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Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D. C. 20505

23 October 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : USSR GENERAL STAFF ACADEMY LESSON:
Ground Forces

1. The enclosed Intelligence Information Special Report is part of a series now in preparation, classified ~~TOP SECRET~~, prepared in 1985 for use in the Voroshilov General Staff Academy.

25X1, E.O.13526

2. [redacted] this document should be handled on a strict need-to-know basis within recipient agencies.

[redacted]
M. Clair E. George
Deputy Director for Operations

[redacted]

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Intelligence Information Special Report

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COUNTRY USSR

[Redacted]

DATE OF INFO. 1985

DATE 23 October 1987

SUBJECT

USSR GENERAL STAFF ACADEMY LESSON:
Ground Forces

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of the text of a lecture given at the Voroshilov General Staff Academy in 1985. The report discusses in rather general terms the role and mission of ground forces today and then devotes a few paragraphs each to the various branch arms, indicating what they do and bringing in a bit about changes over the years and in a couple of cases also speculates about future developments.

End of Summary

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GROUND FORCES

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... the current status of the Ground Forces and the principles of their operational-strategic [employment].

In the ensuing postwar years before the fifties, that is, before the IOC of nuclear weapons, the development of the Ground Forces took the path of assimilation of the experience of the past war and further improvement of the types of weapons and combat equipment which were acknowledged to be the best on the field of battle and in combat. At the same time, it should be emphasized that no substantial changes were seen in the purpose or nature of the actions of ground forces. Their operational and combat training was based on the use of conventional means of combat, although these did undergo further development. The Ground Forces remained the main branch of the Armed Forces of the Soviet state. Then the arrival of nuclear weapons dramatically increased combat capabilities, and this entailed the need to change the purpose and the nature of tasks assigned to and performed by the Ground Forces.

Today the Ground Forces are numerically the largest branch of the Armed Forces, capable of conducting combat actions to smash enemy groupings in continental theaters of military operations both with the use of nuclear weapons and with the use of conventional weapons alone. To emphasize that they are the most numerous branch of the Armed Forces, it should be noted, to cite figures published by the [International Institute] for Strategic Studies, that of the 5.05 million people in the Armed Forces, 1.8 million are in the Ground Forces.

Purpose, role, and tasks of ground forces in modern combat

The purpose of ground forces is to smash enemy troop groupings in a continental theater of military operations, take enemy territory, and to hold occupied territory, regions, and lines. Ground forces working with formations and large units of other branches of the Armed Forces and other branch arms are capable of conducting determined offensive operations and tenacious defense operations.

The role of the ground forces -- the extent of their contribution to and participation in the defeat of groupings of enemy armed forces in continental theaters of military operations and the extent of their contribution to victory -- is determined by the nature of the war, chiefly by the means of destruction

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employed. If one assumes military actions to be conducted with the use of nuclear weapons, as in a worldwide nuclear war, the ground forces with their nuclear means can hit the main forces of an opposing enemy and finish off those groupings on which strikes have been delivered by strategic nuclear forces and take out those groupings on which these forces have not delivered nuclear strikes. In a war fought with the use of conventional means of destruction alone, ground forces will be the main force against the enemy in continental theaters of military operations, successively hitting these groups and destroying them.

In short, one may conclude that the role of ground forces in modern combat will, regardless of the means employed, be the leading role in defeating the armed forces of the enemy in continental theaters of military operations.

What are the tasks assigned to the ground forces? The most important task of ground forces in a war fought with the use of conventional means of destruction alone will be to thwart enemy aggression. [Remainder of paragraph illegible.]

What measures must be carried out in order to fulfill the [word illegible] important task confronting the ground forces? The practice and experience gained in operational and combat training indicate that the first strategic echelon of the armed forces must be in constant combat readiness to employ a massed airstrike to preempt the enemy in deploying and going over to the offensive for the purpose of thwarting aggressive actions prepared or initiated by enemy ground forces and [word illegible]. In addition, the ground forces are entrusted with another, no less important task, that of repelling a possible land or air invasion by the enemy, as well as seizing and keeping the strategic initiative. This task is contingent on the possibility that the enemy can preempt us in deploying and delivering strikes. For the purpose of carrying out this task, in peacetime when the first operations are being prepared, provisions are made for allocating the necessary complement of forces and means to ensure the organized assembly, advance, orderly deployment, and transition of the troops to determined, vigorous combat actions.

