FM 100-2-1

Headquarters
Department of the Army



THE SOVIET ARMY

OPERATIONS AND TACTICS

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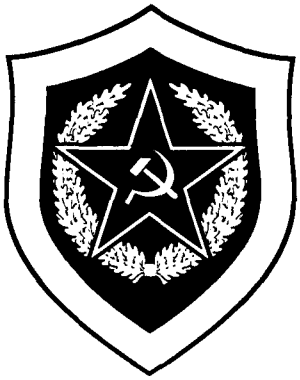
Operations and Tactics

PREFACE

This field manual is part of FM series 100-2, *The Soviet Army.* The other volumes are FM 100-2-2, *The Soviet Army: Specialized Warfare and Rear Area Support,* and FM 100-2-3, *The Soviet Army: Troops, Organization and Equipment.* These manuals cannot stand alone but should be used interchangeably.

These field manuals serve as the definitive source of unclassified information on Soviet ground forces and their interaction with other services in combined arms warfare. These manuals represent the most current unclassified information and they will be updated periodically. More information would become available in the event of war or national emergency.

Users of this publication are encouraged to recommend changes and submit comments for its improvement. Key comments to the specific page and paragraph in which the change is recommended. Provide a reason for each comment to insure understanding and complete evaluation. To send changes or comments, prepare DA Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms) and forward it to Deputy Commander, USA CACDA, ATTN: ATZL-CAT, Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027. 66027.



The cover design is an adaptation of this patch which is worn by Soviet motorized rifle troops, whose organization is representative of the Soviet combined arms theme.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

SOVIET GROUND FORCES

This field manual describes the operations and tactics of Soviet general purpose ground forces. The content is based on information in Soviet writings and other open source literature. Most available information is focused on potential battle in Central Europe. This manual reflects that focus. Though Soviet military activity extends to other parts of the world, the Soviet forces opposite NATO represent a general model for Soviet forces elsewhere, as well as for forces of Soviet allies and surrogates.

The ground forces constitute the largest of the five Soviet military services. Soviet armies have always been massive. Today, they are also highly modernized, well equipped, and have great firepower and mobility. Manpower and materiel combined make the present Soviet ground forces a very formidable land army.

The main combat power of the ground forces is centered in tank and motorized rifle divisions that are deployed under combined arms commands (armies and *fronts)* and controlled through the Chief of the General Staff. The airborne troops are nominally an arm of the ground forces but are subordinate operationally to the General Staff.

In the years immediately following World War II, Stalin maintained massive ground forces to offset the threat of US nuclear power. As the Soviets developed their own strategic nuclear capability and forces, their emphasis shifted away from the ground forces. Under Khruschev, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the size of the ground forces was reduced, while strategic rocket forces increased in size.

The Soviets are concerned about the growing threat from China and wars in the Middle East and Far East. They are increasingly aware that a war may be fought without the use of strategic nuclear weapons. For these reasons, the Brezhnev regime reemphasized the importance of the ground forces. Steady and systematic improvements continue. More than 30 divisions have been added since 1967. Many new weapons and equipment of all types have been introduced. Officer and conscript training has been improved. New tactics, operational art, and strategy also have been developed.

The Soviets believe that any future war could involve the use of nuclear weapons and that the initial stage of the war will be decisive. Tactical nuclear weapons have been assigned at all levels from division up. The Soviets have the largest and most effective array of chemical weapons and equipment in the world. They are capable of employing chemical agents from battalion level upward.

The Soviets' basic principle of land warfare is violent, sustained, and deep offensive action. Mechanized and armored formations, supported by aviation and artillery, are to seize the initiative at the outset of hostilities, to penetrate the enemy's defenses, and to drive deeply and decisively into the enemy's rear area.

GROUPS OF FORCES

In peacetime, the major combined arms commands are located in the 16 military districts in the USSR and in the 4 groups of forces in Eastern Europe: Group of Soviet Forces, Germany, Northern Group of Forces in Poland, Central Group of Forces in Czechoslovakia, and Southern Group of Forces in Hungary. The Soviets also maintain sizable forces in Mongolia and Afghanistan. (See map on page 1-2.)

In wartime, forces in the groups of forces and military districts will be organized into theaters of military operations (Russian: TVD) and *fronts* (army groups) for combat operations. The military districts will continue to function as territorial commands, acting as mobilization and training bases and providing logistical and other support services.

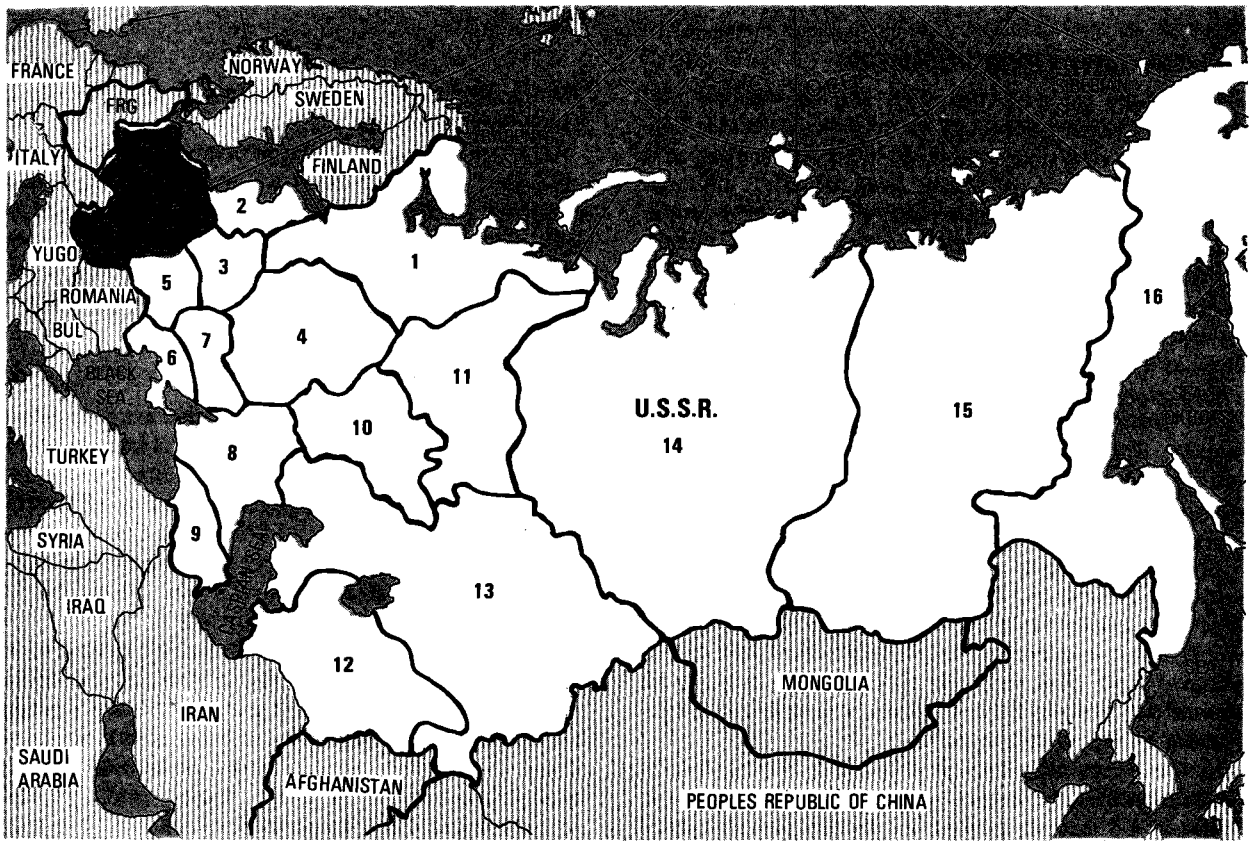
The TVD

Besides being a level of command, a TVD is also a geographic entity. It consists of a particular territory, such as a continent or sea, where military forces of the USSR and/or its allies operate in wartime. The Soviets consider the major type of wartime operation to be the theater strategic operation. Within each TVD there are one or more strategic axes. A strategic axis consists of a wide strip of land or sea and the air space above it, leading the armed forces to the enemy's most important administrative-political and industrial-economic centers. The TVD's most important function will be to orchestrate and control coordinated theater-wide operations involving *fronts,* fleets, independent armies, or flotillas.

The Soviet *Front*

The *front* is the largest field formation in wartime. It is an operational and administrative unit, and its size and composition can vary widely depending on the

Soviet Military Districts and Groups of Forces



MILITARY DISTRICTS:

1 - Leningrad
2 - Baltic
3 - Belorussian
4 - Moscow
5 - Carpathian
6 - Odessa
7 - Kiev
8 - North Caucasus
9 - Transcaucasus
10 - Volga
11 - Urais
12 - Turkestan
13 - Central Asia
14 - Siberian
15 - Transbaykal
16 - Far East

GROUPS OF FORCES IN EASTERN EUROPE:

A - Group of Soviet Forces, Germany
B - Northern Group, Poland
C - Central Group, Czechoslovakia
D - Southern Group, Hungary

mission and situation. Roughly equivalent to a US/NATO army group, a *front* could be composed of three to five armies with organic artillery, missile, air defense, engineer, signal, intelligence, reconnaissance, and rear service units, plus aviation, air assault, and special purpose forces.

The Combined Arms Army. The combined arms army is an operational and administrative organization; it is the basic Soviet field army. A typical combined arms army includes two to four motorized rifle divisions and one or two tank divisions, plus artillery, missile, air defense, engineer, chemical defense, signal, intelligence, reconnaissance, and rear support units. By altering the mix of motorized rifle and tank divisions and artillery and missile support, the army can operate in either offensive or defensive roles in different geographical areas and under various operational constraints.

The Tank Army. The tank army is an operational and administrative unit, and, like the combined arms army, is a basic component of a *front*. The size and composition of the army will depend on the mission, the situa-

tion, and the area of operations. A typical tank army includes two to four tank divisions and one or two motorized rifle divisions, plus artillery, missile, air defense, engineer, chemical defense, signal, intelligence, reconnaissance, and rear service units. A typical role of a tank army is to exploit penetrations deep into the enemy's rear areas.

There are three basic types of maneuver divisions in the Soviet ground forces: motorized rifle, tank, and airborne. (For more detailed information, refer to *FM 100-2-3, The Soviet Army: Troops, Organization and Equipment.)*

STRENGTH AND DEPLOYMENT OF FORCES

The Soviet ground forces have a total strength of about 1,825,000 men. There are currently 191 maneuver divisions. There are 134 motorized rifle divisions, 50 tank divisions, and 7 airborne divisions. Of these maneuver divisions, 30 are stationed in Eastern Europe (East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary), 80 are stationed in the European portion of the USSR, 29 in the Central Asian portion and Afghanistan, and 52 in Siberia, the Far East, and Mongolia.

There are four basic deployment groupings: against NATO, against China, against the Middle East, and a strategic reserve. The largest, best-equipped, and most combat-ready is the group deployed against NATO.

Many Soviet divisions are maintained at reduced strength in peacetime, but they can be brought up to operational strength quickly by calling up trained reservists.

For over a decade, the Soviets have been modernizing and upgrading their ground forces. This has involved large-scale improvements in mobility, fire power, shock action, command and control, obstacle-crossing capability, air defense, electronic warfare (EW), and logistic support. New and advanced equipment has been introduced.

The Soviets have been paying increased attention to the development of power projection forces that would enable them to assert their influence in areas distant from their borders. Naval and air transport resources can be employed to project regular ground force units as well as naval infantry and airborne units and independent air assault brigades.

Soviet power projection capabilities are impressive in the Persian Gulf region. The Soviets have a substantial number of divisions in varying states of readiness based in Afghanistan and in the Transcauscasus, North Caucasus, and Turkestan Military Districts. Soviet aircraft based in Afghanistan can reach most points in the Persian Gulf region and large portions of the Arabian Sea. Port facilities in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and Ethiopia greatly enhance the operating potential of the Soviet fleet in the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea.

CHAPTER 2

SOVIET MILITARY DOCTRINE

THE SOVIET CONCEPT OF WAR

To the Soviets, war is a manifestation of the class struggle. It is an expression of the conflict between the "progressive forces of socialism" and the "reactionary forces of imperialistic capitalism," which they feel will be ultimately resolved in favor of socialism. The Soviet concept of war represents a continuation of politics. In Western perceptions, war occurs when politics fail to resolve conflicts nonviolently. The Soviets feel that war is the least desirable method by which the forces of history will move toward complete victory for socialism.

The Soviet political and military theorists compare the socialist and capitalist camps by a concept called the "correlation of forces." This concept compares the relative political, moral, economic, and military strengths of both sides. In the Soviet view, the correlation of forces has been shifting in favor of the socialist camp since the Soviet defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II. Soviet Marxist-Leninist ideology requires the correlation to shift continuously in favor of socialism. The correlation of forces may be advanced by both violent and nonviolent means. When it is advanced by violent means, the military component of the correlation is the dominant factor.

THE STRUCTURE OF SOVIET MILITARY THOUGHT

Soviet *military doctrine* is the officially accepted set of concepts that delineate the ways and means to achieve military objectives in the interest of politics. This doctrine also specifies the structure of the Soviet armed forces, allocates industrial resources and output, and orients research and development efforts to support armed forces. Military doctrine is the blueprint drawn up by the highest Soviet political leaders that describes in specific detail the shape of the armed forces and the way they are to be used.

The formulation of Soviet military doctrine is a continuous evolutionary process based on:

- Communist ideology.
- Soviet foreign policy.
- Economic and military strengths of adversaries.
- Soviet resources and geography.
- History.
- Science and technology.

Soviet military doctrine is based on an elaborate, integrated system of thought. The doctrinal concepts are precisely defined, and each has its place in a hierarchy of importance that corresponds to its military decision-making level. The system deals with all military issues, ranging from national defense policy down to platoon tactics. Soviet military officers are quite familiar with the entire system of thought and routinely express themselves in these terms. They think and formulate decisions using these concepts.

Military science is the study and analysis of the diverse psychological and material phenomena relevant to armed combat for developing practical recommendations for the achievement of victory in war. Unlike doctrine, military science is characterized by controversy and debate. In military science, there may be several points of view, diverse "scientific" concepts, and original hypotheses that are not selected as doctrine and therefore are not accepted as official state views on military issues. Military science encompasses virtually all things military.

Military art is the most important and primary field within military science and is the basis for strategy, operational art, and tactics. It is the theory and practice of conducting armed conflict. The principles of military art are the basic ideas and the most important recommendations for the organization and conduct of battles, operations, and warfare.

The concept of military art and its role in military science are not just empty exercises in the Marxist-Leninist theory. Many Soviet military officers hold advanced degrees in military science and are serious and intense in their study. They are convinced of the superiority of this methodology for preparing the Soviet armed forces to achieve success in modern warfare. The structure of ideas, terminology, and concepts associated with this system of thought constitutes the very vocabulary through which Soviet officers express their perceptions of military problems and the measures they develop to resolve them.

Military art applies to three separate but interdependent levels of combat activity:

- Strategic - national and theater level.
- Operational - *fronts* and armies.
- Tactical - division and below.

Soviet perspectives on and prescriptions for armed conflict require that tactical success leads to operational success. Similarly, operational gains lead to strategic success.

It is often difficult to separate Soviet tactics from what the Soviets call "operational art" because the maneuver divisions that are the subject of tactics are the maneuver elements that achieve the "operational"

objectives of armies and *fronts*. Moreover, the two concepts are closely interrelated in Soviet military thinking and planning. A recurring theme in Soviet military writing is the need for the commander to keep the "operational" goal in mind. The overriding objective of the combined arms offensive is to rapidly turn tactical success into operational success by a well-orchestrated combination of massive fire, maneuver, and deep, violent strikes.

It is important to understand what the Soviets mean by "tactics" and "operations" as well as the various words and verbal formulas that they associate with each concept. To the Soviet officer, the word "operation" informs him that the activity in question involves at least an army or a *front* that was probably tailored for the mission. "Tactics" consist of combat actions at division level and lower. Divisions have a set organizational structure that, except for combat support reinforcements, does not vary from mission to mission.

Divisions fight battles, whereas armies conduct operations. First echelon divisions usually pursue tactical objectives in the enemy's tactical depth, whereas armies—normally using their second echelon divisions—must achieve operational objectives in the enemy's operational depth.

PRINCIPLES OF MILITARY ART

Soviet military theorists consider the following points to be the general principles of military art. They do not represent any special revelation of truth or radical departure from traditional military thought. However, by their emphasis on these particular points, Soviet military leaders reveal the character of their military thinking and predict the basic characteristics of future Soviet military operations.

According to the Soviets, their armed forces must:

- Be fully prepared to accomplish the mission regardless of the conditions under which war begins or must be conducted.
- Achieve surprise whenever possible. Military operations must be characterized by decisiveness and aggressiveness. Forces must strive continuously to seize and to hold the initiative.
- Make full use of all available military assets and capabilities to achieve victory.
- Insure that major formations and units of all services, branches, and arms effect thorough and continuous coordination.
- Select the principal enemy objective to be seized and the best routes for attacking it. Make a decisive concentration of combat power at the correct time.
- Maintain continuous and reliable command and control.
- Be determined and decisive in achieving the assigned mission.
- Maintain complete security of combat operations.
- Reconstitute reserves and restore combat effectiveness as quickly as possible.

These are general principles that apply to all three levels of military art: strategy, operations, and tactics. At each of these levels, there are more specific, detailed principles.

Soviet military thought subscribes to certain "laws of war" at the strategic level, and "principles of operational art and tactics" which apply to the actual conduct of combat.

The Laws of War

First Law: The course and outcome of war waged with unlimited employment of all means of conflict depends primarily on the correlation of available, strictly military combatants at the beginning of war . . .

Second Law: The course and outcome of war depend on the correlation of the military potentials of the combatants.

Third Law: (The) course and outcome (of war) depend on its political content.

Fourth Law: The course and outcome of war depend on the correlation of moral-political and psychological capabilities of the peoples and armies of the combatants.

Marshal Sokolovsky
Military Strategy

In simpler terms, these laws mean the following:

- *First Law:* Be prepared. Prepare in peacetime for the next war. Forces-in-being are the decisive factors. The side with the most and best troops and equipment at the start of war will win the war.
- *Second Law:* The side which can best sustain a protracted war will win the war.
- *Third Law:* The higher the political stakes of a war, the longer and more violent it will be.
- *Fourth Law:* War aims must be seen as just. Modern war cannot be waged without public support.

Soviet planning and preparation for war reflect a dominant feeling that war is inevitable. This is not to say that the USSR wants war, but that it is preparing for it continuously.

The Soviet state is autocratic, militarized, and centralized. Its political and economic systems give priority to military requirements. The state allocates

resources and directs production for preparation and maintenance of a war footing.

The preparation of a nation for war is accomplished along three main lines:
- **the preparation of the armed forces,**
- **the preparation of the national economy,**
- **and the preparation of the population.**

Marshal Sokolovsky
Military Strategy

The Soviet Union is prepared to exert itself at great expense to achieve its goals. It is a nation which through civil war, collectivization, attendant famine, and purges inflicted more than 20 million deaths on its own citizens from the Russian Revolution to the start of World War II. It is a nation that endured the loss of 20 million people during World War II. Its tolerance for sacrifice is high.

As the "laws of war" dominate strategic planning for war, so do "principles of operational art and tactics" govern the conduct of warfare within a given theater of operations. The popular Western version of these Soviet operational and tactical principles is very brief: objective, offensive, surprise, maneuver, and mass. This list does not fairly characterize the basis on which Soviet military leaders plan and conduct operations and tactics.

Just as they add new equipment to their forces without abandoning older equipment, the Soviets have modernized operational and tactical principles without fully abandoning earlier ones. A good place to begin is with those classical principles that were taught by the tsarist general staff.

Classic Russian Military Principles

- Extreme exertion of force at the very beginning of a war.
- Simultaneity of actions.
- Economy of forces.
- Concentration.
- Chief objective - the enemy's army.
- Surprise.
- Unity of action.
- Preparation.
- Energetic pursuit.
- Security.
- Initiative and dominance over the enemy's will.
- Strength where the enemy is weak.

The most significant points of this list are:
- He who gets to the initial battle with the "most" wins.
- The enemy must be confronted with more than one situation to deal with.
- One should not be diverted by geographical objectives, but should concentrate on the destruction of the enemy's military forces.
- Detailed, exacting preparation must precede an attack.
- Design actions to preempt the opponent and keep him reacting to situations that you control.
- Concentrate on the enemy's weak points rather than his strengths.

Contemporary Soviet military theorists hold that nuclear weaponry and other means of modern warfare have modified the basic principles. By the early 1970's, the following principles dominated Soviet operational art and tactics:

Russian Military Principles of the 1970s

- Mobility and high rates of combat operations.
- Concentration of main efforts and creation of superiority in forces and means over the enemy at the decisive place and at the decisive time.
- Surprise and security.
- Combat activeness.
- Preservation of the combat effectiveness of friendly forces.
- Conformity of the goal to the actual situation.
- Coordination.

Commenting on the above listing, Colonel V. Ye. Savkin wrote the following:

The enumerated principles have become the most important although of course, they cannot encompass the entire diversity of combat activity. Even now, as there is further development of means of warfare and military art, other principles can be formulated. For example, the principle of simultaneous action upon the enemy to the entire depth of his deployment and upon objectives of the deep rear has acquired an increasingly realistic basis with the adoption of nuclear weapons.

Colonel V. Ye. Savkin
The Basic Principles of Operational Art and Tactics (Moscow, 1972)

A melding of contemporary writings and those of the recent past, plus the influence of significant classical Russian principles, results in the following specific Soviet principles of operational art and tactics:

Modern Operational and Tactical Principles

- The offensive is the basic form of combat action. Only by a resolute offense conducted at a high tempo and to great depth is total destruction of the enemy achieved.
- Combat maneuver units must be mobile and capable of rapid movement.
- Fire support, command and control, and logistics must be as mobile as maneuver units.
- Conduct thorough and continuous reconnaissance. Find the enemy's weak points.
- Perform a thorough estimate of the situation and make timely, analytical decisions. Be realistic. Consider the mission, enemy, your own combat power, terrain, weather and light conditions, and time.
- Prepare and plan extensively and in detail.
- The planning and conduct of an operation must involve the full coordination and cooperation of all commanders involved.
- There must be unity of command, a single commander for any operation.
- Fully orchestrate all available combat means in a coordinated, cooperative, combined arms effort.
- Deceive the enemy. Attack from an unexpected direction at an unexpected time. Use terrain and weather to your advantage.
- Strike early with great force. Constantly strive to preempt and dominate the enemy.
- Attack the enemy violently and simultaneously throughout his depth. Carry the battle to the enemy rear with swift penetrations by maneuver units, fires, aviation, airborne and heliborne assaults, and by unconventional warfare means.
- Be bold and decisive. Seize and hold the initiative.
- Prosecute an operation relentlessly, without pause, under all conditions of visibility or NBC contamination.
- Keep the enemy under constant pressure and off balance. Do not allow him to react effectively.
- Fully exploit the effects of nuclear or chemical strikes with deep attacks by all available forces.
- Whenever possible achieve mass by concentrated, massed nuclear or nonnuclear fires rather than by massing maneuver forces.
- If maneuver forces must be massed, do so rapidly. Disperse them as soon as possible after the task has been achieved.
- Maneuver first with firepower. Firepower is maneuver.
- Maneuver forces should attack the weakest points in enemy defenses. If necessary, create weak points or holes with nuclear or nonnuclear fires. Bypass enemy strongpoints to strike deeply into his rear.
- Avoid frontal attacks. Whenever possible strike the enemy in the flanks or rear.
- Maintain security of your own flanks and rear.
- Maintain sufficient follow-on force to assure achievement of the mission and to deal with contingencies.
- Maintain uninterrupted combat support.
- Maintain effective, continuous command, control, and communications. Loss of communications leads to loss of control and defeat. Maintain redundant communications at higher levels. Rely on audio and visual signals and well-rehearsed battle drills at lower levels.
- Staffs at every level must have the equipment and skills necessary to collect and analyze information quickly and to develop and disseminate orders rapidly based on the commander's decision.
- Employ radioelectronic combat to deprive the enemy of effective command and control of his combat forces.
- Adhere to the spirit and letter of a plan. If the plan fails, use initiative to accomplish the mission.
- Be prepared to react effectively to a rapidly changing battlefield. Develop procedures to deal with numerous contingencies.
- Think quickly and be decisive and resourceful in accomplishing the mission.
- Conserve fighting strength through the use of combat vehicles with collective NBC protection, dispersal of forces, minimum combat power necessary to accomplish a task, the use of captured enemy equipment, and effective logistics.

These principles are idealistic. They are what the Soviets strive to achieve. They show what the Soviets would like to do, but not, in all cases, what they may be capable of doing. However, the principles serve as a basis from which any examination of Soviet operations and tactics must start.

THE SOVIET CATEGORIZATION OF COMBAT ACTIONS

An important consideration in understanding Soviet military thought is their categorization of types of combat actions. It is important to adhere to their categorization and terminology to fully understand the essence of Soviet operations and tactics. The 1966 Soviet book *Taktika* (Tactics) was written at a time when it was assumed that all major combat activity would take place under nuclear conditions. The book described four major categories of combat action: offense, meeting engagement, defense, and withdrawal. The listing of the meeting engagement as a separate major category of combat reflects the view held at that time that it would be the most prevalent form of combat under nuclear conditions. More recent writings, to include the *Soviet Military Encyclopedia,* indicate that the meeting engagement is looked upon as one element of the broad category of offense, rather than a separate major category. This probably reflects the contemporary Soviet view that both nuclear and nonnuclear warfare are possible and that the attack against a defending enemy may be just as prevalent as the meeting engagement.

Contemporary Soviet writings describe only two basic, diametrically opposed forms of combat action: *offense* and *defense.*

Categories of Soviet Combat Action

OFFENSE
- Attack Against a Defending Enemy
  - Attack from the March
  - Attack from a Position in Direct Contact
- Meeting Engagement (enemy is also on offense)
- Pursuit (enemy is withdrawing)

DEFENSE
- Hasty Defense
- Prepared Defense
- Withdrawal

Offensive actions are divided into three subcategories which key on enemy actions and disposition. When the enemy is stationary, in a defensive posture, the Soviets conduct an attack against a defending enemy. When both the Soviets and the enemy are on the offense and their forces collide, the action that occurs is the meeting engagement. When the enemy is withdrawing, action performed against him is called pursuit.

Defensive actions are not as clearly delineated. Though the Soviets recognize a hasty and a prepared defense, the distinction between them is not absolute. With time and preparation, a hasty defense becomes a prepared defense. Withdrawal is a topic given very little attention in Soviet writings. If not categorically, then at least in perception, it is probably viewed within the larger context of defense.

Adhering to the Soviet terminology is particularly crucial when examining Soviet offensive actions. Too many US analysts have used US tactical terms such as "deliberate attack," "hasty attack," or "movement to contact" to describe Soviet offensive actions. The use of these terms results in a distorted image of Soviet actions. Their tactics are not a "mirror image" of US tactics. To fully understand the Soviet military thought process and the options available to the Soviet commander, the Soviet categorization must be adhered to.

According to the Soviet categorization, there is no such thing as a "breakthrough attack." This is another term used incorrectly and too freely by US analysts. The misuse of this term has resulted in incorrect perceptions of Soviet tactics. The "steamroller attack" of World War II, with troops and equipment massed across a narrow frontage to bludgeon their way through enemy defenses, is no longer the most common type of Soviet attack. The Soviet commander conducting an attack against a defending enemy has other options.

COMBINED ARMS OFFENSIVE WARFARE

Although some aspects of the Soviet concept of combined arms are similar to the US military practice of combined arms and joint (interservice) operations, the Soviet concept has a different meaning than does the US term. For example, within the Soviet Army, units of different branches do not normally cross attach among themselves to obtain the optimum mix of combat elements for a given mission. Instead, *a unit of one arm will attach its subunits to support or reinforce units of another arm without receiving attachments in return.*

The major difference, however, goes beyond variances in methods of attachment and reinforcement. The concept of combined arms is far more comprehensive and formalized in Soviet doctrine. It is the cumulative expression of the principles of military art. Combined arms combat is the primary vehicle for their implementation in operations and tactics.

Over the past 60 years, the development of the Soviet combined arms concept has been essentially a doctrinal response to increases in the lethality and mobility of weapons and armies.

Their initial combined arms problem arose from the need to coordinate artillery and infantry during World War I and the Russian Civil War. During the 1930s, as the range and speed of weapon systems began to increase, the Soviets developed the theory and practice of operations in depth. This theory included a number of tactical prescriptions: the primacy of offensive operations, surprise, "shock power," and the combination of several arms and services to attain decisive operational success to a considerable depth within the enemy's defense.

The Attack in Depth

The principle of attacking in depth was the Soviets' response to the increased capability and mobility of fire support systems (artillery and aviation) and the appearance of mechanized infantry, tank, and airborne forces. Enemy weapons and formations located several kilometers from the FEBA became an immediate threat to forces opposing them and had to be engaged with the same urgency and decisiveness as closer targets. On the other hand, Soviet fire support systems could reach farther, and their tank and infantry formations had increased in mobility. Soviet military theorists concluded that the deeper threat and the potential for deeper fire and maneuver by Soviet forces necessitated a combined arms effort. They decided that simultaneous artillery attack and airstrikes through the entire depth of enemy defenses combined with tank and infantry formations to break through his tactical defensive and to drive rapidly and forcefully into the depth of his operational rear would best attain success in combat. The enemy's lines of communication, command and control would then be destroyed or disrupted and the remainder of the forward edge of his tactical defensive system would begin to fragment and collapse. Disorganized, demoralized, and isolated, enemy commanders would be unable to reestablish an effective and coordinated defense.

The successful execution of this high-speed, deep operation required closely coordinated aggressive action by tank, infantry, artillery, and aviation. The separate arms and services were required to combine their efforts under a single control element to implement a unified plan. As a consequence, the requirement for thorough and continuous coordination among all combat elements throughout the planning and execution phases of every operation increased markedly. Maintenance of reliable and continuous command and control became at once more difficult and more critical. The roles of the combined arms commander and combined arms staff were expanded and refined. The combined arms commander, advised by his staffs has the overall responsibility for the planning and execution of the operation as well as the authority to carry it out.

To execute the operation in depth successfully, the combined arms force had to maintain a rapid tempo of advance. By tempo, the Soviets mean not only speed but also the flexibility and aggressiveness to create and develop opportunities and to build advantage upon advantage. To accomplish this, the Soviet armed forces adopted the practice of echeloning their formations.

The First Echelon. Typically, the first (assault) echelon attacked and penetrated the enemy's tactical defenses, and the second (exploitation) echelon drove through the penetration deep into the enemy's operational rear. Both echelons were controlled by the same combined arms commander. He assigned missions to the commanders of the first and second echelons in support of his overall mission and controlled the entire force until the operation's ultimate objective had been accomplished.

While the purpose of echeloning has changed little over the years, the circumstances under which echeloning is applied and the manner in which it is applied have varied considerably—depending on the relative strength and defensive tactics of the Soviets' enemies. During World War II, Soviet commanders usually employed a heavy second echelon (one third to one half of the entire formation) at the tactical level only when the enemy defensive formations were strong and deeply echeloned and the enemy had large reserves. When enemy defenses were thin and the defender did not possess significant reserves, the Soviets often attacked in a single large echelon (maintaining a relatively small combined arms reserve) to overwhelm the enemy along his entire front. Use of a single-echelon formation simplified command and control problems for the Soviet commander and denied the weaker defender the opportunity to reinforce laterally and to deal with the attacking force as it presented itself in several "waves."

The Second Echelon. Even when they did not echelon their divisions (tactical echeloning), the Soviets would form an operational second echelon (within armies and *fronts*). The composition, size, and specific employment of the second echelon force was again determined largely by the enemy's strength, tactics, and disposition. When the enemy was able to establish a strong tactical defensive system of several echelons (reinforced by tactical reserves) and had sizable operational reserves available as well, the attacking Soviet second echelon comprised as much as half of the attacking formation (e.g., two divisions of a four-division army). The missions of this standard second echelon included reduction of bypassed enemy forces, exploitation through the penetration achieved by the first echelon, or an attack in a new direction, and possible replacement or reinforcement of the first echelon if the first echelon suffered heavy losses.

The Mobile Group. When the enemy was relatively understrength and lacked credible operational reserves, the army second echelon would take the form of a *mobile group* made up of a tank or mechanized corps (normally one to three divisions reinforced with highly mobile combat and combat service support elements). This group, essentially a large, mobile, operational raiding force, either replaced or supplemented the standard second echelon. The mobile group differed from the standard second echelon in that it was expected to drive to deeper objectives and be able to sustain itself longer without major additional support. It also differed in that while the standard operational-level second echelon usually was primarily nonmotorized infantry, the mobile group was composed of tank or motorized infantry forces. When the mobile group was the only follow-on element, part of its force would usually assist the first echelon to make the initial penetration. When a mobile group and a second echelon were formed to conduct an operation in anticipation of heavier resistance in the tactical defense zone, the mobile group could be committed before or after the second echelon, depending on the actual level of resistance encountered by first echelon units.

The mobile group of the *front* typically consisted of a tank army. The *front* mobile group's missions were similar to the army level group except that the objectives were larger and deeper.

In the post World War II era, the Soviets completely motorized all infantry units and increased the number of tanks in divisions. This full mechanization along with the advent of nuclear weapons resulted in dropping the different roles of a second echelon and a mobile group. The second echelon was thought capable of both building up the offensive or exploiting success of the first echelon.

The Operational Maneuver Group. The concept of the mobile group and its role in combined arms combat received renewed Soviet interest as the basis for refining their contemporary operational offensive methods. The modern version of the mobile group, the *operational maneuver group* (OMG), can move faster, go deeper, and has better combat and combat service support than its World War II counterpart. The OMG concept significantly contributes to fulfilling the existing requirement for the deep theater offensive operation in keeping with the evolving nature of modern war.

The concentration of the necessary amount of force at the right time and place was critical to the maintenance of the tempo required for successful execution of the deep combined arms operation. During World War II, the Soviet Army concentrated tremendous force against a narrow sector of the enemy's defenses to achieve a rapid breakthrough. For example, in one instance, a guards rifle corps was assigned a zone of advance of 22 kilometers but concentrated 80 to 90 percent of its force into a sector less than one third the width of the zone. As a consequence, in a sector 7 kilometers wide, the corps massed 27 battalions, 1,087 pieces of towed artillery and mortars, and 156 tanks and self-propelled artillery weapons, resulting in a force advantage of 4 to 1 in infantry, 10 to 1 in artillery, and 17 to 1 in tanks.

Nuclear Warfare Implications

The advent of nuclear weapons caused Soviet planners to go through a long period of rethinking and revising their combined arms doctrine. Modern, totally mechanized armed forces—supported and threatened by weapons that can change the face of the battlefield in a matter of minutes—gave a whole new meaning to the high-speed, combined arms operation in depth.

Possible nuclear or chemical attacks by the enemy make concentration inadmissable in its World War II sense. At the same time, the availability of friendly nuclear strikes and the longer ranges of conventional artillery reduce the requirement for massed artillery formations. Improved troop mobility permits both the rapid concentration and quick dispersal essential to the survival of tank and motorized rifle formations as they maneuver on a nuclear-threatened battlefield.

In this context, the Soviets now stress that the "quality" of mass must compensate for the reduced

quantity formerly provided by concentrations of troops and equipment. This quality takes the form of intense strikes with conventional air, artillery, and weapons of mass destruction.

The enemy, being under nuclear threat, also must disperse his formations making himself more vulnerable to penetration by an attacking force. But enemy troops are also highly mobile and capable of rapidly concentrating to protect a threatened sector. Therefore, surprise and timing of operations are extremely critical to complicate enemy targeting and to deny him the time to use his mobility to reinforce.

Mobility. In an NBC environment, the need for mobility on the battlefield increases dramatically. Exploitation forces must be prepared to move great distances while maintaining command and control and combat effectiveness. The ability of Soviet combat vehicles using collective NBC protective systems to move through contaminated areas and the increased emphasis on the use of airmobile forces in combat areas enhance mobility.

In past wars, the numerical relation of opposing forces in a particular sector could be changed only by a slow process of providing more men and equipment. Nuclear and/or chemical weapons can bring a sudden change of great magnitude to the balance. Their use can change ratios of forces and means on any axis of advance and to the entire depth of the enemy's dispositions. This constitutes both a threat and an opportunity to the Soviet commander and strongly reinforces the Soviet policy to preempt enemy use of nuclear or chemical weapons.

Decisive Force Capability. Since the mid-1960s, the Soviets have moved toward a doctrine and force capability to fight decisively at all levels of conflict, with nuclear weapons or without them. Soviet planning and preparation for both nuclear and nonnuclear combat always assume the possibility of enemy use of nuclear weapons. They develop plans and doctrine under the supposition that dispersion and mobility must always be maintained. The Soviets plan for enemy nuclear weapons and delivery systems to be detected and destroyed as the first priority by whatever means is most effective and acceptable at the time. Planning, likewise, assumes that whatever the level of conflict (nuclear, chemical, or conventional), all types of weapons releasable at the time will be employed in an integrated, complementary way to accomplish the objectives of the war.

The Soviets believe a theater war is most likely to commence with a phase of nonnuclear combat that may include the use of chemical weapons. They further believe this nonnuclear phase is most likely to lead to the eventual use of nuclear weapons. Soviet emphasis on destroying as much of enemy theater nuclear capability during the nonnuclear phase as possible using air and rocket attacks, airborne, heliborne, and special purpose forces, and rapid, deep penetrations by ground forces, might deny a credible enemy nuclear option.

Limited Nuclear War Considerations

In the past decade, the Soviet political and military leaders have discussed the possibility of a limited nuclear war. They accept that a war could be limited to a given theater of military operations (TVD) and would not necessarily escalate to an intercontinental exchange of nuclear strikes.

Attempting to limit nuclear war to a TVD would place even greater pressure on Soviet forces to achieve theater objectives quickly to present enemy decision makers with a *fait accompli* that would make escalation clearly unattractive. In this context, the principles of tempo, decisiveness, and mission take on added importance.

In a war that is nuclear from its start, nuclear strikes would be directed against the strongest sectors of the enemy's defenses and throughout his operational depth. Divisions, in "nuclear-dispersed" formations, would attack through the created gaps led by forward detachments advancing at top speed into the depth of the enemy defenses. Their aim would be to seize or to neutralize remaining enemy nuclear weapons and delivery systems and command, control, and communications facilities. They would try to split and to isolate the enemy by attacks from different directions and across a broad front.

This exploitation force would probably attack in two echelons to take full advantage of the speed of advance that it would expect to achieve. In a nuclear-supported attack, the echelons are essentially an initial exploitation force and a follow-on relief exploitation force. A rapid tempo of advance is assured by assigning tank elements to the first echelon and by using motorized rifle units with the tanks on the main axis. In this instance, the BMP is preferred for employment in the first echelon, since it was designed primarily for this type of combat. The BMP is a fast, highly maneuverable, infantry fighting vehicle, which would be ideal for operations in which nuclear weapons have already softened or breached the defense. In a nuclear-supported attack, tanks are especially effective in the first echelon, since they have maneuverability, fire-

power, lower vulnerability to enemy nuclear attacks, and the capability to achieve penetrations of great depth.

Even when nuclear weapons are not used from the outset, Soviet commanders deploy their troops based on the assumption that the enemy may strike with nuclear weapons at any moment. They continuously update their own plans for nuclear employment so they will be prepared if they are required to preempt such an attack. The Soviets have developed their combined arms concept to fit a nuclear engagement as well as a nonnuclear phase, which is planned within the context of a pervasive nuclear-threatened environment. Thus, the Soviet command does not have to make a complex transition from nonnuclear to nuclear war-fighting modes, since the nonnuclear mode is already adapted to an overall nuclear posture.

The Soviets would prefer to avoid nuclear warfare. They would probably do so as long as their objectives were being achieved and there were no indications that the enemy was "going nuclear." However, the Soviets would attempt to preempt enemy nuclear use by a massive, initial, in-depth, theater nuclear strike.

Theater Nuclear Targeting Priorities

- Nuclear delivery means.
- Command and control.
- Deployed troop formations.
- Reserves.
- Supplies.

They perceive that their decision to go nuclear must be made early so that sufficient nonnuclear offensive power remains to follow up and to exploit the gains of nuclear employment with an immediate, high-speed air and ground offensive.

Nonnuclear Warfare

Nonnuclear warfare is distinguished not so much by major differences in combat deployments as by the extra missions assigned to artillery, helicopters, and tactical air. These conventional fire support systems must provide additional massive fires to take up the slack in destructive firepower that would otherwise be provided by nuclear strikes. Nonnuclear operations are related closely to nuclear operations. Conventional and/or chemical combat can appreciably alter the "correlation of forces" in the Soviets' favor as well as provide more advantageous positioning of forces when and if the nuclear phase is initiated.

Chemical Warfare

The Soviets do not perceive clear delineations between conventional, chemical, and nuclear warfare. It is possible that chemical weapons would be used early in an operation or from its onset.

Chemical attacks would be directed principally against enemy positions in the forward battle area. Soviet military writings indicate that non-persistent agents would be used across the front of a Soviet attack, while persistent agents would be used to protect their flanks.

Simultaneously with strikes across the front, chemical strikes also could be expected throughout the depth of enemy defenses. These chemical strikes would be combined with other forms of conventional attack to neutralize enemy nuclear capability, command and control, and aviation. Subsequent chemical attacks might be conducted against logistic facilities.

Besides offensive chemical capability, Soviet forces are equipped with the best chemical protective and decontamination equipment in the world. They know that their chemical capability greatly exceeds that of any other nation. Not to use this capability would deprive them of a decisive advantage.

Though they might use chemical weapons, the Soviets would strive to keep a theater offensive nonnuclear. They would attempt to achieve the swift, early destruction or neutralization of enemy tactical nuclear capability by rapid, deep penetrations by ground forces and strikes throughout the enemy depth with all available nonnuclear means.

The vulnerability of densely concentrated formations to nuclear weapons caused the Soviets to alter their method of achieving mass. The "breakthrough" concept of World War II, with its massed troops and weapons, narrow frontages, and fixed echelons, is maladapted to the nuclear-threatened battlefield. Though it is still an option when attacking enemy positions that are well-prepared and arrayed in depth with substantial reserves, densely-massed formations are a least-preferred option.

Under nuclear-threatened conditions, the Soviet offensive concept would have the following features:

- Avoid concentrating forces.
- Concentrate fires, but not firing weapons.
- Attack across broader frontages, on multiple axes.
- Avoid enemy strong points.
- Probe for enemy weak points.
- Penetrate where possible.

- Commit follow-on forces when and where they can best contribute to success.
- Drive rapidly and deeply into the enemy rear to destroy nuclear weapons and enemy defenses.

The desire to keep a theater war nonnuclear has been a driving force behind the vast qualitative and quantitative improvements in Soviet conventional ground forces over the past fifteen years.

ECHELONS AND FORCE RATIOS

A Soviet tactical commander develops his concept for an attack much the same as a US commander does. The Soviet commander considers the same factors which we know as METT-T (mission, enemy, terrain, troops, and time available). He assesses his objectives, the terrain, enemy forces, and avenues of approach. Then he assigns forces necessary to insure completion of the task. One tool that he uses in allocating forces is echelonment.

Forces may be allocated to a first echelon, a second echelon, a combined arms reserve, or special reserves. If enemy defenses are well prepared in depth, the Soviet commander will normally organize his forces into two echelons, special reserves, and, possibly, a small combined arms reserve. If the enemy defends with most of his forces forward, the Soviets normally will attack in a strong, single echelon, followed by a combined arms reserve and special reserves. Combat organization is variable and adaptable to the situation.

First and Second Echelons

A first echelon is a main attack force. It will contain the majority of the combat power of the formation or unit. Missions of first echelon forces are:

- Penetrate or defeat enemy forward defenses.
- Continue the attack.
- Under nuclear conditions, exploit nuclear strikes on enemy defenses.

Second echelon forces are assigned missions at the same time as first echelon forces. Possible missions for second echelon forces include:

- Exploit the success of first echelon forces.
- Conduct a pursuit.
- Destroy bypassed enemy forces.
- Replace or reinforce first echelon forces.

