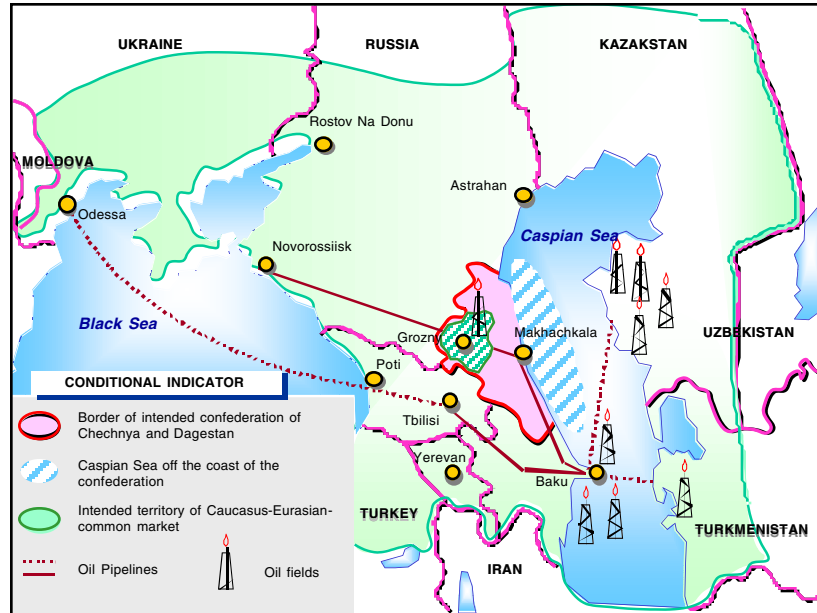

THE FIRST BATTLE OF GROZNY
General Anatoly Sergeevich Kulikov
Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs



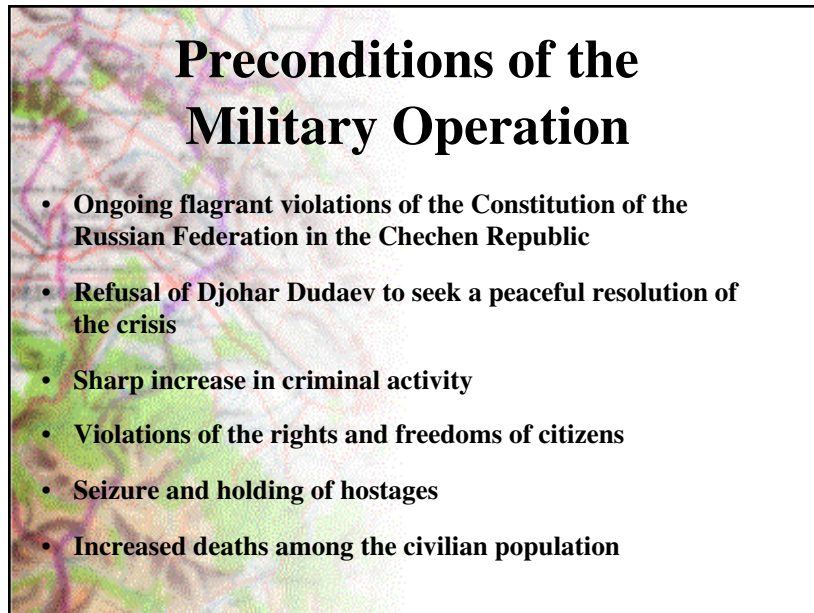
John Barry, writing in the February 21, 2000 *Newsweek*, characterized the Grozny experience as the “new urban battlefield.” He quoted a senior Pentagon official as saying that he wasn’t sure U.S. forces would “do a whole lot better than the Russians.” Barry’s article highlights the key issue increasingly recognized by analysts and planners: mortal combat in urban terrain, like that in Grozny, is combat on very unfavorable terms, and that as urbanization continues, experi-

ences such as Grozny should be studied for their implications for the future. Barry recalls that “The U.S. Army used to have a simple way of dealing with cities: avoid them. The cost in street-fighting casualties was just too steep. That was one reason that in 1945 the Army didn’t try to take Berlin, a battle that Gen. Omar Bradley told Dwight Eisenhower “might cost us 100,000 men.” Bradley was right. The Red Army, which did fight its way into Berlin, lost 102,000 men doing so; 125,000 German civilians died in the battle, as did 150,000 to 200,000 German troops.”¹

¹Barry’s article makes a good starting point for my own presentation that will do as he suggests and consider the Grozny operations of 1994–1995 in the hope that we can learn from them.