If military operations begin with the employment of nuclear weapons, the task of the ground forces will be to deliver the first nuclear strike or to participate in a nuclear strike following the delivery of nuclear strikes by the strategic nuclear forces or simultaneously with these strikes. In offensive operations, the task of the ground forces will be to defeat the opposing enemy groupings, seize vitally important economic areas and political centers, and render the countries of the enemy coalition incapable of waging war.

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In the course of defensive operations, the ground forces are tasked with interdicting or substantially weakening enemy troop groupings which are poised to attack, repulsing the enemy attack, inflicting the maximum possible losses, and creating the necessary conditions for our troops to go over to a determined offensive.

We know that, as in past wars, and all the more so under present-day conditions, success can be achieved in armed combat only through the combined efforts of all the armed forces branches, branch arms, and special troops. The ground forces will therefore carry out their tasks in close cooperation with the air forces, air defense forces, naval forces, and, in a worldwide nuclear war, strategic rocket forces as well. This is why it is believed that the formations and large units of the branches of the armed forces engaged in combat actions in the context of a strategic operation must conduct these actions in support of the tasks confronting the ground forces. For example, nuclear strikes against an enemy missile grouping, against base airfields of the enemy's strategic and tactical aviation, and against his air defense means delivered by the strategic rocket forces and long range aviation can interdict or substantially blunt the enemy's nuclear strikes, alter the balance of theater forces and means to our advantage, and thereby exert a positive influence on success in the tasks to be dealt with by the ground forces on various axes.

Let us consider another example. The actions of naval forces to destroy enemy nuclear missile submarines and air strike groupings and to attack coastal installations, naval actions to cover the coastal flank of our advancing groupings that are vulnerable to enemy attack from the sea, and naval participation in the debarkation of amphibious landing forces will unquestionably make a positive contribution, first of all, to the defeat of the enemy's coastal groupings and to the seizure of key coastal installations, strait zones, and island territories. This applies in equal measure to the air defense forces, who carry out their tasks in cooperation with the air defense troops of the ground forces, for example, in dealing with the first massed airstrike by the enemy. This will undoubtedly affect the ability of ground forces groupings to maintain their combat effectiveness and will consequently affect the success of [their] actions [on various axes].

This applies in equal measure to the ground forces, whose successful conduct of operations will have a positive effect on the actions of formations and large units of all the other branches of the armed forces.

Thus, under present-day conditions, in modern combat, the ground forces will have a leading role in defeating the groupings of the enemy's armed forces in the continental theaters of military operations throughout the entire depth of their [disposition]. In such tasks as the seizure of key areas, denial of these areas to the enemy, and subsequent use of them in armed combat, the ground forces will play the decisive part, since only the ground forces have such capabilities.

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The main tactical combined-arms large unit of the motorized rifle troops is the motorized rifle division, which generally includes three motorized rifle regiments, of which two are mounted in armored personnel carriers and one in infantry combat vehicles. In addition to these regiments, a motorized rifle division has units and subunits of other arms: one tank regiment, a separate tank battalion, an artillery corps, a separate missile battalion, a SAM regiment, a separate antitank battalion, and a separate helicopter squadron.

For combat support of the actions of a motorized rifle division, the table of organization stipulates a separate reconnaissance battalion, a separate communications battalion, a separate engineer/combat engineer battalion, a separate chemical defense company [2-3 words illegible].

Rear services support is handled by a separate repair and recovery battalion, a separate motor transport battalion, a medical-sanitary battalion, [3 words illegible], and division combined depots.

Motorized rifle divisions have the following weapons and equipment: medium tanks, armored personnel carriers, infantry combat vehicles, tube artillery, mortars, antitank guided missiles, surface-to-air missile systems, tactical missile systems, helicopters, and automatic small arms.

In recent years, as a result of measures to reorganize the Ground Forces, the [word illegible] and attack capabilities of motorized rifle divisions have grown substantially -- 20 percent overall and 40 percent in the ability to deal with enemy tanks. Overall the quantity of field artillery has doubled, the number of tanks has increased by a factor of 1.4, and other weapons by the following factors: number of antitank weapons -- 7, air defense weapons -- 5, nuclear weapons able to be issued per day of battle -- 4 or 5, and reinforcing artillery -- 2. Finally, it should be noted that the Ground Forces currently have as many as 134 motorized rifle divisions if we are to believe the data published by the [London Institute for Strategic Studies]. Why let [rest of line illegible]? The fact of the matter is that they are not to be found in any other classified, much less unclassified, source on the strength of the Soviet Armed Forces. This publication gives the strength and [rest of paragraph illegible].