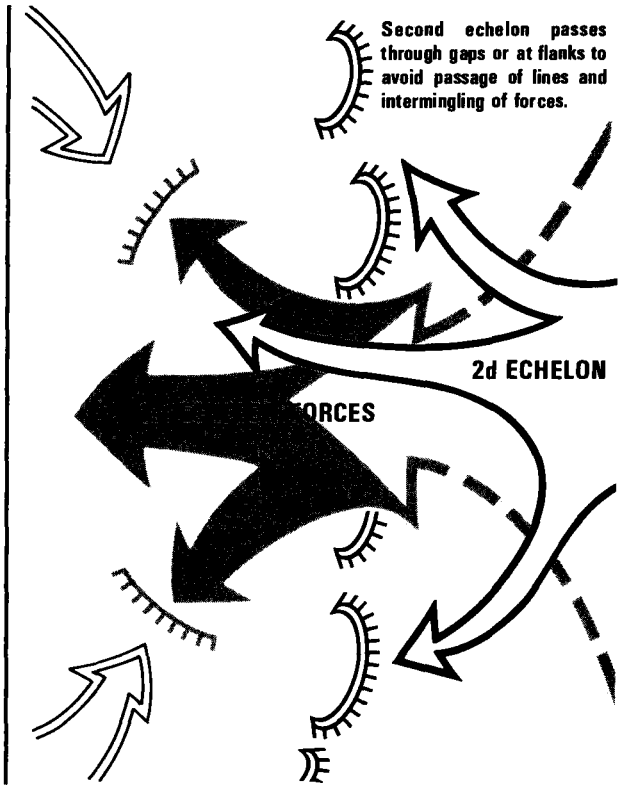
Regardless of a previously assigned mission, second echelon forces are used to reinforce success, not failure. The main goal at all levels is to carry the battle swiftly and violently into the enemy rear. The commander commits second echelon forces in a manner to best achieve this goal.

Second echelon forces are likely to be dispersed laterally, following behind first echelon forces. Dispersal provides both security and flexibility in commitment.

The distance between echelons is not fixed. It is decided by the commander based on the situation. The second echelon is located close enough to the first echelon to insure timely commitment, but far enough back to provide protection and room for maneuver. Second echelon forces normally advance in march or prebattle formation.

The preferred method of committing second echelon forces is through gaps or around flanks of first echelon forces. For example, a second echelon regiment normally would pass between first echelon regiments or around the flank of its parent division.

Commitment of Forces



However, the second echelon could be committed on an axis of a first echelon unit. Whenever possible, the Soviets will avoid a passage of lines and intermingling of forces of two echelons, such as would happen if the second echelon unit were passed through the first echelon unit.

Whereas, second echelon forces have assigned missions, reserve forces do not. This is the key distinction between them. Reserve forces are the Soviet commander's asset for flexible development of the battle and for reacting to contingencies.

Reserve Forces

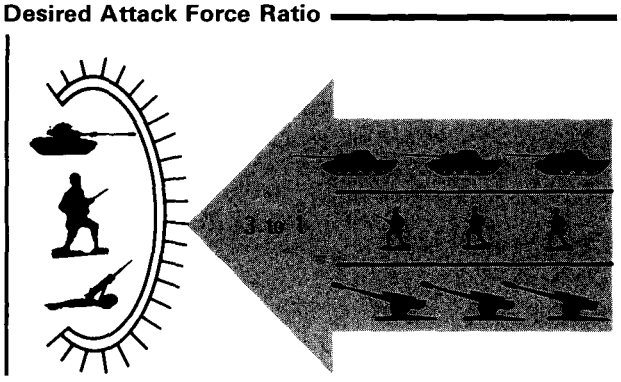
Combined arms reserves are made up of tank, motorized rifle, and artillery subunits. When a large single echelon is employed in an attack, a combined arms reserve will be used to exploit success. It will advance in a manner similar to a second echelon, but will not have a pre-assigned mission. It is committed when and where the Soviet commander believes it can best lead to deeper penetration and success.

A small combined arms reserve, approximately one-ninth the size of the parent unit, may be formed when two echelons are employed. Such a reserve is used primarily for security and reaction to enemy counterattack.

Special reserves are organized from antitank, engineer, chemical, or other combat support elements. They are used primarily for defense against enemy counterattacks, security, and tasks requiring specialty skills.

Force Ratios

After World War II, but before the introduction of tactical nuclear weapons and the complete mechanization of Soviet ground forces, Soviet military planners routinely weighted a main attack with ratios of 3-5:1 in tanks, 6-8:1 in artillery, and 4-5:1 in personnel. Contemporary Soviet writings indicate that an aggregate ratio of combat power of approximately 3:1 is sufficient in conducting an offensive operation or an attack against a defending enemy.



This 3:1 ratio refers to more than just cumulative numbers of first echelon troops and weapons relative to enemy troops and weapons in a given sector. It is, instead, a more sophisticated calculation of the total force, to include all maneuver units and combat support that a commander can bring to bear relative to the total force with which the enemy can oppose him.

In computing his strength relative to enemy strength, a Soviet commander considers all organic, attached, and supporting combat power. When an attack begins, his actual strength advantage at the FEBA could be as small as 2:1. The remainder of his force may not be readily visible to defending enemy units. Massive artillery and air strikes will pour down on defensive positions from remote locations while second echelon or reserve forces approach in march or prebattle formation. Nevertheless, the commander considers this entire force, which may give him an advantage of 3:1 or 4:1 over the defender, when planning and conducting a mission to penetrate enemy forward defenses.

The Soviet norm for dispersion on the nuclear-threatened battlefield is calculated so that no two equivalent subunits (battalion or smaller) would be destroyed by a single tactical nuclear weapon. The distance between those subunits should be great enough that they could not be totally or partially destroyed by a single tactical nuclear weapon capable of destroying an entire subunit of that size. A Soviet commander may depart from these guidelines and temporarily decrease dispersion to achieve the force ratio necessary for a penetration of enemy defenses. Even if he does concentrate forces, he will rarely, if ever, mass his troops and weapons to the densities that were acceptable before the advent of tactical nuclear weapons.

The concept of echeloning allows the Soviet commander to disperse his unit laterally and in depth. At the same time, he can apply a sizable part of his force rapidly when and where he wants to, based on the developing battlefield situation.

NORMS, INITIATIVE, AND FLEXIBILITY

Soviet military doctrine includes a system of performance standards, expressed in numerical form, called "norms." Norms define the ideal performance in a multitude of tasks and conditions. They are used to determine things such as interval, rates of march, frontages, logistics requirements, fire support, and training drills.

Norms provide a mathematical prescription for proper action. They are formulated by historical analysis, training exercises, requirements, and gaming

models. Based on norms, a given situation has an approved response. The correctness of a commander's action or his troops' response is often measured by their adherence to the established norms for that situation.

The advantage of this system is that it provides a high degree of combat readiness, at least in the initial stages. Drills at the subunit level (battalion and lower) are well-rehearsed. The tactical level commander is aware in advance of how well his troops can cope with time and space factors.

The obvious disadvantage to strict adherence to norms is less provision for the unexpected. If a situation arises for which there is no established normative response, a lower-level commander might find himself in peril.

The topic of initiative receives much attention in Soviet military writings. When a plan fails, commanders are strongly urged to use initiative as a cure-all.

The Soviet perception of initiative involves finding a correct solution following normative patterns. If the commander adheres to norms and is successful, he is praised. If he violates normative patterns and fails, he is condemned. Success, however, is most important. If a commander solves a problem by his own devices, he is lauded.

Soviet operations and tactics are not as thoroughly rigid as is perceived by many Western analysts. The amount of flexibility exhibited increases with the rank of the commander and the size of force commanded. There is probably little tactical flexibility at subunit level (battalion and lower). The first level where any real tactical flexibility might be found is at regiment, which is the smallest fully combined arms unit. Flexibility in battlefield thought and action increase by degree, upward through division, army, and *front.*

Soviet officers today are well-educated and well-trained in their military specialties. Most of them are graduates of branch academies where they receive the equivalent of a college education plus a thorough grounding in their branch skills. Though their world outlook is biased by a lifetime of political dogma, they are not ignorant nor incapable of professional, purely military judgment. It is not likely that they would rigidly adhere to a plan faced with imminent failure if an expedient to success were at hand.

Flexibility in Soviet operations has been evident since the final years of World War II. Since the mid-1960s, Soviet military writers and theorists have emphasized:

- The need for rapid concentration and dispersal of combat power on the modern battlefield.
- The rejection of the classic "breakthrough" achieved by massed forces.
- The need to attack on multiple axes.
- The lack of a continuous front.
- The exploitation of weak points in an enemy defense.
- Swift transfer of combat power from one point to another on the battlefield.
- The achievement of surprise.
- Speed in the attack.
- Independent action by commanders.
- The need to carry the battle deep into the enemy rear.

These concepts are not descriptive of a rigid offensive doctrine, but of one that is both mobile and flexible.

CHAPTER 3

COMMAND AND CONTROL

THE NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND AUTHORITY

The Soviet National Military Command Authority exercises complete control over the military-economic planning and activities of the Soviet Union. It is composed of three major bodies:

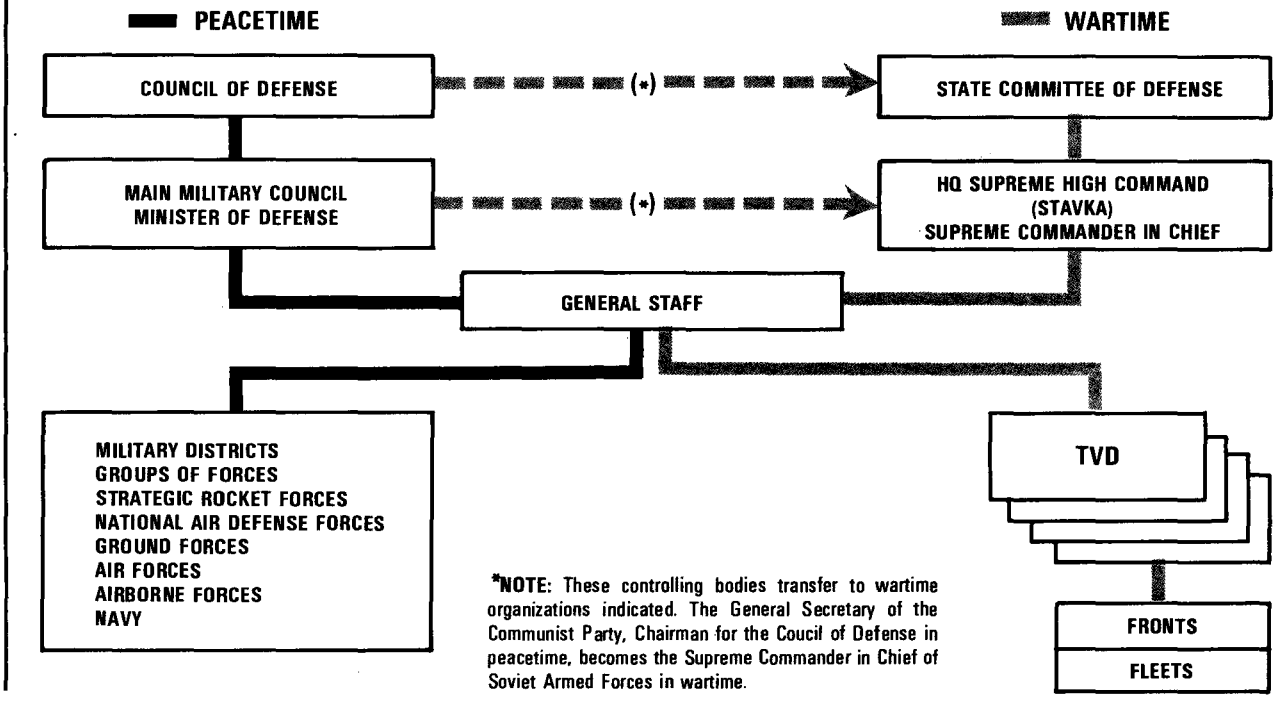
- The Council of Defense.
- The Main Military Council.
- The General Staff.

The *Council of Defense* is responsible for planning and preparing the country for war. It is chaired by the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The council is made up of selected Politburo members, including the Minister of Defense. This council is the USSR's highest military-economic planning agency; it deliberates interrelated issues concerning the nation's defenses, economic plans, and government branches. These include the mobilization of industry, transportation, and manpower for war, and the peacetime structure of the armed forces. Its deliberation and decrees are translated into law. In wartime, this body would be reorganized into the State Committee of Defense—essentially a war cabinet with oversight of the political, diplomatic, and economic aspects of the nation at war, as well as general policy matters concerned with the conduct of military operations.

The *Main Military Council* is immediately responsible to the Council of Defense for the overall leadership and status of the Soviet armed forces in peacetime. The Minister of Defense heads this council. The Chairman of the Council of Defense is a member, as are the First Deputy Ministers of Defense. The ministers include the Chief of the General Staff and the Commander in Chief of the Warsaw Pact Forces. Other members might include the commanders of the five military services, the Chief of the Main Political Administration, the Chief of the Rear Services, and the Chief of Civil Defense.

In wartime, the council would be transferred into the STAVKA (Headquarters of the Supreme High Command), which would represent the top echelon of

Soviet National Military Command Authority



*NOTE: These controlling bodies transfer to wartime organizations indicated. The General Secretary of the Communist Party, Chairman for the Coucil of Defense in peacetime, becomes the Supreme Commander in Chief of Soviet Armed Forces in wartime.

Soviet wartime military control. The General Secretary of the Communist Party, as Chairman of the State Committee of Defense, would become the Supreme Commander in Chief of the Soviet Armed Forces.

The STAVKA will plan and direct strategic operations on a global scale through theaters of military operations (Russian:TVD), sizing and allocating forces to implement its plans. The number of *fronts,* their composition, missions, and the general plans for the conduct of TVD operations will be established by the STAVKA. It also will monitor individual *front* and fleet actions and supervise coordination between them.

The *General Staff is* the major link in the centralization of the Soviet National Military Command Authority. The General Staff is the executive agency for the Main Military Council in peacetime and the STAVKA in wartime. The Soviet General Staff is charged with the basic military planning for the Soviet Armed Forces, both in peace and war. The military services, the military districts, and the Groups of Forces outside of the USSR report to the Minister of Defense through the General Staff in peacetime. In wartime, field forces in a TVD (*fronts* and fleets) would report to the Supreme Commander in Chief and the STAVKA through the General Staff.

THEATER OF MILITARY OPERATIONS

The area of land and sea (and the air space above) on which the armed forces prepare for war, deploy military forces, and conduct war at the strategic level make up the theater of military operations, or "TVD." The theater of military operations usually encompasses a considerable portion of the territory of a continent. The basic types of strategic ground operations are the offense, defense, and counteroffense. The strategic offensive operation is considered the chief and decisive form of strategic operation. Only as a result of such an offensive operation is it possible to defeat and destroy the enemy's field forces within the TVD, to capture vitally important territory, to destroy the enemy's ability to conduct organized resistance, and to insure victory.

A strategic offensive operation can be conducted over one or more strategic axes or across the entire width of a TVD. It can be conducted to the entire depth of the TVD, or may only be planned to obtain intermediate stategic areas; one or more subsequent strategic offensive operations may be required to accomplish all of the strategic tasks required for total victory in the TVD.

A strategic offensive operation is conducted with several *fronts,* (army groups), one or more air armies, one or more airborne divisions, military transport aviation, and fleets on maritime axes. These are joint operations, conceived by the STAVKA, planned and conducted by the General Staff for the Supreme Commander in Chief. The sizing of the *fronts,* the allocation of other forces, the assignment of missions, and the concepts of operations are responsibilities of the General Staff.

Given the extent and redundancy of communications, the mobility of the forces, the anticipated tempo of operations, and the requirements for the highest level centralized control, the Soviet General Staff will probably exercise direct control over the major operational forces, with close supervision over their coordination.

COMMANDERS

The Soviets recognize that effective command and control is critical for success in modern combined arms warfare. Their method of insuring success is to establish and to maintain a system of tightly centralized control over the combat and supporting forces at each level of command.

The Soviet commander at each level is charged with overall responsibility for his forces. Soviet doctrine emphasizes that under the fluid conditions of modern warfare, even in the course of carefully planned operations, the commander must accomplish assigned missions on his own initiative without constant guidance from above. To do this, the commander must be well informed about the general situation and the intentions of the senior commander.

The *front* commander is responsible for the conduct of the entire operation in which his *front* is involved and for carrying out long-term operational and strategic plans. Army commanders receive their missions from their *front* commander. Division commanders, in turn, receive their missions from their respective army commanders.

ORGANIZATION OF HEADQUARTERS

All headquarters (*front,* army, and division) are organized in the same basic manner, but differ in size and complexity. The higher the level, the larger and more complex the staff is.

The staff, supervised by the chief of staff, assists the commander by planning, monitoring, and controlling operations. The principal functions of a Soviet staff are: operations, intelligence, communications, rocket troops and artillery, air defense, engineer support, chemical defense, aviation, rear services, armaments

and equipment (technical matters), and political support.

The political directorate, a department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, is responsible for propagating Party policy throughout the armed forces. Political officers (deputy commanders for political affairs) are present at all levels down to company. They conduct troop indoctrination and training, assist the commander in maintaining troop morale, motivation, and discipline, and advise him on nonoperational matters. The political officer does not play a formal role in making military decisions, but he does exert considerable influence on the general policy and political direction of his unit.

Arms and services are staff elements for tank, artillery, aviation, air defense, communications, and chemical troops. Each is responsible for the technical aspects of its arm. The senior officer of each arm is also an advisor with direct access to the commander.

The logistic staff is responsible for coordinating rear service activities and for liaison between other staff elements and logistics organizations. Logistic activities are managed by chiefs of rear services and chiefs of technical matters/armaments services through their supporting staffs.

COMMAND POSTS

Control is exercised through a series of command posts. The distance between them is planned so that only one would be put out of action by a single tactical nuclear weapon. The number of command posts and their sizes depend on the level of command. There are seven basic types of command posts: forward command post, main command post, alternate command post, rear services control point, command/observation post, auxiliary command post, and airborne command post.

The commander decides where the posts will be located and how they will move. *Front* and army command posts generally are deployed in depth to facilitate control of their entire areas of operation.

During lengthy moves, command posts may leapfrog forward along parallel routes. They are preceded by reconnaissance parties that select the new locations and act as traffic regulators. While on the move, command posts maintain continuous contact with subordinate units, higher headquarters, and flanking units. Normally, the alternate and main command posts move by leap-frogging each other, one moving while the other is set up and controlling operations.

During movement halts, command posts are dispersed in concealed areas and are camouflaged if necessary. Radio stations and special vehicles are located some distance from the actual command center.

All headquarters have an administrative element that provides local security and traffic control. Air defense of these headquarters receives a high priority. Due to dispersion in a mobile environment, command posts will often be responsible for their own local ground defenses.

The seven basic types of command posts are described as follows:

- *A main command post* is the primary command post at division, army, and *front.* It is augmented by forward and alternate command posts.
- *A forward command post* is deployed near the first echelon troops to enable the commander to control his unit in combat more effectively, especially in the main sector. It is employed at division level or higher when control is difficult from the main command post, or when the main command post is moving or has been put out of action.
- *An alternate command post,* with reduced staffing, is established to insure continuity of control should the main command post be put out of action.
- *A rear area command post* is established for the deputy commander for rear services. From it, he organizes and directs the rear service support for his unit.
- *A command observation post* is normally an armored command vehicle, an APC, or tank. It is the only command post formed below regiment level.
- *Auxiliary command post is set up at front* and army levels when the situation requires an extra command post. It is often used to control an operation on a secondary axis.
- *Airborne command posts are used at front,* army, and division levels to provide the commander an airborne platform from which to control operations.

TACTICAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Soviets recognize that they cannot effectively control the battlefield actions of combined arms formations without good communications. They know that the enemy will continually strive to disrupt their communications. To counter this threat, the Soviets stress considerable redundancy in communications modes and equipment.

The organization of communications to meet immediate tactical requirements is a responsibility of the commander at each tactical level. Unit communications officers are charged with establishing and maintaining continuous communications.

The following principles are applied in organizing tactical communications:

- Responsibility for command communications is from higher to subordinate headquarters; however, if communications are not established by the higher headquarters, the subordinate headquarters must provide them using its own equipment.
- Communications with supported units are the responsibility of the headquarters of the supporting units.
- Lateral communications normally are established from right to left; but if such communications are not established by the unit on the right, the unit on the left must do so.
- Radio is the principal means of communications, especially when in contact with the enemy. Messengers and other liaison services are used for augmentation and security.
- Wire is used extensively in the defense and in the preparatory phase of offensive actions.
- Operator discipline is strict, operating procedure is of a high order, and security precautions are to be observed minutely.
- Command nets are designed to provide communications with subordinate units two levels down, in a "skip echelon" manner. This communications structure allows, for example, a division to control a battalion, or a regiment to control a company, if necessary.

Soviet communications equipment ranges from simple, easy-to-operate electronic devices to complex, vehicle-mounted equipment that requires highly skilled operators. Radio is the principal means of communications except in static situations where wire can be employed effectively.

Soviet ground force radios include low power, frequency modulated (FM) and amplitude modulated (AM) sets of manpack and vehicle-mounted types, medium power high frequency (HF) radio stations of a heavy mobile variety, and multichannel radio-relay equipment.

Field telephones are used widely with automatic switching equipment; switchboards are provided down to company level. Teleprinter communications are provided down to regiment level.

Couriers are also used. They are transported by helicopters and a wide variety of ground vehicles.

The following types of communication nets are used:

- *Command nets* are used by the commander primarily to pass combat orders. Channels generally are direct from a superior to his immediate subordinates, but they also permit skipping echelons. The arms and services have separate nets that are similar and parallel.
- *Staff nets* are used by the chief of staff for directing other staff elements at his level and for keeping subordinate and superior staffs informed of his commander's intentions. The chief of artillery at *front*, army, and division has his own staff communications for control of units subordinate to him and to direct the actions of similar forces at the next lower level; the aviation commander or controller at each level may have similar communications. The chiefs of engineer and chemical troops must use the main staff communications network.
- *Liaison nets* are established between ground force units operating in coordinated action, and from supporting units to supported units. Each liaison officer provides his own communications equipment to operate with his parent unit.
- *Coordination nets* are established between commanders to insure mutual understanding and unity of purpose and action with adjacent units.
- *Warning nets* are used to warn subordinate units of impending air, tank, nuclear, and chemical attack and to disseminate meteorological information.
- *Air defense nets* include air surveillance nets to radar sites, air warning nets, and air defense control nets connecting higher and lower staffs and air defense units.
- *Rear services nets* are used by rear elements to control supply, transport, medical, and other support services at all levels from *front* down to battalion. More reliance is placed on cable and wire for these nets than for the other types.
- *Special purpose nets* are established between main command posts and selected units.

Communications units are assigned at all levels from *front* to battalion to support internal headquarters and to provide communications with higher, subordinate, and adjacent units. At the tactical level, each division has a signal battalion, each regiment has a signal company, and each battalion has a communications platoon.

A variety of communications means are provided to tactical units for use when radio and wire communications are not appropriate. These include flares, tracer rounds, signal flags and lights, and loudspeakers.

DIVISION-LEVEL COMMAND AND CONTROL

The Soviet division commander exercises command authority over his unit and is responsible for its actions. His deputies are responsible, however, for some of the technical operations of the various branches of service

represented in the division. This frees him to concentrate his energies on planning and fighting the battle. The division commander is the only general officer in a division. Many division commanders are senior colonels, who are later promoted to major general (one star) rank.

Dual Allegiance

Each branch of service, except for tank and motorized rifle, is represented on the division staff by a chief of the branch. Collectively, these officers are referred to as the chiefs of the arms and services. They are responsible to the division commander but receive additional instructions and guidance from their counterparts at the next higher level.

The division operates as part of an army which is part of a *front*. The operations of the *front* are directed by an extremely centralized system of command and control. From the *front* commander's point of view, for example, all artillery organic or attached to his *front* is under his control. The artillery, as a branch of service, has certain capabilities that assist the *front* commander in the accomplishment of his mission. He directs the chief of rocket troops and artillery at *front* level to plan and direct the *front's* artillery fires to support his concept of the operation. The division's artillery assets are thus part of the general artillery effort. Centralized fire planning at *front* level insures that proper allocation of resources is made and that weapons engage appropriate targets.

The *division* chief of rocket troops and artillery (CRTA) is responsible for integrating his fire plan with the fire plan from the *army* CRTA. Within the constraints posed by the army fire plan, the division CRTA must satisfy the requirements of his division commander—or resolve any conflicts through proper coordination. While the possibility for confusion exists, the Soviets do not view this as an infringement on command prerogative. On the contrary, it insures unity of command at the highest levels. The fire plan, for example, is viewed as an aid to planning, and not a constraint. The division commander learns from the army fire plan which targets will be attacked by nondivisional artillery. He can then decide which targets to attack with division artillery.

A good example of dual allegiance to the unit commander and a branch chief at the next higher level is the operation of the logistic system. A deputy commander for the rear commands the service support operations of the division. However, all logistic assets in the Soviet Army, from the company to the Chief of the Rear at the Ministry of Defense, are considered to be part of one system known as the "military rear." The logistic plans of the division are not independent but are part of a centrally directed logistic system. Army and *front* logistic plans directly affect the division, and assets from these levels augment the division rear.

In the Soviet view, proper coordination and transmission of orders result, for example, in first echelon divisions receiving logistic allocations according to established criteria for first echelon divisions in a given type of operation. Because logistic planning has started at *front* level, there should be no fundamental conflict between division requirements and the assets that have been allocated to the division. The division commander also makes his plans and establishes requirements according to the same criteria. The Soviets recognize that all plans do not operate perfectly and that the situation and special problems affect the division's logistic requirements. Since centralized planning has properly allocated resources from the highest levels, the division should be able to resolve any conflicts.

If the system works, the administrative and technical burden on the division commander is reduced, and he can concern himself with the tactical conduct of his maneuver units. The commander at the highest level has centralized control over the assets available to him. The drawback is the increased need for coordination. When the logistic plan, for example, is not properly coordinated at each level, shortfalls and overages occur.

There are two fundamental areas of division-level command and control: the command group and the staff. The command group includes the commander and those officers who work for the commander in a direct command relationship—those who cause the unit to execute his orders. The staff includes those officers who assist the commander in planning and supervision. Some officers are in both categories.

Division Command Group

A Soviet division commander commands through a group of deputy and subordinate commanders. The four maneuver regiment commanders are considered major subordinate commanders. The deputy commanders are the chief of staff, the deputy commander for the rear, the deputy commander for technical matters, the chief of rocket troops and artillery, and the deputy commander for political affairs.

The *division commander* is responsible for the combat readiness of the division. He is answerable for the combat training, political education, and military discipline of his troops; the condition of the division's

equipment; and the logistic and medical support of the division. He is responsible for all troop control measures during the preparation, organization, and conduct of combat.

The *chief of staff* is the primary assistant to the commander. He is a staff officer and also a deputy commander. The chief of staff is the only officer authorized to issue orders in the name of the commander. It is his responsibility to understand not only the commander's specific instructions, but his train of thought and general approach. He insures the execution of the commander's orders during the commander's absence. The commander usually is located well forward at a small mobile command post during offensive combat. The main division command post is located some distance to the rear and is under the control of the chief of staff.

The *deputy commander for the rear* is responsible for the combat service support of the division and commands the logistic assets of the division. He develops plans and orders, is supported by a rear staff, and operates a rear area command post. He can be considered the "installation commander" for the rear area. Small depots which belong to the chiefs of arms and services and assets controlled by the deputy commander for technical matters also are located in the rear area. The deputy commander for the rear has no authority over the officers in charge of these elements in matters concerning their respective technical operations. He is responsible, however, for rear area organization and security and assigns locations in the rear area. Additionally, he establishes policies and plans concerning security and damage control.

The *deputy commander for technical matters* controls the division maintenance battalion. He is responsible for direct support maintenance for both armored and wheeled vehicles, procurement of repair parts, and vehicle replacement. He also oversees maintenance training throughout the division. During combat, he directs the repair and evacuation of disabled equipment, and informs the commander on the status of the division's equipment.

The *chief of rocket troops and artillery (CRTA)* coordinates and plans the artillery fires of the organic and attached artillery of the division. The division commander issues orders concerning artillery support to the CRTA, who has authority to inspect the artillery units in the division and to hold them accountable for their technical proficiency. During the course of the battle, however, he serves primarily as a special staff officer, advising the commander on artillery matters.

The *deputy commander for political affairs* (also called the political officer) is subordinate to the division commander. He is also under the staff supervision of the army deputy for political affairs. The potential exists, of course, for the political officer to interfere with operations by reporting on the political reliability of the commander and other officers through political channels.

The *political officer,* who is also secretary of the division party organization, operates through a division political section which includes the *Komsomol* (Communist Youth Organization) subsection, the propaganda and agitation subsection, the political information subsection, and the personnel and welfare subsections. The political officer helps to promote the authority of the commander, to raise troop morale, and to enhance troop effectiveness. He bears direct responsibility for the organization of political work in the division. Elements under his control organize and conduct political indoctrination sessions, politically oriented, club-type activities, and lecture on current events and Soviet history.

Political Officer Responsibilities

Soviet regulations state the political officer must accomplish the following:

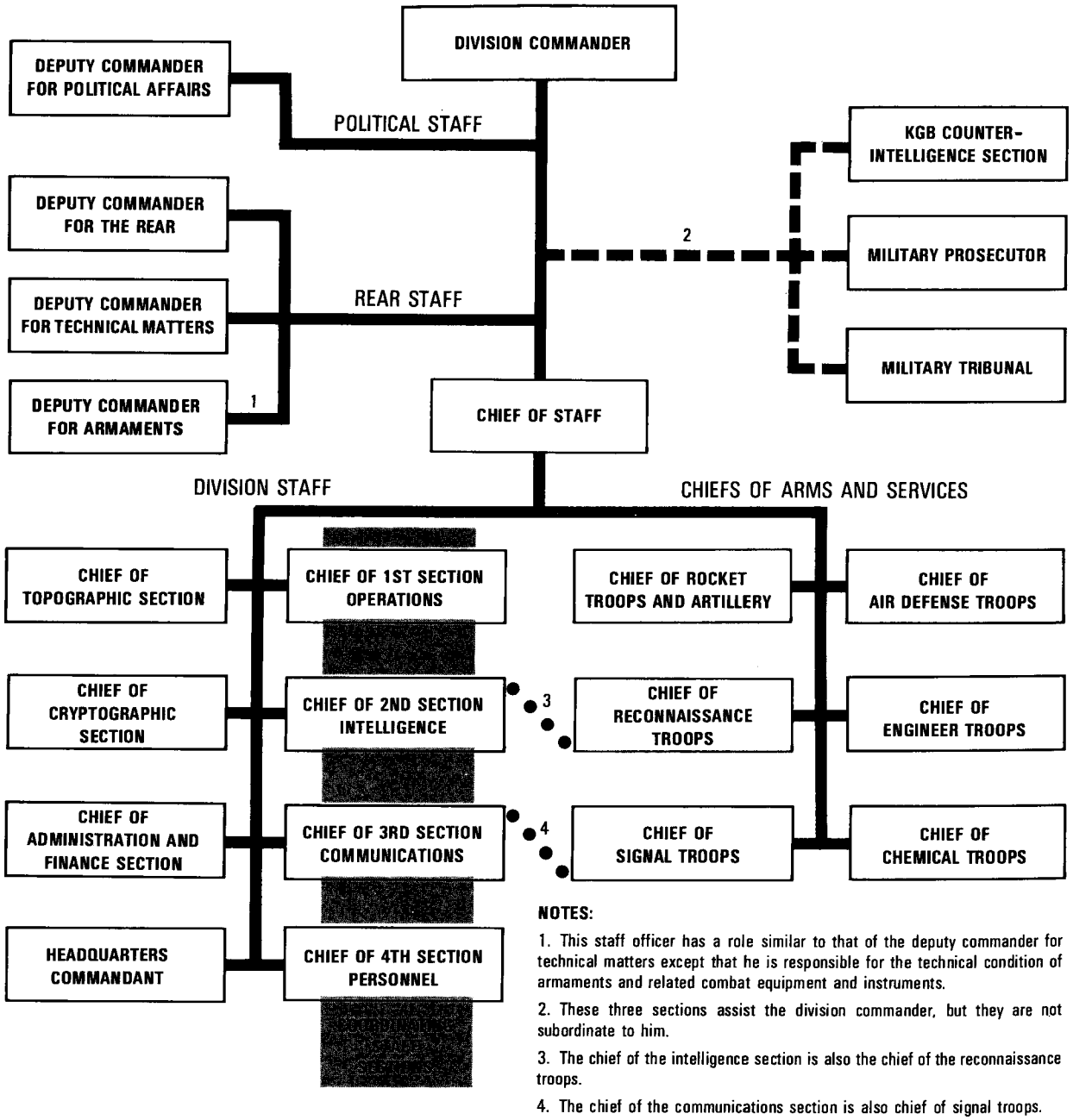
- Participate in planning for combat and political training.
- Organize and conduct political work.
- Cultivate unreserved dedication to the Soviet fatherland, the Communist Party and the Soviet government, proletarian internationalism and undeviating observance of the military oath, obedience to and respect for superiors, and absolute adherence to military regulations and orders.
- Conduct propaganda among soldiers concerning the successes in the building of communism, which includes organizing political agitation and propaganda; organizing and supervising political training for officers; educating troops to develop hatred for enemies of the Fatherland; and educating troops to develop a sense of personal responsibility for the condition of their equipment.

The *regimental commanders* command the division's maneuver units. They are responsible for the combat readiness of their units, as well as their combat and political training. They are the instruments through which the division commander fights the battle.

The Division Staff

The chief of staff controls the staff and coordinates its work. He is the primary conduit for information between the commander and his unit. He reports staff findings and acts as the organizer for execution of the command decision. He monitors progress through the staff and reports problems to the commander. He is responsible for coordination of all staff work, and is personally responsible for the coordination of logistic requirements between the chiefs of arms and services and the deputy commander for the rear.

The Soviet Division Staff



NOTES:

1. This staff officer has a role similar to that of the deputy commander for technical matters except that he is responsible for the technical condition of armaments and related combat equipment and instruments.
2. These three sections assist the division commander, but they are not subordinate to him.
3. The chief of the intelligence section is also the chief of the reconnaissance troops.
4. The chief of the communications section is also chief of signal troops.

Coordinating Staffs. The eight sections which make up the group the Soviets call the division staff are under the direct control of the chief of staff. The four coordinating staff sections belonging to this group are:

- first section, operations,
- second section, intelligence,
- third section, communications, and
- fourth section, personnel.

The most important coordinating staff section is the *operations section,* headed by the chief of operations. The chief of operations has responsibilty for training and formulating operations plans and orders. He monitors the work of all other staff sections, keeps abreast of the situation, and is ready to present information and recommendations concerning the tactical situation. He is present when the commander announces his decision, and he writes combat orders and important combat reports. Inspection troops assigned to the first section check on the execution of assigned missions and adherence of subordinate elements to command directives. In coordination with the intelligence section, the chief of the operations section keeps the commander informed on the progress of operations. His specific duties include—

- Collecting information concerning the tactical situation of friendly forces to include the division, adjacent units, and higher units.
- Preparing and disseminating orders, operational plans and reports, summaries, and situational overlays.
- Providing liaison for the exchange of information within division headquarters and with higher, subordinate, and adjacent units.
- Organizing the main command post and insuring rear area antitank, antiaircraft, and NBC defense.
- Organizing troop movement and traffic control.
- Coordinating the organization of reconnaissance with the intelligence section.
- Controlling the distribution of maps.

The *second section,* or intelligence section, is headed by the chief of intelligence, who is also the chief of reconnaissance troops. He is part of an intelligence chain of command which originates at *front.* In this regard, division-level intelligence efforts fit into an overall intelligence plan.

The chief of the second section is subordinate to the chief of staff, but can report directly to the division commander. In coordination with the operations section, the intelligence section makes collection plans and collects and evaluates information concerning the enemy, weather, and terrain. The section disseminates necessary evaluated information in a timely manner. During combat, the division intelligence officer directs the efforts of subordinate intelligence sections and reconnaissance units. Specific responsibilities of the intelligence officer include—

- Collecting and analyzing information on the enemy, terrain, and weather and its dissemination to the commander and adjacent units.
- Organizing reconnaissance missions, including requests for aerial reconnaissance, in coordination with the first section.
- Preparing the observation plan, in coordination with the first section.
- Preparing the intelligence portion of the division's combat order.
- Preparing periodic intelligence reports.
- Exploiting documents and materiel.
- Interrogating prisoners of war.

The *third section,* or communications section, is headed by the chief of communications, who is also the chief of signal troops. He organizes communications with subordinate, adjacent, and higher headquarters. The section must insure that the commander has continuous and uninterrupted tactical control by planning wire, radio, and mobile communications. The term "mobile communications" includes all means of communications other than radio and wire. Specific responsibilities of the third section include—

- Organizing division radio nets.
- Establishing call signs and radio procedures.
- Organizing courier and mail service.
- Operating the division message center.
- Supervising the supply, issue, and maintenance of signal equipment.

The *fourth section,* or personnel section, is headed by the chief of personnel. He assigns men; requests replacements; records losses; administers awards and decorations; and collects, records, and disposes of war booty. The fourth section keeps complete personnel files on company-grade officers, while files on enlisted personnel are maintained at regimental level. Files on higher ranking officers are maintained at levels higher than division.

Coordinating staff responsibility for logistics rests with the chief of staff. It is evident, however, that the chief of staff cannot devote a large portion of his time to detailed logistic coordination and still fulfill his other duties. Thus, the Soviets operate to a certain degree without a logistic staff officer. This fact increases the burden on the chiefs of arms and services and the deputy commander for the rear. Each chief is responsible for consolidating and forwarding logistic requests for his branch to the deputy commander for the rear.

Special Staffs. The division staff also includes the following four special staff sections:

- The *topographic section* gathers and analyzes terrain data and maintains supplies of maps, catalogs, and map-related equipment.
- The *cryptographic section* encodes and decodes the division's cryptographic communications, designates the codes to be used in communicating with subordinate units, and supervises communications security procedures and cryptographic training. This section's activities are integrated into a large effort, coordinated by the chief of the intelligence section. The intelligence officer operates according to guidance from higher levels in this regard.
- The *administration and finance section* organizes the administration and records necessary for providing quarters, food, supplies, and pay for division personnel. It is responsible for all division financial planning, accounting, auditing, and pay procedures. The division's finance officer supervises subordinate unit finance officers, who are responsible for the distribution of funds.
- The *headquarters commandant* combines the functions (in US Army terms) of the division headquarters commandant and the division provost marshal. He is responsible for insuring that the division headquarters and command posts, in garrison and in the field, are properly sited, organized, supported, and protected. He also directs the activities of the Commandant's Service (somewhat similar to US Military Police), and he operates the division's stockade. He may also be responsible for handling prisoners of war.

Arms and Services. The chiefs of arms and services serve as special staff officers and advise the commander on matters pertaining to their fields.

The *chief of rocket troops and artillery* serves as division fire support coordinator. Acting as the chief artillery advisor in combat, he usually is located at the forward command post with the division commander.

The *chief of air defense troops* acts as a special staff officer for air defense. He advises the commander on air defense tactics and employment.

The *chief of engineer troops* advises the commander on engineer support for all the division's missions. He assigns tasks to engineer units based on the commander's concept of the operation.

The *chief of chemical troops* is responsible for the division's protection from NBC weapons. He is responsible for the supply and maintenance of NBC gear and equipment, for organization of NBC reconnaissance, and for all NBC training and work performed by division personnel.

The *chief of signal troops* is also the chief of the communications section. Likewise, the chief of reconnaissance troops is also the chief of the intelligence section. Their duties are described in the previous section on coordinating staff.

The relationship between the chief of a given branch and the unit commander is best explained by the rating system. For example, the division commander signs the engineer battalion commander's efficiency report, but the report is written by, or at least greatly influenced by, the chief of engineers. The division commander shows the report to the rated officer, usually in the presence of the chief. When the division commander is displeased with the performance of the engineer battalion, he is likely to express his displeasure to the chief and not to the battalion commander.

Other Advisory Staffs. Besides the chiefs of arms and services, the deputy commander for the rear, the deputy commander for technical matters, and the deputy commander for political affairs may be considered special staff officers.

The *deputy commander for the rear* advises the commander on supply and rear service matters. As noted, he also shoulders part of the coordinating staff responsibility for logistics. Through the rear staff, he prepares logistic plans and orders.

The *deputy commander for technical matters* also serves as a special staff officer. He advises the commander on maintenance and repair procedures and vehicular operational readiness.

Furthermore, although probably not designated a division staff officer, the commander of the helicopter element (or squadron in selected divisions) acts as the division commander's primary adviser for employment of the division's organic and attached air assets. When aircraft are used for fire support, the helicopter element (squadron) commander carefully coordinates his plan and its execution with the division CRTA.

Other Support Sections. Besides the coordinating and special staff, there are several additional sections which may not be considered as the personal staff of the division commander as they are not subordinate to him. These include the KGB section, the military prosecutor, and the military tribunal.

The *KGB section,* staffed by personnel from the Committee for State Security (KGB), is responsible for counterintelligence. It works independently of the political officer. This section investigates and interrogates espionage suspects, enforces the political reliability of division personnel, and participates in determining key assignments.

The *military prosecutor* is in charge of investigating and prosecuting criminal activity by division personnel. He is responsible for enforcing both military regulations and civil laws, including those related to counterintelligence. In close coordination with the KGB special section and the deputy commander for political affairs, the prosecutor and his staff investigate cases and prosecute them before military tribunals. The division prosecutor is responsible to the prosecutor at army level.

The *military tribunal* also lies outside the tactical chain of command and consists of at least one judge and one or more officers trained in law. The tribunal presides over trials of military personnel charged with violating military law and of civilians accused of treason or espionage.

Division Command and Staff Procedures

The Soviet division commander must gather information on which to base decisions, convey his decisions in the form of orders, and supervise the execution of these orders. The commander relies on his staff to assist him in accomplishing his tasks. As a result, the Soviets have formalized staff procedures and have established formats for combat documents. It should be understood that these procedures may be performed completely only when time is not a factor in the decision-making process—for example during preparations for a major offensive. Once fast-moving combat has begun, all procedures will be abbreviated.

As far as can be determined, the Soviet commander follows procedures familiar to US commanders. He makes an estimate of the situation, issues a *warning order,* considers courses of action that have been researched and presented by the staff, and finally makes a command decision which is approved by the army commander. The decision is printed in an approved, detailed format and disseminated according to a fixed distribution list. In their military writings, the Soviets emphasize the need to be able to adjust rapidly to radical changes in the situation which can occur on the modern battlefield. This emphasis is more prevalent than emphasis on rigid adherence to formal procedures. As a result, the commander's estimate and decision may take only a few minutes and may be based on very scanty information. The *combat order* may be nothing more than a sentence transmitted by radio or messenger to a regimental commander.

Warning Order. The Soviets attempt to maximize the time available for combat preparations by issuing warning orders to alert subordinate units that an operation is upcoming. In the division, the commander receives his mission from the army commander. This order could be delivered by radio, messenger, or at a formal briefing. The division commander studies the mission, the concept of the operation, and scheduled support by army units. He analyzes the role of his division in the overall operation of the army. From this analysis, he extracts information that will permit his staff and subordinate commanders to begin preparation for combat, and issues this information in the form of a warning order.

The chief of staff organizes the staff to present information to the commander concerning the enemy, terrain, troops available, and weather. From this information, the commander makes his estimate of the situation. If time permits, he makes a personal reconnaissance with his subordinate commanders and staff officers as required to better evaluate the situation. Given sufficient time, written staff estimates are prepared and coordinated for the commander.

The operations section prepares several possible courses of action for the commander's consideration, and the chief of staff indicates his preference. Based on the available data and the recommendations from the staff, the commander makes a decision. The decision may be one of the recommended courses of action, a combination of two or more recommendations, or a new solution.

Combat Order. The commander announces his decision in the presence of the chief of staff, the chief of the operations section, and, when possible, other key personnel such as the coordinating staff, the chiefs of arms and services, and the deputy and subordinate commanders. The final decision is issued in the form of an operation order—in Soviet terminology, a "combat order." When time permits, the combat order contains the following information:

- A brief description of the enemy situation.
- The missions of the division and adjacent units.
- Boundaries separating the division and adjacent units.
- Commander's concept of the operation.
- Guidance on NBC measures within the division zone.
- Immediate mission, subsequent mission, and direction of advance for subordinate units.
- Missions for artillery, antiaircraft, engineer, chemical, and other special units.
- The time troops must be prepared for action.
- Detailed coordinating instructions.
- Location of the main command post and its anticipated direction of displacement.

