An assault, while

dispatching forward detachments on enemy approach routes, used reserves and second echelon subunits to conduct counterattacks....

The detachments usually consist of from a company to a battalion, reinforced by artillery and sapper subunits. They carry out from ambush, strikes on enemy columns, his artillery and his nuclear means; hold up his movement; and destroy his command and control while organizing attacks on his staffs and communications routes. Detachments widely employ mines, construct obstacles on roads, and destroy road construction.¹⁹

In 1987 another article confirmed the independent role of an air assault force, stating:

A parachute-air assault battalion during operations in the enemy rear can serve as a forward detachment with the missions to seize, on the axis of a raid, an important objective or favorable position (mountain pass, crossing over a river obstacle, road junction, defile, etc.) and to protect the approach of the main force. Its composition can include artillery and engineer-sapper subunits.²⁰

By the early 1980s, Soviet works had clearly defined the expanded role of forward detachments in both offensive and defensive operations. The definition continued to expand. F. D. Sverdlov's 1982 work Takticheskii manevr [Tactical maneuver] reviewed the basic nature of maneuver warfare and sketched out, using historical examples, the role of forward detachments during penetration, exploitation, pursuit, river crossings, and meeting engagements.²¹

An important article written in 1982 by N. Kireev reviewed post-war tactics and articulated contemporary missions of forward detachments in penetration operations. He prefaced his description with the remark:

Since the beginning of the 1960s, our military theory and practice have allowed for the conduct of combat operations with conventional weapons only, but with the constant threat of enemy employment of nuclear weapons. This circumstance dictated the necessity of

determining modes of employment of tank units and subunits in penetrating a well-prepared enemy defense in conformity with the new demands.²²

He then described the contemporary role of forward detachments:

In connection with an increase in the role of the security area in the enemy's defense as well as the presence of a large number of diversified minefields and obstacles in the defense, tank subunits were sometimes designated to be employed as special forward detachments. In this case their principal mission was to capture and destroy weapons and control facilities for barriers of fire established in this zone, aggressively penetrate and capture tactically important installations and positions, with the objective of creating the requisite conditions for the main forces to advance to the forward edge of the enemy's main defensive area and to penetrate it.²³

Defensive lines deep in the enemy's defense were to be overrun without a halt, in dispersed approach march formation, and sometimes in march columns as well. Penetration was to be accomplished primarily by advance guards or forward detachments as in a usual offensive operation.

Kireev accompanied his contemporary analysis of forward detachment operations with a comprehensive examination of wartime tank and mechanized corps' forward detachment operations. He finished his analysis by concluding, "These rich combat experiences have great importance both for working out the theory of the use of tank units [regiments] in the offensive in contemporary conditions, and for the practical construction of forces during the course of combat and political training."²⁴

The second edition of Reznichenko's study, Iaktika, published in 1984, underscored the importance of maneuverability in contemporary war and the role of the forward detachments in achieving maneuverability:

The most important means of achieving high maneuverability are: reliable neutralization of the entire depth of the enemy combat formation by nuclear weapons and conventional means and timely and effective exploitation of their effects; wide use of aviation, tactical air assaults and forward detachments; decisive offensive action in pre-combat formation and columns without dismounting; the conduct of maneuver operations along axes; decisive overcoming of radioactive contaminated sectors, obstructions, destroyed regions, fires, etc.; the forcing of water obstacles from the march and other missions.²⁶

In his 1987 edition of Taktika, Reznichenko provided a more refined description of the contemporary battlefield and the role of tactics on it.

While examining the course of the development of offensive tactics, one must note, that today, when combat operations embrace simultaneously the entire depth of the combat formation of both contending sides, the necessity arises for a positive re-assessment of the contents of combat missions of forces on the offensive. In particular, it seems expedient to determine them not by line, as it was done before, but rather by important area (objective), the seizure of which will secure the undermining of the tactical stability of the enemy defense.²⁶

This ended the long tradition of assigning forces lines (rubezh) as missions and instead designated distinct objectives for each force. In effect, this negated linear development of combat and instead postulated uneven development of combat on a fragmented battlefield, another manifestation of the effects of antinuclear maneuver. This description also captured the contemporary milieu in which the forward detachment had to operate and sketched out the principal missions the forward detachment would perform--that is to initiate early tactical maneuver.

Reznichenko stressed the utility of new combat techniques designed to surprise an enemy, among which he included "daring raiding operations" which he defined as "the delivery of surprise and decisive tank strikes on enemy strong points and during the development of the offensive in the depths of the defense."²⁷ In his 1987 edition of Taktika

Reznichenko expanded this theme, writing:

In contemporary conditions, broadened possibilities are created for further enrichment of the arsenal of the tactics of offensive battles by new tactical methods. Thus, in connection with the fragmented nature of contemporary battle,, there are possibilities for further development of raiding operations tactics.²⁸

Reznichenko pointed out that both mobile groups and forward detachments had carried out raids during the Great Patriotic War and concluded, "Now raiding operations can be employed from the very beginning of the offensive" to destroy enemy nuclear delivery means, enemy high precision weapons complexes, air defense and radio-electronic combat communications centers, and for seizure of communications centers.²⁹ The decisiveness and dynamism of contemporary offensive combat created a broad range of opportunities for using forward detachments.

Besides securing separate terrain objectives (road junctions, population points, passes, etc.), forward detachments can perform such complex missions as destroying nuclear delivery means, air defense means, enemy command and control centers, some of his rear area objectives, and combat with air (amphibious) assaults and airmobile subunits. When assigned combat missions, forward detachments are normally given: composition and direction of operations, objectives and when to secure them, and the order of artillery and air support of its actions.³⁰

The 1987 edition added chemical delivery means and reconnaissance fire complexes to the list of forward detachment objectives.

Reznichenko pointed out the decisive role played by forward detachments during the Great Patriotic War and their ability to overcome natural obstacles from the march, in particular rivers, and strongly suggested an expanded role for forward detachments in contemporary combat. Subunits, pursuing the enemy from the front, "destroy security subunits by decisive operations; penetrate to the main force; and, in coordination with neighboring subunits as well as with tactical air assaults and forward detachments (advance guards), if they are created, attack the enemy from the march."²¹ Both forward detachments and advance guards also played "an important part" in river crossings.

Reznichenko declared the principal missions of the forward detachment in the meeting engagement was "while traveling at maximum speed, to attempt to secure its designated objective before the enemy did,"²² It destroyed small enemy groups in its path, inflicted maximum casualties on the enemy, and facilitated the advance of the main force. Failing in its mission, it maneuvered, along with its main force, to overcome enemy defenses. Reznichenko's 1987 edition expanded the description of the meeting engagement and added the forward detachment mission of containing enemy forces so that they could be engaged by concentrated fires. The new edition was also more specific regarding the tactical missions of forward detachments, advance guards, and main force battalions. The forward detachment's immediate mission was "the seizure and holding of assigned favorable positions, the delivery of

fire from all weapons on the advance enemy subunits and protection of the movement and deployment of the main force,"³³ Reznichenko noted the addition of tactical air assaults to the formal combat formation and "wider use of forward detachments," which, in effect, described a new Soviet concept of land-air battle [nazemno-vozdushnyi бой].³⁴

Reznichenko's 1987 edition added further details to forward detachment operations. He noted the importance of providing extensive artillery support to them and stated they could be formed on the march in anticipation of battle or during the attack itself; and, when performing their missions, they could advance 30-60 kilometers in advance of the main force.³⁵ Reznichenko specifically mentioned joint operations by forward detachments and air assault forces against particular objectives. He then added considerable detail on forward detachment operations during a meeting engagement analogous to that contained in Sverdlov's extensive work. In general, the expanded passages reiterated the importance the Soviets attached to the meeting engagement and the role played by forward detachments in that type of combat. It also recognized the dangers posed by enemy "precision weapons systems" and suggested remedies to that problem. Above all, to conduct successful meeting engagements, forces had to exploit the factors of time and maneuverability.