As a result of the reorganization measures, the combat capabilities of motorized rifle divisions have grown substantially. For example, on the offensive a division can have a zone of 10 to 20 km. The depth of a combat mission is 30 to 80 km, but this [word illegible] nearly [line illegible]. As we have already noted, the capabilities of motorized rifle divisions in combat with enemy tanks have increased substantially. Studies indicate that with its antitank weapons, on terrain without engineer preparation, a motorized rifle division can repel [3 words illegible], whose groupings may number 420 tanks.

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Current status of the arms and special troops of the ground forces

In the course of an operation, battle, or combat actions as a whole, the troops must perform the most diverse tasks. This diversity of tasks has given rise to the need for diverse weapons and combat equipment, that is, for weapons and combat equipment with diverse functions, which makes it necessary to divide the branches of the armed forces into branch arms and further into large units, units, and subunits with different functions and different organizational structures intended for different modes of employment.

What is a branch arm? It is a component of a branch of the armed forces which is distinguished by its weapons and equipment, purpose, and table of organization. The ground forces presently include the following branch arms and special troops: (1) Branch arms include motorized rifle troops, tank troops, airborne troops, rocket troops and artillery, air defense troops of the ground forces, and army aviation, which is an organizational component of operational formations and combined-arms large units and at the same time a component of the [Air Forces], large units, and units of [2 words illegible]. (2) Special troops are reconnaissance, engineer, chemical, signal, radioelectronic warfare, nuclear technical, missile technical, technical support, survey and meteorological, and [security?] troops.

Let us examine the nature of each of the branch arms, its purpose, tasks, organizational structure, and its weapons and equipment.

Motorized rifle and tank troops form the backbone of the ground forces and perform the following main tasks: On the offensive, their tasks involve breaking through the enemy's defenses, smashing opposing groupings, seizing key areas, lines, and positions, making assault crossings of water obstacles, and pursuing the retreating enemy. On the defensive, their tasks involve holding occupied areas, lines, and positions, repelling enemy attacks, attacking advancing enemy troops, and conducting meeting engagements and battles as part of amphibious and airborne landing forces. Possessing a high degree of diversity and independence, the motorized rifle troops are capable of performing all the tasks enumerated above under diverse terrain and weather conditions while on the main or secondary axes, in a first or second echelon, and in operational maneuver groups.

The backbone of the motorized rifle troops are the motorized rifle large units and units. They also have fortified area large units, units, and subunits intended for covering and defending key axes of the national borders and employ permanent and field fortifications for this purpose.

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Tank troops are the main hitting power [udarnaya sila] of the ground forces. Possessing a high degree of immunity to the damaging effects of nuclear weapons, tank troops are used primarily on the main axes. In an offensive they will generally be in attack groupings in the first and second echelons and in operational maneuver groups. In a defense they will be primarily used in the second echelons to smash enemy groupings which have penetrated our defenses and finish them off.

Tank troops are equipped with medium tanks such as the T-62, T-64, T-72, etc., which have formidable firepower, excellent mobility, and great resistance to the harmful effects of nuclear weapons. The new generation of tanks have very powerful rocket and gun armament, which can fire both ordinary projectiles and antitank missiles; they have a combination [2 words illegible] protective layer against the harmful effects of nuclear bursts, more powerful [multifuel] and gas-turbine engines, and special equipment for negotiating water obstacles and self-entrenching.

The role of tank troops in modern combat and operations is constantly increasing. The overall percentage of tank troops among the ground forces is three times what it was during the Great Patriotic War. Citing again the previously mentioned report, we have 50 tank divisions numbering approximately 50,000 tanks.

Now The main tactical combined-arms large unit of tank troops is the tank division. The backbone of the tank division is its three tank regiments. In addition, it has units of other branch arms: a motorized rifle regiment, an artillery regiment, a separate missile battalion, a surface-to-air missile regiment, and a separate helicopter squadron. Combat support and rear services support are the same as in a motorized rifle division. A tank division, being a basic tactical combined-arms large unit, is capable of mounting an attack with the same operational-tactical characteristics -- a zone 10-20 km wide with a combat mission depth up to 80 km. In terms of defense, both a motorized rifle division and a tank division can occupy a defensive zone up to 45 km wide and 25 km deep.