Annexes to combat orders are forwarded with the order. If they are incomplete when the order is transmitted, they are sent out separately to prevent delay in transmission of the order. Types of annexes include coordination requirements, intelligence, security, signal, artillery, engineer, movement order, and counterattack plans.

A separate order for logistics is written by the deputy commander for the rear and his staff. The order organizes the rear area, routes of movement for rear elements, supply routes, supply points, sequence and time of resupply, rear area security, and the location of the rear area command post. The order is approved by the division commander.

Supervisory Control. The issuance of orders does not insure that they will be carried out or even understood. Therefore, the Soviets place a great emphasis on supervision after the order is issued. The chief of staff is responsible to the commander for the overall organization of staff supervision. Each staff section is responsible for checking on the execution of the orders which it prepares and insures that orders have been understood correctly. The chief of staff issues the necessary orders, with the division commander's approval, to resolve the misunderstandings.

Proper supervision may take many forms. Supervision may include personal visits by the commander or appropriate staff representatives, observation from the air and ground observation points, and instructions and questions passed by radio or messenger. The best method, according to Soviet thought, is personal contact between the commander or staff member and the subordinate organization's commander.

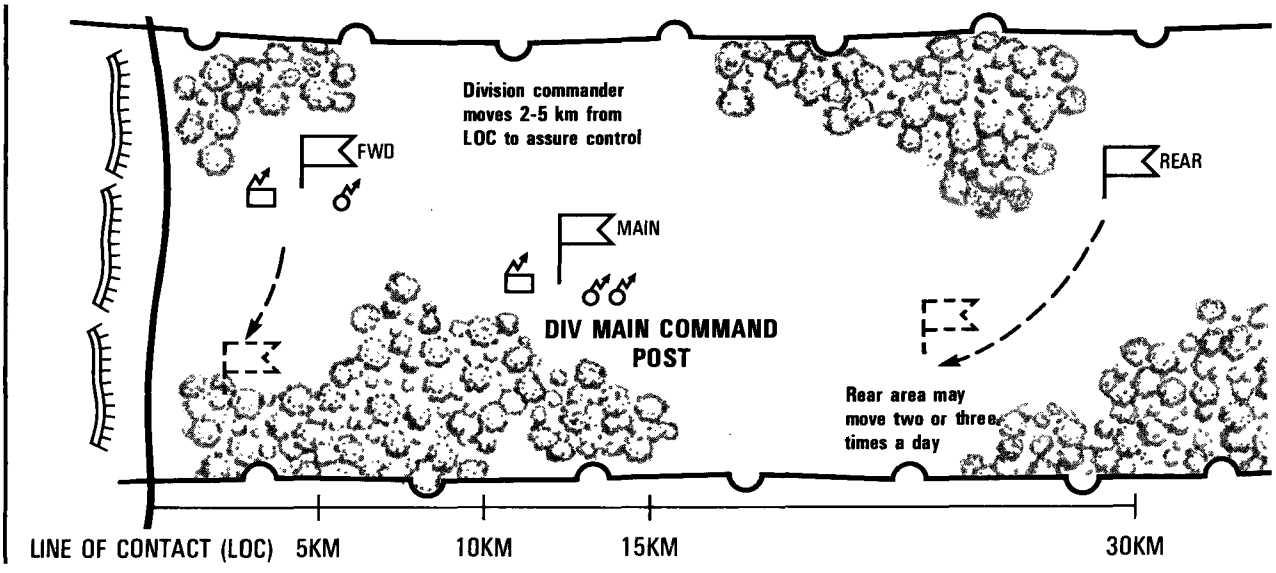
Command Posts. The Soviet division commander also organizes a series of command posts for control purposes. During an attack, the division commander moves well forward, where he can best influence the action. This forward command post is completely mobile and may move 2 to 5 kilometers behind the line of contact. The commander usually will have with him the operations officer and the CRTA. He also may select other officers.

The division's main command post also is mobile, but is much larger than the forward command post. It is controlled by the chief of staff and moves 10 to 15 kilometers behind the line of contact.

Additionally, the rear area is expected to move two to three times a day and is controlled by a rear area command post. This command post usually will not be more than 30 kilometers from the line of contact.

On the march and during the attack, the commander controls the action by radio and messengers. In a static situation, or in the defense, wire communications will be installed. Command posts on the ground can be expected to be well dispersed and camouflaged. Additionally, in a static situation, an alternate command post probably will be established to assume command if the main command post is destroyed.

Divisional Command Posts



Communications. Normal radio nets in the division include command, staff, coordination, warning, and special purpose nets. The command nets link the division commander with regimental commanders and major support units such as the artillery, engineer, and chemical units. Battalion commanders are contacted directly when emergency conditions dictate. The chief of rocket troops and artillery establishes a command net with division artillery units. The staff net provides the chief of staff communications with staff elements of the reconnaissance battalion, the motorized rifle regiments, and the tank regiment. The coordination nets link the main command post with the division rear, and division headquarters with adjacent units. The warning net consists of radio receivers set on a designated warning frequency throughout the division. This net is used for tactical alert and warning messages. The special purpose nets employ radiotelegraph and relay equipment to communicate with units executing special missions and with airborne units behind enemy lines. Division commanders also may establish other nets as required when the necessary equipment is available.

Soviet units usually observe radio silence in, and when departing, assembly areas. While moving toward the enemy, radio transmissions normally are limited to various codewords which inform commanders that assigned tasks have been accomplished or that difficulties have been encountered. Visual signals, such as flags and flares, are used to a great extent during movement.

When contact with the enemy occurs, normal radio procedures are reinitiated. Call signs identify units, and prearranged codewords refer to landmarks. Subordinate commanders inform the division commander, usually by codeword, when phase lines are reached, when NBC contamination is encountered, when contact with the enemy occurs, when the enemy is suspected of conducting a withdrawal, and when other important developments occur.

REGIMENT-LEVEL COMMAND AND CONTROL

The regiment headquarters consist of a commander, a chief of staff, his staff group, three functional groups each headed by a deputy commander, and chiefs of organic or attached support arms or services.

The commander, the chief of staff, and the deputy commanders for technical affairs, rear services, and political affairs form the command group. The commander draws a major part of his decision-making input from them.

The *commander* is usually a colonel or a lieutenant colonel. He is most likely to be in his late thirties or early forties and to have had advanced tactical training at one of the higher military academies. He is expected to maintain strict control over subordinate commanders; to inspect frequently the various training, administrative, and equipment maintenance aspects of his command in garrison; and to set a high personal example. In combat, he has considerable prerogatives in the way in which he organizes and executes his tactical mission.

The *chief of staff* is usually a lieutenant colonel and a graduate of one of the higher military academies. He is the second-in-command of the regiment and is the only officer who may issue written orders in the commander's name. The chief of staff is responsible for mobilization readiness and troop control. He coordinates the work of the functional staff groups and refines and presents to the commander the information which is required for decision making.

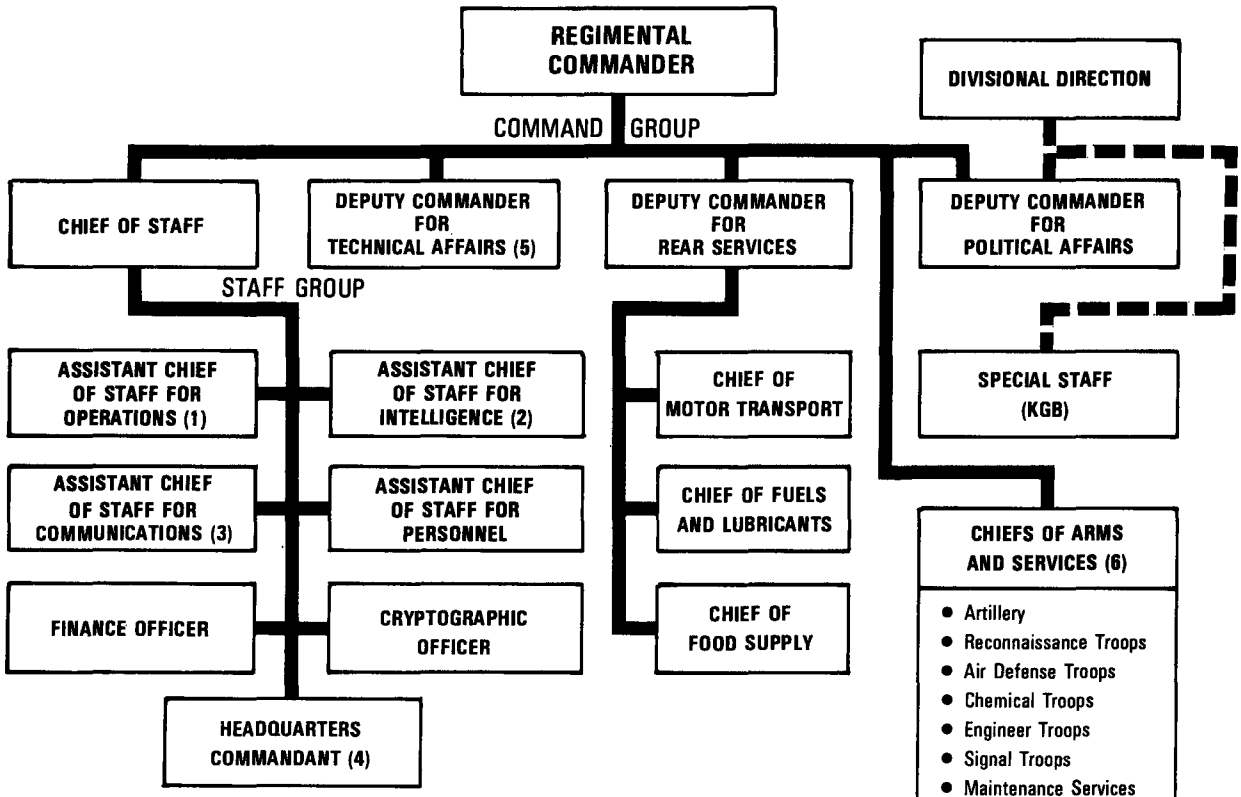
The *deputy commander for political affairs* most often is a major or lieutenant colonel. He has a dual reporting responsibility—to the regimental commander and to the deputy for political affairs at division headquarters. It is the political deputy commander's responsibility to conduct political activities directed at insuring full combat readiness, military discipline, and high morale. He directs the work of political and *Komsomol* activists, is responsible for indoctrinating the troops in the political goals and implications of combat actions, and supervises recreational activities.

The *deputy commander for technical affairs* is normally a major or lieutenant colonel and a graduate engineer. He is responsible to the commander for the serviceability and maintenance of the armored and automotive equipment in the regiment. He is the direct superior of the technical officers who are found in each subunit down to company level. During combat he organizes the recovery, repair, or evacuation of disabled armored vehicles. Besides his other duties, the technical deputy is responsible for the military and specialist training of all technical troops in the regiment.

The *deputy commander for rear services,* normally a major or lieutenant colonel, is responsible for transport and the supply of regimental subunits both in garrison and in the field with ammunition, fuel, food, clothing, and equipment. During combat he commands the rear area command post.

The *staff group* is subordinate directly to the chief of staff and comprises the assistant chiefs of staff for operations, intelligence, communications, and personnel. The staff group also includes a finance

The Soviet Regimental Staff



NOTES:

(1) Also Deputy Chief of Staff

(2) Commands the reconnaissance company

(3) Commands the signal company

(4) Controls work of traffic regulators

(5) Also commands the maintenance company

(6) An ad hoc group which provides advice if required; represents organic or attached arms and services listed above. Officers in this group head, or are members of, other staff groups. Their primary task is to command the combat support and combat service support subunits.

officer, a cryptographic officer, and a headquarters commandant who controls headquarters disposition, security, and traffic control (see tasks, next page).

The chiefs of organic and attached arms and services form an ad hoc group to advise the commander on matters within their expertise. These officers are the commanders of combat support and service support units which are organic or attached to the regiment.

The headquarters of the regiment operates a main command post and a rear area command post (the command post of the deputy commander for rear services). The regimental commander's armored vehicle may be located forward of the main command post, functioning as a command observation post. Additional observation posts are established by artillery and air observers.

The *main command* post consists of several armored vehicles, including the commander's vehicle. It is staffed by the chief of staff; the deputy commander for political affairs; the assistant chiefs of staff for operations, intelligence, and communications; and the commanders of the regimental engineer and chemical defense subunits. The commanders of supporting artillery units, mounted in their own command vehicles, normally are collocated. The main command post moves in tactical bounds up to 5 km behind the line of contact. When in position, the command post is dispersed and camouflaged.

Tasks of Officers in the Staff Group

POSITION	RANK	RESPONSIBLE FOR
ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF FOR OPERATIONS	Major	Planning operations, liaison and training; serving as the Deputy Chief of Staff
ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF FOR INTELLIGENCE	Captain or Major	Planning reconnaissance missions; collecting, evaluating, and disseminating tactical intelligence; commanding the regimental reconnaissance company.
ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF FOR COMMUNICATIONS	Captain	Establishment and maintenance of communications; supervision of serving of signal equipment; management of the regimental post office; command of the regimental signal company.
ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF FOR PERSONNEL	Major	Maintaining statistical records on personnel, equipment and prisoners of war. Processing replacement leave, and awards and decorations.

The *rear area command post* consists of one or two vehicles. The deputy commander for rear services is aided by the commanders of service support units as required. He is responsible for organizing administrative and logistic support of the regiment from his command post. This involves the receipt and issue of fuel, ammunition, food, and minor equipment. The rear area command post also maintains staff control of vehicle and manpower replacements; maintenance, repair, and recovery of vehicles; medical services; and personnel services. During combat, the rear area command post is expected to operate about 15 km behind the line of contact. Ammunition supply for the artillery is coordinated by an officer from the artillery battalion, who is located in the rear area command post for this purpose.

After receiving a mission from the division commander, the regimental commander, assisted by his staff, makes an estimate of the situation. A warning order is sent to subunits. Intelligence on the enemy and information on friendly units is disseminated. After all factors have been weighed and possible courses of action have been examined, the commander makes his decision. Frequently, details are marked on a map from which the staff formulates written combat orders. If time and the tactical situation allow, commanders will issue orders at a meeting with subordinate commanders. If rapid deployment is necessary, orders are given by radio and then backed up by schematics that are delivered to the subordinate commanders.

The regimental commander controls his subunits by issuing combat instructions over the radio. These fragmentary orders change, supplement, or elaborate on initial combat orders as the tactical situation changes.

BATTALION-LEVEL COMMAND AND CONTROL

The battalion commander is normally a major responsible for—

- The combat and mobilization readiness of the battalion.
- The combat and political training, education, military discipline, political reliability, and morale of the battalion's personnel.
- The condition and security of weapons, combat and other equipment, ammunition, fuel, and other materiel of the battalion.
- The successful accomplishment of the battalion's missions.

The battalion commander is assisted by a staff that includes chief of staff, deputy commander for technical matters, and deputy commander for political affairs.

The *chief of staff* is the commander's "right arm." He has the authority to give orders to all subordinate elements; and he insures compliance with orders from the battalion commander and higher commanders. The chief of staff draws up the combat and training plans (based on the regimental plan and the battalion commander's guidance) for the battalion and insures that they are carried out. He also insures that required reports are prepared and dispatched on time to regimental headquarters. He is the principal organizer of rear service support for the battalion.

The *deputy commander for technical affairs* supervises the battalion's maintenance service element and reports directly to the battalion commander or chief of staff. He is responsible for training of rear services personnel, and for the technical condition of their equipment.

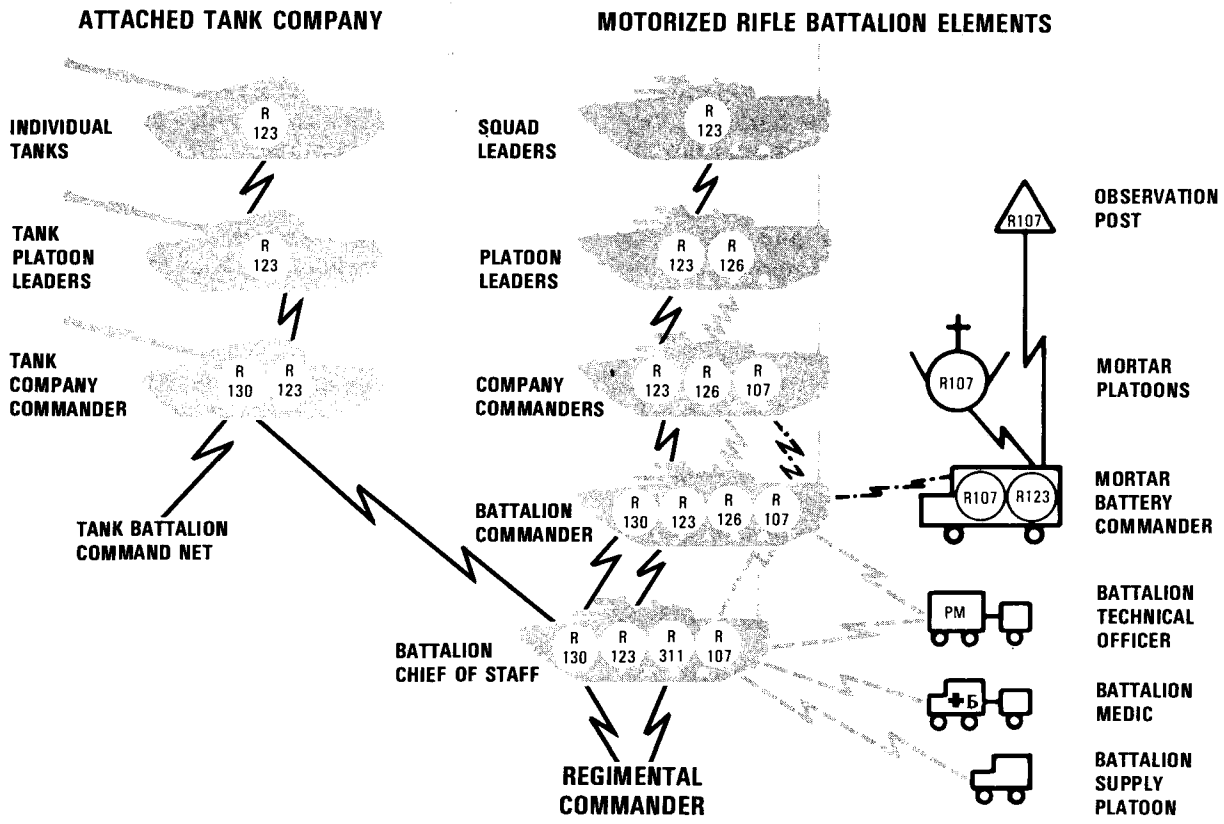
The *deputy commander for political affairs* organizes and conducts political training. He reports to the battalion commander and to the regimental deputy for political affairs.

The *communications platoon leader* acts as the battalion communications officer. It is his responsibility to train battalion personnel in signal procedures and to supervise communications training of the battalion, to include the conduct of classes for radio operators and periodic inspections of communications equipment. In combat, the battalion communications officer receives instructions from the regimental communications officer, battalion commander and chief of staff.

The battalion commander directs the combat actions of his unit from his command vehicle located near his companies.

In an attack, the commander controls his battalion primarily by radio, although he also uses messengers, personal contact, signal flares, signal flags, and other means. Before contact with the enemy, radio silence is observed, except for brief transmissions concerning reconnaissance reports and the crossing of phase lines. In the defense, the battalion relies primarily on wire and telephone communications, but messengers, signal flares, and radios also are used extensively. NBC warnings are provided over a dedicated radio receiver.

Representative Communications Net in a Motorized Rifle Battalion



NOTES

1. Although the company commanders and the battalion commander have R126s for dismounted control, they would attempt to control their subordinate elements from their BMPs.
2. The battalion chief of staff would control the battalion rear services. The battalion technical officer is responsible for the maintenance section
3. The antitank platoon in the BTR-equipped motorized rifle battalion would be part of the fire support net.
4. The battalion chief of staff's R-311 receiver is used to receive air and NBC warnings.

The radio is the most important of several means of control available to the Soviet tank unit commander. Soviet military writers insist that only the speed and flexibility of radio communications can adequately meet the demands for command and control in modern combined arms combat. At the same time, they stress the importance of being able to employ other means of control to supplement or, if necessary, to replace radio communications. The Soviets train extensively in the use of audio and visual signals, pyrotechnics, and "do-as-I-do" control procedures with well-rehearsed tactical formations and battle drills.

The battalion is the primary unit for execution of maneuver. Consistent with that concept, control of radio communications is centralized at battalion level. When individual tank companies operate with their parent battalion, all of the battalion's tanks may monitor the battalion VHF (FM) command net and receive orders from the battalion commander. In combat, the battalion commander attempts to maintain a position from which he can observe and direct the actions of all his companies. Requests for fire support are almost always coordinated at battalion level. The supporting artillery commander (with fire mission computation capability) is collocated with the tank battalion commander.

Attached units such as a motorized rifle company, an artillery subunit (as large as a battalion), an air defense element, and an engineer support element, as well as organic supply, maintenance, and medical sections, all operate stations in the battalion VHF (FM) command and coordination net. These organic support elements normally do not transmit unless called.

Company commanders also have the authority to transmit on the battalion nets. They have the authority to call for supporting fire in combat, but such calls for fire normally are channeled through the battalion commander. While Soviet tactical communications practices seem restrictive, they do appear to be adequate for the company commander's limited control authority, which normally is confined to fire control of his tanks and the deployment of his company in rehearsed battle drills.

As might be expected, the authority of the platoon leader is even more restricted. He is not authorized to transmit on the radio except in an extreme emergency or to request support. This communications posture is consistent with his role, which is to lead his platoon in the execution of the company mission. He does not have the responsibility to translate his superiors' mission into a platoon mission.

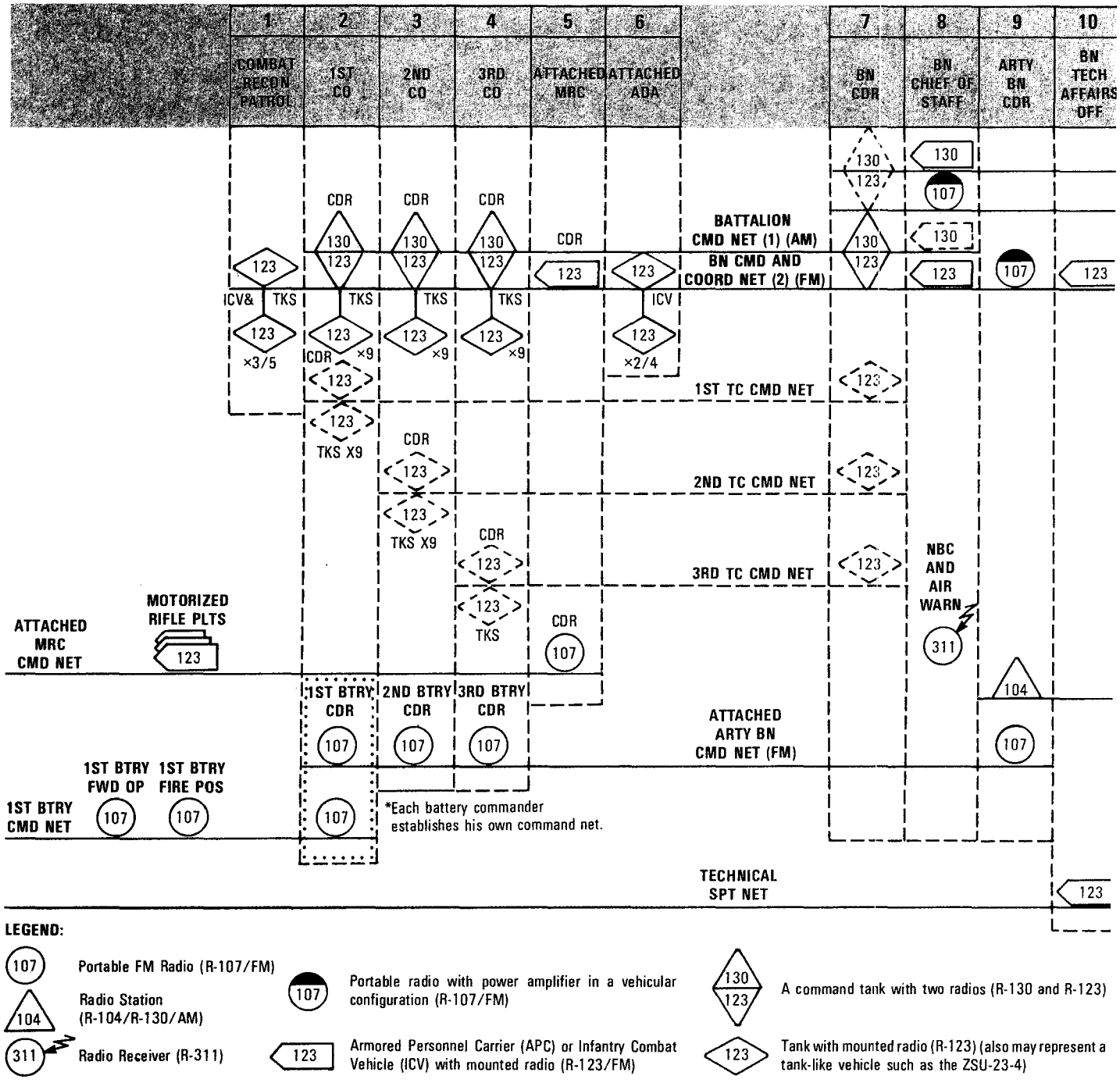
The noncommissioned tank commander monitors and complies with his superiors' commands and follows his platoon leader in the execution of the company mission. Since he is not issued a map, he has limited capability to relay targets of opportunity to fire support units.

However, a commander of a tank company or a platoon does have greater latitude when his unit is employed as a reconnaissance group or a march security element, or is attached to a motorized rifle battalion. For example, the company commander of a tank company that is reinforcing a motorized rifle battalion will operate his own company VHF (FM) net while maintaining communications with his parent tank battalion using his HF (AM) radio. The reinforced motorized rifle battalion commander normally will communicate with the reinforcing tank company on the tank company commander's net.

The variant of a reinforced tank battalion radio net shown at right approximates the portrayal of radio net structures in Soviet military journals and books. Each long vertical rectangle drawn with a broken line represents a command element or subelement within (or attached to) the battalion. Each solid horizontal line represents a single radio net. A symbol (diamond, circle, etc.) enclosing a number on a given horizontal line within the broken lines of a given command element shows that the command element routinely operates a radio station (of the type represented by the number) in that radio net. The identity of the radio net is written on the horizontal line, and the identity of the command element or subelement is indicated at the top of the command column. A symbol drawn with a broken line (diamond, circle, etc.) that appears within a command element on a radio net line shows that the particular command element may operate in that net either as required, or as the alternative to another net, but it does not have sufficient radio assets to operate in the net on a continuous basis.

RADIO NETS, REINFORCED TANK BATTALION (VARIANT)

Shown here is a radio net diagram of a tank battalion to which an entire artillery battalion is attached for support. A tank battalion normally would be directly supported by an entire artillery battalion if it were fig were operating separately from its parent regiment,

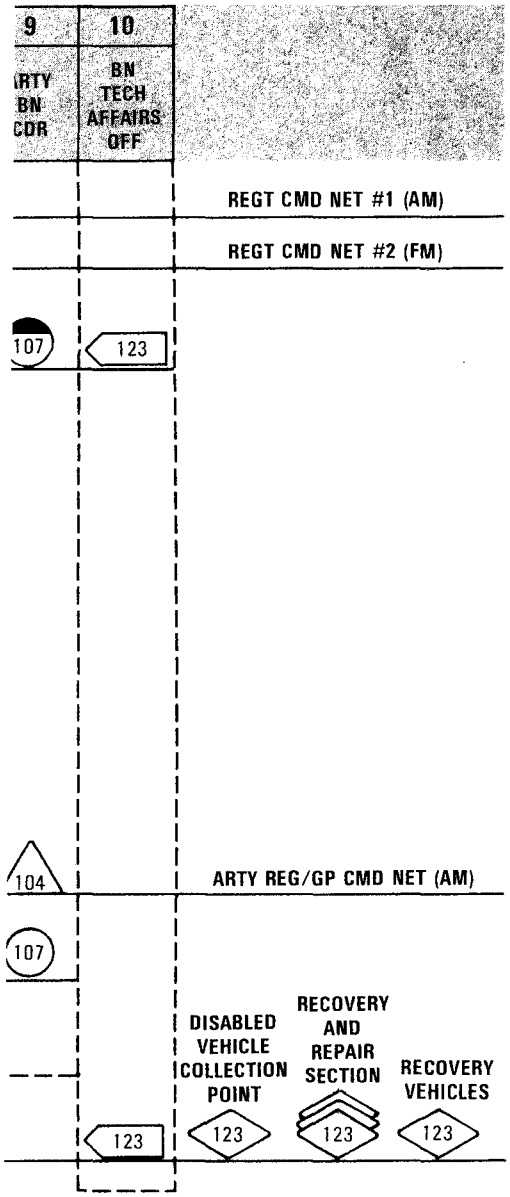


LEGEND:

- 107 — Portable FM Radio (R-107/FM)
- 104 — Radio Station (R-104/R-130/AM)
- 311 — Radio Receiver (R-311)
- 107 — Portable radio with power amplifier in a vehicular configuration (R-107/FM)
- 123 — Armored Personnel Carrier (APC) or Infantry Combat Vehicle (ICV) with mounted radio (R-123/FM)
- 130/123 — A command tank with two radios (R-130 and R-123)
- 123 — Tank with mounted radio (R-123) (also may represent a tank-like vehicle such as the ZSU-23-4)

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n if it were fighting in the first echelon, or if it
rent regiment, as it might in a pursuit.



R-130 and R-123)

lso may represent a
23-4)

NOTES:

1. Broken symbol indicates operation as required.
2. Solid horizontal lines represent primary radio nets.
3. Vertical broken lines show command subelements.

The battalion command group is represented by columns 7 through 10. Within the command group is the **battalion commander** *(column 7)* operating from his own tank, which also serves as a mobile command observation post (COP); the **battalion chief of staff** *(column 8),* who operates the battalion command post from an armored command vehicle; the supporting **artillery battalion commander** *(column 9),* who operates his battalion command observation post from a van or an armored command vehicle; and the **deputy commander for technical affairs** *(column 10),* who directs maintenance, recovery, and support operations from an armored command vehicle or APC. Not shown is a second command truck belonging to the signal section which serves as a backup command post. It is equipped with sufficient radio assets to duplicate every station maintained in the battalion command post.

The battalion commander *(column 7)* has two radios in his tank. One is a VHF (FM) radio, the R123, which can be pretuned to four preset frequencies. The battalion commander normally will operate the radio on his own **FM command and coordination net** *(CMD NET #2).* He can switch to the regimental command net (FM) as required. If his companies are operating their own command nets, he is capable of communicating directly with any subordinate company's tanks by turning to that company's net. He normally would use the preset capability on the R123 radio to reduce the time required to change frequencies.

The other radio in the battalion commander's tank is an HF (AM) set, the **R130 transceiver.** The battalion commander normally will operate this radio on his own battalion **HF (AM) command net** *(CMD NET #1),* in which only his company commanders and chief of staff may operate. The battalion commander has both command and technical control of this net. The commander will use his R130 to operate in the regimental command net (AM) as required.

The battalion chief of staff *(column 8)* controls the battalion command post, which is mounted in an armored command vehicle. He normally has three transceivers and one receiver in his mobile command post. One is the R130 HF (AM) transceiver, which he uses to communicate with regimental headquarters on the regimental command net (AM). He uses
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The last element to be conside
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The principal subordinate comn
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command net (AM). He uses an amplifier-equipped R107 VHF (FM) transceiver to communicate with the regiment on the regimental command net (FM). It appears that the chief of staff has primary responsibility for maintaining these battalion stations in the two regimental nets, thereby leaving the battalion commander free to use both his time and his radios to control the battalion. The chief of staff will use his R130 radio to operate in the battalion HF (AM) command net (CMD NET #1) as required. He operates the net control station (NCS) of the battalion command and coordination net (CMD NET #2) using the R123 VHF (FM) radio in his CP vehicle. Finally, the chief of staff maintains the only battalion station in the higher headquarters NBC and air warning net, using the R311 HF (AM) radio receiver. He retransmits any warning messages on the battalion FM command and coordination net (CMD NET #2).

The attached artillery battalion commander *(column 9)* operates a station in the tank battalion command and coordination net (CMD NET #2) using an amplifier-equipped R107. He rarely transmits on the net, because he normally is collocated with the tank battalion commander. He communicates with his own higher headquarters on the artillery regiment AM command net using an R130/R104 HF (AM) radio.

The artillery battalion commander operates his own command net using another R107 (FM) radio equipped with a power amplifier. Not shown in the diagram is the battalion fire direction net, which is controlled by the battalion fire direction center.

The last element to be considered within the battalion command group is the deputy commander for technical affairs. As the senior officer in the battalion support group, he maintains a station in the battalion FM command and coordination net (CMD NET #2) using an R123 vehicular FM radio. He also uses a second R123 to control the battalion technical support net. Battalion repair and recovery elements also monitor this net, and disabled tanks and other vehicles may tune to the net to request assistance.

The principal subordinate command elements of the reinforced tank battalion are shown on the left side of the diagram. Each of the **tank company commanders** *(columns 2, 3, and 4)* has two radios in his tank. He uses his R130 HF (AM) vehicular radio to operate in the battalion AM command net (CMD NET #1). He operates in the battalion FM command and coordination net (CMD NET #2) on his second radio, the R123. Unlike most other subordinate stations, he has permission to transmit in the net. Under exceptional circumstances, such as when the battalion is widely dispersed in a pursuit, he may use the R123 to control his own FM net, in which case his only radio link with the battalion would be the AM command net (CMD NET #1). The company net alternative is shown by broken lines within each company command element. Each tank below company level normally is equipped with one radio, the R123 VHF (FM).

The **commander of the attached motorized rifle company** *(column 5)* has two VHF (FM) radios in his vehicle. He uses his R123 to communicate with the supported tank battalion commander on the FM battalion command and coordination net (CMD NET #2). He controls his own company net using the R107 VHF (FM) radio in his vehicle.

Air defense elements and the **combat reconnaissance patrol,** normally composed of a tank platoon, *(columns 1 and 6)* operate in the battalion FM command and coordination net (CMD NET #2).

Shown within each company command element *(columns 2, 3, and 4)* is an **artillery battery command observation post.** Normally, the battery commander is collocated with the commander of the tank company that he is tasked to support, and communications between the two commanders are accomplished face to face. The battery commander maintains radio communications with his battalion commander on the artillery battalion command net (FM) using an R107 radio. He uses a second R107 to communicate with his own battery firing position, and forward observation post (shown on the diagram for the first battery only) on his own battery FM command net.

Fire requests generated by the tank company normally are coordinated at battalion level. However, Soviet artillery doctrine and organization do provide a means for direct response to company-level fire requests. These requests can be passed through the supporting battery

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Fire requests generated by the tank company normally are coordinated at battalion level. However, Soviet artillery doctrine and organization do provide a means for direct response to company-level fire requests. These requests can be passed through the supporting battery commander to his firing battery over the nets shown here. The degree of centralization of fire support coordination will be dictated by the combat situation as reflected in the task organization and combat orders.

Below regiment level, the Soviets do not employ sufficient quantities of secure-voice equipment to be operationally significant. From platoon to regiment level, commands routinely are transmitted by radio in clear text during combat.

Stations are identified by callsigns that are issued in the communications operating instructions compiled by the battalion communications platoon leader. The regimental communications officer issues the battalion a block of frequencies and callsigns. Each radio net "item" created normally remains in effect for the duration of an operation.

Place names are identified on the radio using code names assigned to major terrain features by the battalion commander during the ground reconnaissance phase of a combat operation. This local encoding process may be supplemented by an encoded map reference grid system. Pyrotechnic tables and brevity codes also are generated locally, although some code assignments may come from higher headquarters.

Most information is disseminated orally by the battalion commander and the communications platoon leader during the ground reconnaissance, which normally precedes an operation. At that time, the battalion officers record on their maps codenames, frequencies, callsigns, and perhaps even a simple radio net diagram. For obvious reasons, the Soviets call the map "the officers' encoded map," or "encoded working map."

The Soviets strive to maintain strict radio discipline. In the defense, they communicate by wire whenever possible. In the offense, they maintain radio silence until the outbreak of battle, when those authorized to transmit may do so without restriction. In an attack against a defending enemy, the battle is considered to have begun with the artillery preparation. In the meeting engagement, radio silence is lifted as soon as any element of the Soviet advancing force, other than the combat reconnaissance patrol, makes enemy contact.

CHAPTER 4

OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS: *FRONT* AND ARMY

The offensive is the only type of combat action . . . , employment of which attains the complete route of the enemy and the seizure of important objectives and areas.

A. A. Sidorenko
The Offensive

TVD OFFENSIVE

Front and army operations normally take place within a theater of military operations (Russian: TVD), encompassing a considerable part of the territory of a continent and comprising a level of command. A TVD offensive has a strategic mission to defeat and destroy enemy field forces, to capture vital territory, and to bring about the political destruction of the enemy.

Offensive operations within a TVD could be supported by—

- Strategic aviation.
- Strategic rocket forces.
- Airborne forces.
- Transport aviation.
- Naval and naval infantry forces.

Within the TVD, the operational formations are *fronts* and armies. A *front* is a wartime formation comprised of several armies or separate divisions. Its size varies with the mission it is given within the overall strategic operation. An army is the largest peacetime ground maneuver formation at the operational level. In wartime, the composition and size of an army also varies dependent upon mission. An army may be either tank or combined arms. Its structure provides adequate control and ground-based support for the divisions assigned to it during the army's participation in a *front* operation.

Divisions and smaller organizations are found at the tactical level. The division has a fixed organization and serves as the "building block" and maneuver element of armies. The motorized rifle and tank divisions are balanced, powerful, and mobile organizations capable of operations in a nonnuclear as well as a nuclear environment. At this level, the Soviets emphasize both sustainability and mobility. Organic logistic assets can sustain the division for several days of high-intensity, high-speed combat and are as mobile as the maneuver units.

The development of air assault brigades has given the theater commander large, flexible, and well-armed formations that he can employ early in the battle against targets in the enemy rear. The brigade may be deployed as a unit or as subunits. Its mission is to seize, disrupt, or destroy nuclear weapons, airfields, command, control and communication (C^3) centers, logistics facilities, and key terrain such as river crossing sites and road junctions. In this manner, it helps shift the focus of the battle away from the forward edge of the battle area (FEBA). If successful, the activities of the brigade facilitate rapid penetration by first echelon formations through the enemy's forward defensive zone and directly support the high-speed movement of large exploitation forces advancing from the *front* into the depths of the enemy's defenses.

FRONT OFFENSIVE

The mission of a *front* offensive is to seize key political and economic centers and concurrently to destroy enemy military forces defending them.

A *front* offensive involves much more than attacks against enemy forward defensive positions. It involves coordinated, repetitive, intensive strikes throughout the entire depth of enemy field forces. These strikes are accomplished by an initial, massive, nonnuclear air operation, heliborne and airborne assault, possibly coordinated with deep attacks by an operational maneuver group, all available unconventional warfare means, surface-to-surface rockets and missiles, electronic warfare, possible chemical warfare, and, if deemed necessary, nuclear warfare.

The overriding aim in a Soviet front offensive is to delay or prevent the war from turning nuclear by the swift, early destruction or neutralization of enemy nuclear weapons by nonnuclear means. High rates of advance by attacking ground forces, coupled with strikes throughout the rear, are intended to cripple the enemy's ability to respond effectively to the Soviet offensive and to resort to tactical nuclear warfare. The top priority target for Soviet weapons would be enemy nuclear delivery systems.

Offensive Planning

In planning an offensive operation for the *front,* consideration is always given to those situations in which either side would employ nuclear weapons. Destruction or neutralization of the enemy's nuclear-capable delivery systems is considered essential. Thus, continuous reconnaissance is planned to target those systems with a nuclear capability accurately. Planning

at *front* level is essentially the same for both nuclear and nonnuclear operations in objectives, employment of forces, main and supporting attacks, and axes of advance. The similarities end, however, in planning the scheme of maneuver and fire support. Normally, conventional operations require successive intermediate operations with a continuous regrouping of forces. *Frontal* aviation is given the mission to engage targets deep in the enemy rear area while the artillery has the mission to neutralize the enemy near the FEBA. In contrast, nuclear operations keep the number of intermediate operations to a minimum. *Front* objectives are attained by employing high speed operations along multiple axes of advance, exploiting the results of the nuclear fire plan (see diagram below).

Planning at *front* level must support the conduct of operations deep in the enemy's rear area. Armies assigned to the *front*—

- Attack along one or more axes to split the defenders into separate or isolated groups. These groups are to be destroyed while the offensive is continued toward the enemy's rear area.
- Attack along converging axes to envelop enemy forces. These forces are to be destroyed as the offensive continues to the depths of the enemy's defenses.

The width of a *front* offensive zone could extend to approximately 350 kilometers. The frontage, organization, rate of advance, and concept of the *front* offensive are all variable based on missions, enemy defenses, terrain, weather, and time.

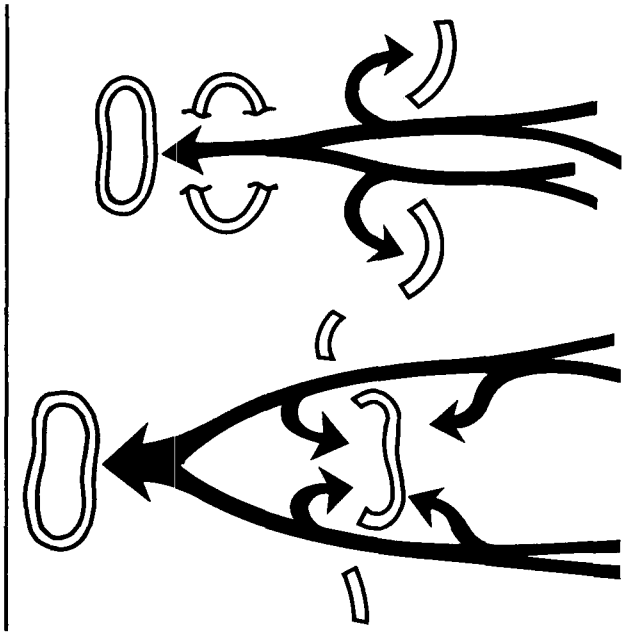
Offensive Phasing

To assist in phasing offensive operations at the operational level, the Soviets have defined a series of terms outlining various depths of the enemy defenses and the objectives encompassed within those depths.

The *initial phase* of the operation requires the penetration of the enemy's forward defenses and the neutralization or destruction of the enemy in the area defined as the "tactical depth." This depth includes the reserves of the forward enemy divisions. The *subsequent phase* calls for the neutralization or destruction of those enemy units in the area encompassed by the "immediate operational depth." The enemy corps reserves are found in this area. When the situation permits the introduction of a *front's* second echelon armies as exploitation forces, the enemy's strategic reserves at Army Group and Theater level are attacked. The *final phase* of the offensive is the accomplishment of the *front* final objectives: the capture of logistical, political, and economic centers and the neutralization of remaining enemy forces.