Finally, the 1987 edition of Reznichenko's work added an extended section on mountain and desert operations, probably derived from experiences in Afghanistan. His description of the utility of enveloping detachments and forward detachments in these special

environments also dovetailed closely with descriptions in Sverdlov's book on forward detachment operations.

Other recent works affirm Reznichenko's description of the role and importance of forward detachments. A 1986 work on motorized rifle and tank battalion tactics, edited by Colonel General D. A. Dragunsky, contained lengthy sections which expanded on Reznichenko's description, especially regarding the meeting engagement. Dragunsky emphasized the importance of the battalion in modern combat, stating, "The revived capabilities of the battalion, and the increased significance of the independent operations of subunits, naturally places great demands on the commander."³⁶ Dragunsky's work reflected a growing trend among Soviet theorists, reflected by actual force structuring, to argue for greater tailoring of forces at regiment and battalion level, so that these forces could operate more independently on the modern battlefield.

An entirely new dimension of forward detachment operations appeared in a 1986 work by M. M. Kir'ian entitled Vnezapnost' [Surprise]. Kir'ian cited wartime experience to underscore the role forward detachments played in achieving surprise. By means of rapid operations, forward detachments pre-empted enemy defenses in both the tactical and operational depths, secured river crossings and passages through intermediate defense lines, and sometimes produced general paralysis of enemy command and control. Kir'ian also pointed out the role forward detachments could play in deception plans to hide the direction of main attacks.³⁷

By the early 1980s, Soviet military theoreticians began to note openly the potential impact of high-precision weaponry on the battlefield, a reality which placed even higher premium on rapid maneuver. An article published in 1984 stated:

In recent years, conventional means of destruction have undergone rapid development; and today some of these types are distinguished by very high accuracy, long range, rapid fire and great power. In their destructive effectiveness they approximate tactical nuclear weapons. It has become obvious that massive enemy use of such high-precision weapons will lead to a considerable complication of conditions for the conduct of combined arms battle in general, and offensive operations in particular.²⁸

The author concluded that, although basic offensive principles still applied, greater premium would have to be placed on "the importance of surprise actions, maneuver of subunits and fires, sharp and continuous cooperation, skill in concealing from the enemy one's intentions, and firm continuous command and control."²⁹ In his subsequent description of combat, the author emphasized the role played by forward detachments in all types of combat.

Thereafter, many Soviet writers raised the issue of precision weaponry and its impact on combat. In a series of 1987 articles, Major General I. Vorob'ev (the same Vorob'ev who, as a colonel in 1964, wrote a seminal article on forward detachment operations) sketched out the impact of new weaponry of the 1980s and stated:

A striking indicator of tactical maturity of commanders and staffs... is the use of the principles of maneuver. Its role in all types of battle is very great. For example, maneuver aimed at concentrating forces for a struggle with VTD (vysokotochnye oruzhiia) [high-precision weaponry], and with mobile antitank helicopter detachments; maneuver aimed at withdrawing subunits from under strikes; and anti-helicopter maneuver. It is important to hide from

the enemy, who is preparing strikes by nuclear weapons and high-precision combat systems, in order to undertake measures in response.

For this, it is necessary to conduct skillfully a dual fire struggle with enemy rapid response fire means; to strike them from the first launch, at the start, and at maximum distances; to counter-act actively turning movements, envelopments, and raid operations; to destroy rapidly air landed, amphibious, and diversionary reconnaissance groups; and to conduct false maneuvers on diversionary axes.⁴⁰

By extension, Vorob'ev implied measures similar to these defensive ones could be used on the offensive. As if to confirm this conclusion, a subsequent article in 1988 expanded on Vorob'ev's description of combat. The authors argued that "modern combined arms battle is fought throughout the entire depth of enemy combat formations, both on the sides' contact line [FLOT] and in the depths, on the ground and in the air." Consequently, the fragmented nature of battle will result in "mutual wedging of units and subunits, which will have to operate independently for a long time."⁴¹

The authors recognized the link between forward detachment operations in the Great Patriotic War and the requirements of contemporary combat, stating, "Whereas in the Great Patriotic War such actions were chiefly characteristic of airborne and advance parties, in our day they may become universal."⁴² Of far greater implication was the authors' open recognition that echelonment would also be affected, as they stated:

In this case, there arises the problem of defining the optimal structure for the first and second echelon at the tactical level. With the enemy using high-precision weapons, the role of the first echelon

has to grow. It must be capable of achieving a mission without the second echelon (reserve).^{4a}

Soviet writings throughout the 1970s and 1980s clearly indicated the belief that extensive employment of forward detachments by virtually every force operating at the tactical level would enable the first (single) echelon to accomplish its critical combat mission. The comprehensive description by Sverdlov and a host of other tactical writers has finally and rather completely defined forward detachment roles and missions in contemporary and probably in future combat.

It is rather ironic that, throughout the 1970s and 1980s, while the Soviets intensely studied about forward detachment experiences and wrote about their contemporary usefulness, Western open source analysts spent little time on the subject. Where mentioned, forward detachments were treated as a tangential aspect of Soviet military art--in essence a curiosity warranting little attention.

From the Present into the Future

General

Today, the Soviets believe that future war with or without the use of nuclear weapons will be war by maneuver. Only a measured response involving precise firepower and extensive, skillful maneuver can produce offensive success. Since the late 1950s, two major factors have shaped Soviet offensive concepts: the existence of nuclear weapons and extensive conventional offensive experiences. Both factors are reflected in current Soviet operational and tactical techniques. Recently major advances in conventional weaponry, in particular, high-precision weapons, have become a third factor.