I will briefly outline the situation in Chechnya that led to the military operations of 1994–1996. Chechen separatists headed by Djohar Dudaev were seeking to create a single trans-Caucasian republic that they envisioned as stretching to include parts of Russia and the Ukraine as well as all of the Caucasian and trans-Caucasian region. This was of significant concern as the Caucasus is a strategically important area. Critical oil and natural gas pipelines traverse it, as do marine trade routes through the Black Sea to the Middle East. Thus, from the geopolitical point of view, the Caucasus is a key military and geostrategic location, a door to the Middle East.



Preconditions of the Military Operation

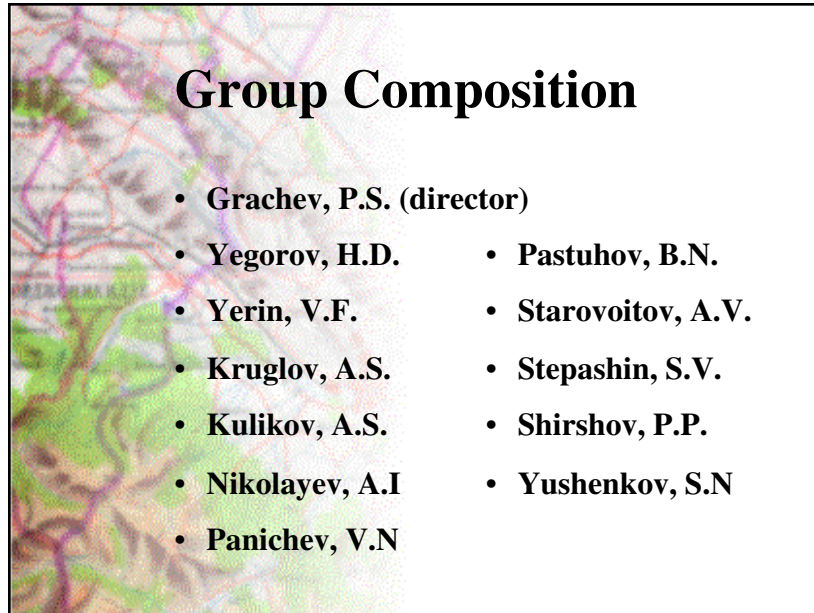
- **Ongoing flagrant violations of the Constitution of the Russian Federation in the Chechen Republic**
- **Refusal of Djohar Dudaev to seek a peaceful resolution of the crisis**
- **Sharp increase in criminal activity**
- **Violations of the rights and freedoms of citizens**
- **Seizure and holding of hostages**
- **Increased deaths among the civilian population**

By the spring of 1994 Dudaev had managed to turn Chechnya into the criminal center of Russia. Murders in the region were up to 2,000 people per year (in Rostov, the annual rate was 450). Fraudulent operations and schemes originating in Chechnya were destroying Russia's financial system. In May, June, and July of 1994, hostages were repeatedly seized, the perpetrators demanding helicopters and/or cash in amounts of 8–15 million dollars. As a result, the Russian speaking population was increasingly fleeing the area, unwilling and unable to continue to live under such circumstances. It was the combination of these factors that led the Russian government, or more specifically the presidential administration, to recommend to the President that steps be taken to restore constitutional order in the Republic of Chechnya. Initial negotiation efforts were made at the end of November of 1994 in conjunction with Chechen forces opposed to the Dudaev regime. Unfortunately, these proved fruitless.

Legal Basis for the Planning and Implementation of the Operation

- **Article 88 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation**
- **Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of November 30, 1994 No. 2137C: “Reestablish constitutional law and order in the territory of the Chechen Republic.”**

On November 30, 1994, in accordance with Article 99 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the President signed Decree No. 2137c, “On steps to reestablish constitutional law and order in the territory of the Chechen Republic.” The reasons for developing such steps were enumerated in the decree: the blatant violations of the Constitution of the Russian Federation in the Chechen Republic, the refusal of D. Dudaev to seek a peaceful resolution to the crisis, the increase in general criminal activity, continuing violations of the rights of and freedoms of citizens, repeated incidents of hostage-taking, and the increasing numbers of murders.