What are the prospects for development of the motorized rifle divisions and tank divisions? To begin with, there is a clear-cut trend toward increasing the firepower and striking power of these divisions, towards giving them more independence in executing tasks in battle and in operations. Finally, there are signs that the day is not far off when there will be [a uniform division]. During the Great Patriotic War the ground forces had the following types of divisions: rifle, cavalry, mountain rifle, mechanized, tank, and airborne. Now we have motorized rifle, tank, and airborne divisions. However, there are already divisions which are fully equipped with infantry combat vehicles and are really armored divisions. We can evidently predict that in due course there will be a uniform [yedinaya] division. It is safe to say this because if we

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examine the motorized rifle and tank divisions and their equipment, the difference between them is something on the order of 50 to 70 tanks. A motorized rifle division has one tank regiment, and a motorized rifle regiment has a tank battalion. A tank division has three tank regiments, giving it 50 more tanks than a motorized rifle division has. The number of tanks has increased from [35] to 40 in the separate tank battalions, and from 30 to 40 in the motorized rifle regiments. A tank regiment has 90 tanks, a motorized rifle regiment has 40; that comes out to 120 + 90 + 40 more (in the separate tank battalion) -- versus the 300 [in a tank division].

The airborne troops possess a high degree of mobility and are tasked with carrying out vertical envelopment of the enemy and executing missions in the enemy's rear. They consist of airborne and airborne assault large units and units. Until recently, airborne assault large units and units were a separate arm, but now they are incorporated into the airborne troops.

Airborne large units are a means of the Supreme High Command. They are used as operational and operational-strategic airborne landing forces for the purpose of disrupting government and military control, destroying the enemy's nuclear attack means, seizing and holding key areas, lines, and installations in the operational and strategic depth, supporting front troops in developing the offensive, encircling and defeating enemy groupings, negotiating water obstacles, working with the Navy to capture strait zones and island territories, disrupting the activation, regrouping, and deployment of operational reserves, and disrupting [word illegible].

The basic large unit of the airborne troops is the airborne division, which consists of three parachute regiments, two of which are mounted in combat vehicles, and one in armored personnel carriers. In addition, the division includes an artillery regiment, a self-propelled artillery battalion, and an antiaircraft artillery battalion. These divisions are equipped with combat vehicles, armored personnel carriers, tube artillery, mortars, guided antitank missiles, and automatic small arms.

The division's organizational structure and armament allow it to operate independently to execute an operational airborne landing and to participate with other airborne divisions and motorized rifle large units to execute an operational-strategic landing.

The future development of the airborne troops will involve increasing their combat capabilities and, most important, decreasing the amount of time necessary to achieve readiness for [word illegible].

Airborne assault large units and units are a means of the front and army command. They are used or can be used as tactical and operational-tactical landing forces.

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Airborne assault large units and units are tasked first of all with destroying the enemy's nuclear and chemical attack means, control posts, and other installations and seizing and holding road junctions, crossing places, and mountain passes and approaches in the tactical and operational depth of the enemy defense. They are also tasked with destroying enemy airborne landing forces which have put down, smashing enemy groupings which have broken through, and combatting airmobile forces and covering the exposed flanks [3 words illegible].

The airborne assault brigade, which is a [word illegible] tactical [large unit], is the TOE unit. It consists of three airborne assault battalions and has two helicopter regiments, an artillery/mortar antitank battery, and combat support and rear services support subunits.

By virtue of its fire capabilities, an airborne assault brigade is capable of attacking exposed enemy troops of 25-30 [two words illegible] concealed in 11-15 platoon strongpoints, seizing and destroying up to three major installations such as an army corps command post, a battalion of [Lance?] missiles, or a nuclear weapons depot. Operating by battalions, an airborne assault brigade can provide division reserves for two or three divisions; operating at full strength, it can delay the advance of a sizeable enemy reserve 6 to 8 hours, [3 words illegible]. These large units have an important role in combined-arms combat and combined-arms operations due to a good combination of superior combat capabilities, a high degree of mobility, the ability to cross front lines by air, and a large measure of independence.

The next branch arm is the rocket troops and artillery. The rocket troops and artillery are the main means for nuclear attack and destruction of the enemy by fire in front, army, and corps operations and in combined-arms combat. The rocket troops are tasked with attacking the enemy's nuclear and chemical attack means, troop groupings, aircraft at airfields, air defense means and control posts, as well as with destroying enemy naval bases and [3 words illegible] on the coastal axes.

In conducting combat actions in which only conventional weapons are employed, the rocket troops can utilize missiles with conventional warheads but be in constant readiness to deliver a nuclear strike.

The rocket troops consist of operational-tactical and tactical large units and units of rocket troops.