The Soviets increasingly doubt that the super powers would resort to strategic nuclear war. They likewise feel that an appropriate combination of peacetime political and wartime military measures may further reduce the likelihood of nuclear weapon use, even in theater war. As M. M. Kir'ian wrote in 1982:

As weapons have been developed and experience gained in exercises has been synthesized, so has Soviet military science been enriched with new theses on possible methods of conducting military operations in the event of a war. The successes of the Soviet Union in the area of military technology and weapons have convinced imperialist strategists both of the doubtfulness of their very concept of utterly defeating the USSR by means of a sudden massed nuclear strike and of the inevitability of retaliation. Refusing to abandon their designs in principle, the aggressive forces of imperialism have come up with the theory of an escalating war--that of unleashing a war, fighting it only with conventional weapons for a time, and making a transition to the use of nuclear weapons at a certain stage (initially tactical and subsequently, if need be, more powerful nuclear weapons). They have not excluded the possibility of engaging in armed conflict

while using only conventional weapons. Under these circumstances, Soviet military thought has developed methods of conducting military operations both with and without nuclear weapons.⁴⁴

During the 1960s the Soviets developed a comprehensive view of how nuclear war would unfold. Kir'ian has provided the clearest general picture:

It has been concluded that in a nuclear war the methods of conducting military operations are based on nuclear strikes and on activities coordinated with them involving other resources. Moreover, the scale and methods of nuclear weapons employment change the nature of troop combat operations, a fact reflected in the further development of the theory of operational art and tactics. Thinking in military theory devoted special attention to working out the first operations, which would be of key importance for the subsequent course of an armed conflict. These operations would be distinguished by decisive objectives, large territorial scope and great dynamism, massed use of diverse resources, intense electronic warfare, difficulty in exercising command and control as a result of active jamming by the enemy, and difficulty in providing logistic support.

The possibility of the defending side creating a stable and deep defense demanded a correspondingly deep operational configuration of attacking forces. The first operational echelon in key sectors was also to include tank formations, which were to be used for a quick advance into the enemy's depth of position, for destroying his nuclear strike weapons in coordination with assault forces, etc. Motorized rifle formations acting in cooperation with tanks were to complete the destruction of surviving enemy groupings. It was recommended to make extensive use of forward detachments, and to penetrate defensive lines in the enemy's operational depth from the line of march. For the most part, tank formations operating in close cooperation with missile troops and aviation were to be used for this purpose.⁴⁵

In the 1970s and 1980s, the Soviet political and military leadership faced the task of implementing policies which would make nuclear war less likely and of developing military concepts which, when employed, would make it difficult, if not impossible, for a hard-pressed enemy to

respond with nuclear weapons, even if it wished to. The political aspect of Soviet policy is apparent in their approach to arms limitations and force reductions. Here the ultimate goal is a de-nuclearized theater of operations.

Since the Soviets realize that de-nuclearization will be a long and difficult incremental process (if it ever occurs), they must develop the military aspect of their policy. That aspect has two principal facets. First, the Soviet have addressed the question of pre-emption in theater war. This has involved close and detailed study of "initial periods" of war, in general, in a search for techniques which either produce rapid victory or, conversely, stave off precipitous defeat.⁴⁶ It has also involved equally detailed study of pre-emption itself--that is those operational and tactical techniques that promise to paralyze either an enemy's will to resist or his capability to react effectively to large-scale military attack. Under the rubric of antinuclear maneuver, the Soviets have sought methods of conducting offensive operations which would achieve those ends. They believe they have found the answer in the realm of operational and tactical maneuver.

Soviet military solutions to the lurking presence of nuclear and other modern weaponry is, characteristically, a dialectical synthesis of the new and the old--of techniques developed in the 1960s to meet nuclear realities combined with time-honored methods employed in the Great Patriotic War. The resulting synthesis envisions Soviet forces operating in a nuclear-scarred configuration employing operational and tactical maneuver in the initial period of war to pre-empt and overcome

quickly enemy defenses, to paralyze the enemy's ability to react, and to win rapid victory within carefully defined political limits.

Through the means of focused operational and tactical maneuver, Soviet forces intend to crush forward enemy defenses; rapidly penetrate into the depths of the enemy's defenses along numerous axes; and, by the immediate intermingling of forces and other direct actions, deprive the enemy of an ability to respond with nuclear weapons. As Soviet maneuver unfolds in the depths, consequent paralysis of enemy command and control will ultimately paralyze his will to resist and, hence, prompt his final defeat.

This offensive scheme posits certain distinct requirements. First, the offensive must achieve a degree of surprise to permit the creation of necessary force superiority and to gain initial critical advantage over the enemy. Surprise implies extensive deception to blur attack intentions, to conceal the location and scale of the assault, and to mask the principal indicators of impending hostilities.

Second, the Soviets must avoid those actions most indicative of impending attack. This means attacking without overt large-scale mobilization, the most visible and apparent of indicators, which requires extensive preparation of the theater prior to war and development of selective covert mobilization techniques which may be carried out incrementally over time.⁴⁷

Third, to offset the lack of mobilization, to reap maximum surprise, and to generate initial correlation of forces sufficient to establish high offensive momentum, the Soviets must eschew deep echelonment. They

must employ single echelon strategic and operational formations with reserves to back up the offensive.⁴⁸

Finally, the Soviets must commit operational and tactical maneuver forces as early as possible in the operation to achieve rapid penetration, to enmesh forces quickly, and to create the very conditions they must create if they are to avoid an enemy nuclear response.

Ideally, the Soviets will seek to meet these requirements. They well understand, however, that theory and reality seldom match. Thus, while seeking to realize the ideal, they will prepare for operations in less than ideal circumstances.

The Soviets describe the ideal circumstances for an offensive to be an attack against an unprepared defense--defined as a defense manned by security (covering) forces only. The least ideal circumstance is the necessity for assaulting a fully prepared defense. So distasteful is the latter prospect that Soviet writers come close to ruling it out categorically.⁴⁹ An attack on such a defense, in non-nuclear war, would produce a high intensity, probably costly penetration battle of a linear nature. More important, as the operation develops to favor one side or the other, there would be available the time, the opportunity, and, perhaps, the inclination to revert to nuclear weapons. This prospect negates virtually all the benefits which the Soviets believe can accrue from using operational and tactical maneuver. It also accords the enemy time necessary to remedy their chief problems in an initial period of war; the problem of forward deployment of forces and weapons, reinforcement, and the movement of reserves.

The manner in which the Soviets conduct operational and tactical maneuver varies across the spectrum of combat, in particular as it relates to the solidity of the defense. In all offensive instances, operational and tactical forces enter combat as early as possible from positions well forward in the Soviet front and army operational formation. Against unprepared defenses, tactical and operational maneuver forces lead the assault, while against partially prepared defenses, tactical maneuver forces lead, supported by heavy fires, to be followed shortly by operational maneuver forces. The task of penetrating prepared defenses is fulfilled by multi-purpose divisions and armies while tactical maneuver forces commence the exploitation and operational maneuver forces continue the exploitation deep into the enemy's operational rear area--all in a matter of a few days. The coherence of the exploitation and pursuit, in all of these circumstances, depends directly on the well-coordinated operations of tactical and operational maneuver forces and their close interaction with other main force units.

Quantity, Composition, and Terminology

The number, size, and designation of operational and tactical maneuver forces varies in accordance with combat conditions. In general, however, operational maneuver groups function at front and army level. Normally fronts employ one to two operational maneuver groups of army size. Armies, in turn, normally employ one operational maneuver group of division size. Tactical maneuver forces, in the form of

forward (or enveloping) detachments operate at the army, division, and regimental level. Armies normally field one regimental-size forward detachment whose mission is tactical/operational, that is, it is expected to perform a mission as deep as the close operational depths of a defense. Divisions normally employ one battalion-size forward detachment; and, on some occasions, regiments may employ a battalion-size forward detachment as well. Army and divisional forward detachments operate during the penetration and pursuit phase of an offensive or on the march in anticipation of a meeting engagement. Regimental forward detachments are employed primarily in an attack against an unprepared (or sometimes partially prepared) defense or during the pursuit and meeting engagement.