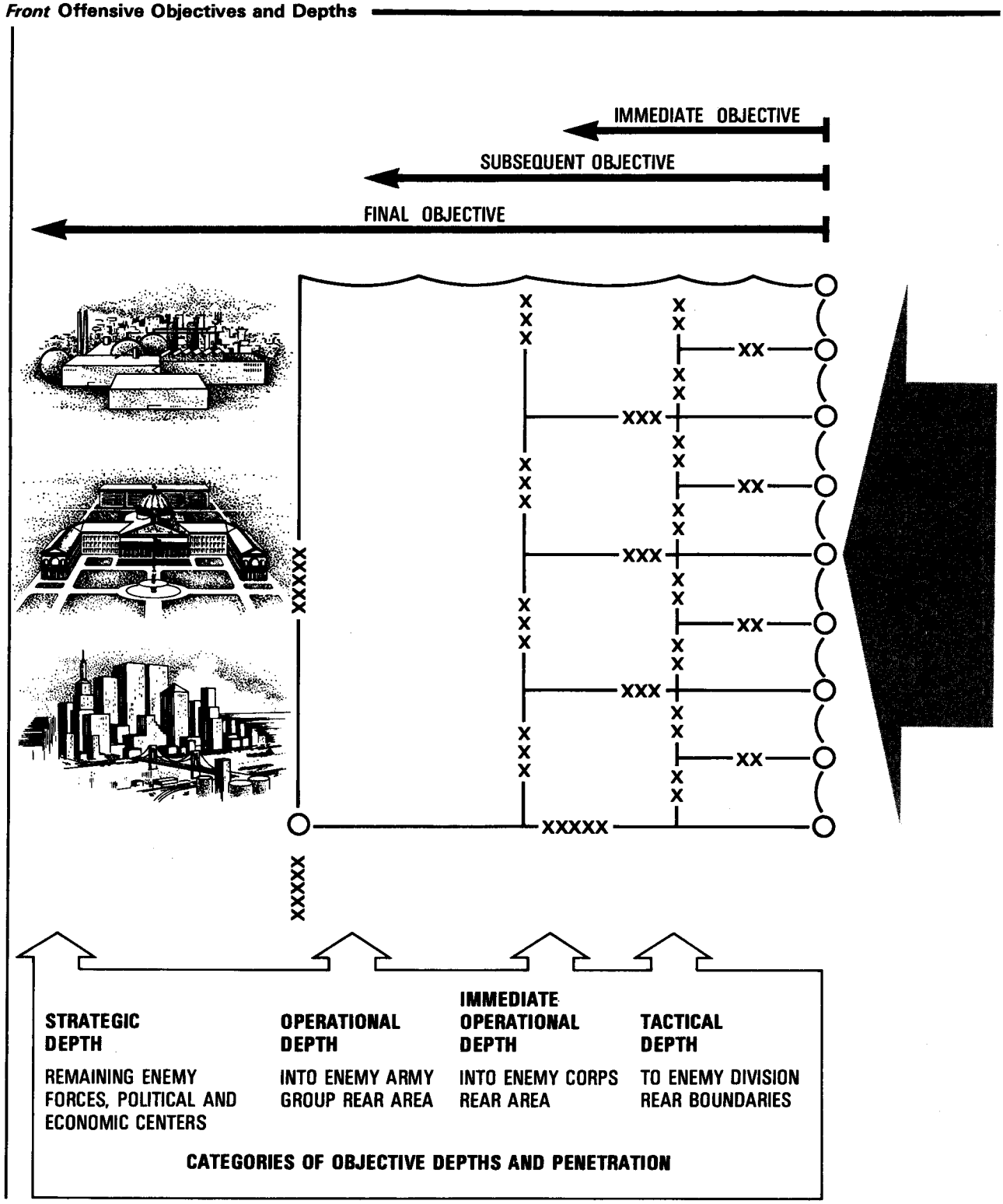
The categories of objective depths which regulate *front* offensive operations are identified and illustrated on the next page.

***Front* Planning Objectives**



ATTACK ALONG ONE OR MORE AXES TO SPLIT THE DEFENDERS INTO SEPARATE OR ISOLATED GROUPS. THESE ARE TO BE DESTROYED IN DETAIL, WITH CONCURRENT FURTHER ATTACKS TOWARD THE ENEMY'S REAR DEPTHS.

ATTACKS ALONG CONVERGING AXES TO ENVELOPE SIZABLE ENEMY FORCES. SURROUNDED FORCES ARE TO BE DESTROYED AS CONCURRENT ATTACKS CONTINUE TO THE DEPTHS.


Front Offensive Objectives and Depths
IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE
SUBSEQUENT OBJECTIVE
FINAL OBJECTIVE
XX
XXX
XX
XXX
XX
XXX
XX
XXXXX
XXXXX
XXXXX
STRATEGIC DEPTH
REMAINING ENEMY FORCES, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CENTERS
OPERATIONAL DEPTH
INTO ENEMY ARMY GROUP REAR AREA
IMMEDIATE OPERATIONAL DEPTH
INTO ENEMY CORPS REAR AREA
TACTICAL DEPTH
TO ENEMY DIVISION REAR BOUNDARIES
CATEGORIES OF OBJECTIVE DEPTHS AND PENETRATION

Rapid Advance

The Soviet offensive is characterized by a high rate of advance. Over a period of several weeks or more, the Soviets anticipate a rate of advance of approximately 50 kilometers per day under nuclear or nonnuclear conditions. Rate of advance is not expected to be uniform. While fighting through enemy defensive positions, the Soviets expect a rate of several kilometers per hour or up to 30 kilometers per day. Once a major penetration has been achieved, the rate would increase considerably.

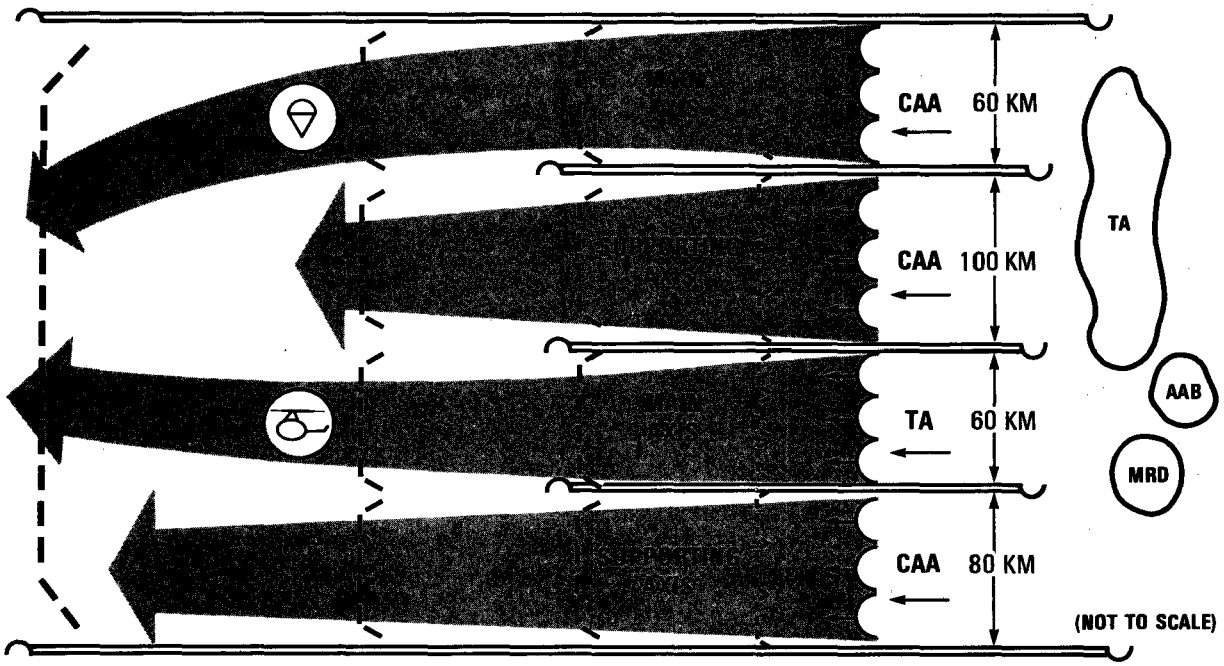
When confronting an enemy that has taken up defensive positions, the Soviets attempt to strike weak points in the defense and to drive to the enemy's rear whenever possible by bypassing his major force concentrations. They attempt to cripple the enemy quickly by destroying or disrupting his nuclear capability, his command and control facilities, and his logistic system before he could effectively react.

Even if the Soviets are forced to deal with an enemy that is emplaced in defensive positions across their entire frontage, they still attempt to avoid a costly, time-consuming battle of attrition. They would strive to develop penetrations leading to the enemy rear to topple the enemy defensive structure. They anticipate that elements of a front second echelon probably would not have to combat enemy forces in defensive positions. After the first two to five days of the war, they expect prepared positions to have been overrun and combat to be characterized by rapid movement into the enemy rear interrupted by violent, relatively brief, meeting engagements.

Concentration of Forces

A *front* normally conducts a main attack over one or more axes whose proximity to one another depend upon whether the front is to split or envelop the enemy in its drive towards its objectives. The direction of a main attack would be decisive in the defeat of the enemy and seizure of territory. One or more supporting attacks accompany the main attack. A supporting attack ties down opposing enemy forces to prevent them from reinforcing the sector threatened by the main attack.

Soviet *Front* Offensive Operation (Variant)



FRONT FINAL OBJECTIVES	ARMY SUBSEQUENT OBJECTIVES	ARMY IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVES	DIVISION OBJECTIVES
600-800 KM	250-350 KM	100-150 KM	25-30 KM
12-15 DAYS	6-7 DAYS	3-4 DAYS	FIRST DAY

LEGEND:
CAA - Combined Arms Army
TA - Tank Army
AAB - Air Assault Brigade
MRD - Motorized Rifle Division

Certain sectors of enemy defenses may be designated as breakthrough sectors. These are areas, normally across a main attack axis, that an operational-level commander deems necessary, desirable, or likely for major penetration. Under nuclear conditions, enemy defenses in a breakthrough sector are destroyed by tactical nuclear strikes, followed by rapid exploitation by maneuver units. Under nonnuclear, but nuclear-threatened conditions, the sector is attacked by massed air and artillery fires and numerous attacks on multiple axes by maneuver units.

The benefit gained by the attacker who uses only conventional weapons on the nuclear-threatened battlefield is that the enemy also must avoid concentrating forces. The defender must leave gaps and/or lightly manned sectors between his units. Whenever possible, the Soviet commander directs his attack against these undefended or lightly defended areas, thereby achieving a favorable force ratio without massing his own forces.

The greater range and increased mobility of modern artillery weapons enable Soviet artillerymen to mass fires against a target without concentrating the weapons themselves. This practice reduces their vulnerability to a nuclear strike and makes it more difficult for the enemy to determine long in advance where a main attack might be made. The fires of combat helicopters and close air support fixed-wing aircraft also are integrated into their overall fire planning. This again enhances the Soviets' ability to focus a great deal of firepower without putting masses of troops at risk to an enemy nuclear strike.

When the Soviets do concentrate forces, they are likely to do so in several locations along the FEBA and in relatively small numbers in any one sector. By narrowing the width of an attack frontage, they achieve superior force ratios at several points along the FEBA. In such a situation, they probably attack with most forces in the first echelon.

The Soviet commander is more likely to use multiple, narrow penetrations when he has a clear numerical advantage over the enemy across his entire frontage and when the enemy has positioned the bulk of his defending forces forward. When enemy defenses are echeloned in depth, the Soviets tend to use an attack force echeloned in depth to maintain the momentum of the attack after the initial penetration.

Attack Echelons

As a very general rule, combined arms armies would be used in the first echelon of a front. Then tank armies would normally appear in its second echelon, combined arms reserve, or operational maneuver group (OMG).

Tank armies may be placed in the first echelon for attaining greater speed when terrain and other conditions permit this employment. This variant would be likely if a massive nuclear strike preceded the ground offensive or if enemy defenses were not well prepared.

Most forces of a *front* are placed in its first echelon. The mission of the *front's* first echelon would be to overcome enemy defenses and to attack through the immediate operational depth (to enemy corps rear areas).

Front first echelon forces are reinforced by artillery, other combat support, and logistic elements from *front* second echelon forces.

The remainder, or follow-on, forces of the *front* could include—

- A second echelon or a combined arms reserve.
- An operational maneuver group (OMG).
- Special reserves.

A *front* second echelon (or a combined arms reserve), normally at least one army, has a mission of exploiting success achieved by first echelon forces by continuing the main thrust of the offensive to reach deeper objectives. Committed follow-on forces then become part of a new first echelon. Then a combined arms reserve normally is constituted from former first echelon forces.

The *Front* Operational Maneuver Group

Since the late 1970s, important changes in the operational employment and organization of Soviet ground maneuver formations have been observed. The most significant operational change has been the concept of employing a tailored high-speed exploitation force at army and probably *front* level. This force, called the operational maneuver group (OMG), is tailored for the situation and is designed to move deep into the enemy rear area and to seize critical objectives, normally before second echelon Soviet formations are committed to combat. A *front* OMG could be committed well before the *front* immediate objective (enemy corps rear) is attained.

The OMG is an updated version of an older concept infused with new technology. It was widely used in the final stages of World War II when the Germans and Japanese were unable to present a deeply echeloned defense and had no large operational reserves. The predecessor of the OMG was the army and *front* "mobile group" of World War II. Mobile groups were large operational exploitation forces used to move rapidly and decisively deep into the enemy's rear area

to destroy his command and control and lines of communication, to defeat his reserves, to encircle and destroy his forces, and to capture or destroy key political and economic centers.

The mission of an OMG is to help the first echelon penetrate the enemy defenses, if required, and then to raid deep into the enemy rear as early in the offensive as possible. The OMG is to destroy enemy nuclear weapons, air defenses, communications, command and control, to seize airfields or disrupt lines of communication, and to assist advancing main forces by seizing bridgeheads, road junctions, and so forth.

A *front* OMG may be attached from resources controlled by the theater of military operations (TVD) or Supreme High Command. It could be as large as an army, constituted either before or during an operation.

An OMG may not always be formed. Whether one is formed depends on a number of factors the most important of which are the planned direction(s) of the main attack; the tactics, strength, and readiness of enemy forces; and the nature of the terrain over which an attacking force must maneuver. An OMG is most likely to be used when the enemy defense system is seen to be at a low state of readiness or when enemy defenses are relatively shallow and not supported by large reserves.

Nonnuclear *Front* Offensive

A nonnuclear Soviet front offensive probably would begin with a massive air operation, conducted continuously for several days, using massed assets from *frontal,* strategic, and naval aviation. The two main goals of the air operation are to neutralize enemy theater nuclear capability and to gain tactical air superiority for the remainder of the operation. Targets of the air operation are nuclear delivery systems, airfields and aircraft, air defense systems, and command and control facilities.

The Soviets are willing to accept great losses in their own air assets to achieve their goals. They believe that they could conduct the remainder of the offensive with older, possibly obsolescent, aircraft provided they succeeded in crippling enemy tactical air power.

Ground attacks by *front* ground forces are preceded by a massive artillery preparation conducted by first echelon armies. If nuclear weapons are used from the onset, they are used in a massive, in-depth strike before the nonnuclear preparation. Whether they are used or not, nuclear strikes always are included in fire planning.

An airborne operation conducted by a front could be launched either at the start of an offensive, or at a later time, possibly after completion of the air operation. It could be of airborne-regiment or possibly division size. Linkup may be planned with advancing ground forces, probably an OMG. Possible objectives include nuclear weapons, command and control centers, enemy airfields, major bridges, and logistic facilities.

Soviet airborne forces are equipped with BMD airborne assault vehicles. On the ground, in the enemy rear, they fight as motorized infantry. A *front* may also employ small, foot-mobile, special-purpose airborne forces to conduct reconnaissance and sabotage in the enemy rear.

ARMY OFFENSIVE

An army in the first echelon of a *front* offensive normally has a mission to attack through enemy defenses to the immediate operational depth, the enemy corps rear area. The achievement of an army's mission is the culmination of successive attacks conducted by its divisions.

A combined arms army may have two to four motorized rifle divisions and one or two tank divisions. A tank army may have two to four tank divisions and one or two motorized rifle divisions.

An army offensive normally has a frontage 60 to 100 kilometers wide. The first echelon of an army normally contains most of the army's combat power. Army follow-on forces could include—

- A second echelon or a combined arms reserve.
- An operational maneuver group.
- Special reserves.

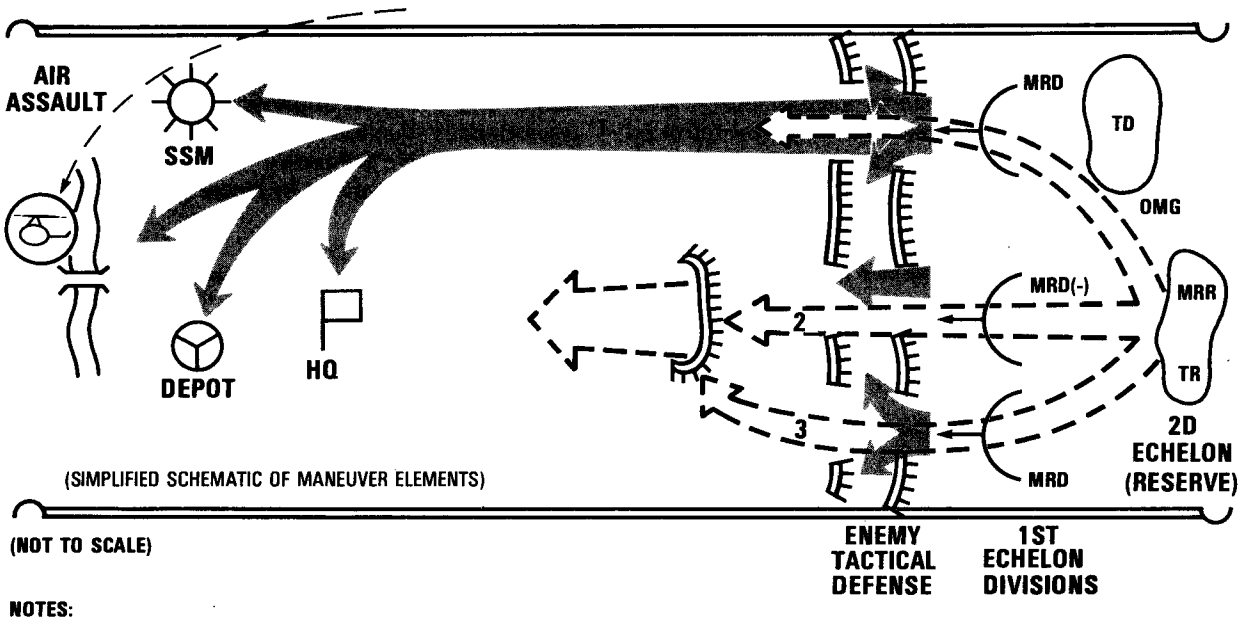
Echelonment of Forces

When an OMG is formed at army level, the bulk of the forces available to the army commander probably is distributed between the first echelon and the OMG. This may cause the second echelon or reserve to be smaller in those armies where OMGs are employed.

If enemy defenses are not well prepared in depth and not backed up by operational-level reserves, the army probably attacks in a single strong echelon followed by a combined arms reserve and, possibly, an OMG. If the enemy is well prepared in depth and does have operational reserves, the army probably attacks in two echelons. In other words, if the enemy defense has an operational second echelon (or reserve) the Soviets employ an operational second echelon to sustain the momentum of the offensive.

First and second echelon forces operate in concert to destroy defending enemy forces before them, up to

Soviet Army Offensive Operation (Variants)



NOTES:

(1) Several variants are depicted.

(2) Combined Arms Army (CAA) depicted consists of 3 motorized rifle divisions (MRD), a tank division (TD), and an independent tank regiment (TR).

(3) CAA main attack could be on axis 1 or axis 3. Supporting attack on axis 2.

(4) Frontage: approximately 60 km.

(5) Depending on CAA missions and/or development of battle, second echelon could be committed to:

- maintain momentum on axis 3
- secure OMG lines of communication on axis 1
- develop opportune success on axis 2

(6) Flexibility most apparent at operational (Army and *front)* level.

assigned mission (objective) depths. Second echelon forces of an army normally are committed after the army's immediate objective is attained. An army OMG, if employed, could be committed as early as the first day of an operation.

One or more divisions in the first echelon probably attack on a predetermined army main attack axis. Other first echelon divisions conduct supporting attacks. Achievement of a "breakthrough" of enemy prepared defensive positions is a probable mission of forces conducting the main attack of an army.

First echelon regiments of the army's first echelon divisions attack from the march at top speed to achieve deeper penetration of the enemy's main defenses, and to exploit surprise and enemy disorganization. Second echelon regiments of the army's first echelon divisions would exploit the best penetrations into the deep tactical rear of the enemy.

The army's second echelon or combined arms reserve, normally about division size, advances behind army first echelon forces. It is dispersed laterally on multiple routes to minimize vulnerability to enemy detection and attacks. Based on the development of the battle and on his assigned mission, the army commander commits his follow-on forces at the most opportune time and place. He does this to achieve a "breakthrough," deeper exploitation, and dissolution of enemy tactical and immediate-operational defenses.

Use of Forward Detachments

The offensive is characterized by surprise, speed, and a striving to preempt or forestall the enemy. Some subunits of first echelon forces may attempt to strike deep into the enemy forward defensive area before enemy defenses are fully organized and solidified. Such

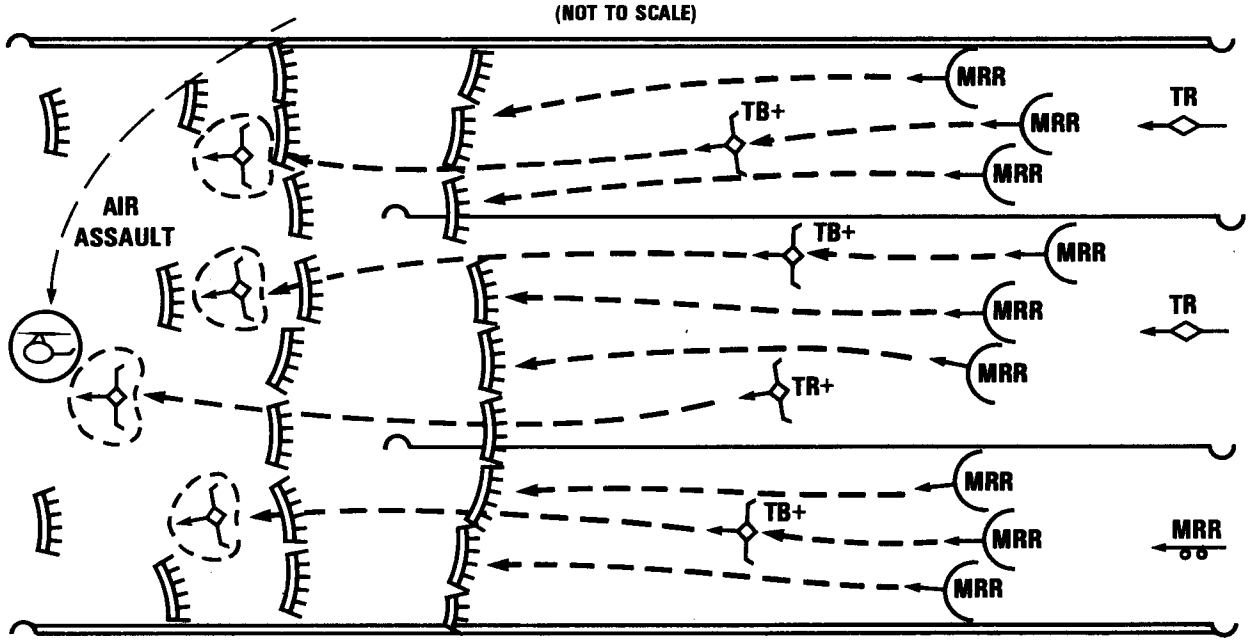
missions are likely given to forward detachments of an army's first echelon divisions, fully supported by artillery and close air support. It is also possible that an army could employ a tank-heavy regimental-sized "operational" forward detachment to achieve similar but deeper results in the enemy main defensive area.

Division forward detachments, normally reinforced tank battalions, could advance during the night before the offensive. They attack on multiple axes across the army's offensive zone to penetrate enemy covering forces. Then they drive at top speed in prebattle or march formation to seize and hold key terrain within the main defensive area. Battalion-sized heliborne assaults designed for linkup with the forward detachments also could be employed. The purpose of such operationally-planned tactics is to disrupt or preempt enemy defensive structure while opening multiple avenues for swift attacks by larger first echelon forces.

Combined Arms Army Offensive (Variant)

EMPLOYMENT OF FORWARD DETACHMENTS IN SURPRISE, PREEMPTIVE ATTACKS TO FORESTALL ORGANIZATION OF ENEMY DEFENSE

(NOT TO SCALE)



MAIN DEFENSE AREA (NOT YET FULLY OCCUPIED NOR ORGANIZED)

LEGEND:

TB - Tank Battalion
TR - Tank Regiment
MRR - Motorized Rifle Regiment

DIVISION FORWARD DETACHMENTS (TB+) AND ARMY FORWARD DETACHMENT (TR+)

DIVISION FIRST ECHELON REGIMENTS

DIVISION SECOND ECHELON REGIMENTS

ARMY FIRST ECHELON

Strong forward detachments probably would be used throughout the operation to continually press the advance into the enemy rear on several axes. Numerous deep penetrations by forward detachments and/or OMGs early in the operation would result in an intermingling of enemy and friendly forces. This situation would complicate or forestall enemy use of tactical nuclear weapons. The Soviets probably would accept heavy losses in deep-penetration forces if they could cause an early collapse of the enemy's defensive structure before he could resort to use of nuclear weapons.

The Army OMG

Army OMGs likely are formed from resources that are normally part of or supporting the army. OMGs may be established before an operation as part of the initial plan or during an operation to exploit an unforeseen opportunity. At army level, the OMG probably would be as large as a reinforced division. An OMG could operate 100 kilometers or more beyond other army forces.

Command and control of an OMG is conducted by a combination of radio, an airborne command element, and air and ground couriers. Sustaining an OMG requires highly mobile transport and supply. The Soviets attempt to maintain a ground line of communication as well as resupply by air.

The relationship between the OMG and the second echelon in an operation varies depending on the concept of operation. If the OMG is operating away from the main axis of advance, its activities and those of the second echelon may not be directly related. If the OMG is operating on the main axis of advance, the second echelon may be required to destroy forces bypassed by the OMG or to secure the OMG's lines of communications.

Unlike the second echelon, the OMG acts as a large operational raiding force. Typically, it is assigned an ultimate objective or objectives (perhaps located on the main axis) but is expected to disrupt, capture, or seize other objectives along the way, while attempting to avoid a decisive engagement with large enemy forces. The OMG could attack targets en route with its entire force or more likely with units detached for this purpose. The relative importance of raiding versus seizing an objective varies depending upon whether the OMG is operating in isolation or as part of an encirclement operation.

Other Support Elements

Encirclement of enemy forces is accomplished by blocking routes of withdrawal with forward detachments, OMG, pursuit maneuver units, air assault forces, or air strikes. Encirclement may be achieved by the army itself, with the cooperation of a flanking army or with the support of *front* assets. Surrounded enemy forces are destroyed piecemeal while the army continues to develop the offensive in depth.

An army of a *front* first echelon receives artillery units from the *front* artillery division. The army commander then allocates artillery to his divisions. He may retain some artillery at army level to form an army artillery group. Within the army, artillery from second echelon divisions probably is allocated to first echelon divisions.

A first echelon army probably would receive from *front* additional engineers and river crossing equipment, air defense weapons, chemical units, and transportation assets.

An army offensive could also include an airborne or heliborne assault operating in conjunction with an OMG to seize deep objectives. Smaller special-purpose airborne units could be employed to conduct reconnaissance and sabotage.

CHAPTER 5

OFFENSIVE TACTICS: DIVISION AND LOWER

TACTICAL FORMATIONS AND MOVEMENT

The Soviets emphasize swift, efficient movement, or transfer, of combat power from one point on the battlefield to another. This is accomplished by rapid column movement in *march formation* and successive deployment into *prebattle formation* and *attack formation.* Commanders insure that their unit is constantly ready to perform a march, with minimum warning and preparation. Units frequently rehearse the march, and its conduct is strictly controlled. They practice deployment from march column into prebattle and attack formation in standard battle drills. These formations and drills are designed for a rapid transition into combat while maintaining maximum security, speed, and firepower.

The March

A march is an organized troop movement conducted in column formation on roads or cross country. It may be simply an administrative move from one point to another. In wartime, however, the march often will be governed by the possibility of enemy contact. It is planned and conducted with the expectation of contact.

A march may be conducted—

- When moving from a rear assembly area to a forward assembly area or attack position.
- When leaving an assembly area to launch an attack from the march.
- When moving forward in anticipation of a meeting engagement.
- During a pursuit.
- When conducting a passage of lines.

In any march, the challenge facing the commander is the proper disposition of combat and support elements within the column, to insure efficient transition into combat. The column organization, established before starting the march, should minimize or preclude any reorganizing before commitment in battle.

Having received an order to conduct a march, the Soviet commander issues a warning order to his subordinate commanders. He then conducts an estimate of the situation to include—

- Mission of the march.
- Time available.
- Locations of possible or anticipated enemy contact.
- Enemy strength and disposition.
- Disposition of friendly forces and missions of adjacent units.
- Attachments and supporting units.
- Terrain, weather, and light conditions.
- Possible march routes.
- Nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) conditions.
- Control measures.
- Reconnaissance and security.

Based on this estimate, he selects routes, if they have not been specified by his commander. The following norms apply:

- A division is assigned either a march zone or march routes. As many as four routes are possible.
- A regiment is normally assigned one or two routes.
- A battalion marches on one route.
- Distance between routes should be at least 3 kilometers to reduce vulnerability to nuclear strikes.

Planning the march is carried out in as much detail as time and information will permit. If possible, a route reconnaissance is conducted to determine route conditions; to locate contaminated areas, choke points, or obstacles; and to determine requirements for engineer or decontamination support.

Considering the total length of the march and the time available, the commander determines the average rate of march for the entire march. He then divides the march route into segments. Based on the terrain, he determines the permissible rate of march over each segment and the time to complete each segment. He then determines control measures for conduct of the march and the times associated with each control measure.

Prescribed times for units to pass from assembly areas to march column are indicated below.

March Column Assembly Times

UNIT	MINUTES
Motorized rifle company	5
Motorized rifle battalion	10 to 15
Artillery battalion	15 to 20
Artillery regiment	40 to 50
Motorized rifle regiment (reinforced)	60 to 120

A *start line* or *start point* is designated for the beginnng of the march. It must be far enough from assembly areas to allow columns to form and reach the required speed as they pass the start point.

Control lines (points) are established to insure timely and orderly movement. Their number will be a function of the distance to be covered, the terrain, weather, time of day or night, and state of the roads. Usually they are designated for every 2 to 3 hours of movement. Elements of the force must cross these control lines or points at the designated time.

Halts and rests are specified to preserve the strength of personnel and to maintain equipment. Short halts are 20 to 30 minutes duration every 2 to 3 hours of movement. The column formation is not disturbed, and unit intervals are maintained.

Within units, vehicles pull over to the right side of the road with spacings of not less than 10 meters between them. Refueling, minor maintenance, and if necessary, partial decontamination are accomplished. Long halts are used on marches of over 24 hours duration. They are not normally scheduled at night to allow maximum time for night movement. If used, they are 2 to 4 hours duration, usually at the beginning of the second half of a day's movement. Units disperse off-road in camouflaged positions. Maintenance, resupply, and decontamination (if required) are accomplished and troops are fed a hot meal.

Day rest is scheduled after a night march and night rest after a day march. Troops are dispersed and concealed in such manner to facilitate rapid continuation of the march. Necessary logistical functions are accomplished.

March formation normally consists of the following elements:

- Reconnaissance.
- Advance guard (or forward security element of a battalion).
- Flank security elements.
- Main force.
- Rear security element.

The focus for march planning is security of the main force and creation of conditions for its successful commitment into battle.

The organic reconnaissance battalion precedes its division on the march. Scout elements of the reconnaissance battalion may operate 50 kilometers forward of the division. A regiment is preceded by its organic reconnaissance company, whose scouts may operate 25 kilometers forward. Reconnaissance forces are trained to obtain as quickly as possible the following information about enemy forces:

- Nature and location of enemy nuclear delivery systems.
- Movement axes of enemy columns.
- Strength and composition of enemy forces.
- Deployment lines and routes.
- Location of contaminated areas.

The advance guard precedes the main force on the same route and provides movement security and warning. It normally consists of about one third of the total combat power of the main force. The advance guard of a motorized rifle regiment is normally a motorized rifle battalion reinforced with tank, artillery, antitank, antiaircraft, engineer, and chemical elements. The advance guard of a tank regiment is normally a similarly-reinforced tank battalion. In a division marching on multiple routes, the lead regiment on each route forms its own advance guard. There is no "divisional advance guard," as such.

The advance guard, in its turn, will dispatch to its front a forward security element (FSE) consisting of about one third of its combat power. A forward security element of a regiment's advance guard will normally be a reinforced company. (The FSE is known as an "advance party" in some texts.)

The FSE is preceded by a combat reconnaissance patrol (CRP). The CRP is normally a platoon reinforced with engineer and NBC reconnaissance elements. It reports intelligence information and makes the initial contact with any enemy forces encountered.

Flank and rear security elements for a regiment are normally of platoon size. (More detailed information on the organization and function of march elements is found under *The Meeting Engagement* later in this chapter.)

March considerations include dispersion, rate of march, and march order. Particularly under nuclear conditions, march formations must maintain dispersion both laterally and in depth. A division attains lateral dispersion by marching in a zone up to 25 kilometers wide on as many as four routes, each separated by 3 to 4 kilometers.

The average rate of march is based on the total route distance and the time allowed for the march.

Average March Rates for Mixed Columns

Day, on roads	20 to 30 KM/HR
Night, on roads	15 to 20 KM/HR
Cross Country	5 to 15 KM/HR

Dispersion in depth is a function of the organization of the forces on each route and the intervals between units and vehicles. The commander balances the requirement for dispersion in depth with the requirement for timely commitment of his forces in case of enemy contact.

The depth of a march formation depends on the number of march routes, the interval between units, and the interval between vehicles and between subunits in each column.

The average movement intervals and vehicle speeds shown in the tables below apply to marches of some duration. If enemy contact is made, units may move at maximum speeds. Examples of typical march formations for Soviet motorized rifle and tank forces are shown on the following pages.

Unit Dispersion Intervals

UNIT	NORMAL INTERVAL	VARIATIONS
Between vehicles in a company	25-50 M	Increased at high speeds and when traversing contaminated or rugged terrain or on icy roads. May be decreased at night.
Between companies in a battalion	25-50 M	Up to 300 M or more under nuclear conditions.
Between battalions on the same route	3-5 KM	
Between regiments on the same route	5-10 KM	Can vary as contact becomes imminent.
Between regimental rear services and main force	3-5 KM	
Between division rear services and main force.	15-20 KM	

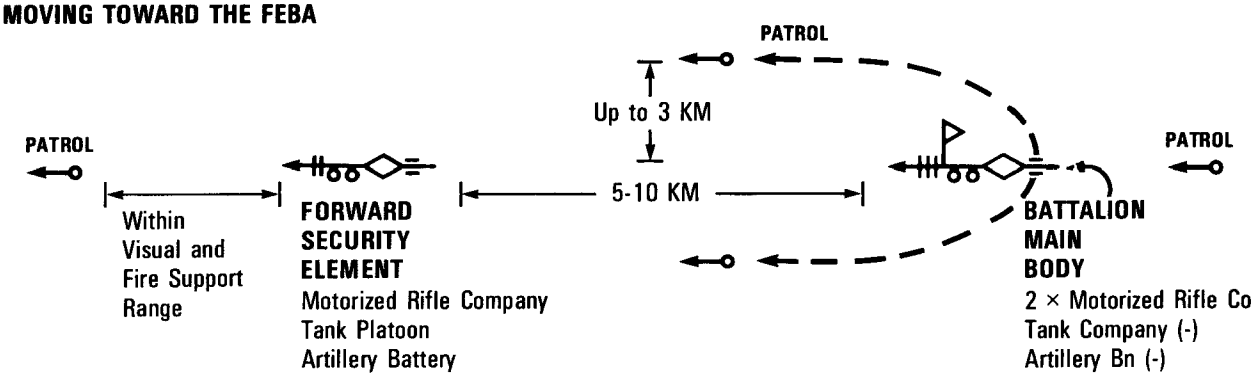
NOTE: Vehicles speeds are determined by road conditions.

Average Speeds of Vehicles

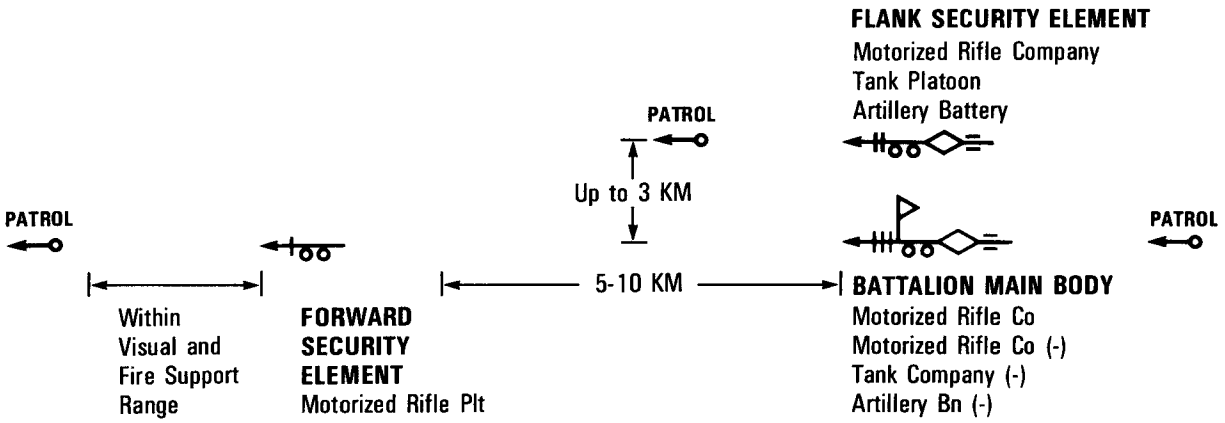
	PER (KM/HR)		
TYPE OF ROAD	UNDAMAGED SURFACE	10% SURFACE DESTRUCTION	MORE THAN 10% SURFACE DESTRUCTION
Concrete, asphalt-concrete	40-50	20-35	10-20
Gravel and rubble	40-45	20-30	10-20
Dirt	15-25	8-15	5-10

March Formations, Reinforced Motorized Rifle Battalion

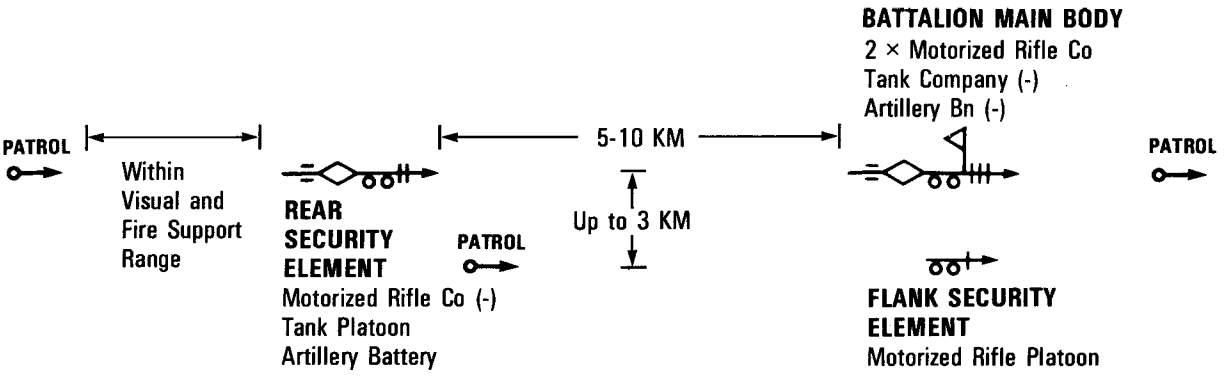
MOVING TOWARD THE FEBA



MOVING PARALLEL TO THE FEBA



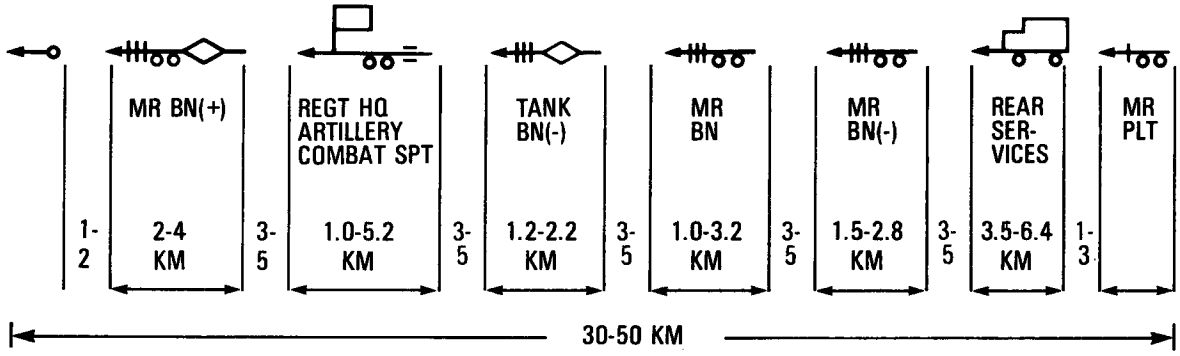
MOVING AWAY FROM THE FEBA



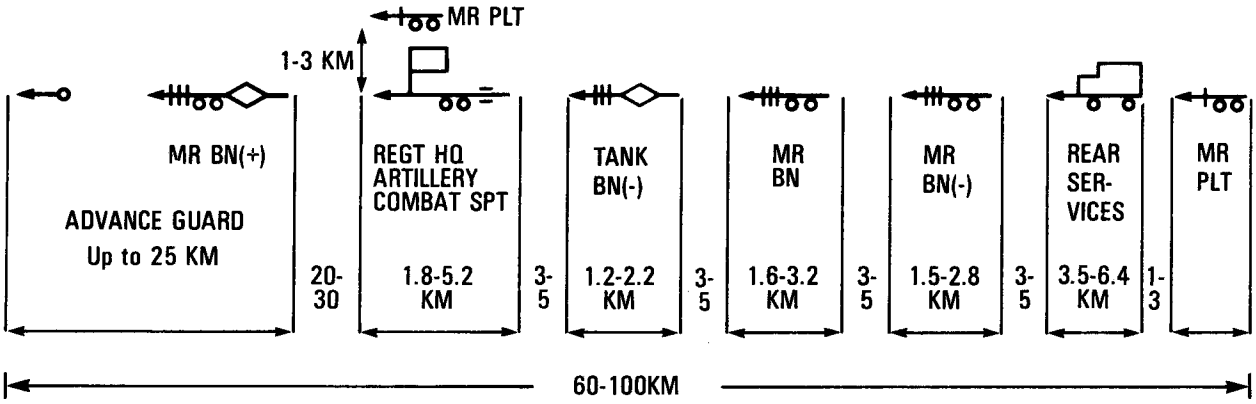
(NOT TO SCALE)

March Formations, Motorized Rifle Regiment

MARCHING ON A SINGLE ROUTE WITHIN A DIVISION MARCH FORMATION



MARCHING ON A SINGLE ROUTE, ALONE OR IN FOREFRONT OF A DIVISION

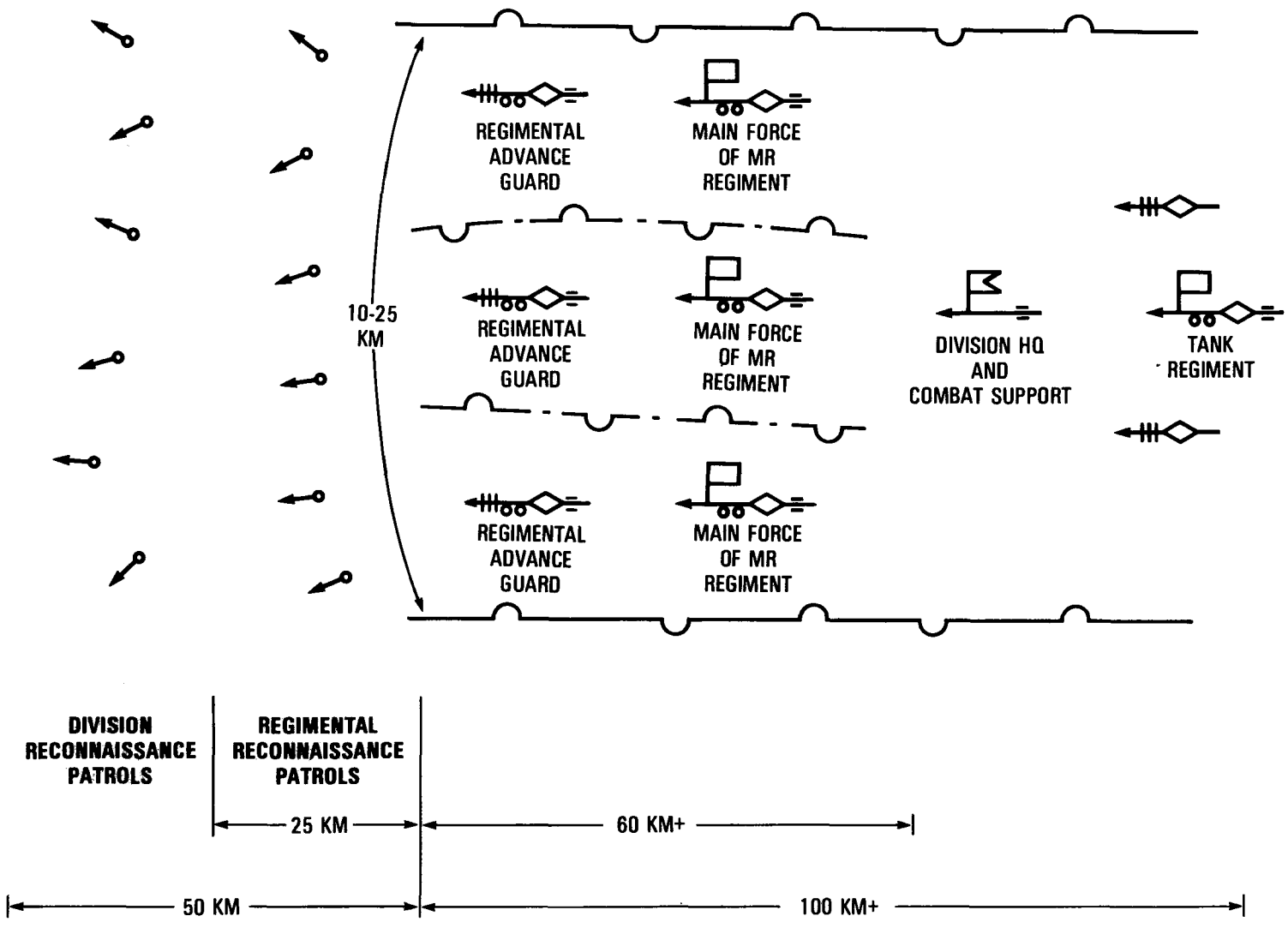


NOTES:

1. Above distances are approximate and only serve to depict minimum and maximum expected distances.
2. Although basically identical inorganic structure, the regiment marching ahead of a division may include a motorized platoon at flank, with the advance guard covering up to 25 kilometers and extending 20 to 30 kilometers ahead of the main body of the division.