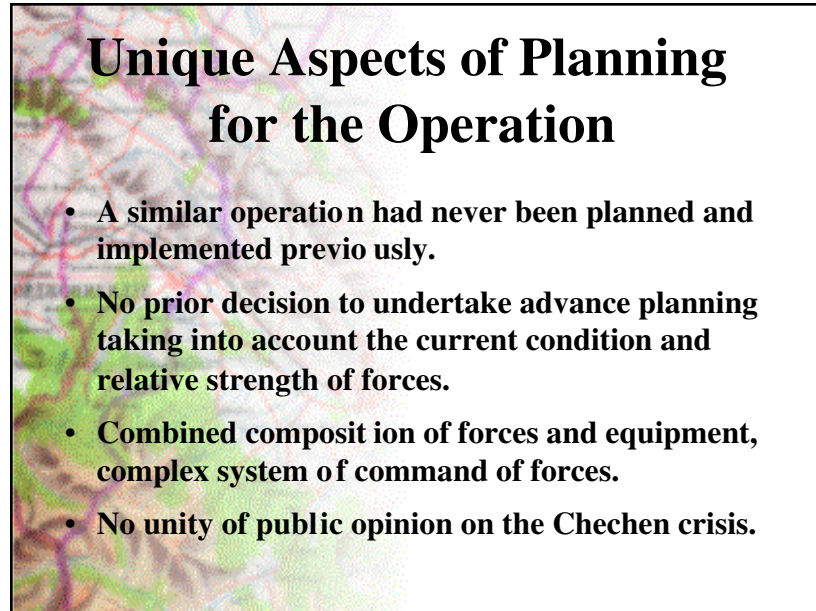


In accordance with this decree, a special group was created to direct operations to disarm and eliminate illegal armed formations in Chechnya and to declare and administer a state of emergency in the territory of the Chechen Republic. The group was headed by Minister of Defense Pavel Grachev, who was also granted the rights and privileges appropriate to creating and directing the Joint Grouping of Federal Forces that was to carry out these operations.

Given the situation in the region and the impossibility of resolving the conflict by political means, an addendum to the presidential decree laid out a series of tasks to be undertaken by a number of relevant ministries and organizations and the time frames for accomplishing them.



The President entrusted the Joint Grouping of Forces with the tasks shown here.



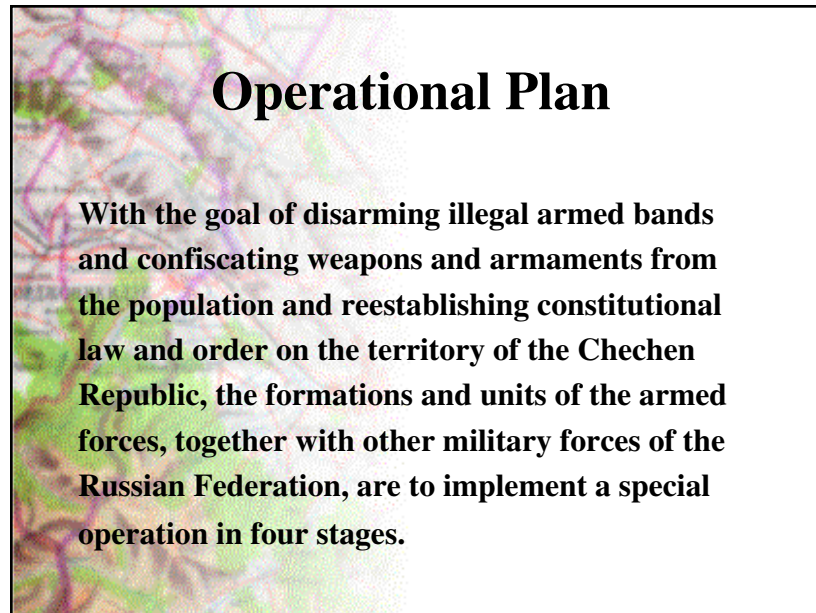
Unique Aspects of Planning for the Operation

- **A similar operation had never been planned and implemented previously.**
- **No prior decision to undertake advance planning taking into account the current condition and relative strength of forces.**
- **Combined composition of forces and equipment, complex system of command of forces.**
- **No unity of public opinion on the Chechen crisis.**

For all practical purposes, this was the first time such an operation had ever been planned and implemented. It was unique in the following five respects.