The rocket troops are currently equipped with the following systems: [R-900?], R-300 (which is being replaced by the R-400), and R-70, which is used by operational formations and combined-arms large units.

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The combat capabilities of the rocket troops are marked by the ability to strike and destroy various types of targets, their launch range, and their maneuver capabilities. With regard to launch range, the number in R-900, R-300, and R-70 tells the range at which the enemy can be hit from [2 words illegible] siting [areas].

When the missile is on the launcher, the time the rocket troops require to achieve readiness to deliver a strike is as follows: a tactical missile launcher can deliver a strike in 1-16 minutes, an R-300 in 10-20 minutes, and R-900 in 27-30 minutes.

The requisite kill factor is determined by the selected yield of the nuclear warhead, the type of burst, and the optimum launch range [2 words illegible]. For example, if the designated objective is to destroy a Lance guided missile battalion located at a siting area, that is, deployed in battle formation, it will require three missiles with a yield of [4 words illegible]. To destroy a division located in a concentration area with engineer preparation will take 10-12 missiles with a yield of up to [number illegible] [word illegible].

Organizationally the rocket troops consist of missile brigades and battalions which are part of operational formations and combined-arms large units. A front missile brigade consists of three battalions. Each battalion has two launch batteries, and each battery has two launchers, for a total of 12 launchers. An army missile brigade has exactly the same organizational structure as a front missile brigade. A separate missile battalion of a motorized rifle or tank division consists of two launch batteries [line illegible].

The future development of the rocket troops will take the path of greater accuracy, increase in nuclear warhead yield, and reduction in the amount of time required to achieve readiness to deliver strikes. Another feature will be the creation of so-called reconnaissance/strike complexes on the basis of these large units [2 words illegible].

Artillery is meant for destroying and neutralizing enemy nuclear and chemical means of attack, armament, combat equipment, personnel, and control posts and for illuminating the terrain and doing remote [minelaying].

Artillery consists of howitzer, gun, rocket, antitank artillery, mortar, and antitank guided missile large units, units, and subunits. It is currently equipped with 203.2-mm howitzers and guns, 240-mm mortars which employ nuclear weapons, 130-mm guns, 152-mm howitzers and gun howitzers, 122-mm howitzers, 100-mm antitank guns, BM-21 and BM-24 rocket launchers, antitank guided missiles and 82-mm and 120-mm mortars.

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It should also be noted that, as the new combat regulations state, "Attached reinforcing artillery of combined-arms large units can be used in a nuclear attack on the enemy in combined-arms combat." In other words, self-propelled 152-mm howitzers can take nuclear munitions, which substantially increases the capabilities of combined-arms large units with regard to a nuclear attack against the enemy, thereby increasing their combat effectiveness as well. The combat capabilities of artillery are characterized by range, that is, depth of hitting the enemy, and by fire and maneuver [capabilities]. With regard to range, 203.2-mm howitzers can fire as deep as 30 km, and rocket-assisted projectiles as deep as 50 km.

The combat capabilities of rocket artillery have increased significantly, particularly if fuel-air explosives [literally "volume-burst projectiles"] are used. Proving ground tests and calculations indicate that two BM-21s firing fuel-air explosives can take out a company-level strong point. If we translate these capabilities to nuclear warheads, this is equivalent to a warhead of [end of line illegible]. The capabilities of multiple-round rocket launchers have increased substantially. For example, the BM-24 URAGAN, in a single launch, can fire antitank or antipersonnel mine [word illegible] up to 18 km.

Artillery is divided into organic artillery and Supreme High Command reserve artillery. Organic artillery is in turn divided into army, corps, division, and regiment artillery. Artillery which is not part of armies, divisions, regiments, or battalions is reserve artillery of the Supreme High Command. The future development of artillery will follow the course of increasing range, better accuracy, and increased power of ammunition, and it will include the creation of reconnaissance/fire complexes.

The air defense troops of the ground forces are one of the main means used for combatting the air enemy. They destroy aircraft, cruise missiles, and other enemy air targets. In front, army, and corps operations and in combined-arms combat, they provide cover of [word illegible] troop groupings, control posts, and airfields; they combat enemy aerial reconnaissance means, airborne landing forces, and airmobile forces in flight; and they do reconnaissance and warn our troops of the presence of [2 words illegible] in air defense space. They carry out their tasks in the common system of air defense of the country and air defense of the armed forces.

The air defense troops of the ground forces consist of missile, missile-artillery, antiaircraft artillery, and radiotechnical large units, units, and subunits. The TOE units are the SAM/AAA division included among the front troops, the SAM brigades included among front and army troops, and the SAM regiments included among fronts, armies, and combined-arms large units, as well as the antiaircraft, missile, and artillery subunits included among the combined-arms units and [word illegible].