To assist movement and enforce march control, each regiment employs a traffic control platoon and each division employs a traffic control company. Traffic regulators wear distinctive black uniforms with white belts and helmets. Before the march, they normally are placed at critical points such as turns, intersections, choke points, and control points. Use of traffic regulators permits less reliance on maps and radio communications.

Use of radios is restricted to minimize risk of radio-electronic detection, jamming, and enemy attack. Subunits normally march under radio listening silence. The Soviets are well drilled in and rely heavily on hand and arm signals, flags, and light signaling devices. During long halts, wire communications may be used. Extensive use is also made of motorcycle-mounted couriers.



(NOT TO SCALE) (All distances approximate)

Air defense for the march normally is planned in advance and includes organic and supporting antiaircraft weapons and aviation. Air defense weapons can be located in the column or in stationary positions occupied in advance. Normally, the weapons are distributed throughout the column.

When enemy aircraft appear, the commander gives the signal to open fire. Simultaneously the column speeds up and vehicle spacings are increased to a distance of up to 100 meters between vehicles. If a large group of aircraft attack, the column may be forced to disperse or seek concealment off the road.

Engineer support for the march allows the force to overcome or bypass those areas which would disrupt the march. Engineer subunits may be formed into—

- A movement support detachment (MSD) which performs route reconnaissance, removes obstacles, organizes bypasses, marks the route, and does limited road repair.
- A mobile obstacle detachment (MOD) which provides protection for advancing columns by mechanically laying minefields and creating expedient obstacles on likely enemy approaches.

(The organization and employment of the MSD and MOD are described in *Chapter 14, Engineer Support.)*

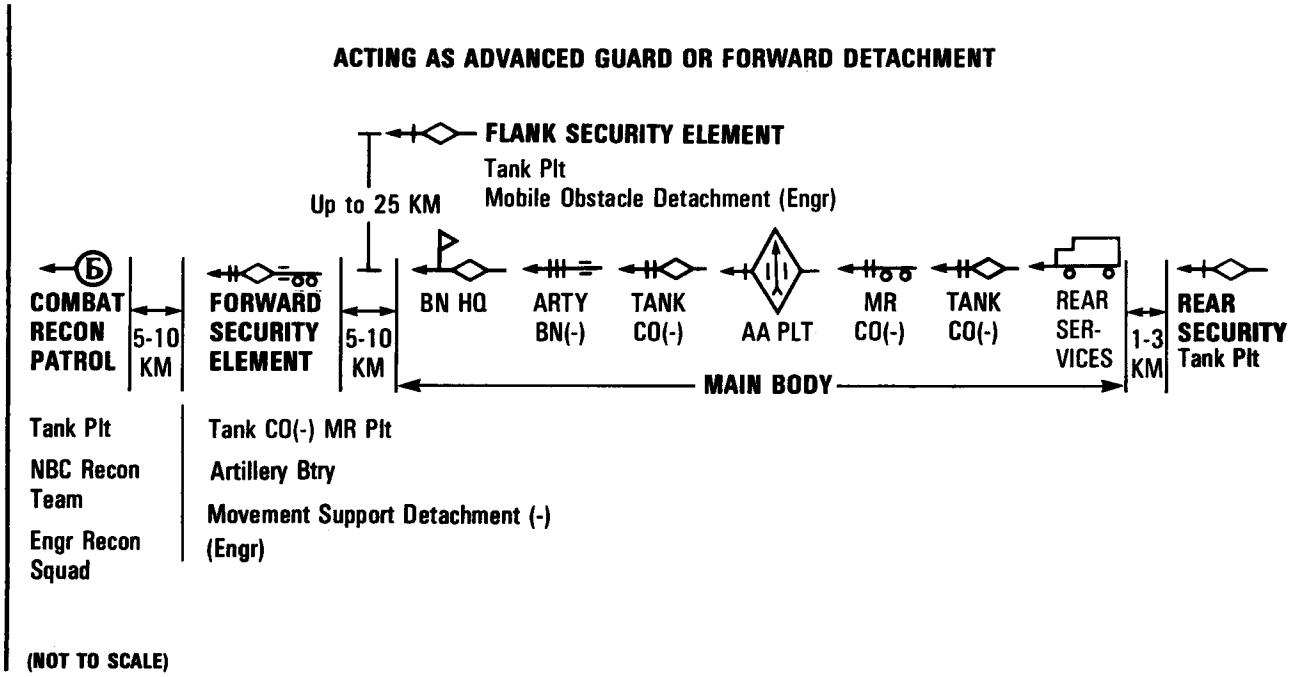
Logistic support of the march can be divided into two phases: before the march and during the march. Before the march, rear services elements are brought forward to replenish supplies, to perform maintenance, and to evacuate the wounded and sick. Refueling and maintenance elements are sent forward to halt or rest areas. Every attempt is made to replenish fuel reserves on the vehicles before combat.

During the march, logistical support is performed in areas of halts or rests. Vehicles which break down between these areas are taken to the right of the road and repaired there. Wounded and sick personnel are given medical aid in place. The seriously wounded are evacuated.

Control of rear services during the march is effected through detailed planning and coordination between rear services chiefs, commanders of rear services units, and the supported commander. A rear command post, headed by the deputy commander for rear services (at regimental and division level) is established. It moves at the head of the column of rear services units (on the main axis if there is more than one column) but will be situated wherever the best control can be maintained.

Under nuclear conditions, units probably will encounter contaminated areas. Bypassing zones of radioactive contamination reduces casualties and saves time spent on decontaminating personnel and materiel but may not always be possible. Some zones could be too large to bypass.

March Formation, Reinforced Tank Battalion



Two methods of crossing contaminated zones are possible. The first is immediate movement across the zone. The other is movement across the zone after waiting for a reduction in radiation levels. The crossing is made on primary routes to insure high speed and control, unless better axes are selected to reduce the distance traveled or to bypass areas of very high radiation.

Units move across the contaminated area at high speeds with increased spacings between vehicles, especially in dusty conditions. Personnel wear protective equipment and use the protective systems of combat vehicles.

When a decision is made to wait for a reduction of radiation levels, forces disperse and camouflage. After radiation levels have fallen, the crossing is made without significant change in deployment.

The Soviets use their best available fire suppression means to preclude an enemy attack during their movement across the contaminated area. This fire suppression mission is an ideal role for self-propelled artillery.

Throughout the march, order, speed, and interval are enforced vigorously. The Soviet penchant for detailed planning and execution dominates such activity.

Platoon leaders normally ride in the lead vehicle of a platoon column. Company and battalion commanders ride near the front of their march formations. Regimental commanders normally are located near the front of the regimental main force.

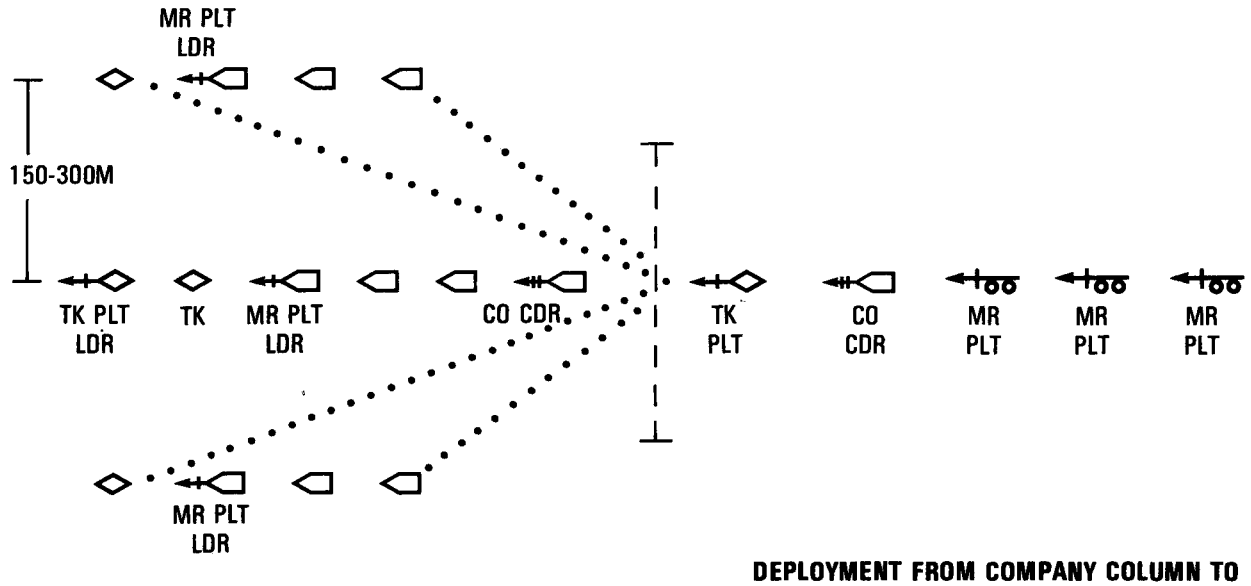
The march is completed when the last control measure is crossed and the unit enters a new assembly area, or when it enters prebattle formation or combat.

Prebattle Formation

For the sake of speed, the Soviets prefer to remain in column or march formation whenever possible. They normally resort to lateral deployment only by necessity, such as when combat is imminent. The next, successive lateral deployment out of march formation is into *prebattle formation* (known incorrectly as "approach march formation" in some Western publications). In prebattle formation, a unit advances dispersed laterally and in depth. This formation is used when approaching the battlefield, moving in the depths of a defending enemy's rear area, and attacking enemy defenses when preparatory fires have significantly reduced enemy resistance. Prebattle formation also may be used to rapidly cross nuclear-contaminated zones and areas that are burning or obstructed.

Prebattle Formation

MOTORIZED RIFLE COMPANY (BTR), WITH ATTACHED TANK PLATOON



(NOT TO SCALE)

DEPLOYMENT FROM COMPANY COLUMN TO COMPANY LINE WITH PLATOONS IN COLUMNS

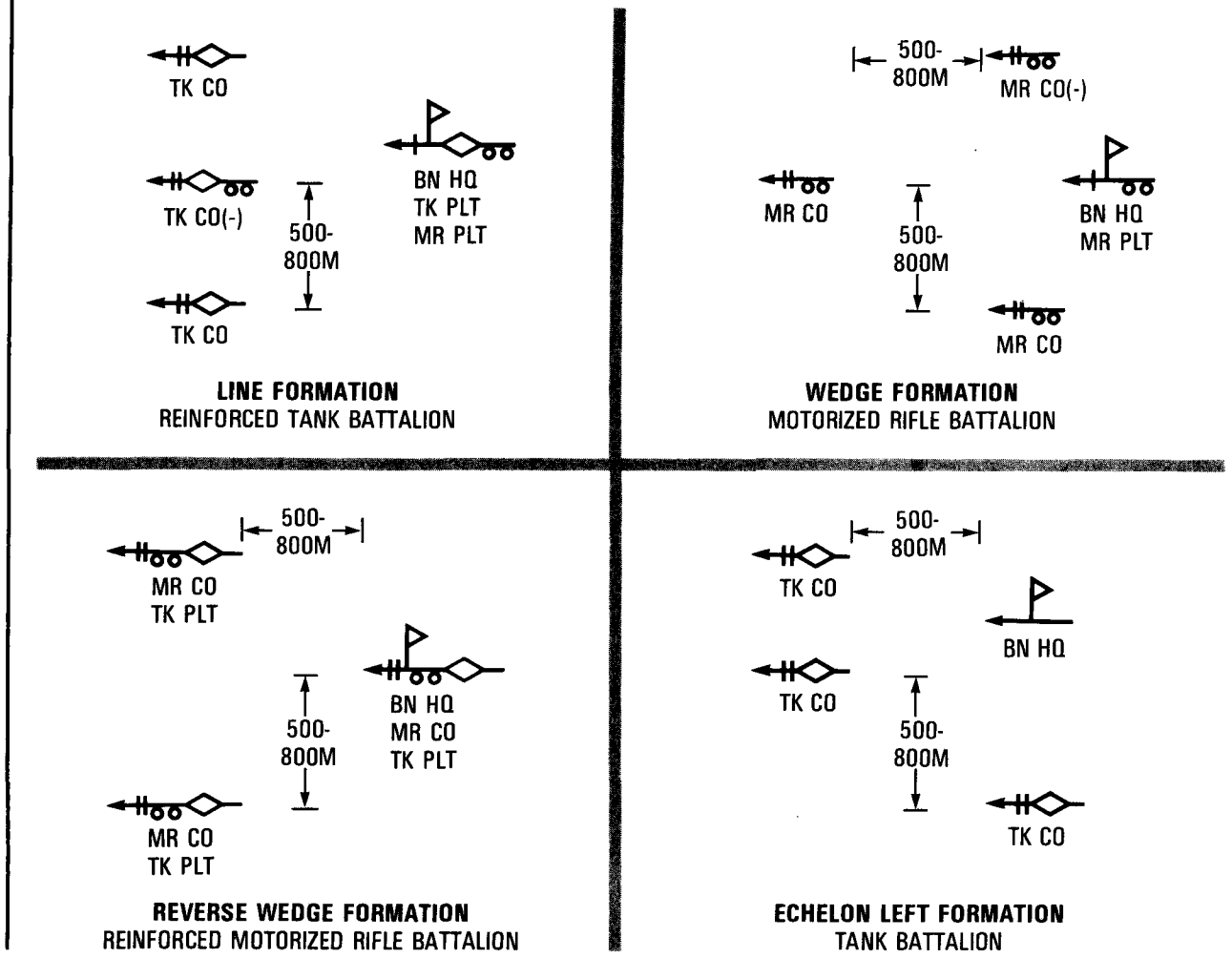
Prebattle formation minimizes troop vulnerability to enemy tactical nuclear strikes and conventional artillery and air strikes. It facilitates rapid maneuver as well as quick deployment into attack formation. Units in prebattle formation either deploy into attack formation or return to march formation, depending on the tactical situation. A unit might remain in this formation for a lengthy period of time. It normally would pass through some form of prebattle formation when moving from the march into full deployment for an attack.

In prebattle formation, a battalion advances with its companies deployed on line, deployed in a forward or reverse wedge, or echeloned left or right. Each company moves in march column within the formation. Deployment into and out of prebattle formation is rehearsed often by set battle drill.

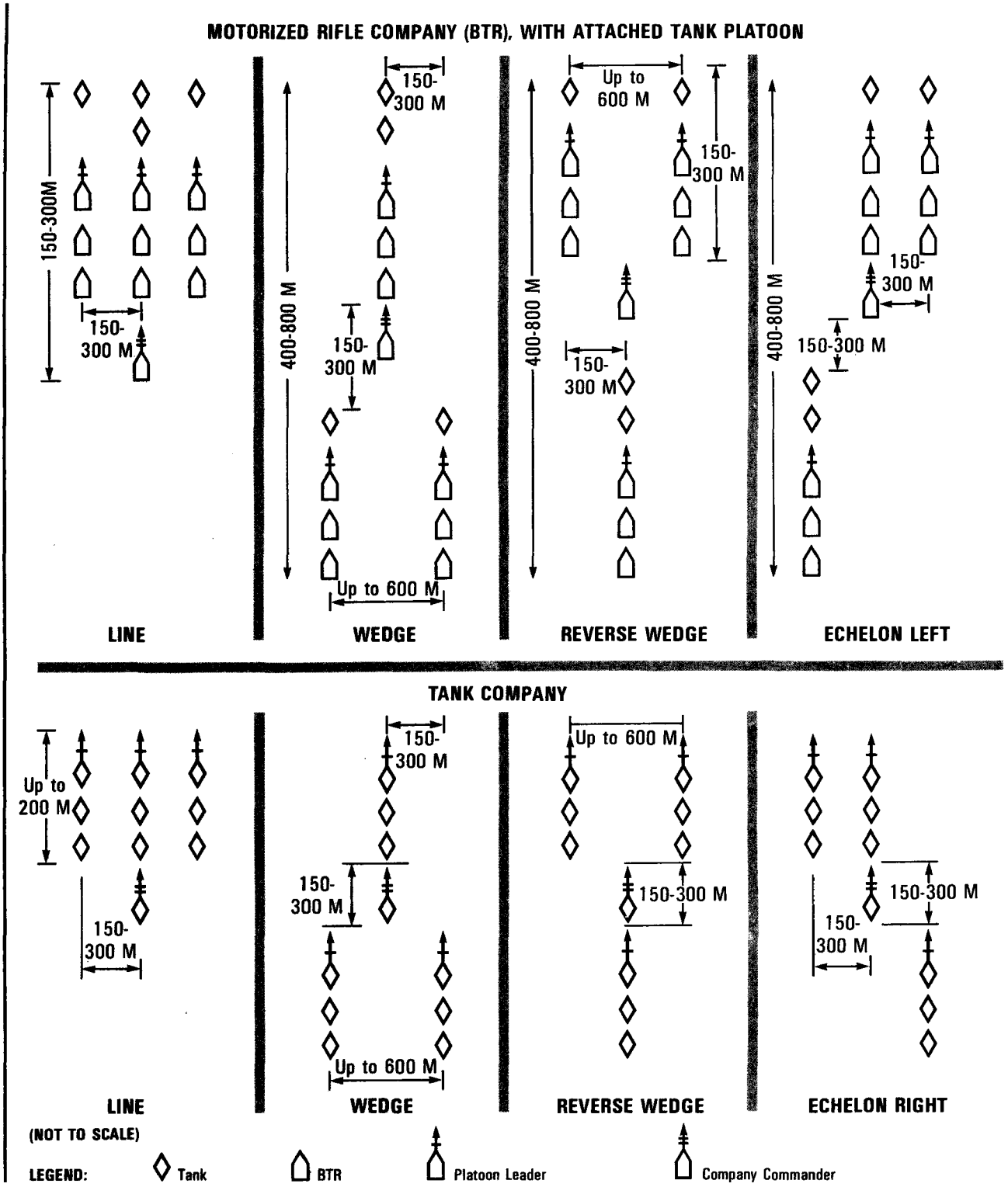
A company in prebattle formation advances with platoon columns in one of the formations described in the examples on page 5-10. In prebattle formation a unit does not laterally deploy beyond platoon columns. The intervals between company or platoon columns in prebattle formation will be large enough to allow full deployment of the subunit into attack formation without additional lateral expansion of the entire formation. Prebattle formation provides a combination of speed, dispersion, flexibility, and firepower in an anticipated direction.

Battalion Prebattle Formations

(COMPANIES IN COLUMNS-NOT TO SCALE)



Company Prebattle Formations (Platoons in Column)



Attack Formation

Normally, the *attack formation* is assumed immediately before combat. In prebattle formation, platoons, and possibly companies remain in column. Attack formation is assumed when platoons disperse laterally into line formation. Within their company, however, platoons need not be formed on line but may be also arrayed in wedge or echelon formations, based on the situation. However, an array of platoons on line is most common. Tanks on line normally precede BTRs or BMPs. If troops dismount, they normally follow closely behind the tanks. BTRs or BMPs normally follow between 100 to 400 meters behind the tanks. Attack formation normally is assumed within about 1000 meters of enemy positions.

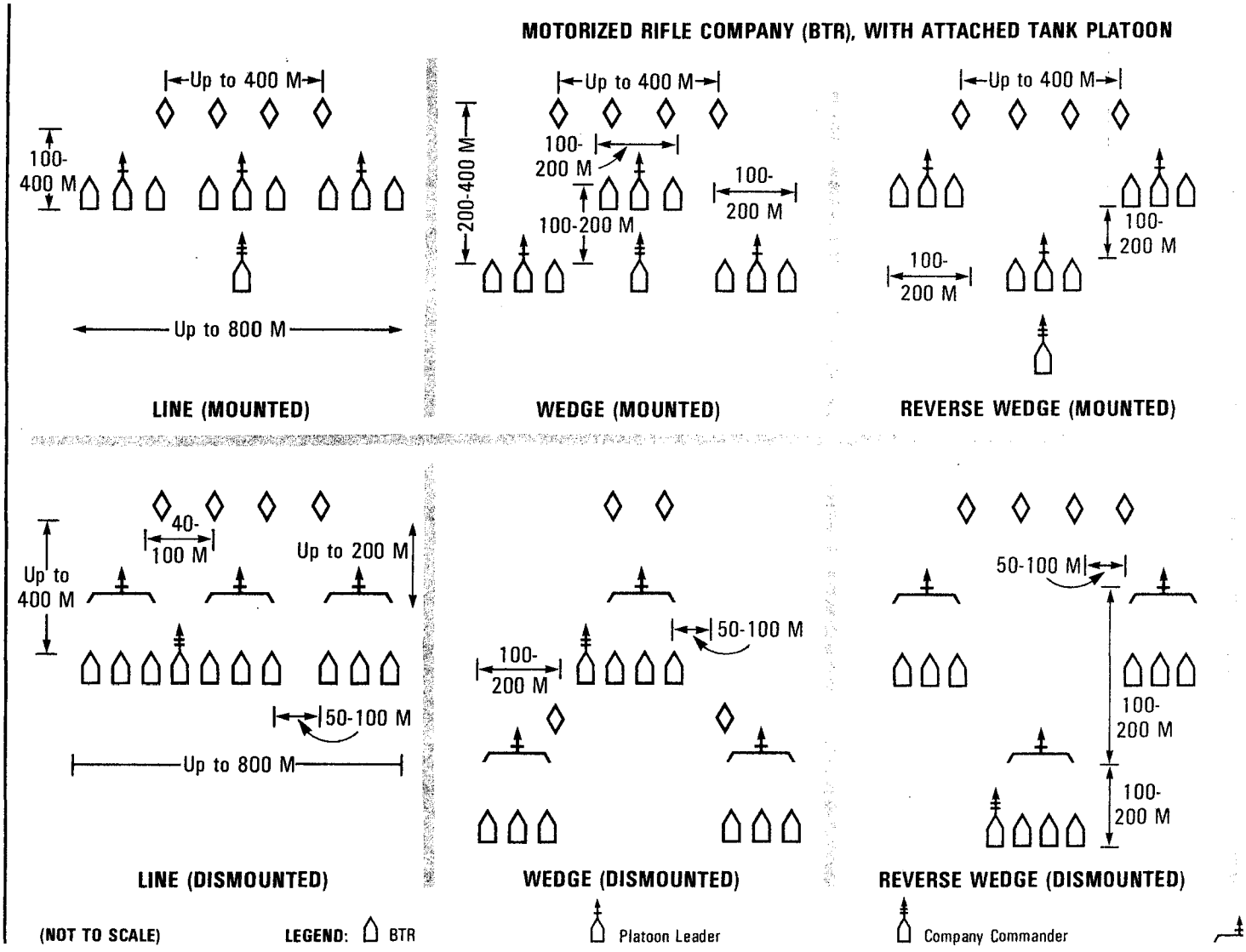
Platoon leaders normally are located centrally. Company commanders normally are located centrally and slightly to the rear of lead elements.

Attack formation *(boyevoy poryadok)* is sometimes referred to as "combat formation" or "battle formation" in Western publications. It is called *attack formation* in this manual to distinguish it from the Russian term *boyevoy poryadok voysk*, which is best translated as *battle formation.*

Battle formation is the organization of a unit or

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Company Attack Formation (Platoons on Line)



Fold out for 5-11

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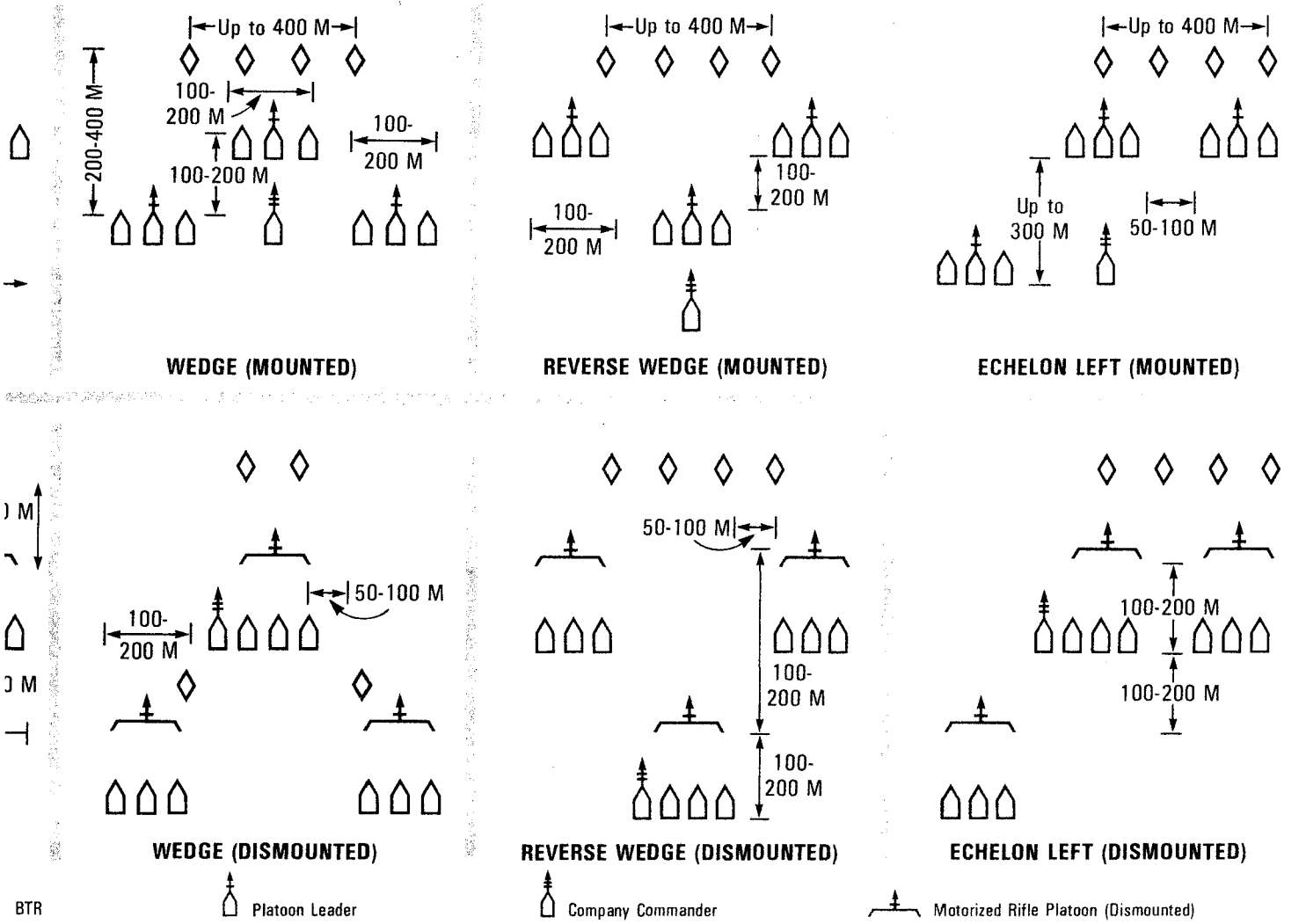
Platoon leaders normally are located centrally. Company commanders normally are located centrally and slightly to the rear of lead elements.

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Battle formation is the organization of a unit or group of forces for offensive or defensive combat. For example, the battle formation of a motorized rifle regiment in the attack may be two tank-reinforced battalions in the first echelon and one in the second echelon, or it may be three battalions in the first echelon with a company held in reserve (see illustrations on page 5-12). The battle formation of a battalion in the defense might require two company strongpoints forward and one to the rear, and a platoon-sized antitank reserve. The manner in which artillery and other support elements are deployed for a given battle or operation is also part of the battle formation.

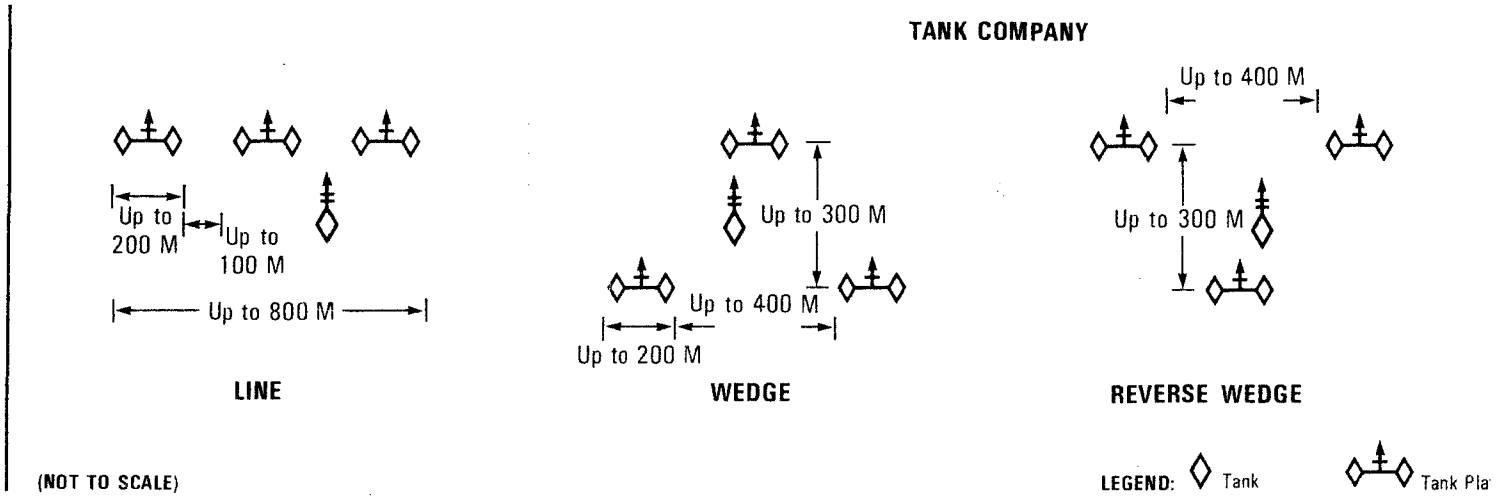
; on Line)

MOTORIZED RIFLE COMPANY (BTR), WITH ATTACHED TANK PLATOON

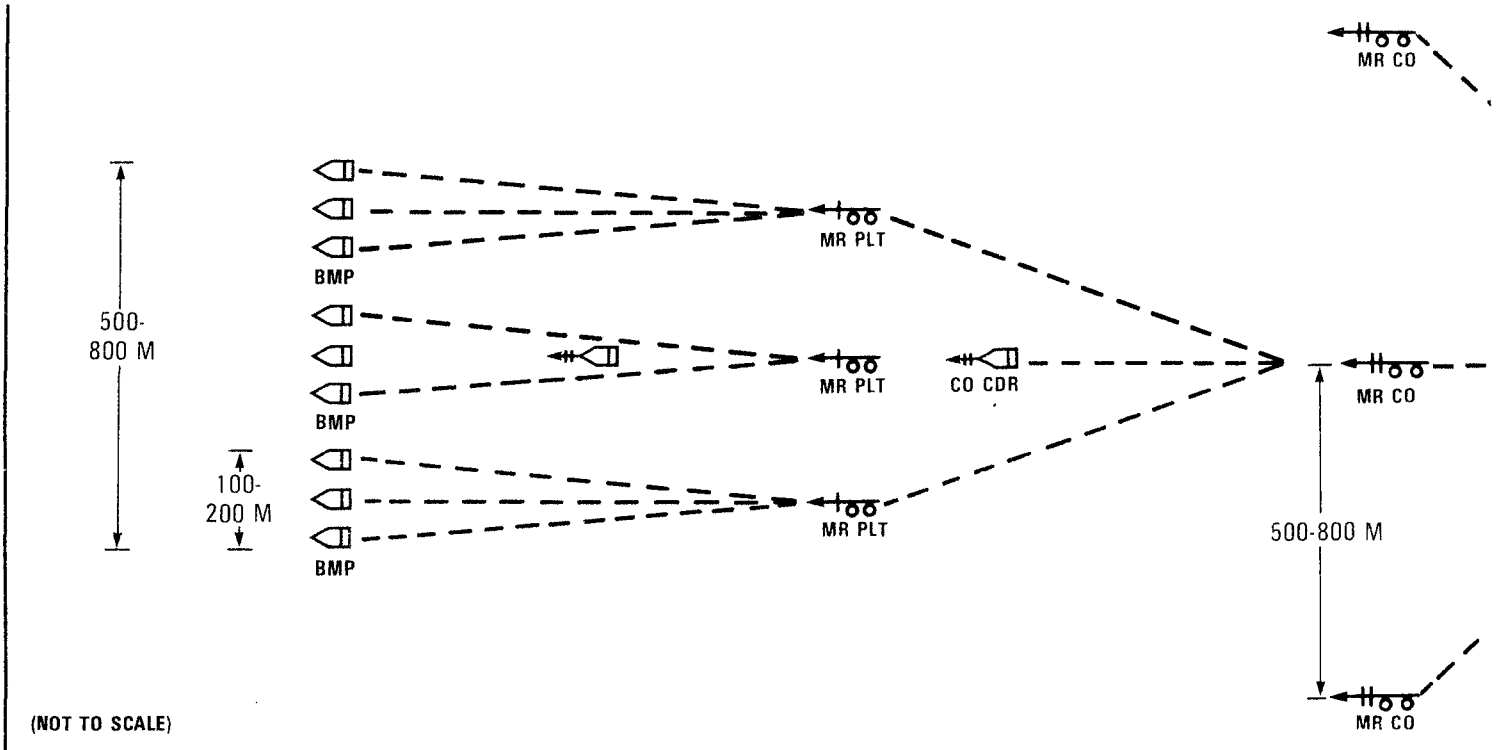


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Company Attack Formation (Platoons on Line)

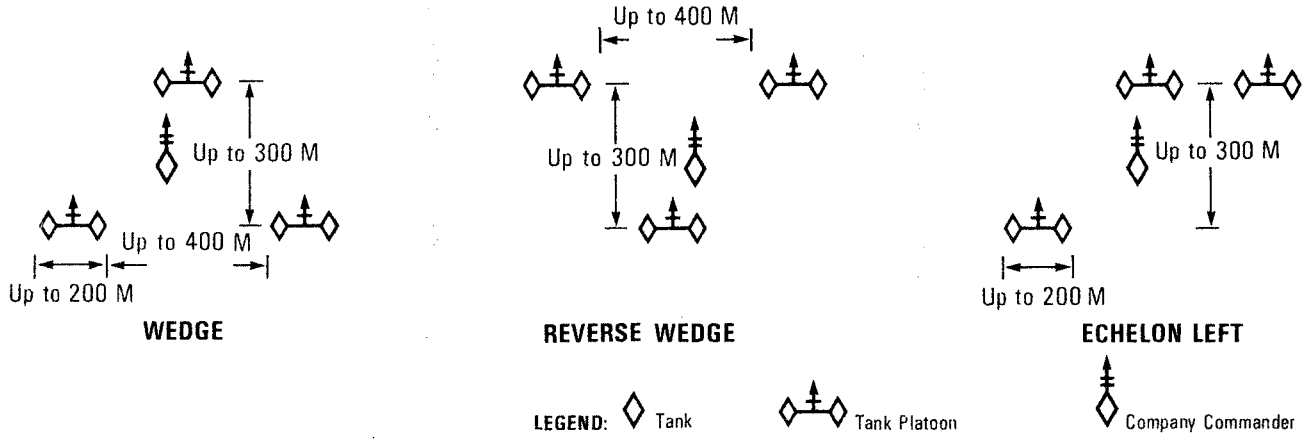


Tactical Formations of a Motorized Rifle Battalion (BMP)

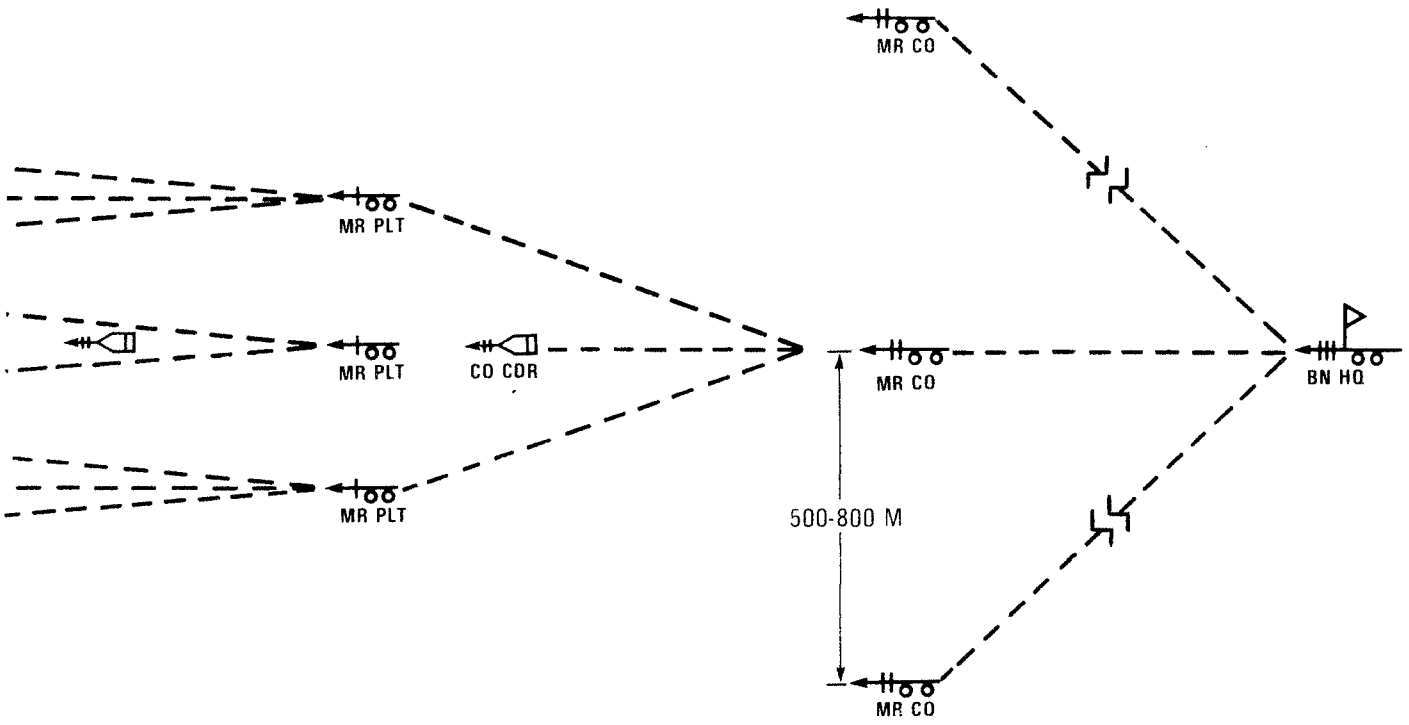


Line)

TANK COMPANY



Battalion (BMP)



COMPANY PREBATTLE FORMATION: LINE (PLATOONS IN COLUMNS)

BATTALION PREBATTLE FORMATION: LINE (COMPANIES IN COLUMNS)

BATTALION IN MARCH FORMATION

Concept

The attack against a defending enemy is employed when the enemy is in a defensive position, and the Soviets know his location. It normally follows a plan, based on intelligence on enemy disposition and the factors of mission, terrain, troops, and time available.

The attack against a defending enemy is the tactic which has been incorrectly described as a "breakthrough" or "deliberate attack." These terms are incorrect because they do not fully describe all options available to the Soviet commander conducting what he calls attack against a defending enemy.

Principles of Attack Doctrine

- Conduct aggressive reconnaissance.
- Breach enemy defense at weak points or gaps. Maneuver against enemy flanks and rear.
- Bypass strongpoints.
- Rapidly maneuver forces and fires in decisive direction.
- Mass fires.
- Give priority to destruction of enemy nuclear weapon systems.
- Strike rapidly and deeply into enemy rear.
- Maintain momentum under all conditions.
- Employ radioelectronic combat.

The two methods of conducting an attack against a defending enemy are to attack from the march and to attack from a position in direct contact.

An *attack from the march,* the preferred method of attack, is launched from march formation out of assembly areas in the rear. Subunits deploy laterally at designated control lines and assume attack formation within approximately 1,000 meters of enemy defenses.

The Soviets perceive the advantages of the attack from the march to be as follows: The unit is not committed before attack. The attack increases chance of surprise, allows greater flexibility, decreases vulnerability to enemy artillery, and enhances momentum. Preparation for combat is performed out of enemy contact.

Disadvantages of the attack from the march are:

- Commanders may not be familiar with terrain and enemy dispositions.
- It is more difficult to coordinate fire and maneuver and simultaneous combined arms efforts.

An *attack from a position in direct contact,* the less preferred method, is launched from a position which may be part of, or immediately behind, a defensive position. It is most often used when changing over to the offense from the defense.

The advantages of an attack from a position in direct contact are as follows:

- It allows more thorough study of terrain and enemy disposition.
- It permits more refined organization of battle.
- It is easier to coordinate fire and maneuver.

The disadvantages of an attack from a position in direct contact are as follows:

- Unit may be already committed.
- Unit is under threat of attack during preparation.
- There is less chance of surprise.
- There is less chance to build up momentum and to overcome inertia.

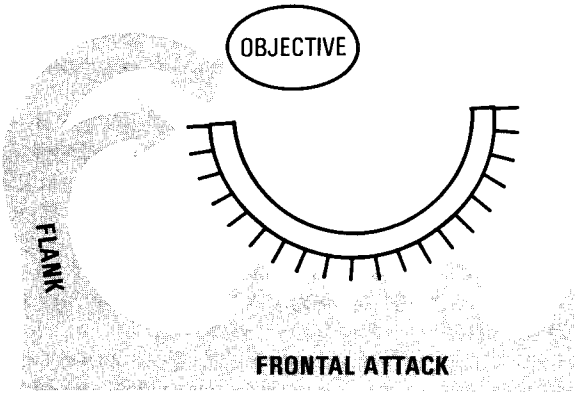
Forms of Maneuver

The three basic forms of maneuver in the attack are the frontal attack, the flank attack, and the envelopment.