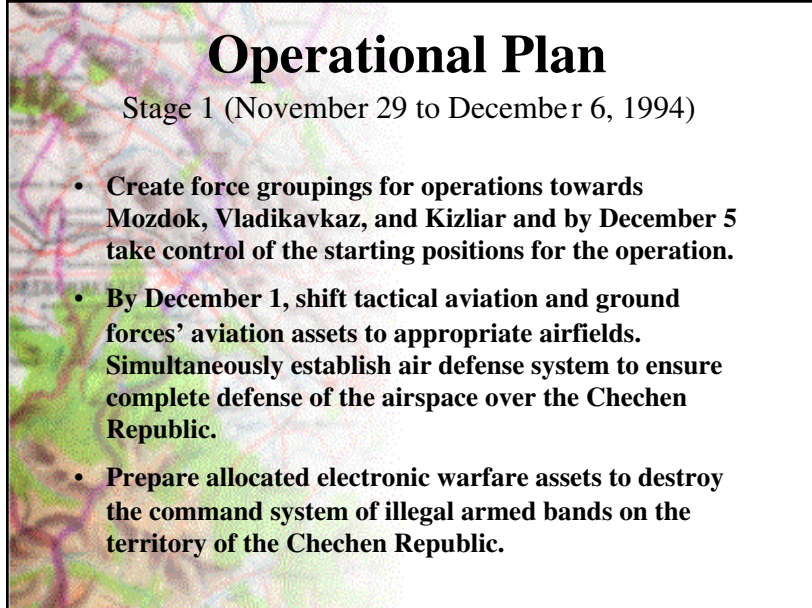
- First, there had been no previous decisions made nor any steps taken to plan and prepare for an operation to disarm the illegal armed bands. This was true despite the lengthy period during which the internal political situation had been developing in these unconstitutional directions even as the crisis continued to ripen and attempts by the Russian government to resolve these problems peacefully proved ineffective. In the end, the decision itself was made too late to facilitate the necessary preparation and planning.
- Second, a Joint Grouping of Forces was created to implement this operation. This grouping was composed of army units, Internal Affairs Ministry units, border guards, railroad troops, and forces and components of the FSB, FAPSI, and MChS.

- Third, a special command was created on the foundation of the existing Northern Caucasus Military Region to direct this Joint Grouping. It included a wide range of ministries and agencies.
- Fourth, never before had all of these organizations been combined in a single joint command. There was, therefore, no prior experience in coordinating such operations.
- Fifth, and finally, the operation in question was to be carried out in a component republic of the Russian Federation, creating a range of substantive constraints and operational peculiarities.



The operational plan for the use of force in this mission was developed by the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation with the involvement of all other relevant ministries and agencies.

It stated the goal of the mission, as indicated, and laid out a four-stage operation to accomplish it.



Operational Plan

Stage 1 (November 29 to December 6, 1994)

- **Create force groupings for operations towards Mozdok, Vladikavkaz, and Kizliar and by December 5 take control of the starting positions for the operation.**
- **By December 1, shift tactical aviation and ground forces' aviation assets to appropriate airfields. Simultaneously establish air defense system to ensure complete defense of the airspace over the Chechen Republic.**
- **Prepare allocated electronic warfare assets to destroy the command system of illegal armed bands on the territory of the Chechen Republic.**