In addition, operational maneuver groups of fronts and armies extensively employ forward detachments during all phases of operations. Front operational maneuver groups use a regiment-size forward detachment of its own and a battalion-size forward detachment for each of its subordinate formations. Army operational maneuver groups also use multiple battalion-size forward detachments for their own operations and for those of subordinate units.

Forward detachments, at whatever level they are employed, are tailored entities with a broad range of reinforcements designed to permit them to operate independently and, while doing so, survive and complete their mission. Depending on the enemy and the terrain, their nucleus can be either tank or motorized rifle forces.

Because they are both tailored and functional units and subunits, it is probable the Soviets refer to them as corps and brigades. The traditional difference in terminology between division-regiment and corps-brigade is that the former have been and are line formations and units which perform a broad range of combat functions. In contrast, corps and brigades have been tailored formations and units which have performed an experimental or specific function.⁵⁰ Operational and tactical maneuver traditionally fits into the latter category. Thus, up to the end of the Great Patriotic War, operational maneuver forces were termed armies and corps, while tactical maneuver forces were called brigades. In essence, corps were tailored and reinforced divisions, while brigades were tailored and reinforced regiments or battalions. Today it is likely the Soviets have already covertly termed designated operational maneuver forces as armies or corps. It is equally likely that forward detachments are covertly termed brigades (as in the case of an army forward detachment, either corps or brigade).

Use

Forward detachment use depends upon the nature of the defense. The number, composition, nature, and depth of forward detachment operations differs in direct relationship to the firmness of the defense.

When attacking unprepared defenses (only a deployed enemy covering force), army, division, and regimental forward detachments initiate the assault, penetrate the covering force area, and pre-empt enemy

occupation of the main defensive belt (figures 1-2). The general depth of the forward detachment mission from the FLOT will range as follows:

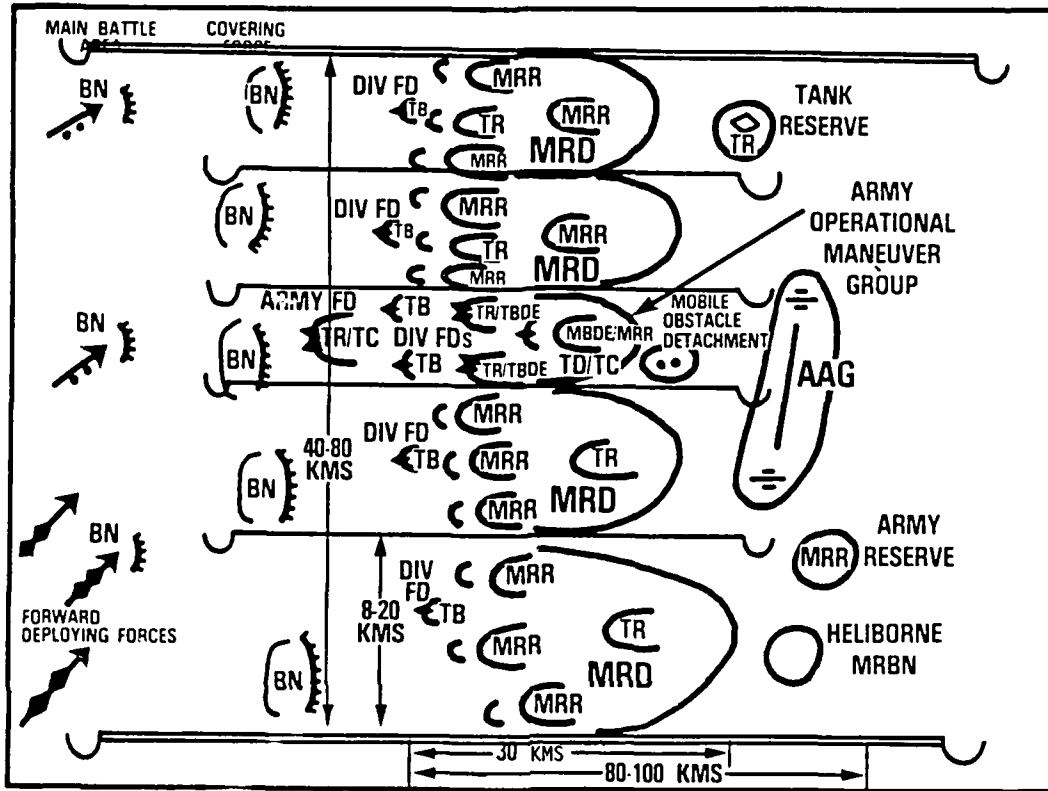
<u>Forward Detachment</u>	<u>Depth of Mission (kms)</u>
Army	50-80 (close operational depth)
Divisional	30-50 (rear of main defensive area)
Regimental	20-30 (front of main defensive area)

Against partially prepared defenses (in-place covering force plus partially occupied main defense area), army and divisional forward detachments, supported by heavy fires, overcome the security zone and penetrate into the main defensive area to forestall establishment of a firm, continuous defense and facilitate the commitment of main force formations and operational maneuver groups (figures 3-4). Average depths of mission are as follows:

<u>Forward Detachment</u>	<u>Depth of Mission (kms)</u>
Army	30-40 (rear of main defensive area)
Divisional	20-30 (front of main defensive area)

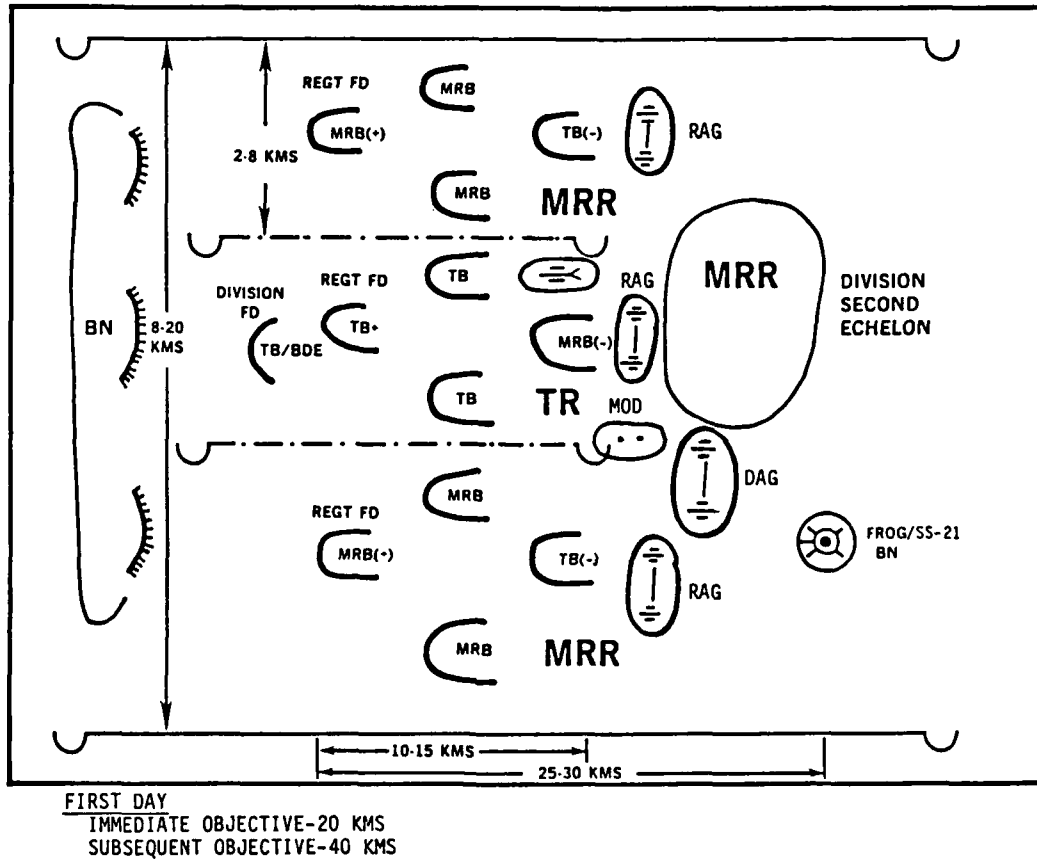
In offensives against prepared defenses (fully occupied defenses), forward detachments are designated in advance at army and divisional level (figures 5-6). However, they do not participate in operations until the penetration phase is complete. In some instances, divisional forward detachments can be used to overcome the security zone or to