The *frontal attack* is directed against the enemy's frontline forces to penetrate his defenses along single or multiple axes. A unit conducting a frontal attack attempts to create openings for subsequent exploitation. The frontal attack was previously one of the most frequently employed forms of offensive maneuver. Its success depends on superiority of forces and firepower, the presence of sufficient reserves, and thorough planning. The frontal attack, by itself, is the least preferred form of maneuver. Normally, it is used in combination with a flank attack or an envelopment.

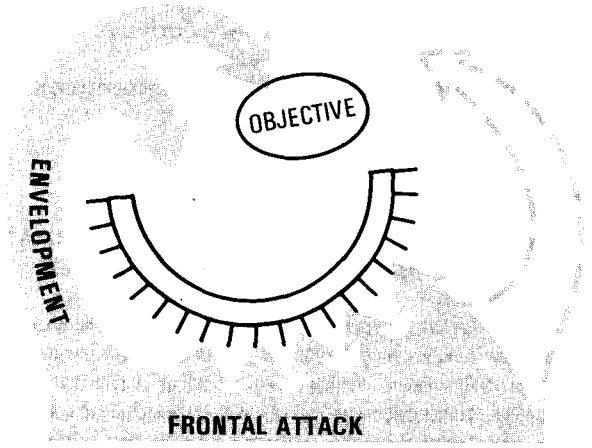
The *flank attack* is conducted to strike enemy forces in their flank or rear at a relatively shallow depth. It normally is initiated through gaps or breaches in enemy formations. Forces conducting the flank attack and those conducting a simultaneous frontal attack coordinate fire support.

Combination of Frontal and Flank Attacks



The *envelopment* is a deeper attack that causes the enemy to turn and fight in a new direction. It is launched against enemy open flanks or through gaps or breaches. There is no requirement for mutual fire support with forces conducting a frontal attack.

Envelopment with Frontal Attack



The Soviets seek to exploit massive suppressive fires through the vigorous, sustained, forward movement of attacking units. Attacking forces attempt to bypass strongpoints and to envelop defensive positions. The maneuvers used vary with the situation. Units attempt to exploit gaps in a defense and to maneuver against its flanks and rear. The objective is a strike into the key points and to the full depth of an enemy defense.

Objectives

Soviet tactical objectives are expressed as dashed lines on a terrain map, arrayed at various depths, based on enemy dispositions and terrain. Assignment of an objective to a maneuver unit requires that unit to attack to the limit of the objective line and to destroy or neutralize enemy troops, weapons, equipment, and support systems.

The objective lines, all normally assigned by the next higher commander, are based on his knowledge of the enemy and his concept of attack. Divisions and regiments normally are assigned an immediate objective and a subsequent objective. Battalions and companies normally receive an immediate objective and a subsequent direction of attack. A battalion may sometimes be assigned a subsequent objective.

At the tactical level, objectives form a progressively higher and deeper hierarchy. The depths of objectives are not fixed dimensions, but vary with each situation.

In the initial phase of an attack, when configuration of enemy defenses may be evident, commanders may assign objectives to subordinate commanders to create, at each level, a minimum 3 to 1 advantage in combat power.

An idealized, but representative, hierachy of tactical objectives for an attack in which a 3 to 1 ratio is created at all levels is portrayed in the illustration at right.

This illustration shows a hierarchy of objectives for a division attacking in an army first echelon at the beginning of an offensive operation. If the division attack is successful, it will reach an enemy brigade rear area, or, possibly, the enemy division rear area.

As the offensive continues and enemy resistance decreases, objective depths would increase based again on the situation. If enemy resistance were light (during a later phase of an offensive), a division final objective could be as deep as 80 kilometers.

Planning

Division-level planning and preparation for the attack are based on the objectives and missions assigned by the army commander. The division commander assesses the situation, outlines his concept and intentions, specifies preliminary actions and missions, and directs the preparation of required information and planning. Warning orders are then passed to subordinate and attached units, specifying where, when, and by what means the attack will be conducted.

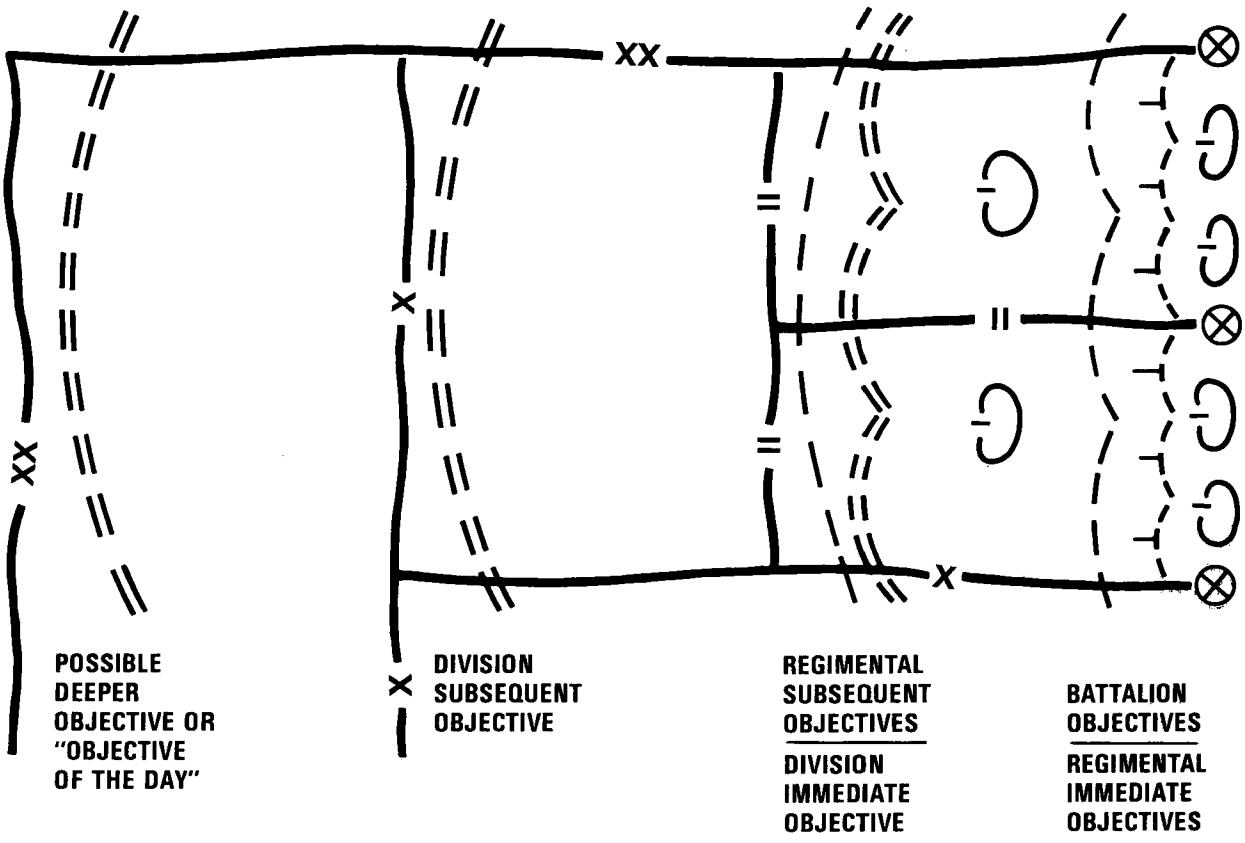
Preliminary actions are regulated by a strict timetable. The less time available, the more rigidly the work is regulated. Concurrent planning and action at all levels is emphasized.

Soviet attack plans are worked out in great detail. Despite the demands such planning may impose, in favorable circumstances the average reaction times to mounting an attack when already in contact, from receipt of orders or contact report to an H-Hour, are indicated below.

Reaction Times To Mounting An Attack

UNIT	REACTION TIME	PLANNING TIME
Division	2-4 hours	1-3 hours
Regiment	1-3 hours	30 minutes to 2.5 hours
Battalion	25-60 minutes	20-45 min

Possible Hierarchy of Tactical Objectives for a Soviet Division Attack Against a Defending Enemy



OBJECTIVE DEPTHS

	ENEMY BATTALION REAR	ENEMY BRIGADE REAR	ENEMY DIVISION REAR
REGIMENT	FORWARD DEFENSE OF ENEMY BATTALION	ENEMY BATTALION REAR	
BATTALION	ENEMY FORWARD PLATOON AND COMPANY STRONGPOINTS	DIRECTION FOR CONTINUATION OF ATTACK	

LEGEND: — — — Immediate Objectives = = = Subsequent Objectives

NOTE: Objectives assigned based on maintaining a minimum 3 to 1 advantage in maneuver forces combat power.

On receipt of a mission, the division commander and his chief of staff immediately assess the assigned mission, calculate available and required time, and establish what information about the situation they need, what they already have, and what is lacking. Analysis of the assigned mission centers on the role of the divisions in the attack; where, unless told, its main effort should be concentrated; what attack formation should be used; and what rates of advance are possible during the attack.

The division commander reviews the army's offensive plan, the allocation and procedures for employment of nuclear and chemical weapons, and the role of the division in the army's scheme. He notes the axes, objectives, and groupings of flanking division(s).

The basis for his attack planning stems from consideration of—

- Objective(s).
- Enemy dispositions.
- The army's fire plan, particularly the provision for nuclear/chemical fires, and the allocation of artillery.
- The terrain in the assigned attack zone, the weather and light conditions, and time of the attack.
- Combat effectiveness and supply situation of all elements of the division.

The balance of forces directly influences the alignment of Soviet troops for the attack. The calculation of the relative balance of forces is made across the entire zone of the planned action and to the full depth of the assigned mission. When nuclear weapons are employed, the commander assesses the balance of forces after expected nuclear strikes.

In calculating the balance of forces, the Soviets attempt to determine the quantity and quality of the opposing forces. Besides a precise count of battalions and companies, tanks, artillery, mortars and antitank weapons, this estimate also assesses morale, actual strength in personnel and equipment, and the combat experience and readiness of each side.

The assessment of the balance of forces derives from intelligence estimates that primarily pertain to—

- Grouping of forces and the structure of enemy defenses in the attack zone to the depth of the attack mission.
- Presence and location of enemy weapons of mass destruction and their possible employment.
- Distribution of strongpoints in the defense and location of antitank weapons.
- Existence of gaps, breaks, and boundaries in the defense.
- Location of reserves, especially armor, and the possible nature of their commitment.
- Location and organization of enemy artillery and mortars.
- Positions critical to the stability of the defense.
- Perimeters of strongpoints and defensive areas on the FEBA and in the depth of the defense.
- Obstacles.
- Probable areas of nuclear or chemical strikes.

In planning an attack from the march and the required movements of troops to the line of attack, critical attention is given to timing. Usually the next higher commander specifies the routes, start lines or points, lines of deployment, and the line and time of attack. The length of the routes and distances from a start line to other control lines are measured and broken down by 5 kilometer segments. Permissible speeds are determined for different sectors based on the condition of the routes, the time of year and day, the weather, the composition of the columns, and possible enemy action during movement. Average speeds are calculated, and schedules for troop movements are developed. In calculating troop movements, planners reduce the speed of movement from successive lines of deployment to the line of attack by 25 to 50 percent from the march speed.

An attack against a defending enemy may be staged from an assembly area. If an assembly area is occupied, the stay is limited to the time necessary to assign missions to subordinate units, to check preparations, and to organize combat formations. The assembly area is located far enough forward for first echelon regiments to move to their lines of deployment, normally during the hours of darkness, and to reach their attack lines during the artillery preparation.

Troops are dispersed in assembly areas with their attached reinforcements and are grouped by battalions. Their movement routes, with prescribed control and deployment lines, permit rapid, effective movement to the attack line. The attack line is designated in the combat order. It is planned to be as near as possible to the forward positions of the enemy defense.

If a division assembly area is used, it would probably be located about 60 to 75 kilometers from the forward edge of the battle area (FEBA) and cover an area of 300 to 600 square kilometers. First echelon regiments could occupy assembly areas as close as 20 to 30 kilometers from the FEBA.

Reinforcements

A first echelon division may receive the following reinforcements from army and *front* resources:

- 2-4 artillery battalions
- 1 engineer company

- 1 engineer (construction company)
- 1 engineer (ponton bridge) company
- 1 engineer (amphibian) company
- Air defense
- Communications support
- Signal intelligence resources
- Medical support
- Chemical defense
- Motor transport

The division commander assigns some artillery to his first echelon regiments to form regimental artillery groups (RAG) and retains the rest in a division artillery group (DAG). These are temporary groupings which may be modified based on need. *(See Chapter 9, Artillery Support).*

Fire Planning

Fire planning, being highly centralized, integrates conventional artillery and air strikes as well as missile strikes and possible nuclear or chemical fires. The fire plan includes details which specify the time of assignments, groupings, and displacement of artillery. Fragmentary orders provide specifics concerning the missions of designated artillery units and identify the location of observation posts and firing positions. Deadlines for units to be ready to fire are specified. Artillery units are among the first combat forces to deploy.

Artillery units allocated by higher headquarters join the designated elements of the attack force in the assembly area or link up on the march. Artillery designated to support or reinforce the attack take up firing positions early enough to be ready to cover the advance of the division several hours before the attack is launched. Artillery attached to maneuver regiments usually moves near the head of the regimental main forces.

For the attack, fire planning is conducted in the first echelon regiments and divisions based on the scheme of maneuver and fire plan of the division and higher headquarters. The chief of rocket troops and artillery at division level receives instructions from and advises the division commander on—

- Nuclear fires allotted to the division and plans for integrating nuclear, chemical, and conventional fires and available air strikes.
- Fires to create passages through obstacles and obstructions.
- Priorities of sectors of the enemy defense which are to be neutralized.
- Starting time, duration, and phases of the fire preparation.
- Methods of firing in support of the attack.
- Plans for partial decentralization of artillery control during the accompaniment phase in the enemy depths.
- Plan of support for commitment of second echelon forces and reserves.

The CRTA incorporates the planned fires of the RAGs and DAGs into a division fire plan. The completed division plan is forwarded to army level for approval and incorporation into the army plan. Adjustments in the organization for combat and planned fires are made as the planned attack develops. These changes are also forwarded to the army CRTA.

A possible fire plan outlining the timing for an artillery fire preparation is shown below.

Possible Artillery Fire Plan

TIME	PHASE OF FIRE PREPARATION
H-25	Heavy surprise concentration of nuclear strikes or conventional artillery and air strikes on the entire depth of the defense.
H-20	Destruction fire against strongpoints, observation points, headquarters, and artillery. Priority fires against enemy's forward defenses.
H-15	Conventional suppressive fire against enemy forward positions.
H-5	Heavy, surprise concentrations against enemy strongpoints.
H-Hour	Artillery fires in support of the attack begin.

Fire planning is basically designed to suppress enemy defensive capabilities, including artillery, and to cover the deployment and initial assault of the attacking maneuver elements. High priority is given to neutralizing enemy antitank defenses and to being able to engage possible counterattack forces. Fire planning also provides for suppressing enemy strongpoints on the flanks of the attack zones.

Fire planning for the attack is methodical and highly quantitative because of the need to determine

ammunition requirements and to distribute planned fires effectively. The availability of artillery and its organization is measured against the numbers and types of targets and the commander's decision for coordinated action in the attack. Targets are allocated to artillery, tanks, aircraft, and nuclear or chemical weapons.

The width and depth of the area for which preparatory fires are planned depends on the strength and deployments of the enemy defense. When time permits, fire planning is based on thorough, detailed reconnaissance and careful study of the attack plan. In any attack, a systematic targeting effort underlies the fire plan at all levels. Accordingly, the commander's *attack order* contains specific details such as—

- Time of start, direction, and plan of fires.
- Locations, times, and methods for clearing passages in obstacles (friendly and enemy).
- Procedures for marking and guarding cleared passages.
- Firing procedures for direct firing weapons.
- Coordination with troop units in direct contact.
- Actions if the enemy fires a counter-preparation.
- Necessary signals.

The commander also specifies in his attack order other actions to be carried out while units move to the attack lines. These include:

- Emergency procedures and alternate routes in the event of enemy use of nuclear or chemical weapons and/or creation of zones of contamination.
- Organization of air defense measures.
- "Safe distance" lines in the event nuclear strikes are to be employed.
- Procedures for relieving units if they lose their combat effectiveness due to enemy nuclear strikes.
- Signal instructions for the attack, calls for fire support and to cease fires.

Division Attack

A division normally conducts an attack as part of its parent army offensive. In some circumstances, it may conduct an attack under control of a corps or front. Attacking divisions have missions which contribute to the accomplishment of the army's missions. Achievement of a division's mission is the culmination of fires and attacks by its maneuver regiments.

A likely mission for a division attacking in the first echelon of its parent army would be to penetrate enemy forward defenses, to attack through the enemy brigade rear, and to continue the attack to the full tactical depth—the enemy division rear area.

A division normally attacks with most of its combat power in a first echelon or a strong single echelon. The remaining forces are organized into a second echelon, a combined arms reserve, or special reserves (such as engineer, chemical, or antitank subunits).

The main difference between a second echelon force and a combined arms reserve is that the former has an assigned mission while the latter does not. A combined arms reserve is used to exploit developed or developing success or to react to contingencies.

Within the division's attack zone, a main attack axis may be designated based on terrain, disposition of enemy defenses, or the order received from army or higher headquarters. One or two of its first echelon regiments probably would attack along or abreast the main attack axis. Another first echelon regiment probably would conduct a supporting attack. (The illustration on page 5-19 depicts a typical Soviet maneuver plan against a defending enemy.)

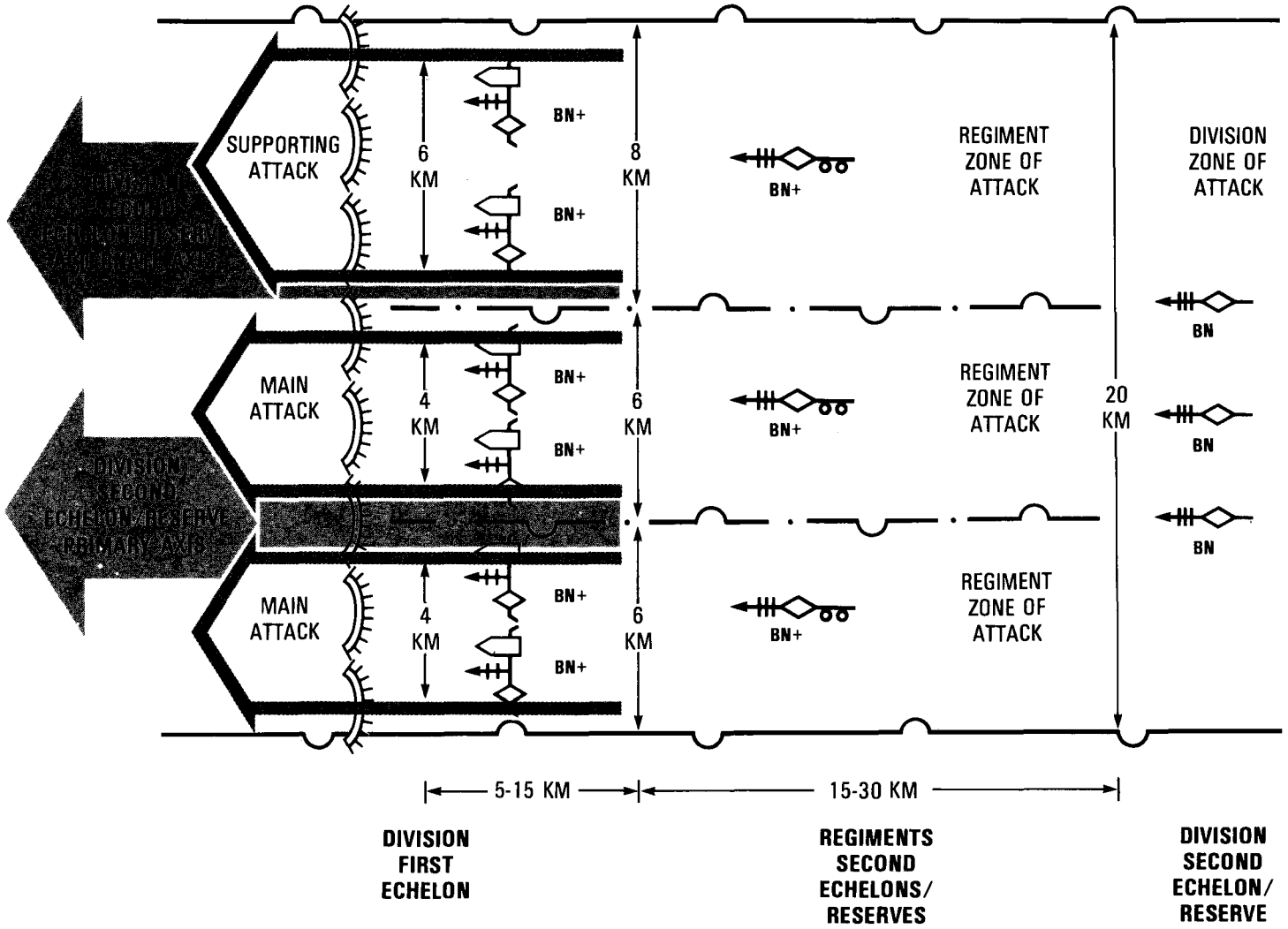
A second echelon regiment normally has a mission to continue the attack against a deeper objective along the main attack axis. Normal commitment of a second echelon regiment takes place after the division's immediate objective has been achieved. However, the time of commitment depends on the success of first echelon forces and the manner in which the enemy uses his reserves. The second echelon is committed by the commander when and where it can best contribute to overall success. The division commander could commit the second echelon on an alternate axis, based on his evaluation of the developing situation.

A regiment designated a combined arms reserve would not have an assigned objective at the beginning of an attack. It would be held in readiness to attack along the most opportune axis at a time determined by the division commander.

Before being committed, second echelon or combined arms reserve subunits advance in march or prebattle formation approximately 15 to 30 kilometers to the rear of the first echelon. This distance varies with the situation. The commander keeps second echelon or reserve forces far enough forward to influence the battle in a timely manner, but far enough to the rear to protect them from the bulk of enemy direct fire and direct support weapons. Second echelon or reserve subunits, before commitment, probably would be kept sufficient lateral depth to protect them from enemy nuclear or chemical weapons.

When attacking with three regiments in a single echelon, a division zone of attack is normally 15 to 25 kilometers wide. This width could vary considerably with the situation. Within the zone of attack there probably would be no distinct, continuous division "attack frontage." Each of the three first echelon regiments attacks on its own axis, with situation-variable

Typical Maneuver Plan
Soviet Tank or Motorized Rifle Division Attack Against Defending Enemy



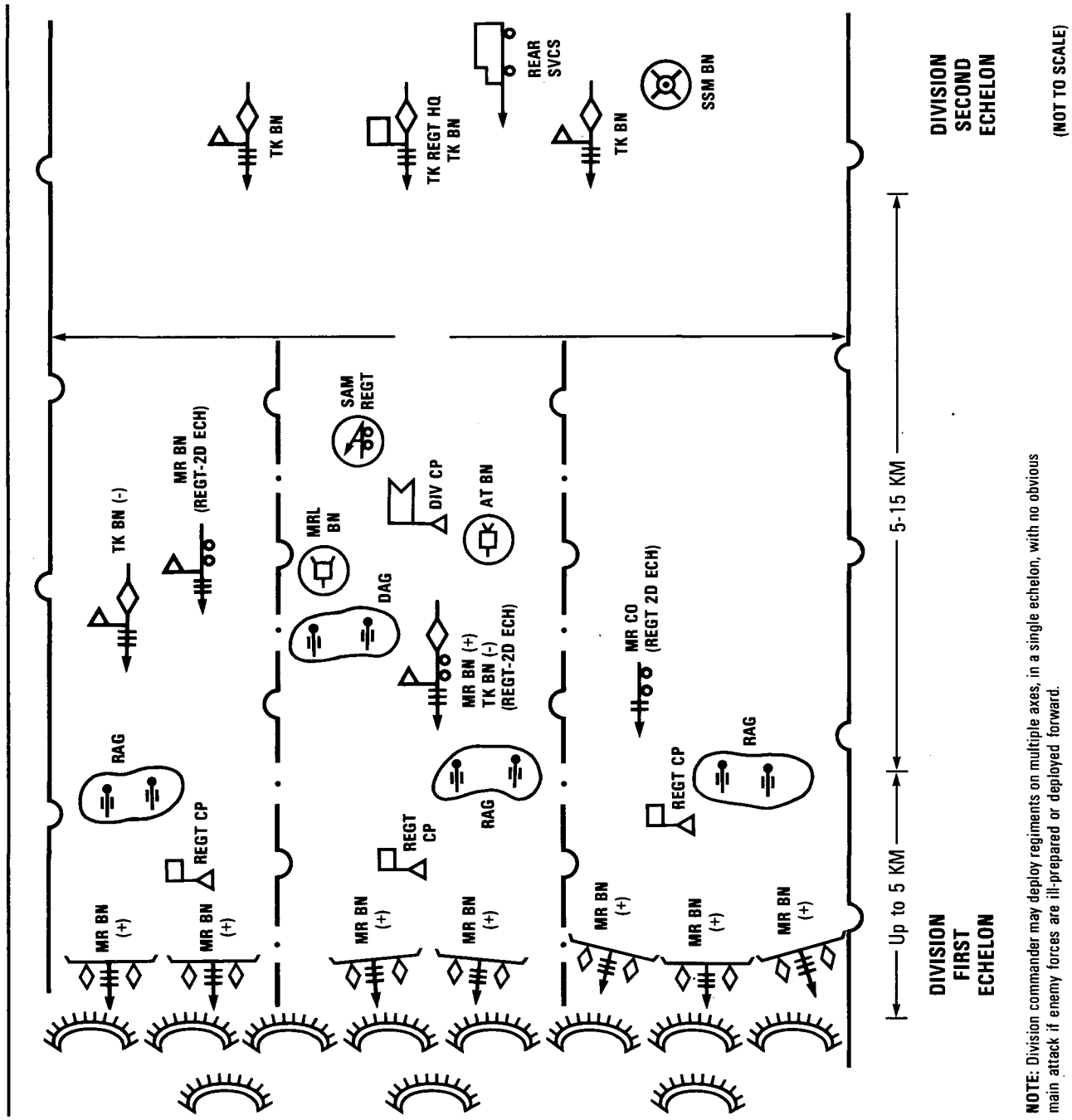
NOTE: Division second echelons/reserves normally are spaced 15 to 30 kilometers to the rear of first echelon force. Distances between elements of a regiment can vary from 5 to 15 kilometers. Regimental attack frontages vary from 3 to 8 kilometers depending on mission.

(NOT TO SCALE)

spaces between regiments. Regimental attack frontages can vary from as little as 3 kilometers to as much as 8 kilometers, depending on the regiment's mission and battle formation.

If enemy defenses are not well prepared and most of the enemy force is deployed forward, a Soviet division may attack on multiple axes with no *obvious* main attack. The division array would be similar to that

Typical Attack Formation, Soviet Motorized Rifle Division



NOTE: Division commander may deploy regiments on multiple axes, in a single echelon, with no obvious main attack if enemy forces are ill-prepared or deployed forward.

just described, with three regiments about equally dispersed in a single echelon. The leading regiments attack and probe for weak points in enemy defenses, penetrate wherever they can, develop penetrations, and carry the attack as deeply as possible. The division commander allows the battle to develop to a stage where he can determine which penetration promises the best opportunity to drive into the enemy rear. He then commits his combined arms reserve through this penetration.

The challenge facing the opposing commander under such an attack is to maintain the integrity of his main battle area. Otherwise, he may be forced to commit his reserve before the direction of the Soviet main attack becomes obvious.

Another Soviet option, less desirable, especially under nuclear conditions, is the attack with forces massed across a narrow frontage. Such an attack might be conducted to create a breach in well-prepared, deeply arrayed enemy defenses. A division conducting the main attack of its parent army could conduct such an attack to achieve a breakthrough for an offensive operation. A probable array for the division in these circumstances would be two regiments in the first echelon massed across a frontage as narrow as 6 to 10 kilometers, followed by two second echelon regiments and a small reserve.

Because this type of attack makes their forces extremely vulnerable to tactical nuclear strikes, it is not likely the Soviets would employ it under nuclear or nuclear-threatened conditions. Under any conditions, such an attack requires rapid concentration of forces and fires to create the breach and just as rapid a dispersal of forces on the other side of the breach. Though this type of attack is less likely, it must be considered a possible option.

The Soviet division attack options described are not all-inclusive, but representative. The organization, concept, and conduct of a Soviet division attack varies with the division's mission, and the commander's estimate of the situation. The basic concept for an attack is to strike enemy defenses with intensive fires, find or create a gap, slip through, and drive deep at top speed.

A division attack could include a vertical envelopment by a heliborne force of up to battalion size. An organic motorized rifle battalion, stripped of its combat vehicles and reinforced with air mobile combat support, could conduct such an assault.

The locations of division elements in the attack are shown below.

Deployment of Division Elements in an Attack

ELEMENT	DEPLOYMENT
DIVISION FIRST ECHELON	Concentrated to attack on two or three axes each several km wide.
DIVISION SECOND ECHELON OR COMBINED ARMS RESERVE	Moves by bounds 15-30 km behind the first echelon until committed.
REGIMENTAL ARTILLERY GROUP	1-4 km from the forward edge of the battle area (FEBA).
DIVISIONAL ARTILLERY GROUP	3-6 km from the FEBA.
MULTIPLE ROCKET LAUNCHER BATTALION	3-6 km from the FEBA.
DIVISIONAL ANTITANK RESERVE	Between first and second echelons on the axis of the main attack or on a threatened flank.
DIVISION MAIN COMMAND POST	Up to 15 km from the FEBA.
DIVISION FORWARD CP	Up to 5 km from the FEBA.
DIVISION REAR AREA CP	Up to 30 km from the FEBA and located near the rear service elements.
REGIMENTAL MAIN CPs	Up to 5 km from the FEBA.
LOGISTIC UNITS	The divisional medical post, together with repair and evacuation elements, moves behind the first echelon. The rest of the divisional logistic units will be some 5-10 km behind the second echelon.

Heliborne assaults could extend out to 50 kilometers beyond the FEBA. Likely objectives are key terrain such as defiles, bridges, or river-crossing sites. A division may employ a forward detachment, such as a reinforced tank battalion, to link up with a heliborne assault.

The use of forward detachments at the beginning of an offensive operation is discussed in Chapter 4. It is likely that forward detachments also would be employed throughout an offensive operation, particularly after penetrating the enemy main defense area.

A division forward detachment of reinforced battalion size may be dispatched on a swift, independent penetration into the enemy depths to seize and hold a tactical objective until the arrival of main forces. It may also be used for tactical raids. In either case, missions of forward detachments are intended to accelerate the advance of main forces and the dissolution of the enemy defense.

Typical objectives for a forward detachment include—

- Road junctions.
- Bridges.
- River crossing sites.
- A mountain pass.
- Air defense weapons.
- Rockets and missiles.
- Command posts.
- Communications centers.
- Tactical reserves.
- Withdrawing forces.

Advance guards differ from forward detachments in mission. An advance guard is a march security element which protects and warns the main marching force and engages enemy forces encountered on the march route. A forward detachment is a deep attack force detailed to achieve an independent mission. It is not restricted to the route of its main force.

Regimental Attack

A maneuver regiment is the smallest fully combined arms ground force element. It is capable of limited independent action, but normally attacks as part of a parent division.

A regiment attacking in the first echelon of a division normally will have a mission to penetrate, destroy, or neutralize forward strongpoints of defending enemy battalions, to continue the attack to an enemy battalion rear area, and to be prepared to continue the attack into enemy brigade and division rear areas.

A regiment normally is organized for combat into three reinforced battalions and, possibly, a company-sized reserve. A motorized rifle regiment has three motorized rifle battalions and one tank battalion. The subunits of the tank battalion normally are assigned to the three motorized rifle battalions. A tank regiment of a tank division has three tank battalions and possibly a motorized rifle company or battalion. Motorized rifle subunits may be assigned to the three tank battalions.

Either regiment normally attacks with two reinforced battalions in its first echelon, and one reinforced battalion in a second echelon. A regiment could also attack with three battalions in a single echelon with a reserve of one or two companies.

An antitank reserve of a motorized rifle regiment normally consists of its antitank battery, a tank platoon, and an engineer mobile obstacle detachment.

A regiment's zone of attack can vary from about 3 to 8 kilometers, depending on the attack concept and the situation. The most typical attack frontage of a regiment is 4 to 5 kilometers. The distance between echelons can vary from about 5 to 15 kilometers.

Motorized rifle regiments and tank regiments have an organic 122-mm howitzer battalion. When attacking in a division first echelon, a regiment normally receives additional artillery from division. The regimental commander may assign artillery, up to a battalion, to each of his first echelon battalions. The remainder is formed into a regimental artillery group (RAG). A RAG is normally deployed 1 to 4 kilometers from the FEBA (see illustration on the next page).

A first echelon regiment could also be supported by attack helicopters from *front,* army, or division.

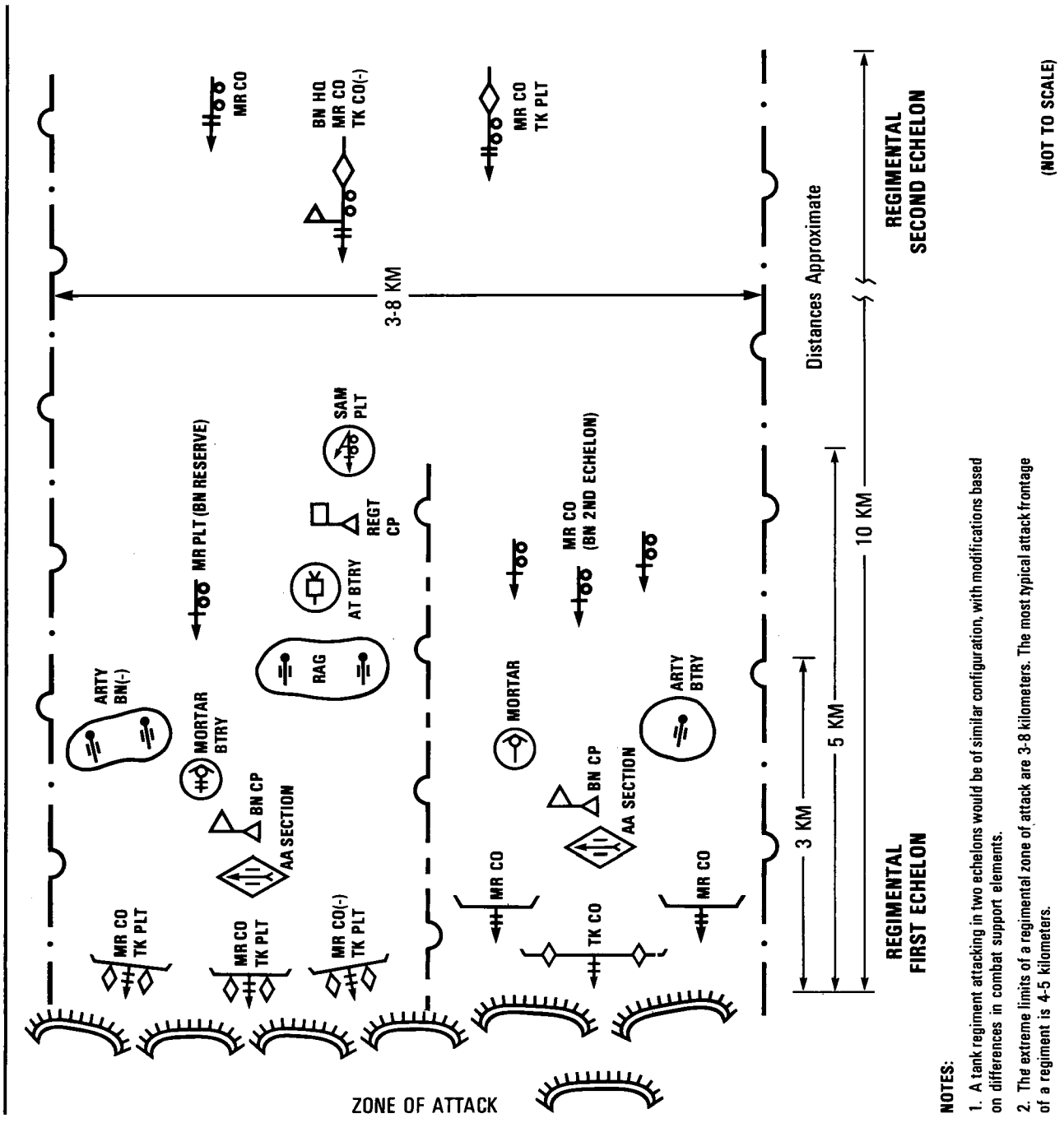
An attack from the march conducted by a motorized rifle regiment follows this sequence:

- The air and artillery preparation, which may be up to 50 minutes duration, is planned and executed to end just before maneuver subunits assault enemy forward defenses.
- The regiment advances out of assembly areas at least 20 kilometers to the rear, concurrent with the fire preparation.
- Subunits normally deploy at distances from enemy forward defenses of approximately 8 to 12 kilometers in battalion columns; 4 to 6 kilometers in company columns, and 1 to 5-4 kilometers in platoon columns.

If enemy defenses are not well prepared, the attack may be conducted in prebattle formation. Attack formation is used against prepared enemy positions. In general, the Soviets do not deploy laterally except when absolutely necessary. They will remain in march or prebattle formation whenever possible, for sake of speed. Even after a lateral deployment, subunits may revert back to march or prebattle formation if enemy resistance is not as great as anticipated.

The most probable attack formation is the line with most firepower forward. Attack formation is assumed before reaching a designated line of attack, normally about 300 to 1000 meters from the forward edge of the battle area. Ideally, all subunits of a regiment cross the line of attack simultaneously. If conditions are favorable, smoke will be employed. *(See Chapter 13, Smoke).*

Typical Attack Formation, Soviet Motorized Rifle Regiment



NOTES:

1. A tank regiment attacking in two echelons would be of similar configuration, with modifications based on differences in combat support elements.
2. The extreme limits of a regimental zone of attack are 3-8 kilometers. The most typical attack frontage of a regiment is 4-5 kilometers.

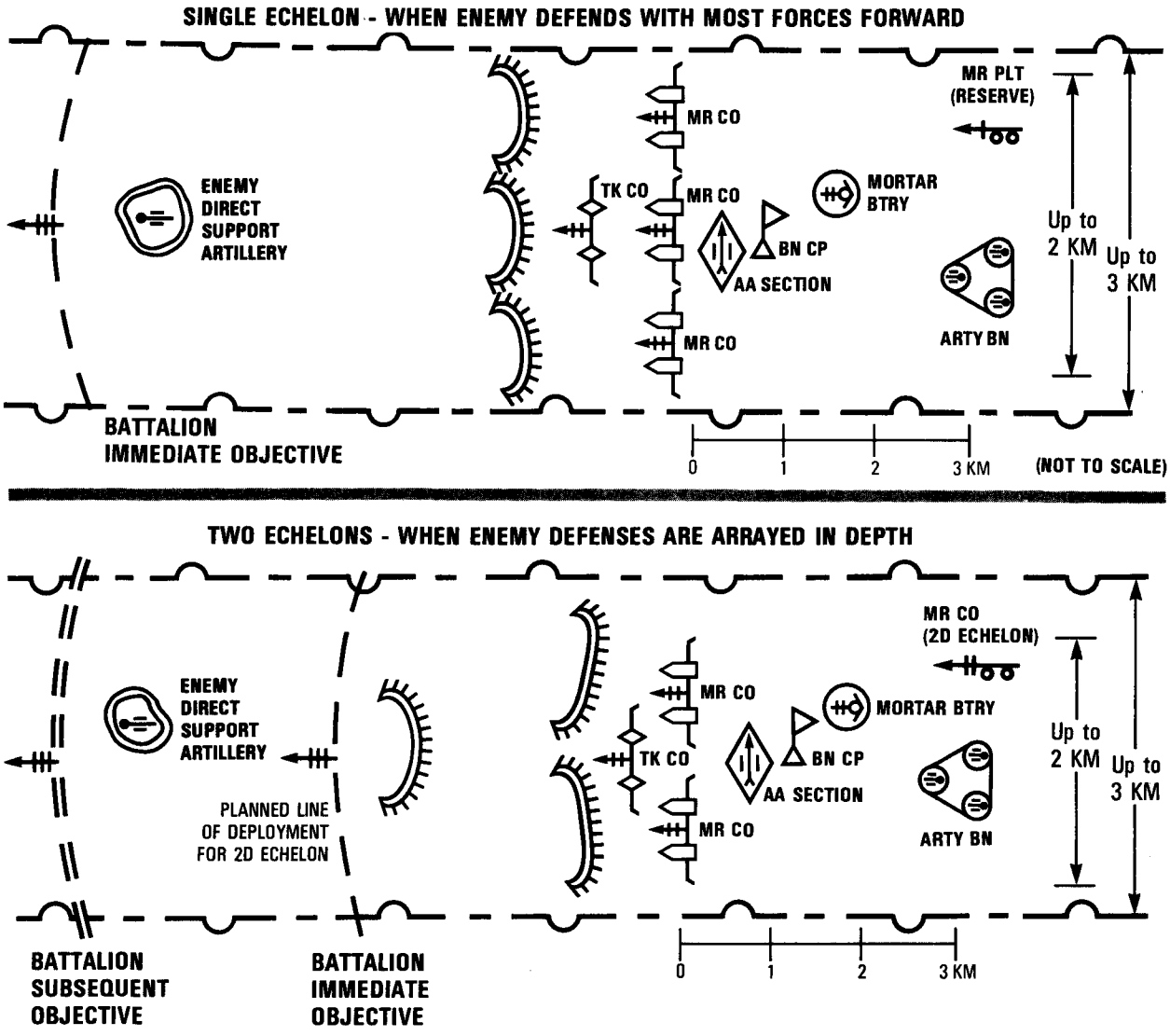
Battalion Attack

A battalion normally attacks as part of its parent regiment. A battalion does not have the organic combat support or combat service support required for independent action. The exception to this is the employment of a battalion as a forward detachment to accomplish a deep, independent mission. In such a circumstance, the battalion would be reinforced to sustain itself for as long as possible.

A battalion attacking in the first echelon of a first echelon regiment would probably have a mission to attack through strongpoints of defending enemy battalions and to continue the attack in an assigned direction. Soviet subunits normally do not stop on objectives and consolidate them, but continue the attack deeper into the enemy rear.

A motorized rifle battalion has three motorized rifle companies and normally has a tank company attached, as illustrated below. A tank battalion has three tank companies and may have either a motorized rifle platoon or company attached.