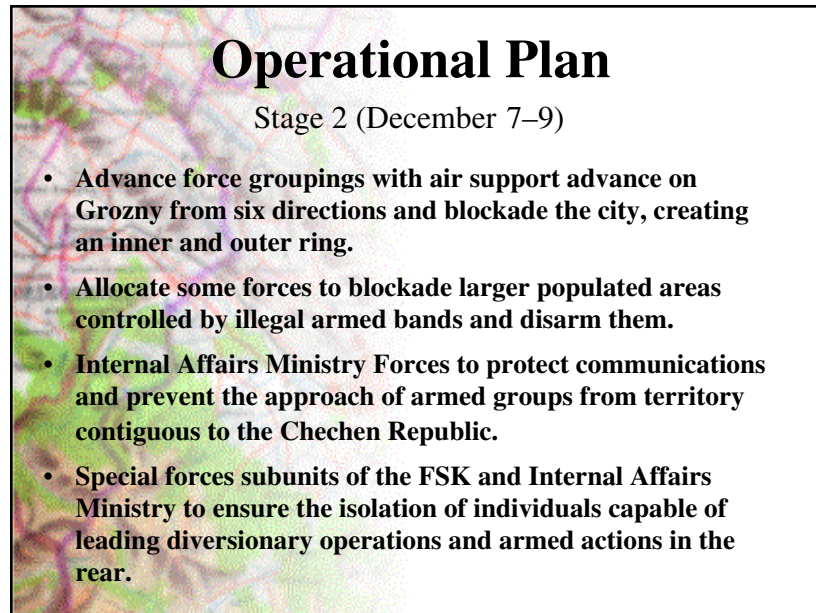
Stage One (November 29–December 6, 1994):

The first stage was to begin on November 26 and be completed by December 6. During this time, force groupings were to be created in preparation for troop movements in three directions: Mozdok, Vladikavkaz, and Kizliar.

By December 5, forces were to have taken control of these locations.

Before that, by December 1, tactical aviation and ground forces aviation were to have been shifted to the appropriate airfields and air defense systems were to have been in place.

At the same time, electronic warfare assets were to have been prepared in order to suppress the illegal bands' communications systems.



Operational Plan

Stage 2 (December 7–9)

- **Advance force groupings with air support advance on Grozny from six directions and blockade the city, creating an inner and outer ring.**
- **Allocate some forces to blockade larger populated areas controlled by illegal armed bands and disarm them.**
- **Internal Affairs Ministry Forces to protect communications and prevent the approach of armed groups from territory contiguous to the Chechen Republic.**
- **Special forces subunits of the FSK and Internal Affairs Ministry to ensure the isolation of individuals capable of leading diversionary operations and armed actions in the rear.**


Stage Two (December 7–9):

With air support, the advance force groupings were to advance on Grozny from six directions and blockade it by forming two concentric rings. The outer ring was to coincide with the administrative border of Chechnya and the inner ring with the outside limits of the city of Grozny.

The main part of the Russian force was to be allocated to the blockade mission and to disarming armed bands located within the city. A smaller portion of the force was to blockade other populated areas controlled by illegal armed bands and disarm those bands.

Internal Affairs Ministry Forces were to protect communications, prevent attacks on federal forces by the illegal armed bands, and prevent any approach of armed groups and detachments from territory contiguous to the Chechen Republic.

Internal Affairs Ministry and FSB special forces groups were to locate and isolate the leadership of republic, local government, and opposition parties that might be capable of leading military operations and diversions in the rear.



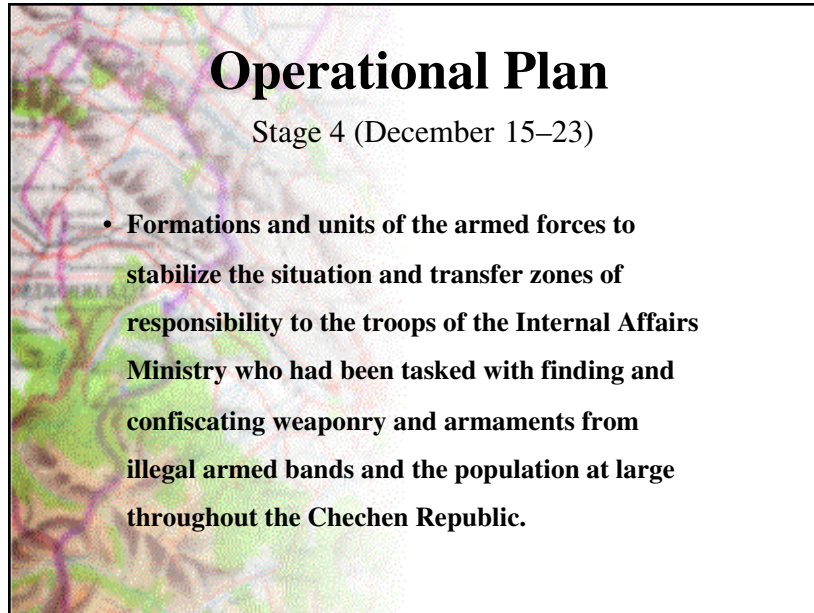
Operational Plan

Stage 3 (December 10–13)