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The air defense troops of the ground forces are currently equipped with KRUG, [KUB], OSA, and STRELA surface-to-air missile systems and with S-60 and ZSU-23-4 antiaircraft artillery systems [3 words illegible]. Motorized rifle and tank companies are equipped with STRELA-2M and STRELA-3 surface-to-air missile systems. And, as experience has shown, air defense troops of the ground forces included in operational formations and combined-arms large units can effectively provide cover of [word illegible] troop groupings and installations.

The reserve of the Supreme High Command includes an artillery division, which consists of five brigades: a howitzer brigade, two heavy howitzer brigades and [two] gun artillery brigades. Each brigade consists of four battalions of 18 guns each.

A rocket artillery brigade consists of four battalions: two BM-21 battalions and two BM-24 battalions of 18 guns each. The reserve of the Supreme High Command also has heavy artillery brigades, each of which consists of four battalions: two 203-mm howitzer/gun battalions of 12 guns each and two 240-mm mortar battalions of 12 mortars each.

An antitank artillery brigade of the reserve of the Supreme High Command consists of [four] antitank battalions. Each battalion has three batteries of 100-mm smoothbore antitank guns [word illegible] and one battery of [nine] [word illegible] antitank [2 words illegible].

An army has an army artillery brigade which, as opposed to the brigades of the reserve division of the Supreme High Command, has five battalions: two 130-mm gun battalions of 18 guns each, and [three] 152-mm howitzer/gun [battalions], also with 18 guns each.

An army also has an army rocket regiment of three battalions [line illegible] and an antitank artillery regiment of three battalions. Each battalion consists of two 100-mm gun batteries and one antitank guided missile battery.

In examining the main branch arms of the Ground Forces, it should be noted that the actions of the branch arms in modern combined-arms combat and combined-arms operations are supported by a number of special troops, which have already been mentioned, such as reconnaissance troops, engineer troops, signal troops, etc.

Fundamentals of operational-strategic employment of the ground forces

In modern warfare, ground forces carry out their tasks by conducting offensive or defensive operations, which are divided by type into combined-arms operations and joint operations.

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A combined-arms operation is conducted with participation of all or most of the branches of the armed forces, branch arms, and special troops, and it is run by a combined-arms command. In the course of a combined-arms operation, a large number of interrelated tasks of different types are carried out. Included among operations of this category are strategic operations of all sorts -- front operations, army operations, and corps operations.

A joint operation is a component of a combined-arms operation. It is conducted with the participation of formations and large units of several branches of the armed forces, branch arms, and special troops to carry out one kind of task. A joint operation can be run by a combined-arms command or by the command of the branch which has the key role in the operation. Specifically, joint operations include air and air defense theater operations, airborne assault operations, amphibious assault operations, and antilanding operations. Joint operations are divided by type into offensive and defensive operations, and by time into initial and follow-up operations. With regard to the classification of operations by type, the primary type is, of course, the offensive operation. This is not accidental, since only through an offensive can the enemy be defeated and [word illegible] [be taken]. The importance and the part played by the offensive in an armed conflict was noted by V. I. Lenin in his article on the lessons of the Moscow Uprising, where he says: "We must proclaim far and wide the need for a bold offensive. The offensive against an enemy must be most vigorous. Attack, rather than defend, must be the slogan of the masses." If we examine the experience of the Great Patriotic War in this light, for 926 of the 1418 days of the war, the Soviet armed forces waged a strategic offensive.

At the same time, in a war with a strong, well-prepared and well equipped enemy, it would not do to count on achieving victory through offensives alone. To quote V. I. Lenin once again, at the 12th Moscow Provincial Party Congress, he stressed the fact that there has never in the history of the world been a war which was one continuous victorious offensive from start to finish, and if ...

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... powerful means of destruction as nuclear weapons. It becomes more than obvious that in the course of military operations the troops must take to the defensive in a whole series of instances. In this connection it is no coincidence that the Minister of Defense states in his order for the current academic year that: "It is time to stop underrating the defense."

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Operations can also be divided by scale into front, army, and corps operations, which can be offensive or defensive. A front offensive operation is carried out on one strategic axis or several operational axes. It is characterized by depth, width, rate of advance, total time required to carry it out and achieve the objectives. All this together is what the scope of an operation is. Today's operations have a depth of 600-700 km, a width of ...

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