ARMY OPERATIONAL FORMATION – 1987 AGAINST AN UNPREPARED DEFENSE



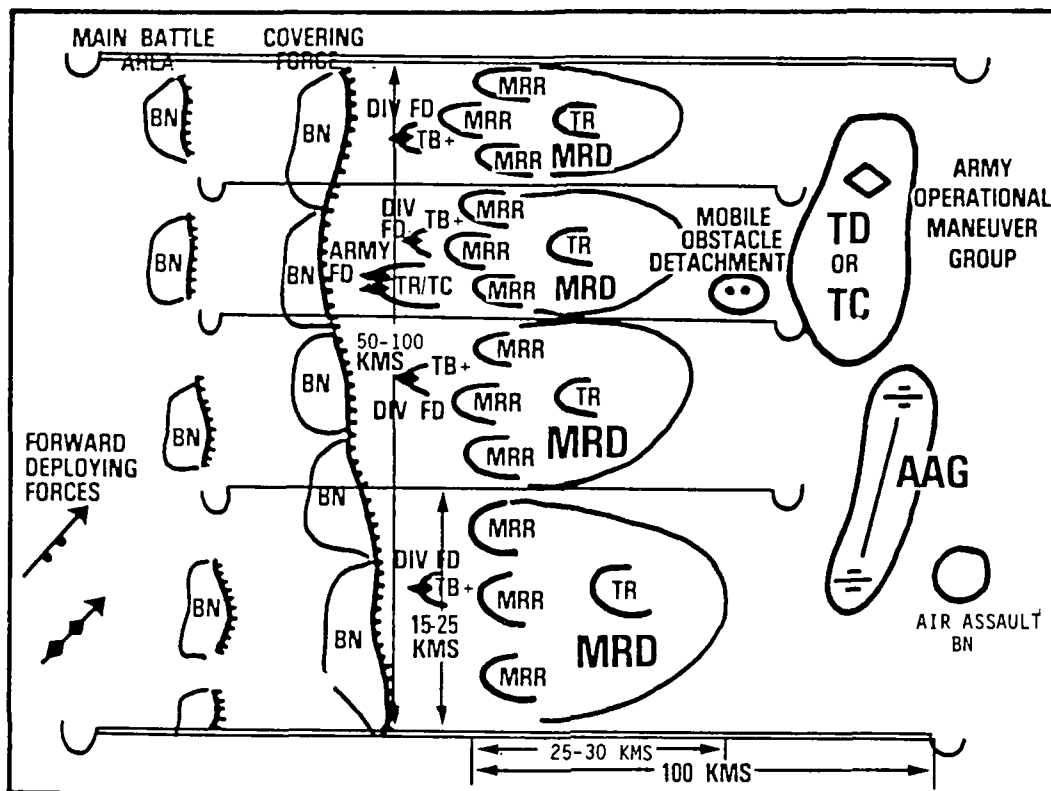
1. Army operational formation:
Against an unprepared
defense, 1987

MOTORIZED RIFLE DIVISION COMBAT FORMATION 1987 AGAINST AN UNPREPARED DEFENSE



2. Motorized rifle division
combat formation: Against an
unprepared defense, 1987

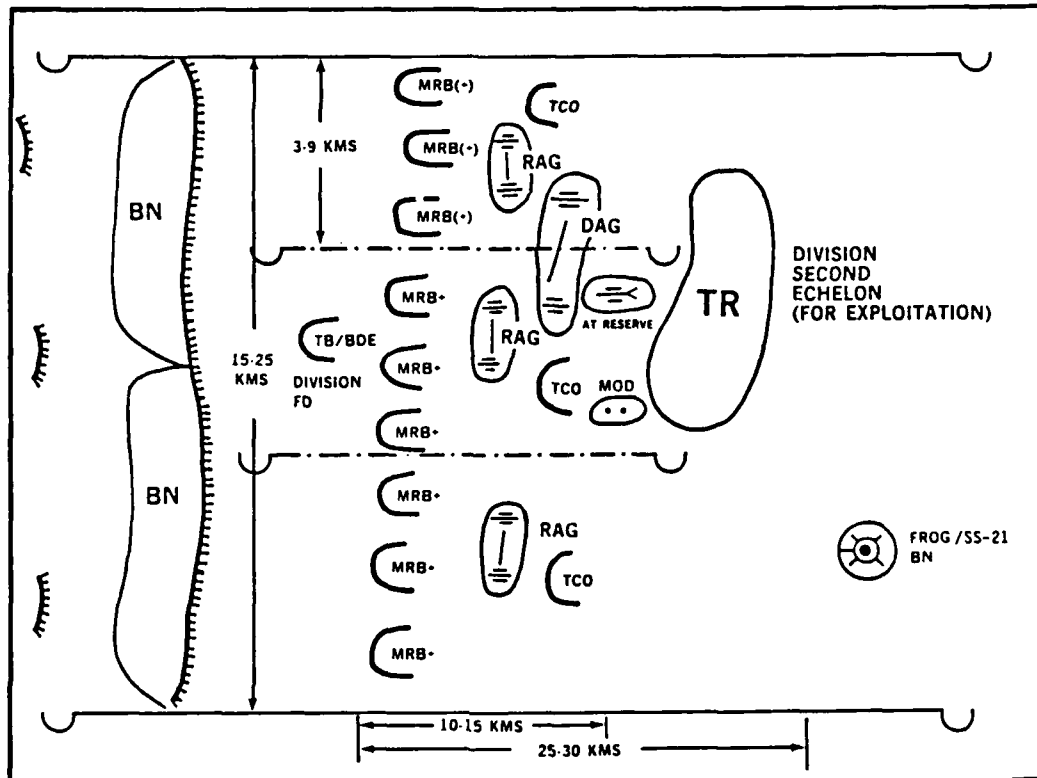
ARMY OPERATIONAL FORMATION — 1987 AGAINST A PARTIALLY PREPARED DEFENSE



IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE-120 KMS
SUBSEQUENT OBJECTIVE-300 KMS