- **Formations and units advance from the north and south to capture the presidential palace, government buildings, television and radio facilities, and other important structures [in Grozny].**
- **Then, together with special forces subunits of the Internal Affairs Ministry and FSB, continue to confiscate weaponry and materiel.**

Stage Three (December 10–13):

From December 10 through 13, Russian Army units were to advance from the north and south to capture the city and its key nodes (such as the palace and other government buildings). With these under control, the military was to undertake operations to disarm illegal formations.



Operational Plan

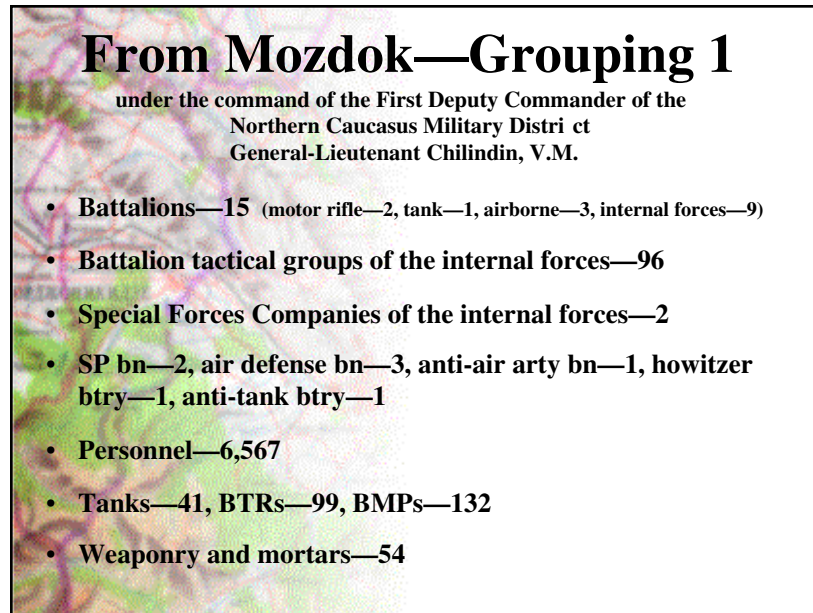
Stage 4 (December 15–23)

- **Formations and units of the armed forces to stabilize the situation and transfer zones of responsibility to the troops of the Internal Affairs Ministry who had been tasked with finding and confiscating weaponry and armaments from illegal armed bands and the population at large throughout the Chechen Republic.**

Stage Four (December 15–23):

During this stage the armed forces were to generally stabilize the situation, transferring responsibilities for critical areas to the internal troops which in turn would continue to confiscate weapons and disarm bands.

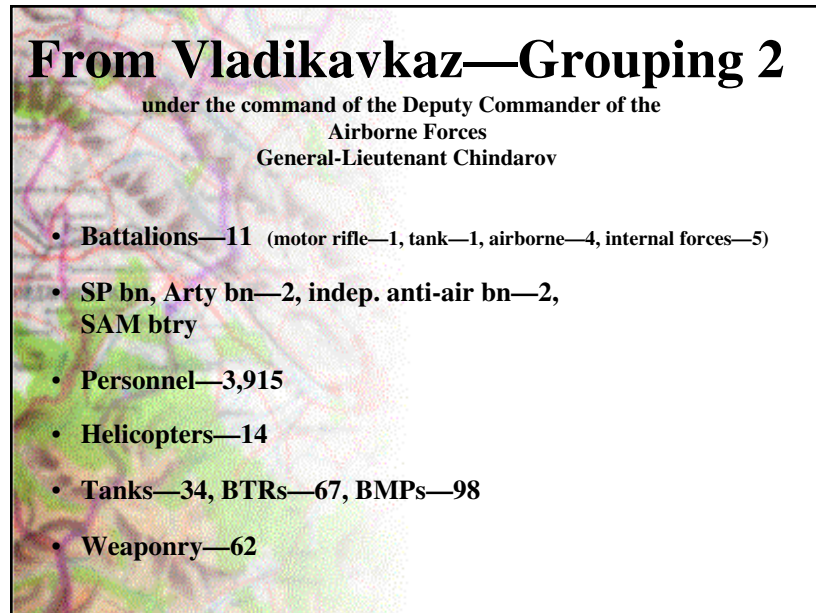
As already noted, Internal Affairs Ministry forces were tasked with creating the outer ring of control coinciding with the Chechen Republic border and with protecting the rear of the army forces. Army forces were to advance from that outer ring inwards, transferring authority to Internal Affairs Ministry forces as they captured territory and eventually entered Grozny where the procedure would be repeated. To accomplish this, the armed forces were divided into the three groups described on the following pages, each to advance on Grozny from a different direction: Vladikavkaz, Mozdok, and Kizliar. The forces in question were predominantly those of the North Caucasus Military District Army forces augmented by paratroopers and some Internal Affairs Ministry troops.