Attack Formations, Reinforced Motorized Rifle Battalion



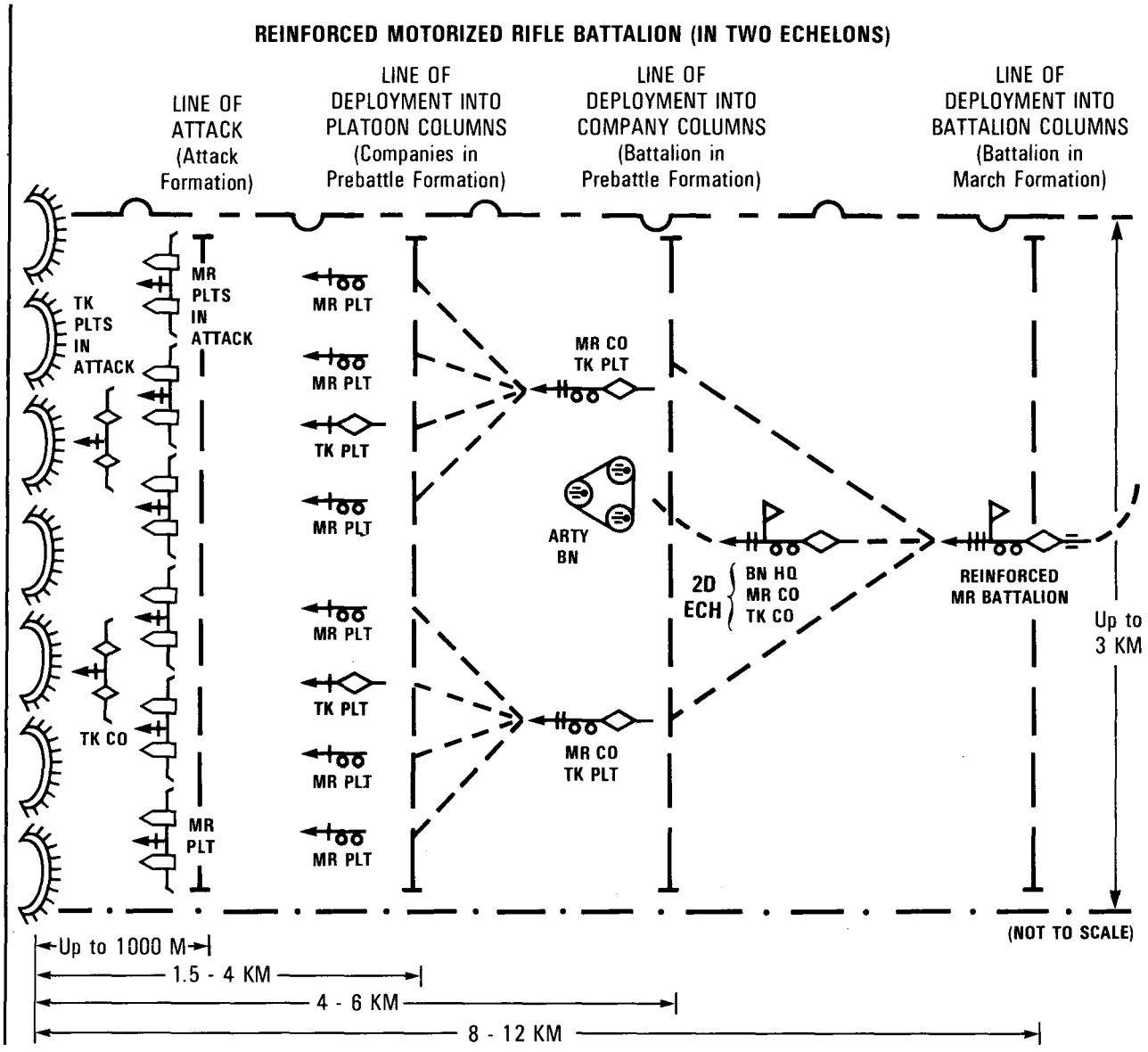
NOTE: Tank battalion formations are of same general configuration minus mortar battery. **(NOT TO SCALE)**

A battalion could attack with three reinforced companies in a single echelon, plus a small reserve, possibly a platoon. A battalion also could attack with two reinforced companies in a first echelon and one reinforced company in a second echelon. When two echelons are employed, a normal distance between echelons is 1 to 3 kilometers. A normal frontage for an attacking battalion is 1 to 2 kilometers, within a zone of 2 to 3 kilometers.

A battalion attacking in a regiment's first echelon probably would have up to a battalion of artillery attached to it. This artillery is under the operational control of the maneuver battalion commander. It may be used for direct fire.

A typical tank or motorized rifle company attack frontage is from 500 to 800 meters. Platoons normally attack on a frontage of 100 to 200 meters, with 50 to 100 meters between vehicles. The frontage of a 4-tank platoon attached to a motorized rifle company could extend to 400 meters.

Deployment for an Attack from the March



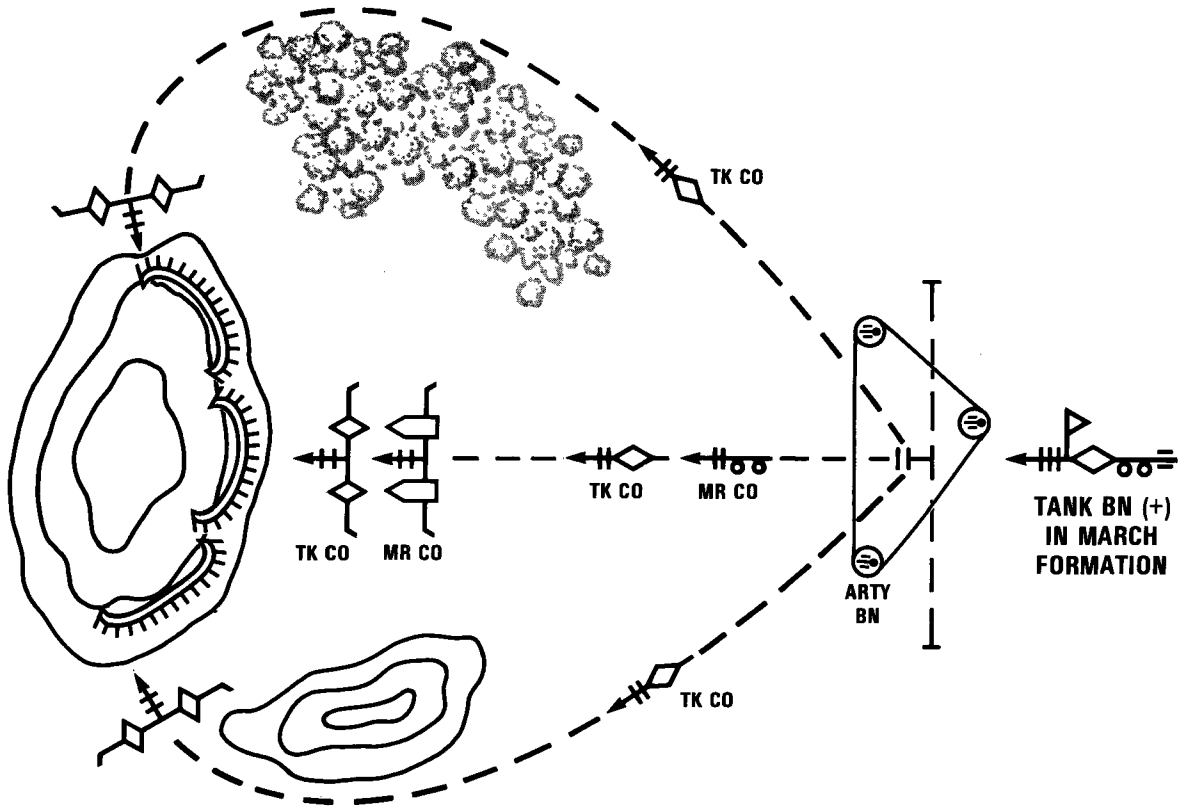
There would probably be little maneuver evident in platoon and company tactics. These subunits normally attack on line, in unison. However, maneuver probably will be evident in the way a battalion commander moves his companies.

Normally, company and battalion commanders are located centrally and slightly to the rear of lead elements in combat vehicles with extra antennas. If commanders are killed, the attack probably would not grind to a halt but would be carried forward on its own momentum. However, elimination of tactical commanders would diminish coordination of the attack, especially fire coordination.

Shown below is a reinforced tank battalion attacking from the march against a strongpoint in the depths of the enemy's defense.

Tank Battalion (Reinforced) Attack from the March

ATTACK AGAINST A STRONGPOINT IN THE DEPTHS OF ENEMY DEFENSE



Conduct of the Attack

Mounted assault speed is approximately 12 kilometers per hour (200 meters per minute). This speed allows tanks to fire from a brief halt, allowing one aimed round to be fired from the main gun. There are indications that the Soviets are striving to increase mounted assault speed to 20 kilometers per hour to reduce vulnerability to antitank weapons. Dismounted assault speed is approximately 6 kilometers per hour.

Soviets prefer motorized rifle units to assault mounted. The factors favoring mounted assault are—

- NBC contamination.
- Open terrain.
- Reduced enemy antitank capability.
- Weak enemy defenses.

If a dismounted attack is planned, a dismount line is designated, within about 400 meters from the FEBA. If possible, dismount is performed with the BMPs or BTRs in defilade to protect riflemen from machine gun fire and vehicles from antitank fires. Factors favoring dismounted assault are—

- Strong enemy antitank capability.
- Well-prepared enemy defenses.
- Fords or bridges.
- Obstacles or minefields.
- Rough terrain: no high speed avenues of attack.
- Maximum firepower needed.

Combined Tank and Motorized Rifle Assault

The most probable array is:

- Line of tanks
- Line of dismounted infantry
- Line of BMPs or BTRs

or

- Line of tanks
- Line of BMPs or BTRs

Dismounted riflemen follow closely behind tanks. The BTRs or BMPs normally remain within 100 to 400 meters behind tanks and fire through gaps between tanks. If the terrain is rugged or heavily wooded, motorized rifle subunits might lead the assault.

A first echelon battalion may have a section or platoon (two or four) of self-propelled antiaircraft guns (ZSU) attached. The ZSUs follow approximately 400 meters behind attacking maneuver elements, with 150 to 250 meters between vehicles.

Minefields are breached by a combination of—

- Tanks with mine rollers and plows.
- Line charges.
- Sappers.
- Artillery fire.

Mine-clearing is covered by smoke and intensified fire on enemy defensive positions. Ideally, the Soviets would like to create one lane through an obstacle or minefield per platoon. Normally one tank per tank platoon is equipped with a mine roller. In addition, each tank company has a mine roller/plow. Mobile mine-clearing vehicles hurl line charges out to several hundred meters to clear lanes several meters wide. Combat vehicles cover each other's passage through the minefield. If dismounted, riflemen follow in column behind tanks.

The artillery preparation should end just before first echelon elements reach the FEBA. Fires are normally shifted on command of maneuver commanders within about 200 meters of lead elements, depending upon weapon caliber. There is no pause between the preparatory fires and the start of fires in support of the attack. While fighting through enemy defenses, maneuver elements will be preceded by a pattern of intense artillery and mortar fires. Fires like the rolling barrages of World War II are unlikely; however, fires on successive concentrations or lines will be provided.

Fixed-wing air strikes normally are used for targets beyond artillery range. Attack helicopters provide close air support on the FEBA in direct support of ground units.

Subunits go into the final assault moving at maximum possible speed.

Combined Arms Tactics

The essence of the attack and final assault is combined arms cooperation based on the close and uninterrupted interaction of all forces to best exploit their capabilities. Each arm provides strength and protection where another arm is weak or vulnerable.

The Soviets believe the tank is the major ground force weapon. The tank is the keystone of combined arms cooperation in the attack. Concern for the enemy antitank threat is the dominating factor in coordinating the combined arms effort. For this reason, Soviet tanks normally carry more high explosive (HE) rounds than antitank (AT) rounds.

Tank fires are directed by tank company commanders and platoon leaders. An entire tank company may engage an area target with salvo fire. Tank platoons engage area or point targets at the direction of platoon leaders. Platoon leaders direct fires by visual signals, radio, and designation with tracer rounds.

Motorized rifle subunit fires are directed primarily against enemy personnel and antitank weapons. Artillery attached to motorized rifle battalions may

initially be used for indirect fire then revert to direct fire from the immediate rear of assaulting maneuver subunits.

Consistent with their principle of doing the unexpected to surprise the enemy, the Soviets would attack through difficult terrain against lightly defended or undefended areas. Attacks by motorized rifle subunits along forest trails or ridge lines are likely.

The bulk of responsibility for neutralization of antitank weapons falls upon artillery. The massive, continuous artillery fires in the attack would be extremely intense. Even if enemy antitank weapons are not destroyed, the Soviets expect the enemy gunners to be forced to keep their heads down.

After penetrating the forward edge of an enemy defense, the Soviets strive to attack further into the depths of the defensive position. Enemy strongpoints that cannot be reduced immediately may be bypassed.

If strongpoints cannot be bypassed, they are attacked, preferably from their flanks or rear. Close and continuing fire support by massed fires is employed. Smoke is used, as well as flame weapons, against strongpoints.

If required to repel counterattacks, part of the attack force meets the counterattack head on while the main strength of the attacking unit strikes the counterattack on the flanks and in the rear. Artillery fires are called for immediately. Regimental or division antitank reserves move forward to lay down a base of fire and lay hasty minefields. If necessary, the attacking force may temporarily take up the defense to defeat counterattacks, then resume the attack. The chart below identifies combined arms tactics.

Penetration by First Echelon. When a first echelon regiment's battalions have achieved a major penetration, the area of penetration will be widened for exploitation by second echelon forces or, if still capable, first echelon battalions will continue the attack into the enemy depth. Battalions may revert to prebattle formation and advance rapidly to deny enemy movement of reserves and to prevent the organization of the defense on new positions.

The Soviets expect a defending enemy to attempt to rapidly assess the direction and weight of a main attack and to allocate available forces to defeat the attack.

Soviet Combined Arms Tactics (Who does what to whom?)

ARM	MAJOR TASKS: DEFEAT ENEMY—
TANKS	Antitank Weapons Tanks Infantry Fighting Vehicles
MOTORIZED RIFLE	Antitank Weapons Troops Infantry Fighting Vehicles
ARTILLERY	Antitank Weapons Troops Artillery Command Posts
ATTACK HELICOPTERS	Tanks Infantry Fighting Vehicles Antitank Weapons
FIXED-WING CLOSE AIR SUPPORT	Targets beyond range of artillery and attack helicopters
REGIMENTAL AIR DEFENSE WEAPONS	Attack Helicopters Fixed-Wing Aircraft
RADIOELECTRONIC COMBAT	Communications Command and Control Intelligence Artillery

Therefore, as the first echelon battalions move to deeper objectives, the regimental commander stays particularly alert for enemy counterattacks.

A first echelon regiment which has successfully penetrated the enemy forward defenses may establish and secure the gap through which the division follow-on force will attack. The first echelon regiment also could be used as a forward detachment to move ahead of the division to seize important objectives in depth. Often such actions take place in coordination with heliborne forces. Regiments may send out forward detachments of battalion strength. An independent tank battalion of a motorized rifle division is likely to be used as a forward detachment.

Commitment of Second Echelon or Reserves. The division second echelon or combined arms reserve is ideally committed upon achievement of the division's immediate objective. This commitment must take place before the momentum of the advance decreases.

The commander of a second echelon or combined arms reserve regiment normally is collocated with the division commander. This enables him to keep abreast of the battle as it develops. It also simplifies the division commander's task of amplifying or assigning the mission of the second echelon or reserve when he decides to commit it to the battle. The commitment of the division second echelon or reserve is usually marked by an intensification of reconnaissance activity, artillery fire, air strikes, and the use of smoke to screen the force from enemy observation.

A second echelon or reserve regiment converges in battalion march columns toward the penetration. It may remain in battalion columns for the sake of speed if enemy resistance has been minimized. Otherwise, battalions assume prebattle formation or, if required by enemy dispositions, assume attack formation. Ideally, the regiment passes through developed penetrations to drive swiftly into the enemy rear to seize deep objectives.

The division commander constitutes a combined arms reserve from first echelon forces or uncommitted combat assets as soon as the original follow-on force is committed. Surviving pockets of resistance are attacked by follow-on forces or are destroyed by concentrated fires of artillery and aviation, including attack helicopters.

Hastily occupied positions in the enemy rear are attacked from the march in mounted formations. A dismounted attack may be required due to the presence of minefields or a density of antitank weapons. As a basic rule, exploitation units attempt to remain in prebattle or march formation for ease of control and speed, unless confronted by a stubborn enemy defense.

Intensified reconnaissance, artillery and air strikes, and rapid ground attacks are employed to locate and destroy enemy nuclear delivery systems and reserves.

If enemy defenses are stronger than anticipated and cannot be penetrated, second echelon or reserve forces may be committed earlier. If, however, first echelon forces succeed in penetrating enemy forward defenses and are capable of continuing toward deeper objectives, second echelon or reserve forces may not be committed until much later in the battle.

Assuming the division commander commits his second echelon or reserve on the axis of the most successful penetration and the attack continues successfully, this penetration could be developed further by the parent army's commitment of its follow-on forces. Additional divisions could be committed on a widening and ever deepening rapid penetration and exploitation. This is the fundamental concept behind achievement of an operational "breakthrough".

THE MEETING ENGAGEMENT

Objectives and Characteristics

The Soviets define the meeting engagement as follows:

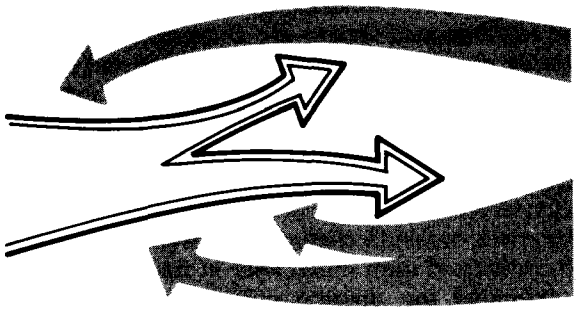
> **A clash between opposing sides when they are simultaneously striving to fulfill assigned missions by means of offensive actions. A meeting engagement is characterized by obscurity of the situation and by abrupt changes in it . . . by rapid changes in . . . formations.**
>
> *Soviet Dictionary of Basic Military Terms*

The objectives of the meeting engagement are destruction of the enemy's forces, seizure of key terrain to insure favorable conditions for future operations, and continuation of the advance.

The meeting engagement may occur under widely differing circumstances, either offensive or defensive. The circumstances in turn influence its organization and conduct. There are four likely circumstances at the beginning of war: when the defender is advancing to forward positions; after penetrating enemy forward defenses, in a clash with advancing reserves; during pursuit; and during counterattack. These circumstances are illustrated on the next page.

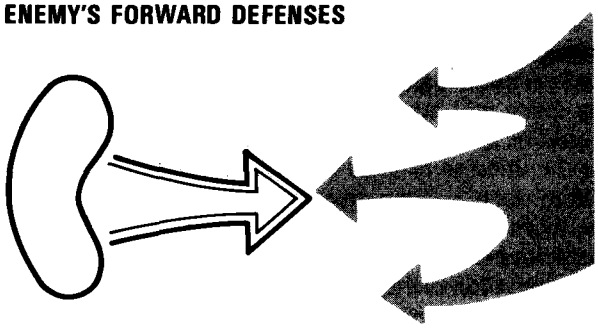
Circumstances Under Which a Meeting Engagement May Occur

BEGINNING OF A WAR



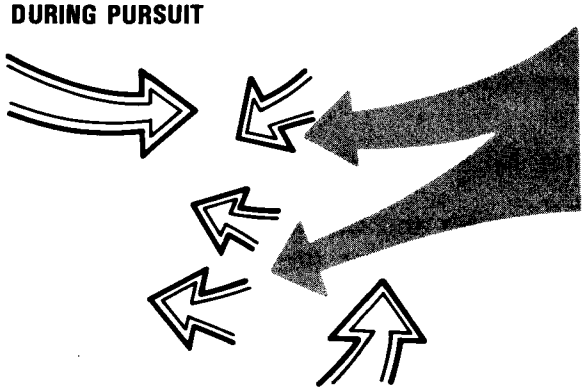
Could also occur at the outset of any attack when opposing forces are not in initial contact, and both assume the offensive.

AFTER PENETRATION OF ENEMY'S FORWARD DEFENSES



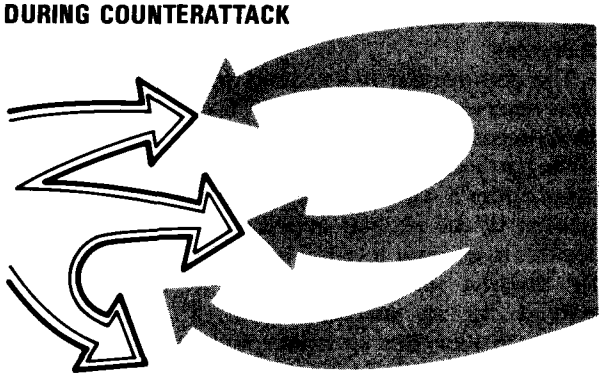
Would involve the penetrating force meeting the defender's advancing reserve elements.

DURING PURSUIT



Meeting engagement likely during counterattack by either side.

DURING COUNTERATTACK



Strong probability that the counterattacking force could be met head-on or from the flanks by the enemy.

Because, in the Soviet view, an offensive generally develops unevenly over a wide front, meeting engagements are characterized by—

- Intense combat over a wide front with considerable room to maneuver.
- Extremely limited planning time, resulting in heavy reliance on battle drills.
- Continuous effort to seize and maintain the initiative.
- Deployment into combat from the march at high speed.
- Uncertainty due to lack of detailed intelligence.
- Sudden changes in the situation.
- Open flanks on each side.
- Both sides seeking advantageous maneuver room.
- The rapid approach of the opposing forces.
- An unclear and fluid situation.

The Soviets do not look upon the meeting engagement as a purely chance occurrence.

One of the most important tendencies in the development of the meeting engagement . . . is the ever greater tendency for early initiation of the meeting engagement instead of its accidental rising. As a result of . . . the depths of action of modern reconnaissance . . . commanders of both sides, more often than not, will already have some indication of the strength and firepower of the enemy far before the meeting. The decision for the meeting engagement will be taken as a result of real assessment . . .

A. I. Radzievskiy
Tactics in Combat Examples-Regiment

Soviet commanders are trained to anticipate a meeting engagement, to identify a likely point of contact, to choose terrain, and to take the initiative. They believe that the side which aggressively seizes the initiative with fire and maneuver will win the meeting engagement.

The commander anticipating a meeting engagement must consider these factors in his planning and decision making:

- Continuous and thorough reconnaissance from his own reconnaissance means and the correct interpretation and use of reconnaissance information furnished from higher levels.
- The requirement for speed in his troop leading procedures—the making and transmitting of decisions.
- Anticipation of enemy air and artillery strikes, nuclear or nonnuclear, and the use of such information in gaining fire superiority.
- Achievement of the initiative through immediately responsive deployment of maneuver forces.
- Adequate flank and rear security.

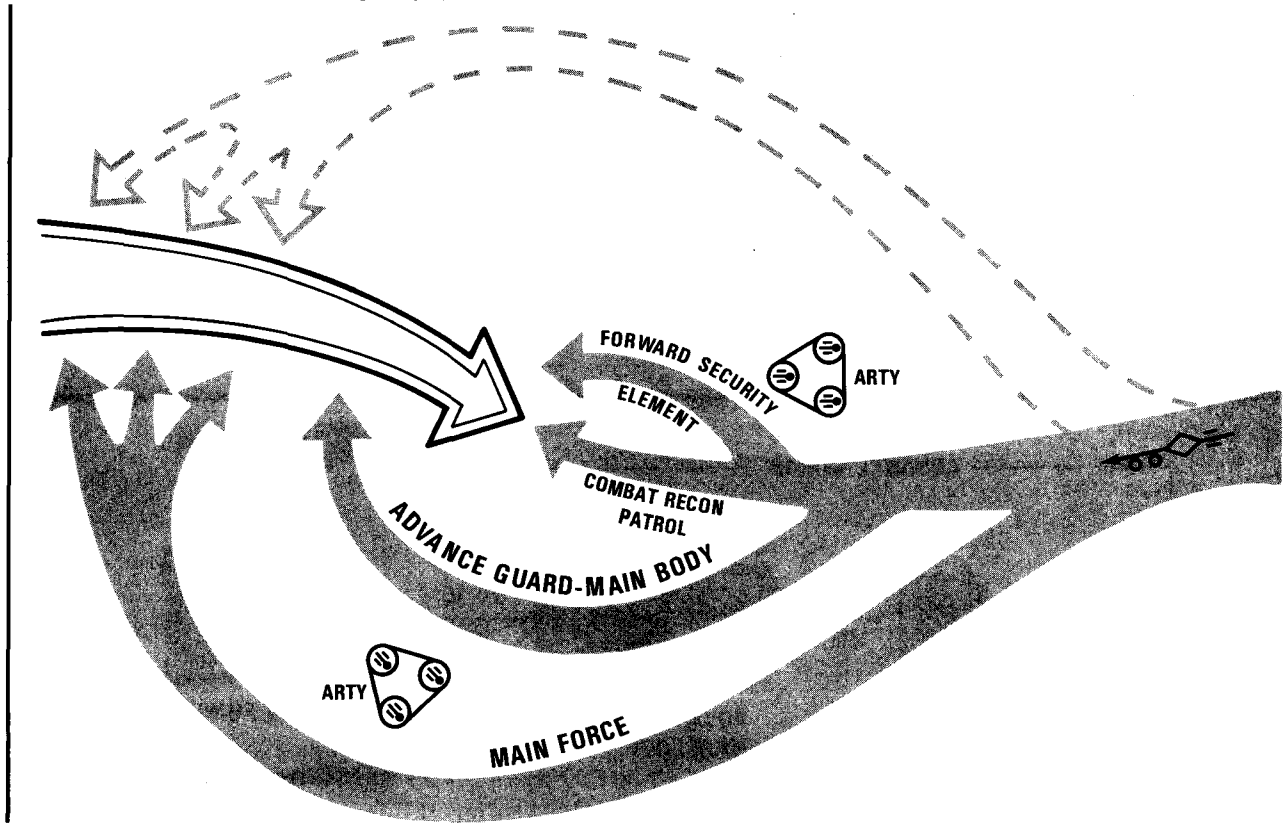
Organization of the March

The organization of a march formation anticipating a meeting engagement varies with the situation. The general organization for a march when enemy contact is possible is described in Section I of this chapter. A more detailed description of such a march formation follows, using a reinforced motorized rifle regiment as an example. (The BTR-equipped motorized rifle regiment is used as an example because it is the most numerous type of maneuver regiment. The description also applies to BMP and tank regiments, with substitutions or deletions of subunits based on organizational differences. *See FM 100-2-3.)*

A regiment conducting a march usually is preceded by its organic reconnaissance company, out to about 25 kilometers, and possibly by elements of the division reconnaissance battalion, out to about 50 kilometers. These elements attempt to avoid enemy contact and to obtain as much information as possible on the enemy.

The advance guard of a motorized rifle regiment usually consists of a motorized rifle battalion reinforced with artillery, tanks, air defense, engineer, and chemical elements.

Soviet Concept of the Meeting Engagement



The advance guard has the tasks of—

- Insuring that the main force moves unhindered.
- Insuring suitable conditions for the commitment of the main force.
- Warning the main force of surprise attack.
- Preventing the penetration of the main force by enemy reconnaissance.

The advance guard dispatches a forward security element (FSE), which in its turn dispatches a combat reconnaissance patrol (CRP).

The *combat reconnaissance patrol* is a fighting patrol consisting of a motorized rifle platoon augmented with chemical/radiation and engineer reconnaissance personnel. The mission of the patrol is to provide prompt information on the enemy's strength, composition, and direction of movement. The patrol attempts to penetrate and report on the enemy main body. The patrol also reports information on routes, the radiological and chemical situation, and the nature of the terrain.

The *forward security element* (called the "advance party" in some texts) is normally a motorized rifle company reinforced with tanks, artillery, mortars, engineers, and chemical defense. The mission of the FSE, moving up to 10 kilometers behind the CRP, is to advance at maximum speed and to engage lead enemy elements. Through use of its mobility and fire power, it seizes and holds a position advantageous for subsequent commitment of the advance guard main body.

The *advance guard main body* constitutes the bulk of the combat power of the advance guard.

The advance guard main body has the mission of either eliminating enemy opposition, permitting continuation of the march, or fixing the enemy force to permit a flank attack by the main force. Artillery and tanks are habitually placed forward in the column. If a threat comes from the flank, artillery and tanks may be placed in the middle of the column.

Typical Composition of Advanced Guard Main Body

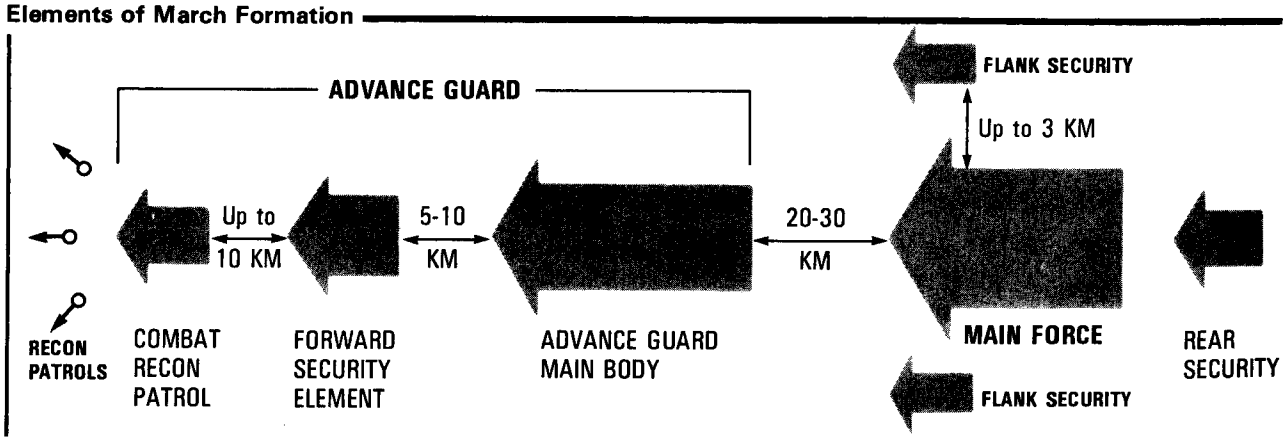
- Motorized rifle battalion commander, staff, artillery commander.
- Signal platoon.
- Antitank platoon.
- Antiaircraft section.
- Artillery battalion (minus 1 battery with the FSE).
- Tank company (minus 1 platoon with the FSE).
- Two motorized rifle companies.
- Rear, including medical post.

The *main force,* about two thirds of the combat power of the regiment, maneuvers to destroy enemy forces that cannot be quickly overcome by the advance guard. The composition of the main force may vary.

Typical Composition of Main Force

- Regimental commander, staff, fire support commanders.
- Antitank battery.
- Antiaircraft artillery and missile battery (minus elements with advance guard).
- Artillery battalion.
- Tank battalion (minus one company with advance guard).
- Two motorized rifle battalions.
- Rear.

Elements of March Formation

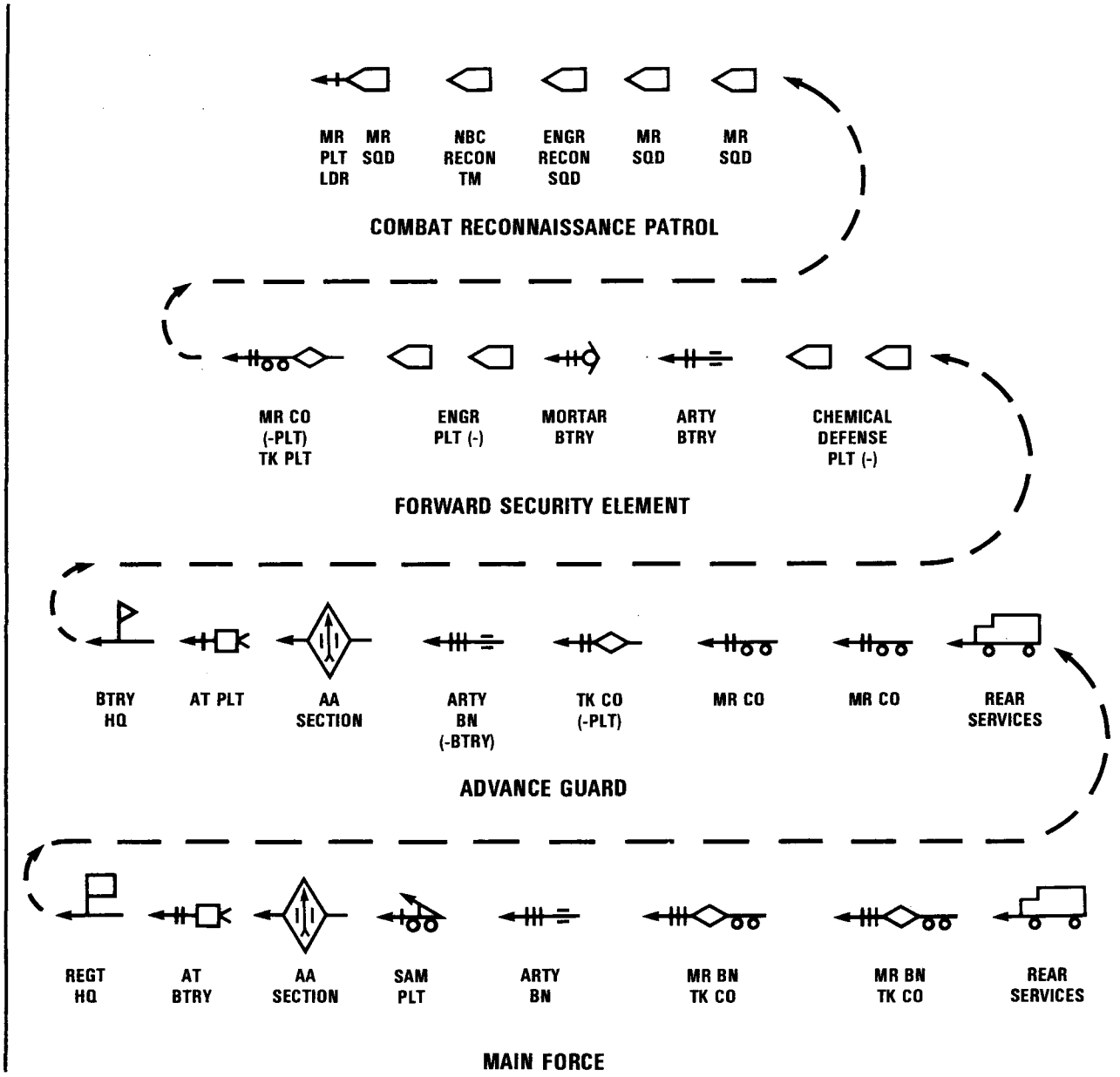


Elements of the regimental engineer company (minus elements in the advance guard) are dispersed throughout the formation. The signal company and chemical defense company (minus) are probably in the middle or rear of the formation.

In addition, there may be additional engineer, antiaircraft, artillery, and signal support furnished from division, army, or *front* assets.

Rear security elements of up to platoon strength normally are positioned up to 3 kilometers from the advance guard and the main force. Depending on the enemy threat, flank security elements of up to platoon strength are dispatched up to 3 kilometers from the column.

Typical March Formation of a Reinforced Motorized Rifle Regiment (BTR) In Anticipation of a Meeting Engagement



Initial Phase

The initial phase of the meeting engagement is that period of combat from the time of enemy encounter by the leading element (the combat reconnaissance patrol) up to the commitment into battle of the main force. The initial phase is carried out by the elements of the advance guard. The subsequent employment of the main force depends on the outcome of the initial phase.

With current reconnaissance capabilities, the initial enemy encounter by the CRP should not be a complete surprise. Rather, the use of reconnaissance reporting may permit employment of long-range fires, both artillery and air, to inflict damage on the enemy and to delay his advance. A one hour delay could permit the further advance of the march column by 25 to 30 kilometers.

The actions of the elements of the advance guard are indicated on the following pages. The buildup of major weapons, based on the typical organization described above, is also shown.

Upon contact, actions of the CRP are to—

- Report contact to advance guard commander.
- Attempt to penetrate to enemy main force, bypassing his advance elements.
- Perform chemical and engineer reconnaissance.
- Collect all information on the enemy that will expedite the commander's decision.

Buildup of Firepower (CRP)

Time: 0 minutes

Soviet Forces Committed: 3 BTRs

Actions of the FSE, moving in column behind the CRP by up to 10 kilometers, are to—

- Advance at maximum speed.
- Engage the enemy with all weapons.
- Develop the fight.
- Seize and hold a position until arrival of the advance guard main body.

Buildup of Firepower (FSE)

Time: +20 minutes

Soviet Forces Now Committed:
10 BTRs
4 Tanks
6 Mortars, 120-mm
6 Howitzers, 122-mm

At the time of initial contact, the advance guard main body is moving in march column 5 to 10 kilometers behind the FSE. The commander—

- Defines the plan for engagement.
- Issues orders to the commanders of the CRP and FSE.
- Moves forward, with the artillery commander, at maximum speed to an observation point.
- Issues orders for the deployment of the advance guard main force.
- Launches the attack.

Buildup of Firepower (Advanced Guard)

Time: +60 minutes

Soviet Forces Now Committed:
31 BTRs
13 Tanks
6 Mortars, 120-mm
18 Howitzers, 122-mm
2 Antiaircraft Guns
4 ATGMs

As the forward elements of the advance guard encounter the enemy, the regimental commander is at or near the head of his main force, some 20 to 30 km to the rear of the advance guard. This deliberate spacing is calculated to give the commander about 2 hours for planning and execution of his battle.

Deployment of Main Force

When the advance guard becomes engaged, the main force continues its forward movement. The deployment of the main force depends on the outcome of advance guard action. Four possible outcomes of advance guard action are shown below:

- Attack by FSE and/or advance guard is successful.
- Advance guard achieves no immediate success.
- Enemy forces deny further offensive action by advance guard.
- Advance guard is unable to hold the enemy.

Possible outcomes for this advance guard are illustrated on the next page.

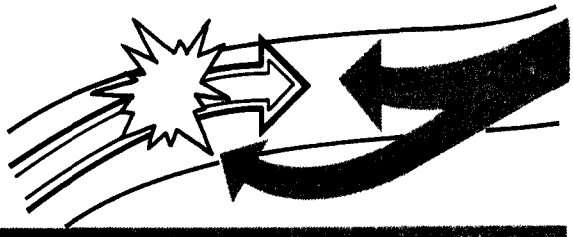
When the outcomes of the advance guard action require deployment of the main force, the commander decides what form of maneuver to use. There are three basic choices:

- *Envelopment* - A deep maneuver, executed through gaps or from an open flank, requiring the

Possible Outcomes of Advance Guard Action in a Meeting Engagement

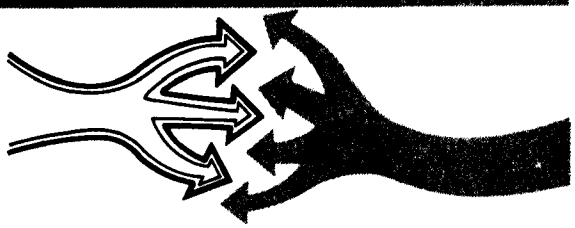
ATTACK BY FORWARD SECURITY ELEMENT AND/OR ADVANCE GUARD SUCCESSFUL

- Enemy element destroyed.
- Advance guard resumes march.
- Main force of regiment does not deploy.



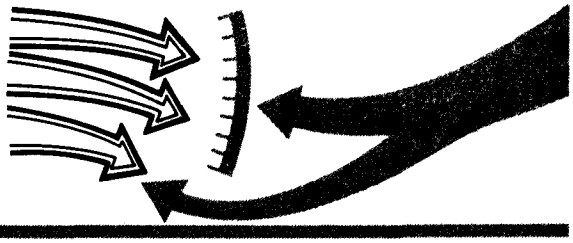
NO IMMEDIATE SUCCESS BY ADVANCE GUARD

- Advance guard continues attack.
- Main force continues march forward and prepares to deploy.



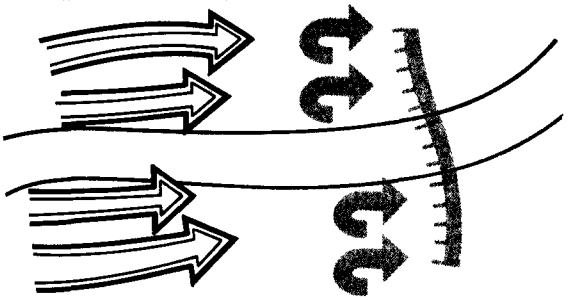
ENEMY FORCES DENY FURTHER OFFENSIVE ACTION BY ADVANCE GUARD

- Advance guard shifts to defense.
- Main force deploys and attacks.



ADVANCE GUARD UNABLE TO HOLD ENEMY

- Main force defends on the best available terrain.
- Advance guard withdraws and joins the defense.
- Follow-on division forces are committed to attack.
- Division assumes defense if enemy force is too large to attack.



enemy to turn and fight in a new direction. The double envelopment involves a deep maneuver around both flanks.

- *Flank attack* - A more shallow maneuver, which may be executed through gaps or breaches.
- *Frontal attack* - A direct maneuver against enemy defenses, most often conducted with an envelopment or a flank attack.

The envelopment and the flank attack are the preferred forms of maneuver. However, in some cases the frontal attack is required.

The time available to execute a maneuver may be a major factor in the commander's selection of a form of maneuver. If an envelopment occurs, space could be the controlling factor. Terrain must be trafficable and should provide covered or concealed routes for the enveloping force, open ground for deployment, and good fields of fire. The area adjacent to the original route of advance must be 3 to 5 kilometers wide for an envelopment by a battalion-sized advance guard. Envelopment by a regimental-sized main force requires an area 10 to 15 kilometers wide.

The Soviets consider the major contributing factors to a successful envelopment to be—

- Effective real-time intelligence and counterintelligence capability.
- Effective utilization of terrain.
- Coordination between forces.
- Appreciation of enemy tactics and capabilities.
- Capable, ingenious leadership and staff work.

Follow-on Forces

The preceding description of the meeting engagement focuses on the actions of a motorized rifle regiment. Unless such a regiment has been assigned an independent mission, such as pursuit or acting as a forward detachment, it is marching as part of a division force. Consequently, the development of battle might require the commitment of the follow-on elements of the division. The procedures are substantially the same as in the example of the lead regiment.

Before his lead regiment is fully engaged, the division commander's forward command post normally is near the head of the main division force and most likely with the next following regiment. He monitors the action of the lead regiment and, after its engagement, moves his command group to the best location to control subsequent deployments.

The Soviets believe that the disadvantage of a hastily planned attack is more than offset by the advantage of a quick strike against the enemy before he has sufficient time for his own preparation. Division follow-on forces can be fully engaged in less than three hours after the lead regiment's main force is engaged.

The employment of division follow-on forces is dictated by the progress of the initial actions of the lead regiment and is shown below.

The division's actions in a meeting engagement have been portrayed as a sequential, front-to-rear unfolding of combat. There are many other possibilities as formations move on a fluid battlefield and encounter one another. The meeting engagement will not always unfold in the sequence of encounters by reconnaissance elements, advance elements, and main bodies. Neither will it always begin with a head-to-head meeting; it may arise from direct encounter by main bodies, or from oblique encounters.

Whatever the patterns and condition, the Soviet formula for a successful meeting engagement requires surprise, rapid and decisive maneuver, and concentrated preemptive fires against the enemy.

PURSUIT

The Soviets define the pursuit as follows:

> **An attack on a withdrawing enemy, undertaken in the course of an operation or battle for the purpose of finally destroying or capturing his forces. Destruction of a withdrawing enemy is achieved by hitting his main body with (fire) strikes, by relentless and energetic parallel or frontal pursuit, by straddling his withdrawal route, and by . . . attacking his flanks and rear.**
>
> *Soviet Dictionary of Basic Military Terms*

Employment of Division Follow-on Forces

SUCCESSFUL ATTACK BY THE LEAD REGIMENT

- Lead regiment exploits success or resumes march.
- Follow-on regiments initiate pursuit or resume march on one or multiple routes.
- Depending on the assigned mission and degree of success, units could consolidate positions and await orders, or resume march in new direction.

ENEMY ESTABLISHES HASTY DEFENSE

- Lead regiment attacks enemy defenses and, by fixing enemy force, facilitates commitment of division follow-on forces.
- Depending on availability of maneuver space and size of enemy force, follow-on regiments flank or envelop enemy.
- If follow-on forces succeed, exploitation or pursuit are carried out. Alternatively, the position may be consolidated, forces regrouped, and the march resumes.

LEAD REGIMENT FORCED TO ESTABLISH HASTY DEFENSE

- Lead regiment holds pending arrival and deployment of follow-on forces.
- Follow-on forces counterattack and attempt to envelop enemy. If successful, subsequent actions are as above.
- Follow-on forces may be required to augment defense.

LEAD REGIMENT UNABLE TO CONTAIN ENEMY ATTACK

- Follow-on forces conduct counterattack. If successful and the enemy withdraws, exploitation or pursuit is initiated; alternatively they may consolidate the position, regroup, and later resume march.
- Follow-on forces establish defensive positions to or through which the lead regiment withdraws.
- Division holds pending commitment of army follow-on forces.

Pursuit features swift and deep movements of forces to strike the enemy's most vulnerable areas. Three basic requirements for successful pursuit are planning and organization, detection of withdrawal, and maintenance of high tempo.

By definition, a pursuit occurs when the enemy withdraws. An enemy could be forced to withdraw—

- As a result of a meeting engagement.
- After a penetration of his defensive position.
- Following a nuclear strike.

An enemy may deliberately withdraw—

- When threatened with encirclement.
- If he is making a redistribution of forces.
- When he attempts to draw the opposing side into a kill zone.
- When he withdraws for safety before launching a nuclear strike.

Normally, a regimental commander is the lowest command level to order initiation of pursuit. However, commanders at all levels are expected to move independently into pursuit when indicators of withdrawal are seen.