3. Army operational formation:
Against a partially prepared
defense, 1987

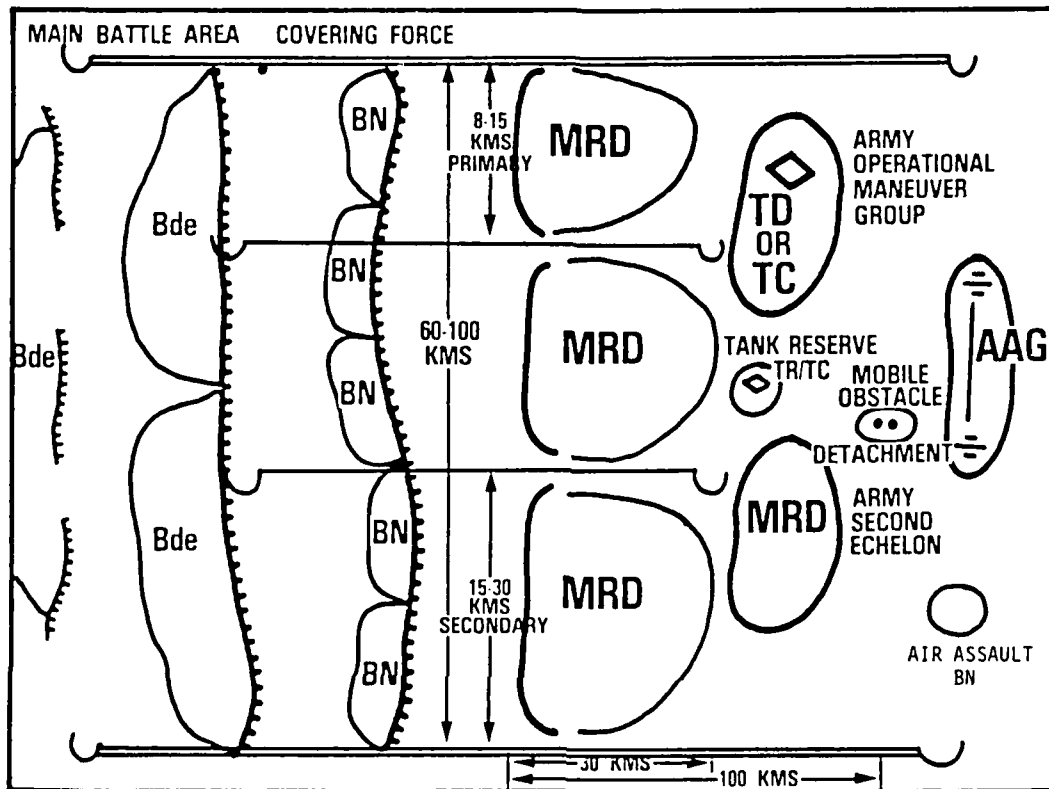
MOTORIZED RIFLE DIVISION COMBAT FORMATION 1987 AGAINST A PARTIALLY PREPARED DEFENSE



FIRST DAY
IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE-15 KMS
SUBSEQUENT OBJECTIVE-30 KMS

4. Motorized rifle division
combat formation: Against a
partially prepared defense, 1987

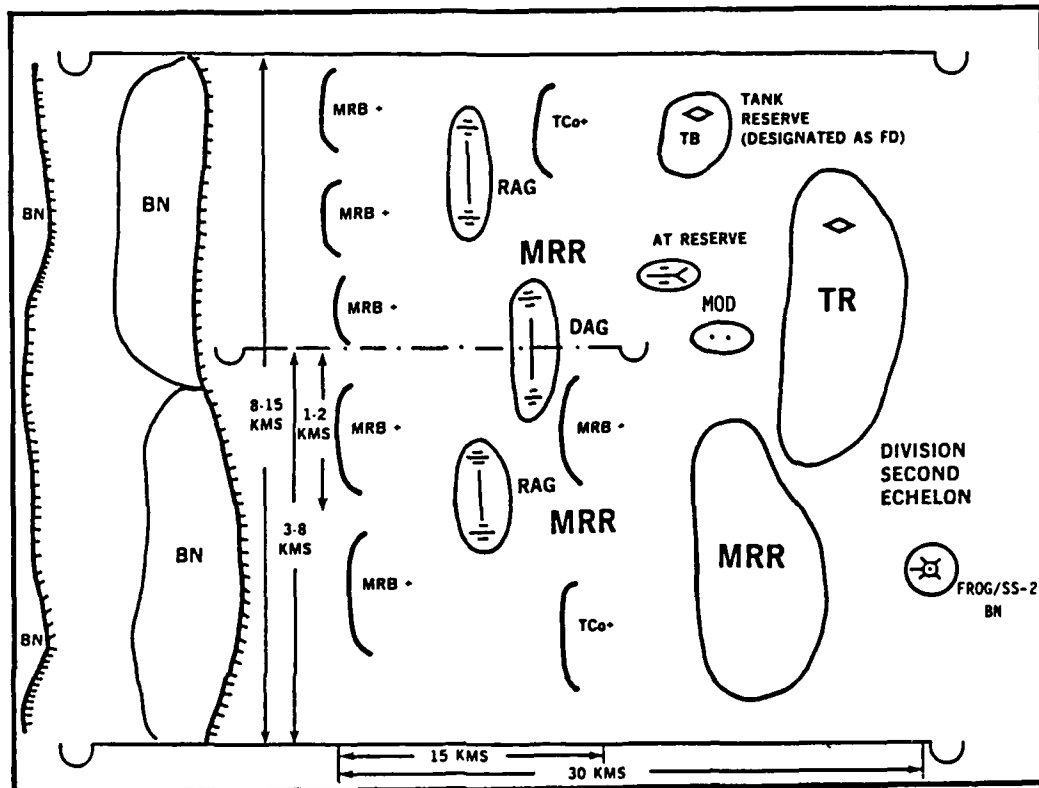
ARMY OPERATIONAL FORMATION — 1987 AGAINST A FULLY PREPARED DEFENSE



IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE-100 KMS
SUBSEQUENT OBJECTIVE-250 KMS

5. Army operational formation:
Against a fully prepared
defense, 1987

MOTORIZED RIFLE DIVISION COMBAT FORMATION— 1987 AGAINST A FULLY PREPARED DEFENSE



FIRST DAY
IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE-10 KMS
SUBSEQUENT OBJECTIVE-20 KMS