This chart outlines the forces that made up the Mozdok grouping. They included:

- From the Northern Caucasus Military District forces:
 - Forces of the 131st Independent Motor Rifle Brigade (MRB) that included about 7,000 men, 20 tanks, 50 BMPs, 4 KONKURS (AT-5 Spandrel) guided anti-tank missiles, 6 TUNGUSKA (2S6) gun-missile air defense vehicles, and other weapons systems;
 - The 481st SAM regiment of the 19th Motor Rifle Division (MRD) with 2 Osa (SA8 Gecko) SAMs;
 - A battalion from the 170th Engineer-Sapper Brigade that included sapper and road engineer companies and a pontoon bridging battalion from the 173rd Pontoon Bridging Brigade; and
 - The combined regiment of the 22nd Independent Spetsnaz brigade.

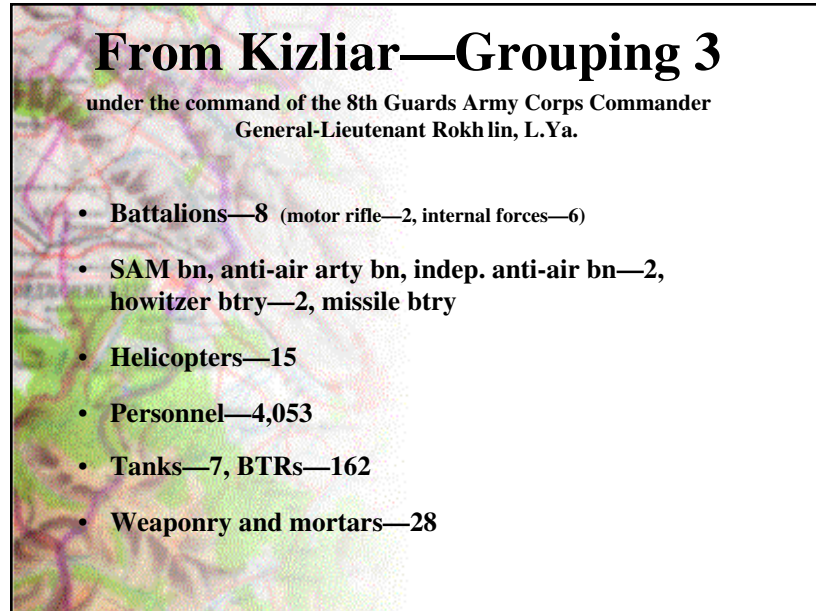
- From the Paratrooper Forces:
 - The combined forces of the 106th Paratrooper Division with 850 men in 2 airborne battalions, an SP battalion, 43 BMPs, and 39 air defense weapons; and
 - The 56th Independent Paratrooper Brigade with 3 airborne companies, an artillery and an anti-tank battery, and a total of 416 personnel with 8 units of grenade launchers and other equipment and 6 units of air defense weaponry.
- From the Internal Affairs Ministry Troops:
 - The 59th Operational Designation Regiment including two battalions, an armored group, an air defense battalion, a special forces company, 15 BTR-70s, 18 BMP-2s, 6 units of air defense weaponry, and a total of 600 personnel;
 - The 81st Operational Designation Regiment with three battalions, an armored group, a special forces company, an air defense battalion, 21 BTR-80s, 6 units of air defense weaponry, 9 PT-76s, 12 BTMs, and a total of 446 personnel;
 - The 193st Special Designation Battalion with 140 men and 8 BTR-80s; and
 - The 451st Operational Designation Regiment with two battalions, an air defense battalion, 28 BTR-80s, and a total of 600 men.