The scale of a pursuit is governed by the size of the force involved and is categorized as—

- *Tactical pursuit* - Conducted by a regiment or a division. In the case of a regiment, pursuit would probably begin about 10 to 20 km in the enemy depths; in the case of a division, from 20 to 30 km.
- *Operational pursuit* - Conducted by army or higher headquarters on a broad front; may extend to a depth of several hundred kilometers.

Tentative planning for pursuit is included in the initial attack plan. The amount of detail in such planning depends on the anticipated actions of the enemy, the battle formation of attacking troops, and the amount of planning time available.

Planning Considerations For Pursuit

- Possible enemy routes of withdrawal.
- The scheme of maneuver.
- Availability and condition of pursuit routes.
- Forces available.
- Critical terrain features (high ground, road junctions, river crossings, bridges, defiles).
- The use of forward detachments and helicopter assault forces.
- Allocation of nuclear weapons and delivery systems.
- Combat support and combat service support resources.

Active reconnaissance, appreciation of enemy tactics, and knowledge of the current tactical situation are essential in obtaining indicators of enemy withdrawal. Signs of preparation for withdrawal include—

- Nuclear strikes against first echelon attacking formations.
- Intensified movement to the rear, especially artillery and reserves.
- Increase in fires in individual sectors of the front.
- Conduct of heavy fire concentrations in separate areas which apparently are not in accord with the developing situation and at a time when there appears to be a general reduction of fires.
- Intensified reconnaissance.
- Preparations for demolitions and/or destruction of facilities, installations, and equipment.
- Limited local counterattacks.

Once pursuit has been initiated, its success depends on the maintenance of a high rate of advance with continuous application of force.

The forms of pursuit are frontal, parallel, and combination frontal and parallel. The preferred and most effective form is combination frontal and parallel.

The *frontal pursuit* is conducted by forces in contact. It is the most likely type of pursuit at the very beginning of the enemy withdrawal, at night, in difficult terrain, when overcoming obstacles, or when off-road maneuver is limited. Frontal pursuit applies constant pressure on the enemy. It limits his freedom of maneuver, his ability to take up defensive positions, and his ability to disengage. The aim of a frontal pursuit is to force the enemy to deploy and to accept combat under unfavorable conditions, and to delay the withdrawal. Maneuver and flank attacks, though limited, are conducted. The frontal pursuit normally is not decisive since it only pushes the enemy back on his approaching reserves.

In the *parallel pursuit,* the pursuit force advances on routes parallel to the withdrawing enemy. High-speed parallel pursuit may permit either attack on the enemy's flank or cutting his main withdrawal routes. Under threat of flank attack, the enemy may be required to split his force and delay withdrawal while defending against the pursuer's attacks. Unless accompanied by frontal pursuit, this method gives the enemy some opportunity to maneuver and counterattack.

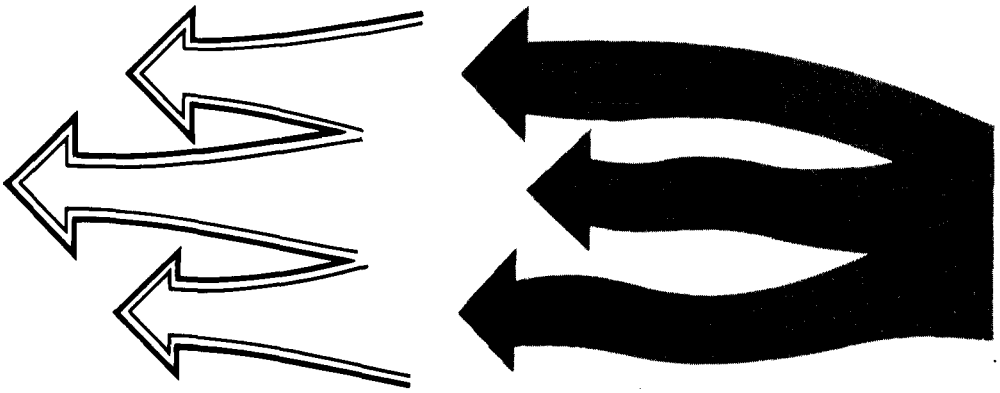
In the *combination frontal and parallel pursuit,* the main pursuit force moves parallel to the withdrawing enemy. A smaller force pursues directly, maintaining constant contact with the enemy. The combination form has the advantages of both frontal and parallel pursuit. It hinders disengagement, leads to flank attacks, and cuts the enemy's withdrawal routes.

Forms of Pursuit

FRONTAL PURSUIT—

Used at initial enemy withdrawal to—

- Pressure the enemy.
- Limit maneuverability.
- Delay withdrawal.
- Force enemy to deploy.



PARALLEL PURSUIT—

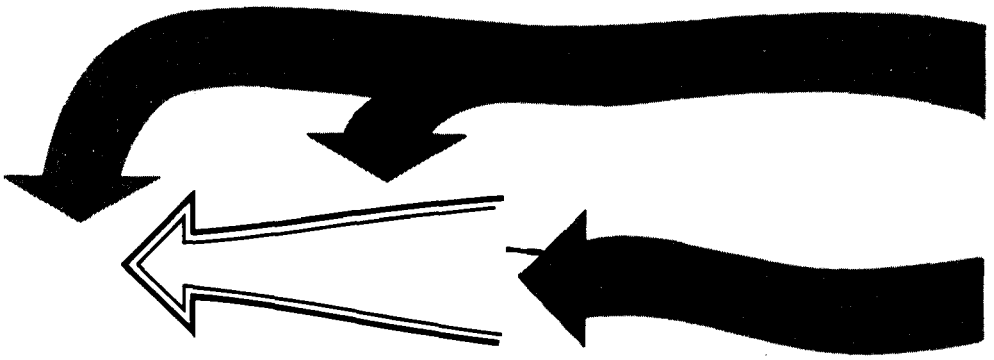
High speed pursuit to—

- Permit flank attack.
- Cut off withdrawal routes.



COMBINATION FRONTAL AND PARALLEL PURSUIT—

Combines both methods of pursuit to maintain high rate of advance with continual force to hinder disengagement and cut withdrawal routes.



The Soviets believe that a timely and correct decision to initiate pursuit is critical to its success. If the enemy is able to begin an undetected withdrawal, he avoids the constant pressure that disrupts his action. Further, if the enemy can gain a safe distance of withdrawal, the attacking forces are vulnerable to tactical nuclear strikes.

The enemy will attempt to withdraw at an advantageous time, usually at night. Timely actions are taken to insure maintenance of contact. Artillery fire and air strikes harass and disrupt the enemy's withdrawal. In the initial phase, tank and motorized rifle pursuit groups attempt to take up routes parallel to the enemy withdrawal route. This helps establish the combination frontal and parallel method of pursuit.

Units in contact initiate frontal pursuit immediately on detection of withdrawal, moving in whatever formation they have at the moment. As the situation

permits, they reform into march or prebattle formation, and then into attack formation when required.

The actions of the frontal pursuit force are aimed at facilitating the commitment of a parallel pursuit force, which is preferably tank heavy. The parallel force, with security elements in the lead, also uses march or prebattle formations until deployment for the attack is required.

In pursuit the commander attempts to employ the maximum available combat troops. Pursuit is conducted in a wide zone — up to 30 km for a division. The commander retains the tactical options to converge on the most important axis or to redirect the effort on a new axis. This flexibility also is required when engaging advancing enemy reserves or counterattack forces.

Centralized planning and decentralized execution characterize the pursuit. Preservation of control is a primary concern in such a fast-moving situation. At the same time, the Soviets attempt to disrupt the enemy's command and control, as an integral part of destructive pursuit. Continuity of their own control is achieved by—

- Designating the direction of advance, routes or zones of advance, phase lines, and objectives.
- Fixing times for completion of specific missions.
- Altering missions as subsequent developments require.
- Augmenting normal radio communications with aerial relays.
- Using two command groups. The commander will be at an observation post behind the leading combat elements. The second group, headed by the chief of staff, will be with the main force.
- Designating the phase lines from which the artillery must be prepared to fire by specified times.

As the pursuit is developed, reconnaissance elements provide information on the disposition of retreating enemy formations and on the forward movement of his reserves. Because of the potential depth of the operation, aerial reconnaissance may be the primary means of identifying significant threats to pursuit forces. This intelligence is vital at the stage when a pursuit force faces the risk of becoming overextended. It could be the basis for termination of the pursuit.

Before or during the course of pursuit, forward detachments may be designated to move ahead of main pursuit forces and to operate independently to outdistance withdrawing enemy forces. These detachments avoid combat until they reach their assigned objective area. Their missions may include concurrent reconnaissance reporting, seizure of critical points on withdrawal routes, destruction of the enemy's means of nuclear attack, and link up with tactical airborne or heliborne landings.

Heliborne or airborne forces may be assigned missions similar to those described for forward detachments. Vertical envelopment permits operations much deeper into enemy territory.

When pursuit is initiated, the parallel pursuit force normally is formed from uncommitted second echelon elements. The control of artillery is decentralized to maneuver battalions. Batteries and even individual guns move with lead elements to deliver direct fire. Artillery elements also are a normal component of forward detachments.

During pursuit, artillery missions include fire on columns and concentrations at road junctions, defiles, bridges, and crossings. They also include repulse of enemy counterattacks, destruction or delay of enemy reserves, and destruction of enemy means of nuclear attack.

Air support complements other fire support in the destruction and disorganization of the retreating enemy, particularly mobile targets. The situation during the course of a pursuit may become obscure. Consequently, air reconnaissance is an important factor in insuring the success of the pursuit.

Air Support During Pursuit

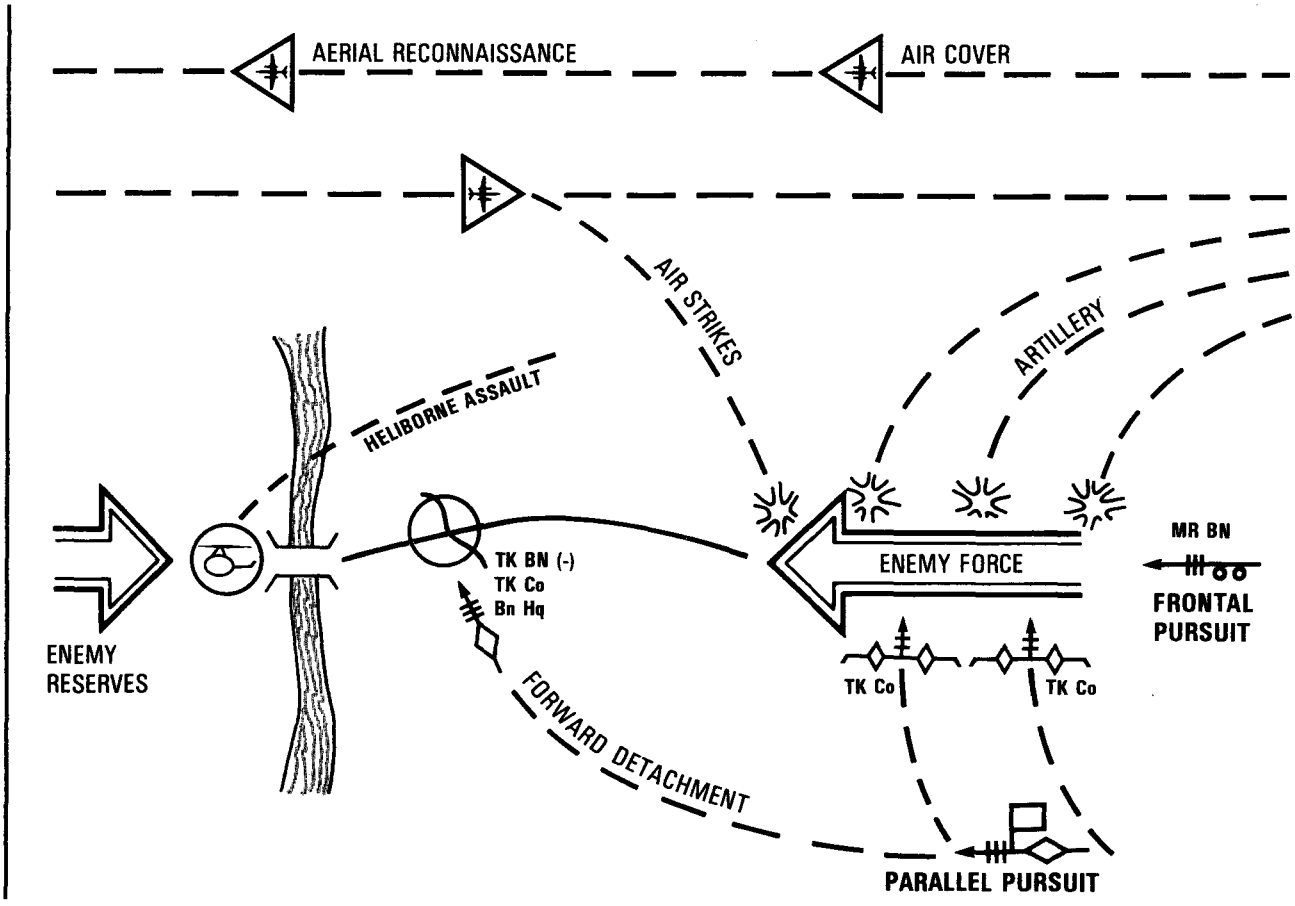
AIR RECONNAISSANCE IS USED TO DETERMINE—

- The beginning of the withdrawal of rear area forces.
- The composition of withdrawing forces and direction of movement.
- The composition and direction of movement of reserve force moving forward.
- The nature of obstacles and intermediate defensive positions.

The actions of the pursuing force, in conjunction with forward detachments and air-landed forces, act to create nuclear targets. Priority nuclear targets include—

- Approaching reserves.
- Main groupings of retreating force.
- Enemy concentrations at critical areas (bridges, road junctions, defiles).
- Means of nuclear attack.

Soviet Tactical Pursuit (Attack of a Withdrawing Enemy)



Movement support detachments and mobile obstacle detachments provided by engineer troops are instrumental in sustaining the rate of advance. In the initial phase, their missions include operating from forward positions to breach obstacles and minefields. In the course of the pursuit, their mission is to provide bridging and road repairs and to block withdrawal routes of bypassed units with mines, demolitions, and obstacles.

With maximum commitment of forces, requirements for fuel, ammunition, and maintenance increase. Priority of logistics is given to units having the greatest success. The depth of pursuit is governed by the capability for logistic support. One yardstick for sustaining pursuit is the requirement that, in a large scale offensive, a tank division with reinforcing transportation units should be self-sufficient for up to five days.

The pursuit is terminated on order of the next higher commander. Conditions under which pursuit is terminated include the following:

- The enemy has been destroyed.
- The pursuing force has outdistanced its logistic support.
- The pursuing force has become overextended and is in danger of being cut off.
- The advantage no longer belongs to the pursuing force.

CHAPTER 6

DEFENSE, WITHDRAWAL, AND RELIEF

THE ROLE AND NATURE OF THE DEFENSE

Soviets consider the offensive as the only means to achieve decisive victory. However, defensive doctrine has not been totally overlooked. Grounded in the histories of World War II and the great defensive battles of Stalingrad, Moscow, and Kursk, the Soviets have developed a doctrine that is mindful of recent technological developments such as ATGMs and nuclear weapons. Stated reasons for assuming the defense are—

- To consolidate gains.
- To await additional resources when temporarily halted by the enemy during the course of an offensive.
- To protect the flanks of a formation or a seacoast.
- To repulse an enemy counterthrust.
- To regroup after severe losses suffered from nuclear weapons.
- To free resources for other units that are on the offensive.
- To await logistic support.

The Soviets define the defense as follows:

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

In most of these cases, the defense is temporary and leads to the resumption of the offense.

The two major forms of the defense are the *prepared* defense and the *hasty* defense (sometimes called "defense in the course of the offense"). A hasty defense may turn into a prepared defense if conditions and availability of resources do not favor resuming the offense in that sector.

The defense at *front* and army levels may involve the entire formation during the initial stage of hostility where an enemy attacks across international borders, or in a sector where no offensive action is planned. Usually only part of the formation is on the defense while the rest takes offensive action.

During World War II, entire theaters were on the defense. Extremely dense defenses sometimes were developed, consisting of three or more static defensive belts with the majority of the combat forces deployed in the first defensive belt.

The development of nuclear weapons required modification of this concept and increased the importance of a security echelon and a reserve. Modern defensive doctrine at *front* and army levels stresses defense in depth; but rather than multiple continuous belts, the defensive area consists of clusters of strongpoints. At both *front* and army levels, the key is stubborn defense of the forward area by motorized rifle forces deployed in depth and decisive counterattacks by highly mobile, tank-heavy forces of a second echelon and a reserve. The increased fluidity of combat has required an increase in the size of reserves.

The operational reserve and second echelon may make up half of the force. While second echelon divisions of an army will occupy defensive positions, their major tasks will be to counterattack and to destroy enemy forces penetrating the forward defenses.

It is the first echelon divisions that hold the forward edge of the army and *front* defenses. It is at division level that we find all the principles of defense employed. Therefore, the remainder of this chapter will examine the defense as conducted by a first echelon division.

CONCEPTS OF THE PREPARED DEFENSE

In organizing and establishing a prepared defense, the Soviet commander considers the same factors addressed by a US commander:

- Mission
- Enemy
- Terrain
- Troops
- Time

In analyzing his mission, the commander determines what it is he must accomplish and for how long. The destruction of an amphibious assault along the coast will require different measures than will the protection of an exposed flank.

The enemy and his weapon systems influence the mix of weapons and the type and amount of preparation required. Whether or not he is in contact makes a great difference to the defender.

The terrain and vegetation also affect the force composition and deployment. This includes consideration of natural features such as high ground and other key terrain, rivers, and marshes.

The troops available for commitment to the defense seriously affect the force dispositions.

Finally, the amount of time available to establish the defense will temper all these considerations.

Requirements for Establishing the Defense

- The deployment and employment of a security echelon.
- The location and deployment of forces in a main defensive area.
- The location of "fire sacks" (kill zones) and ambush sites.
- Construction of minefields and obstacles.
- The location, composition, and employment of the reserve.

Security Echelon

The security echelon or zone is that portion of the battlefield forward of the main defensive area. It is occupied by a force whose mission is to delay and deceive the enemy as to the location and deployment of the main defensive forces. The security force engages the enemy at the longest possible range and attempts to cause him to deploy prematurely.

The security force's size and composition depend on those factors mentioned earlier. The zone may extend to a depth of 30 kilometers at army level and 15 kilometers at division level. It is at least far enough forward to prevent aimed direct fire from being placed on the main defensive area.

The security force deploys on the best terrain to effect maximum damage to the attacking enemy. Obstacles and barriers are used extensively. When faced with encirclement or decisive engagement, the forces of the security zone attempt to withdraw under cover of artillery fire and to return to the main defensive area.

Main Defensive Area

The main defensive area may appear as bands, belts, or layers, but it is simply a defense in depth. The basic element of the main defensive area is the company or platoon strongpoint. This is established on terrain that is key to the defense and must be retained at all costs. The subunit occupying the strongpoint prepares an all-round defense with alternate and supplementary firing positions for all weapons. Fires are planned to be mutually supporting as well as provide for fire sacks. Vehicles are dug in, and a network of communication trenches is constructed linking weapon positions with supply, command and control, and fighting positions. Everything that can be is dug in and given overhead protection. Wire provides the primary means of communication. Minefields, obstacles, and barriers are emplaced and covered by fire. In addition, the Soviets rely heavily on the use of maneuver by fire and fire sacks to damage or destroy the enemy force.

Fire Sacks

Maneuver by fire is the concentration of fires from many guns from dispersed firing positions. Fire is concentrated on an advancing enemy in a sudden and devastating strike or series of strikes. Fire sacks are formed based on key terrain, enemy avenues of approach, defensive strongpoints, obstacles and barriers, and preplanned fires. (The Russian term for this defensive deployment translates to "fire sacks" and is so used herein.) Fire sacks are similar to the US concept of a kill zone. Obstacles and barriers are planned along the edge of the fire sack to contain the enemy force, and reserves are placed where they can counterattack into the "sack" after the fires are lifted to destroy any remaining enemy.

Fires are planned to cover all approaches to the position. Finally the entire position is camouflaged. This may include the use of dummy positions to draw fire and to deceive the enemy as to the true location of the defenses.

Strongpoints are linked with other strongpoints until a defensive area or belt is formed. This occurs at every level, thus multiple belts are formed. Included in and between these belts are headquarters, logistic facilities, reserves, and combat support forces. Each of these elements is responsible for its own security.

Minefields and Obstacles

Minefields are placed forward of the defensive position to slow the enemy and to force him to concentrate. Fires are planned to attack these concentrations and to prevent or delay breaching. Minefields are

designed to break up the enemy's assault and to strip away the infantry's supporting armor. They are also designed to force the enemy into areas where concentrated fires of all weapons may be brought to bear. Minefields within the main defensive area are placed to confine the enemy within fire sacks and to make the employment of the reserves easier.

Besides preplanned minefields, the Soviets also employ hasty antitank minefields laid by engineer mobile obstacle detachments, by mechanical minelayers, or by helicopter. Hastily laid minefields normally are used with an antitank reserve to counter enemy tanks that may have penetrated the depths of the defense.

Obstacles (including minefields) are used to slow, disorganize, and canalize the enemy force. They are used alone or with preplanned fire concentrations. The use of natural obstacles is stressed; they include lakes, rivers, marshes, escarpments, and densely forested areas. Artificial obstacles may include antitank ditches, wire entanglements, abatis, and antiheliborne and antiairborne stakes.

Anti-Tank Defense

Antitank defense is essential to any defense and is of great concern to Soviet tacticians. (See Chapter 10, Antitank Support.) The system of antitank (AT) defense is composed of—

- Subunit strongpoints containing well-sited AT weapons.
- Tank ambushes set up throughout the defense.
- Antitank reserves placed to respond to enemy tank penetrations.
- Tanks within the second echelon to bolster the first echelon or to counterattack.
- Mobile obstacle detachments. (See Chapter 14, Engineer Support.)
- Artillery in the direct fire role, both in forward positions and from positions in the depths of the defense.
- Antitank obstacles covered by fire and complementing the maneuver of fires and forces.
- Maneuver by antitank forces and weapons.

Antitank guns and ATGMs are concentrated by platoon and battery. They employ multilayered crossfires, long-range fires, and all-around fires. Cooperation between guns and ATGM systems is considered essential to adequate antitank defense. As with all facets of combat, the integration of combined arms is considered paramount.

Attack helicopters mounting rockets and antitank missiles are used as mobile, quick-reaction, antitank reserves. Emphasis is placed on their use to defeat tank penetrations or flanking maneuvers.

The reserve is positioned to undertake multiple missions: blocking, counterattacking, reinforcing. amd providing rear area security.

Counterattacks

Counterattacks are planned at every level for use if the enemy succeeds in breaching forward defensive positions. Commitment of this force requires the authority of the next higher commander. With the exception of first echelon battalions, whose reserve companies may have to conduct a frontal counterattack, this force generally is launched from a flank. Regimental and higher counterattacks normally are spearheaded by tanks, preceded by an intense air and artillery preparation, and supported by the fires of adjacent units. A counterattack normally is conducted from the march. While tactical counterattacks usually are planned to restore the defenses, those at operational level may be the opening phase of a counteroffensive.

CONCEPTS OF THE HASTY DEFENSE

The writings of Soviet tacticians indicate that the hasty defense will be more prevalent than the prepared defense. They acknowledge that there may be diverse situations in which the hasty defense must be established. The force making the transition to the defense may be in contact with the enemy. If so, a limited attack could be required to gain defensible terrain. Conversely, it may be necessary to establish a defense to the rear and withdraw to it. In any case, the nature of a hasty defense does not provide time for detailed preparation.

The same factors of mission, enemy, terrain, troops available, and time available considered in a prepared defense are the primary considerations in establishing the hasty defense. They may differ in that—

- The mission of hasty defense is more transitory.
- The enemy situation is clearer, and attack is imminent.
- The terrain may be unfavorable for organization of a defense; it may be better suited for the attacker.
- Time will be short.

Reverse Slope Defense

Establishing the defense when in contact with the enemy poses particular problems, since forces may have to dig in while under fire and observation of the

enemy. For this reason, a reverse slope defense is often chosen. Part of the force is left in contact with the enemy on the forward slope(s), while the remainder of the force prepares the position on the reverse slope(s). The Soviets recognize the following advantages of a reverse slope defense:

- It hinders or prevents enemy observation of the defensive position.
- Attacking forces will not be able to receive direct fire support from following forces.
- Enemy long-range antitank fires will be degraded.
- Attacking enemy forces will be silhouetted on the crest of the hill.
- Engineer work can be conducted out of direct fire and observation from the enemy.

A disadvantage is that the maximum range of all weapon systems cannot be exploited. When possible, both forward and reverse slope defense are used to take maximum advantage of the terrain.

When the force going over to the defensive is in contact with the enemy, it is extremely difficult to establish a security echelon. If established, its depth is not nearly as great as in the prepared defense. Additionally, long-range fires do not play the part they do in the prepared defense because the opposing forces are, for the most part, within direct fire range. Deception is difficult to achieve, since friendly forces may be under direct observation of the enemy. Obstacles are emplaced but are not as extensive as in the prepared defense.

Support Elements

Differences in mission arise from the temporary nature of a hasty defense. Normally, the primary objective is to deny enemy access to a specific area. However, attrition of the enemy force is essential to any defense. In many cases, defensive positions are chosen to support resumption of offensive action rather than for a prolonged defense.

Combat support remains basically configured for continued offensive action. Artillery groupings may be organized to support the next offensive phase.

Engineer mobile obstacle detachments lay minefields across critical avenues of approach. Maximum use is made of armored mine layers, armored engineer vehicles, and dozer blades attached to tanks to prepare obstacles and hasty positions. Engineer works are carried out in a sequence that insures readiness to repulse an enemy attack.

Combat service support also remains configured to support offensive action. Primary effort is devoted to preparing units for future offensive actions, with priority of support going to units selected to initiate offensive actions.

CONDUCT OF THE DEFENSE

At division level, the tactical defense is very important and can be an integral part of a larger offensive operation. A typical Soviet response against a counterattack is to place a division on the defense to halt the attack while other divisions continue the advance.

Defensive Planning

In the Soviet view, the prepared defense is distinguished from the hasty defense by the amount of time and engineer support available for preparation of the defense. The types tend to merge as a function of time. The latter stages of a hasty defense may approximate the early stages of a prepared defense. The prepared defense is more detailed than the hasty defense, so this section will deal mainly with it for descriptive purposes.

Two fundamental considerations affect the division commander's defensive planning. First, the defense should provide protection against nuclear weapons. Defense under nuclear conditions demands dispersion, deception, and field fortifications. The advent of small-yield nuclear weapons has complicated the problem of dispersion. When the minimum yield of a warhead was approximately 20 kilotons, dispersion was achieved by maintaining intervals between battalions. The development of warheads of less than 1 kiloton increased the need for dispersion so that now, according to the Soviets, company and platoon strongpoints are the basis of the defense. Increased dispersion leads to problems in fire support coordination and troop control. Furthermore, a defense that is too dispersed does not offer sufficient resistance to accomplish the defensive missions. As a result, the Soviets caution that dispersion must not be accomplished at the price of effective defense.

The second fundamental consideration is that the defense must be organized in sufficient depth to provide effective fire and maneuver. The enemy must be engaged at as great a range as possible and must continue to meet an ever-increasing volume of fire as he nears the defensive positions. Fire support weapons must be positioned so that they can shift their fires against threatened axes within the defensive position. To counterattack enemy penetrations, units deployed in the depth of the defense must be in position to maneuver and concentrate rapidly.

A system of fire is constructed to bring all available fires on the enemy as he approaches and to provide for continuous fire at the forward edge, the flanks, and within the defensive position. In addition, it should provide for the rapid concentration of fire against threatened axes.

Division-level Defense

When a division is ordered to assume the defense, the commander issues orders based on a map reconnaissance and personally clarifies missions on the ground. He determines key terrain, enemy avenues of approach and probable main attack axis, areas for possible nuclear and chemical strikes, organization for combat, maneuver requirements, organization of strongpoints, probable counterattack axes, and locations of command posts and command observation posts. Soviet commanders are expected to make maximum use of the terrain and to avoid establishing patterns that would make enemy targeting easier.

A tank or motorized rifle division typically defends a sector 20 to 30 kilometers in width and 15 to 20 kilometers in depth. The commander normally organizes the main defensive area in two echelons and a reserve. The first echelon's mission is to inflict losses on the enemy, to force him to concentrate, and to canalize him into fire sacks. The second echelon's mission is to stop and destroy enemy penetrations or to reinforce or replace troops of the first echelon.

While there is no rigid requirement for the composition of echelons, normally at least two regiments are placed in the division's first echelon. In a motorized rifle division, the first echelon consists of motorized rifle regiments. A tank regiment usually is employed as a division's main counterattack force.

The division commander issues a combat order which contains information about the enemy, the mission, the concept of the operation, the location of the FEBA, and the position to be occupied. The order further specifies the following details:

- For first echelon regiments: reinforcements, missions, defense sectors, and axes and areas in which main efforts are to be concentrated.
- For second echelon regiments: reinforcements, missions, defense sectors, and axes and deployment lines for counterattacks.
- The time that positions are to be occupied.
- Coordination requirements.

When the defense is established before contact with the enemy, the Soviets establish a security echelon up to 15 kilometers forward of the main defensive area. The elements which make up the security echelon come from the division's second echelon. A security force of up to battalion size may be deployed in front of each first echelon regiment.

A detailed and coordinated fire plan is developed. Weapons are positioned so that the maximum amount of fire can be brought to bear directly in front of the FEBA. Enemy penetrations are blunted by shifting artillery fire and by conducting counterattacks.

The commander controls the defense through a series of command posts and command observation posts. At division level, there are normally four command posts: a main command post, a forward command post, an alternate command post, and a rear area command post.

The main command post is located in the rear of the defensive sector and contains the bulk of the staff. The chief of staff directs its operation.

The division commander establishes a forward command post with a small group of selected staff members. The composition of this group varies but usually includes the operations officer and chief of rocket troops and artillery (CRTA). This post may be as close as 3 kilometers from the FEBA.

An alternate command post contains representatives from key staff sections. Displaced from the division main command post, it is ready to take over direction of the division if the main command post is damaged or destroyed.

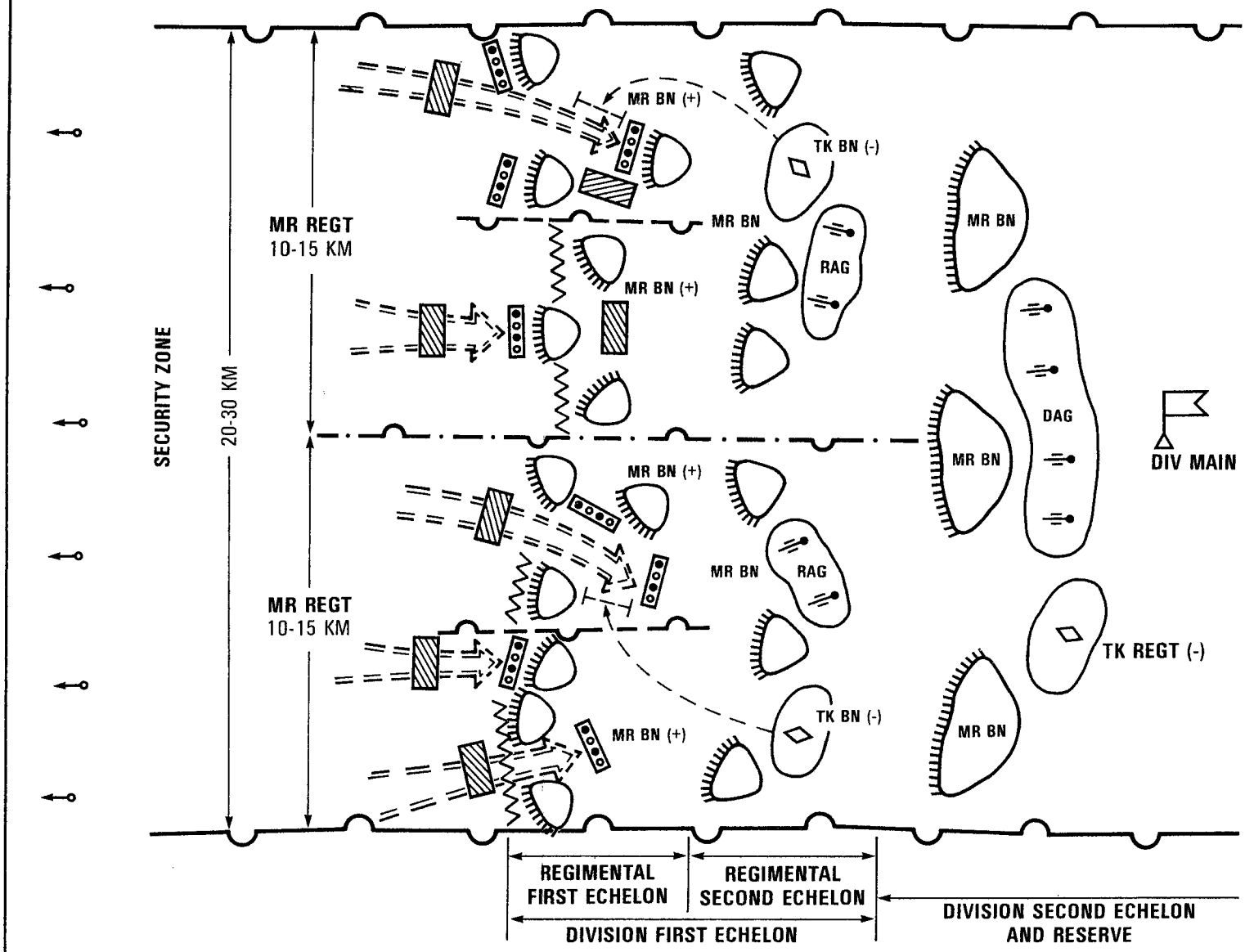
The rear area command post is established and controlled by the deputy commander for rear services.

Besides the command posts, the commander may establish command observation posts which are controlled from the forward command post. These posts have radio and wire communications and permit the commander and his CRTA to better observe different sectors of the battlefield.

There is no rigid structure for the location of command posts. Command posts are established where the commander orders them established. He makes use of terrain to camouflage command posts and places them according to his mission concept. The Soviets avoid establishing command posts on distinguishing terrain features.

They anticipate radio communications to be difficult and often impossible or undesirable in combat and they train accordingly. During training exercises, the Soviets regularly practice the use of radio, wire, pyrotechnic (visual signals), sound, and courier communications. It is standard procedure for them to employ wire communications in a defensive position or an assembly area. This means of communication—including the prompt restoration of destroyed lines—receives heavy emphasis in Soviet tactical exercises.

Defense of a Motorized Rifle Division, Variant

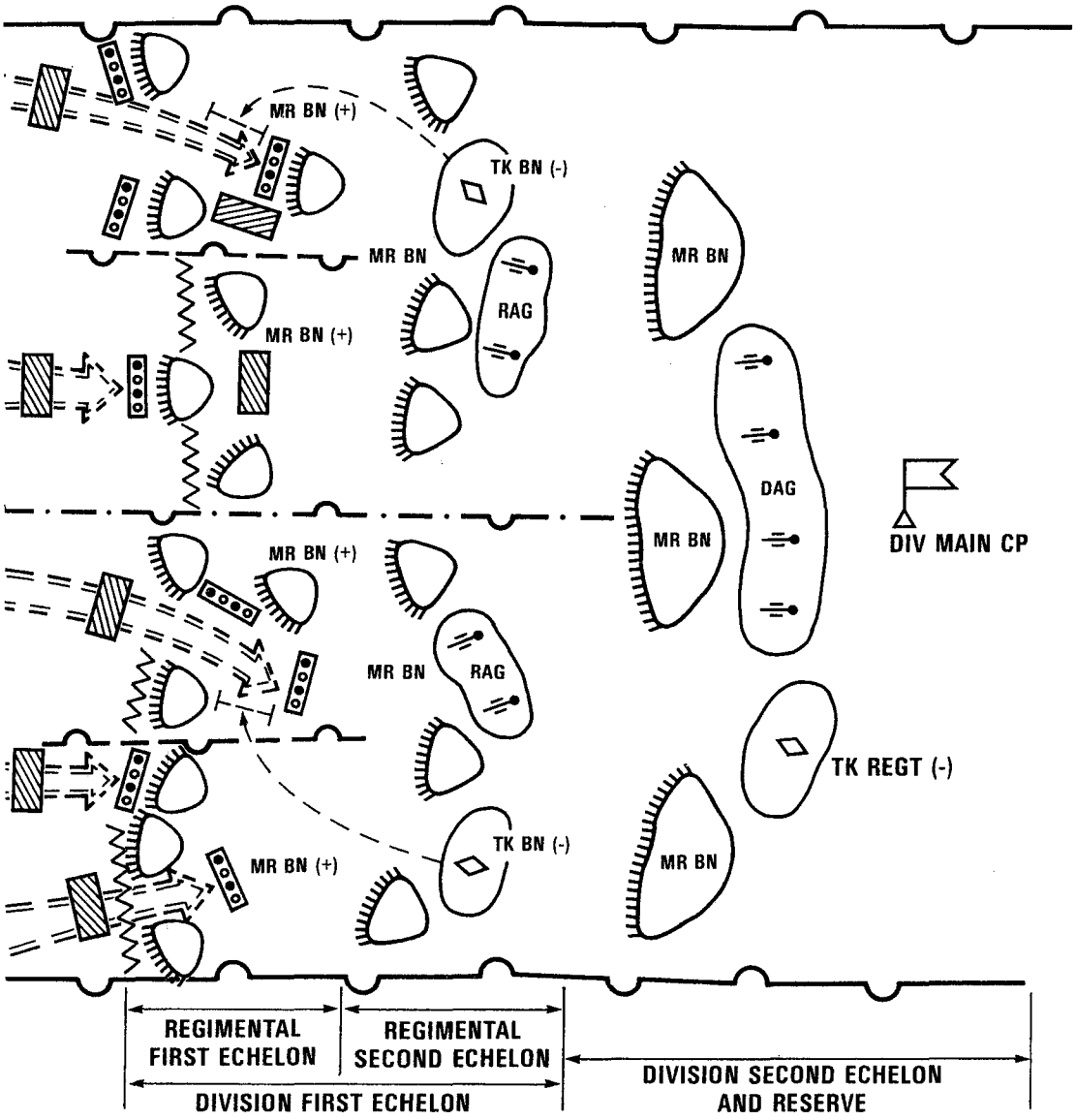


Shown above is a simplified diagram of the defense of a motorized rifle division. Not all details or weapons are shown, but the primary elements found in the division and its regimental echelons are typical.

Regimental-level Defense

A regiment may be used in the first or second echelon of the division defenses. As part of a division's first echelon, its mission is to prevent penetration of the main defenses by repulsing enemy assaults with intense fire and counterattacks by its reserve. When given the mission to defend in the division's second echelon, a regiment attempts to defeat any enemy penetration of the division's first echelon.

Regimental subunits normally are dispersed so that a single low-yield nuclear strike can destroy no more than one company. Dispersion is also limited to insure the stability of the defense and to maintain the capability to m
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(SIMPLIFIED DIAGRAM. NOT ALL DETAILS OR WEAPONS SHOWN.)

NOTES:

1. Main defensive area is organized into two echelons and a reserve:
   - First echelon inflicts enemy losses, forcing him to concentrate and canalize him into fire sacks.
   - Second echelon's mission is to destroy enemy or reinforce/replace first echelon.
2. In a motorized rifle division a tank regiment acts as the main counterattack force.
3. The security zone is comprised from elements of the division's second echelon.
4. Detailed and coordinated fire plan is developed for fire support.

LEGEND:

- Preplanned artillery concentration
- Mixed minefield (antipersonnel and antitank)
- Barrier
- Probable enemy avenue of approach

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Regimental subunits normally are dispersed so that a single low-yield nuclear strike can destroy no more than one company. Dispersion is also limited to insure the stability of the defense and to maintain the capability to mass fires. The defensive frontage for a regiment is normally 10 to 15 kilometers. The depth may vary from 7 to 10 kilometers.

A regimental reserve normally is positioned near the regiment's second echelon. It is usually of company size and tank heavy. Its mission is to conduct counterattacks against an enemy penetration.

A regimental antitank reserve normally is formed from the antitank missile battery (found only in motorized rifle regiments), the engineer company,

and either a tank or motorized rifle platoon. The engineer company probably operates as a mobile obstacle detachment to emplace hasty minefields and obstacles. The antitank reserve occupies an assembly area generally near the regimental command post.

A regiment in the division first echelon has its command post centrally located between its first and second echelons. A regimental command observation point may be established in the area of one of the subordinate battalions. Regimental logistic units and the rear area command post are positioned to the rear of the regimental second echelon. Communications are established between the command and observation posts. Wire is the primary mode, supplemented by messengers, pyrotechnic signals, and radio.

The division commander is responsible for security forward of the FEBA. The regiment is responsible for local security in front of the defensive positions of its first echelon battalions. When time and terrain limit establishment of a security echelon by division, regiments in the first echelon organize combat outposts. Each first echelon battalion places a reinforced motorized rifle platoon forward, across the main expected enemy avenue of approach into the battalion defensive area. The reconnaissance company of the first echelon regiment performs screening and reconnaissance activity in front of the combat outposts. Each battalion organizes its own observation and listening posts.

Battalion-level Defense

After receiving the mission from his regimental commander, a battalion commander begins organizing his assigned sector. The regimental order is as complete as possible. As a minimum, it contains the battalion's mission, trace of the FEBA, and battalion boundaries.

In a hasty defense, there may be no time for the regimental commander to issue an order with detailed supplementary instructions. Consequently, the motorized rifle battalion commander is allowed more initiative and flexibility in organizing his defensive position in this situation. The battalion initially consolidates on the terrain it occupies or attempts to seize critical terrain favorable for the defense. In contrast, organization of a prepared defense is centrally planned by the regiment.

A typical battalion defensive area is 3 to 5 kilometers wide and up to 2 kilometers deep. A battalion usually defends with companies in a single echelon. Single echelon deployment permits the greatest concentration of firepower but it also reduces defense in depth. When a battalion defends on a narrow frontage and/or greater depth is required, it may deploy in two echelons, with two companies in its first echelon and one in its second echelon. Reserves are located behind the second echelon. The distance between the first and second echelons can be up to 2 kilometers.

A company occupies a strongpoint 500 to 1000 meters in width and up to 500 meters in depth. Normally, all three platoons of a company defend in one echelon. (See diagrams on pages 6-8 and 6-9.)

Artillery, tanks, engineers, and chemical defense troops attached to a battalion may be allocated to the companies. This allocation depends on the number and types of attachments received by the battalion and the importance of the sectors the companies are defending. Although artillery may be assigned to the companies for direct fire support, artillery is usually positioned to provide the best fire support for the entire battalion.

The battalion commander positions a small reserve (normally a platoon) where it can most rapidly and effectively stabilize the defense in the event of an enemy penetration. Key terrain and likely enemy avenues of attack are factors in determining where the battalion reserve will be positioned. Reaction time for a mounted reserve is based on speeds of 20 to 30 kilometers per hour in daytime and 15 to 20 kilometers per hour at night.

The mortar battery of a motorized rifle battalion is deployed in accordance with the overall fire plan and is positioned to provide close-in fires for the company strongpoints.

The battalion's rear service elements are located in covered and concealed positions within the battalion area. Rear service elements are responsible for their own security and should change locations frequently to avoid destruction from enemy air and artillery fire.

Defensive fires are centrally organized and are planned as far forward of the FEBA as possible. Fires are concentrated on avenues of approach using a series of designated fire lines. The distance between these lines is 400 to 600 meters on high-speed avenues. The distance is less on less-likely avenues of approach because of a probable slower rate of advance. Artillery fire is used to separate attacking infantry from their tanks approximately 200 to 400 meters from the FEBA. Final protective fires are planned within 100 meters of the FEBA, with concentrations to halt the advance of enemy forces that have penetrated the defenses.

Antitank defenses are organized to engage enemy tanks at an effective range up to 3 kilometers forward of the FEBA. Normal distance between tanks and antitank weapons in defensive positions is about 100 meters. On open terrain, there may be up to 200