6. Motorized rifle division
combat formation: Against a
fully prepared defense

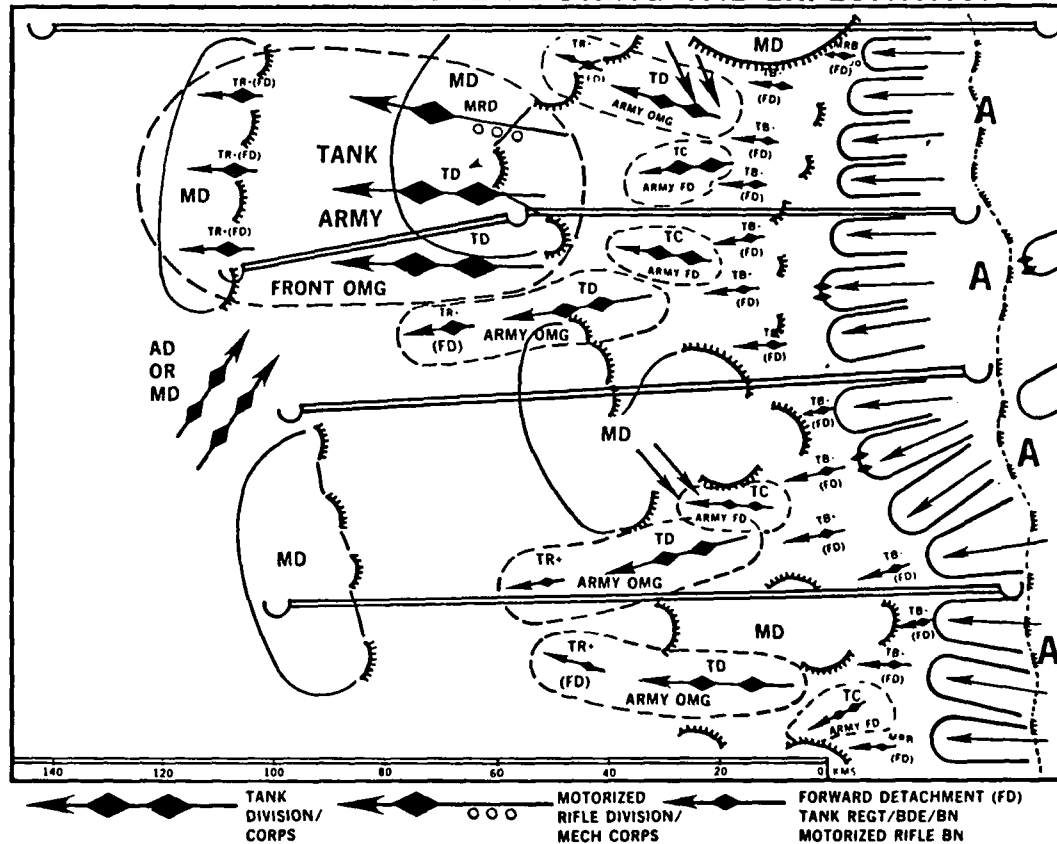
initiate subsequent attacks on the main defensive area. If they are employed during this phase, they would be tasked only with performing limited missions against specific objectives. It is also unlikely they would emerge capable of conducting subsequent operations, hence the Soviet reluctance to use them during initial phases of the operation.

Should combat be nuclear from the outset, forward detachments lead the attack at all levels of command. Whether combat is nuclear or non-nuclear, once the penetration operation is complete, forward detachments lead the exploitation phase at all command levels.

During the exploitation, forward detachments serving operational maneuver forces and main forces provide the means for maintaining the forward momentum of the entire force. They insure fragmentation of enemy forces, pre-empt or overcome intermediate enemy defensive positions, and destroy the equilibrium of deploying enemy reserves. All the while, forward detachments provide the essential linkage between operational maneuver and main forces and lend cohesiveness to the entire offensive (figure 7).

Tactical air assaults in battalion, or sometimes brigade, strength either operate in coordination with ground forward detachments or serve as forward detachments in their own right. An air assault company or battalion under division control participates in operations to overcome a security zone or, as is more likely, the enemy main defensive area. It cooperates with the divisional forward detachments. An air assault battalion or brigade conducts similar operations in support of an army forward detachment, usually within the close operational depths (80-120

OPERATIONAL MANEUVER DURING THE EXPLOITATION



7. Operational and tactical maneuver forces during the exploitation

kilometers) to support either the initial advance and subsequent exploitation of an army tactical maneuver force. In essence, air assault forces with their vertical fire support means constitute an air echelon, in its own right, to supplement the existing ground echelon(s).⁵¹

Problems and Vulnerabilities

Too often the Soviets have portrayed forward detachment operations in a positive light, devoid of all the blemishes and warts which have characterized their evolution. Very simply, tactical maneuver, just as in the case with operational maneuver, has been, is, and will remain, a complex endeavor undertaken amidst the uncertainty of combat. On occasion, chance itself has turned well-planned maneuver into tactical disaster. The Soviets understand this fact well, even though they are often loath to talk of it.

Soviet military theorists, commanders, and planners must certainly wrestle with solving problems inherent in forward detachment operations. Among those long-term problems are the following:

- determining the proper size of each forward detachment,
at each level of command
- tailoring each detachment to meet objective conditions
- structuring each detachment for both march and combat
survivability (anti-tank, anti-aircraft, logistics,
maintenance)
- determining the proper depth of mission and,

- matching mission depth to the requisite logistical support
- determining the proper time of commitment of each detachment
- assessing proper length and width of pre-combat formation and the distance between forward detachments and their parent units
- insuring continuous and effective command and control
- assigning missions which will facilitate achievement of overall tactical and operational objectives

These problems are not unique to tactical maneuver, for they apply to operational maneuver as well.

Failure to solve any one of these problems can lead to severe operational difficulties, if not worse. Just as none of these problems is new or unique, each has also proven in the past difficult to solve, in particular in peacetime.

A last major problem, and hence challenge, for the Soviets rests in their continued ability to adjust operational and tactical maneuver concepts to the realities of changing weaponry. A recent Soviet review of Sverdlov's book on forward detachments highlights the dilemma, stating:

It needs to be pointed out, however, that the author has not taken into full account trends in the development of conventional

weapons in the armies of the USA and certain other nations of the aggressive NATO bloc. These involve homing missiles, bombs, and shells, high-precision weapons, reconnaissance/strike systems and high-powered charges providing for highly effective target destruction and making it possible to put the "fire and forget" principle into effect. The book should have explained the impact of these weapons upon the combat operations of forward detachments.⁵²

Certainly this new technological revolution in military affairs will have a major impact on Soviet offensive concepts. The Soviets understand this perhaps better than anyone else, and some theorists are postulating that a new period of military development has already begun.⁵³ Soviet military theorists are pondering the dilemma and suggesting solutions. In the short term these solutions suggest even greater emphasis on maneuver, tempo, and those qualities and procedures the Soviets have already been stressing. It is clear that forward detachments will play an increasing role in any emerging new solutions.

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3. F. D. Sverdlov, Maneuver in Land Warfare, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1967), 29. Polish articles referring to operational maneuver groups began appearing in 1981 and have continued to appear in even greater frequency. For a selection of recent articles, see Selected Translations from the Polish Military Press, tr. Harry Drenstein, Vol. 1, (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Soviet Army Studies Office, 1987), 141-160.
4. See TOEs in Headquarters, Department of the Army, FM 100-2-3, "Soviet Army Troop Organization and Equipment," July 1984, 4-48.
5. V. Savkin, "Cherty sovremennogo boia" [Characteristics of modern battle], Voennyi vestnik [Military Herald], No. 3 (March 1974), 24. Hereafter cited as VV with appropriate number and page.
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7. Ibid., 228.
8. F. Sverdlov, "K voprosy o manevr v boiu" [Concerning the question of maneuver in combat], VV, No. 8 (August 1972), 31.
9. V. Savkin, "Manevr v boiu" [Maneuver in battle], VV, No. 4 (April 1972), 23.
10. V. G. Reznichenko, Taktika [Tactics], (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1987), 72.
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14. O. A. Losik, ed., Stroitel'stvo i boenoe primeneniye Sovetskykh tankovykh voisk v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny [The formation and combat use of Soviet tank forces in the years of the Great Patriotic War], (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1979), 379.
15. P. Simchenko, "Manevr--klich k pobeде" [Maneuver--key to victory], VV, No. 4 (April 1977), 70. Other articles include G. Lobachev, "Vysokii temp nastupleniya--nepremennoe uslovie pobydy" [High offensive tempo--an indispensable condition for victory], VV, No. 2 (February 1977).
16. Simchenko, 70.
17. P. Tsygankov, "Razvitiye taktiki nastupatel'nogo boia strelkovykh (motostrelkovykh) i tankovykh podrazdelenii v poslevoennyye gody" [The development of offensive combat tactics of rifle (motorized rifle) and tank subunits in the post-war years], Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal [Military-historical journal], No. 7 (July 1977), 43. Hereafter cited as VIZh with appropriate number and page.
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20. R. Salikhov, "V peredovom otriade" [In a forward detachment], VV, No. 3 (March 1987), 33.
21. F. D. Sverdlov, Takticheskii manevr [Tactical maneuver], (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1982).
22. N. Kireev, "Primeneniye tankovykh podrazdelenii i chastei pri proryve oborony protivnika" [The use of tank subunits and units during the penetration of an enemy defense], VIZh, No. 2 (February 1982), 38.
23. Ibid., 39.
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25. V. G. Reznichenko, Taktika [Tactics], (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1984), 62-63.
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28. Reznichenko, Taktika (1987), 181.
29. Ibid.
30. Reznichenko, Taktika (1984), 102.
31. Ibid., 129.
32. Ibid., 165.
33. Reznichenko, Taktika (1987), 291.
34. Ibid., 292.
35. Ibid., 293.
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42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. M. M. Kir'ian, Voenno-tekhnicheskii progress i voozuzheniye sily SSSR [Military-technological progress and the armed forces of the USSR], (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1982), 313.
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47. This includes such measures as the build-up of war material stockages in the forward area, establishment of cadre, spin-off type formations satellited off existing forces, creation or maintenance of a false order of battle, and use of special transport techniques to facilitate selective high speed mobilization and reinforcement.

48. A single echelon strategic deployment and operational formation does not negate the requirement to form tactical forces in two echelons if required by either enemy dispositions or terrain considerations.

49. Since the mid-1960s, numerous Soviet military writers have renounced the possibility or wisdom of conducting classic frontal penetration operations which they call "progryzaniia" [gnawing through] the defense. For example, see Stokov, 616.

50. For example, since 1930 virtually all Soviet forces which were either experimental or created to fulfill specific functions were designated corps and brigades. In the pre-war period these included tank, mechanized, armored car, and air assault brigades and tank, mechanized and airborne corps. These formation conducted operational or tactical maneuver while tank and mechanized regiments and battalions provided routine support for rifle formations. During the Great Patriotic War, tank, mechanized, motorized rifle, and airborne corps and brigades performed operational and tactical maneuver as mobile groups, forward detachments, or air assault forces. At the same time, tank regiments and battalions provided routine armor support for line units. Airborne divisions emerged in late 1942 when they began to be employed

NOTES (Continued)

as regular ground rifle formations. For the remainder of the war, the Soviets maintained the general purpose airborne divisions and functional air assault brigades. During wartime a variety of corps and brigades (artillery, sapper, tank destroyer, etc.) performed functional missions. The rifle corps was something of an exception; but, then, it was a non-TOE, tailorable, tactical headquarters.

In the immediate post-war years, the distinction of division-regiment and corps-brigade blurred because all forces had become mobile and armor had spread almost uniformly throughout the force. The brigade terminology was retained for specialized support units (artillery, antitank). In the late 1960s and 1970s, however, as Soviet concern for maneuver in a potentially conventional environment revived, so also did the use of the older terms "corps" and "brigades." Today various types of brigades (air assault, diversionary, heavy artillery) exist. In addition, brigades have appeared in Afghanistan (motorized rifle), which appear to be tailored entities possessing a distinct maneuver function. Separate (so-called independent) tank battalions in Soviet motorized rifle divisions of GSFG are organized similar to older tank brigades and seem to warrant the designation brigade. The somewhat larger separate tank regiment assigned to armies is analogous to the separate tank battalion and may be termed brigade or corps.

51. Reznichenko, in his 1987 edition of Taktika, differentiates between ground and air echelons, stating:

While analyzing the future development of offensive combat tactics, one can propose that, under the influence of modern weapons and the greater saturation of ground forces with aviation means, the combat formation of forces on the offensive is destined to consist of two echelons--a ground echelon, whose mission will be to fulfill the penetration of the enemy defense and develop the success into the depths, and an air echelon created to envelop defending forces from the air and strike blows against his rear area. (p. 206)

Hence, throughout Taktika, while referring to Western air-land battle, Reznichenko refers to Soviet "land-air battle."

52. P. Lashchenko, "Operations of the Forward Detachment," Krasnaia zvezda [Red star], 5 August 1986, 2. Translated by JPRS, 17 December 1986.

53. In a recent review of a book by A. Babakov on the Soviet armed forces in the post-war years, A. Reznichenko challenges Babakov's description of post-war periods of military development. Babakov postulated that the distinct periods were 1945-1953, 1954-1961, 1962-1972, and 1973-1986. Reznichenko argues for the subdivision of 1945-1960, 1962-1970, and 1971-1985. His argument clearly delineates the

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period of the revolution in military affairs (1961-1970) and the period when the Soviets adopted a dual option (1971-1985). He strongly implies that a new period has begun in the mid-1980s characterized by the rapid changing pace of conventional technology and the emergence of high-precision weaponry as the first noticeable facet of that change. The growing importance of the new weaponry will probable accentuate techniques the Soviets developed in the 1970s to deal with the menacing presence of nuclear weapons. Specifically, the Soviets will develop further operational and tactical maneuver techniques aimed at pre-empting or neutralizing effective enemy use of any weapons of mass destruction, nuclear or conventional. See V. Reznichenko, "Sovetskie vooruzhennyye sily v poslevoennyi period" [The Soviet armed forces in the post-war period], Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil [Communists of the armed forces], No. 1 (January 1988), 86-88. Soviet concern over Western technological dominance and an inability of the Soviet economy or research and development organs to keep up with the accelerating pace of evolving weaponry may have, in part, prompted Soviet recent emphasis on defensiveness in search for peredyska--a breathing spell--to undercut the pace of Western weapons' development and permit the Soviets to keep pace.