The Vladikavkaz grouping included the following forces:

- From the Northern Caucasus Military District:
 - Forces of the 19th Motor Rifle Division, including a motor rifle battalion, a tank battalion, an artillery battalion, an air defense battalion, 28 tanks, 34 BMPs, 10 units of weaponry, 6 ZSU-23/4 Shilka systems, 4 S10 SAMs, and a total of 723 personnel;
 - The 3/481 SAM Regiment of the 19th Motor Rifle Division including 4 Osa (SA8 Gecko) SAMs and 42 personnel; and
 - The 1/933 Independent SAM Regiment of the 42nd Army Corps including 4 Kub missiles and 36 personnel.
- From the Paratrooper Forces:
 - The 76th Paratrooper Division including 3 paratrooper battalions, an SP battalion, 41 BMPs, 12 units of weaponry, 30 units of air defense weaponry, and 1,125 personnel; and

- The parachute battalion of the 21st Independent Paratrooper Brigade, including 3 airborne companies, a howitzer battery, an anti-tank battery, 10 units of weaponry including grenade launchers, 6 units of air defense weaponry, and a total of 350 personnel.
- From the Internal Affairs Ministry Forces:
 - The 46th Operational Designation Regiment including 2 battalions, a SAM battery, a Spetsnaz company, 29 BTRs, 18 BMPs, and a total of 639 personnel;
 - The 7th Spetsnaz Detachment including 6 BTRs and 168 personnel; and
 - The 47th Operational Designation Regiment including two battalions, two independent anti-air battalions, 30 BTR-80s, 21 BMPs, and a total of 650 personnel.



From Kizliar—Grouping 3

**under the command of the 8th Guards Army Corps Commander
General-Lieutenant Rokhlin, L.Ya.**

- **Battalions—8** (motor rifle—2, internal forces—6)
- **SAM bn, anti-air arty bn, indep. anti-air bn—2,
howitzer btry—2, missile btry**
- **Helicopters—15**
- **Personnel—4,053**
- **Tanks—7, BTRs—162**
- **Weaponry and mortars—28**

Finally, the Kizliar grouping:

- From the Northern Caucasus Military District:
 - Forces of the 20th Motor Rifle Division including an independent reconnaissance battalion, a missile battery, 2 howitzer batteries, a SAM battery, a missile battery, a SAM battalion, 83 BTRs, 29 units of grenade launchers and other weaponry, 15 units of air defense weaponry, and 1,712 personnel.
- From the Internal Affairs Ministry Forces:
 - The 57th, 63rd, and 49th Operational Designation Regiments including 6 battalions, 3 Spetsnaz companies, and 2 SAM battalions.



Overall Complement of Forces

- **Battalions—34** (motor rifle—5, tank—2, airborne—7, internal forces of the Internal Affairs Ministry—20)
- **Artillery bn—4, SP bn—2, SAM bn—3, anti-tank btry—2, howitzer btry—4, missile btry**
- **Helicopters—90, including 47 attack**
- **Personnel—nearly 24,000, including**
 - Armed forces of the Russian Federation—19,000
 - Internal forces of the Internal Affairs Ministry—4,700
- **Tanks—80, BTRs and BMPs—208**
- **Weaponry and mortars—182**

The three groups together comprised the total force shown above.

The inner and outer blockade called for by the plan was to be effected as follows: The outer ring was the responsibility of Internal Affairs Ministry forces. They were to block the main rail and automobile routes so as to prevent Chechens from neighboring areas, such as Dagestan, from entering Chechnya. Note that while Dagestan remains Russian territory, it has a significant ethnic Chechen population. The units were deployed as follows:

From the East:

- The 81st Operational Designation Regiment at Petropavlovsk on the left bank of the Argun River
- The 57th Operational Designation Regiment at Nizhni Gerzel', Gerzel'-Kutan

From the West:

- The 59th Operational Designation Regiment at Zebir-Urt and Dolinskiy
- The 22nd OBRON at Novi Redant

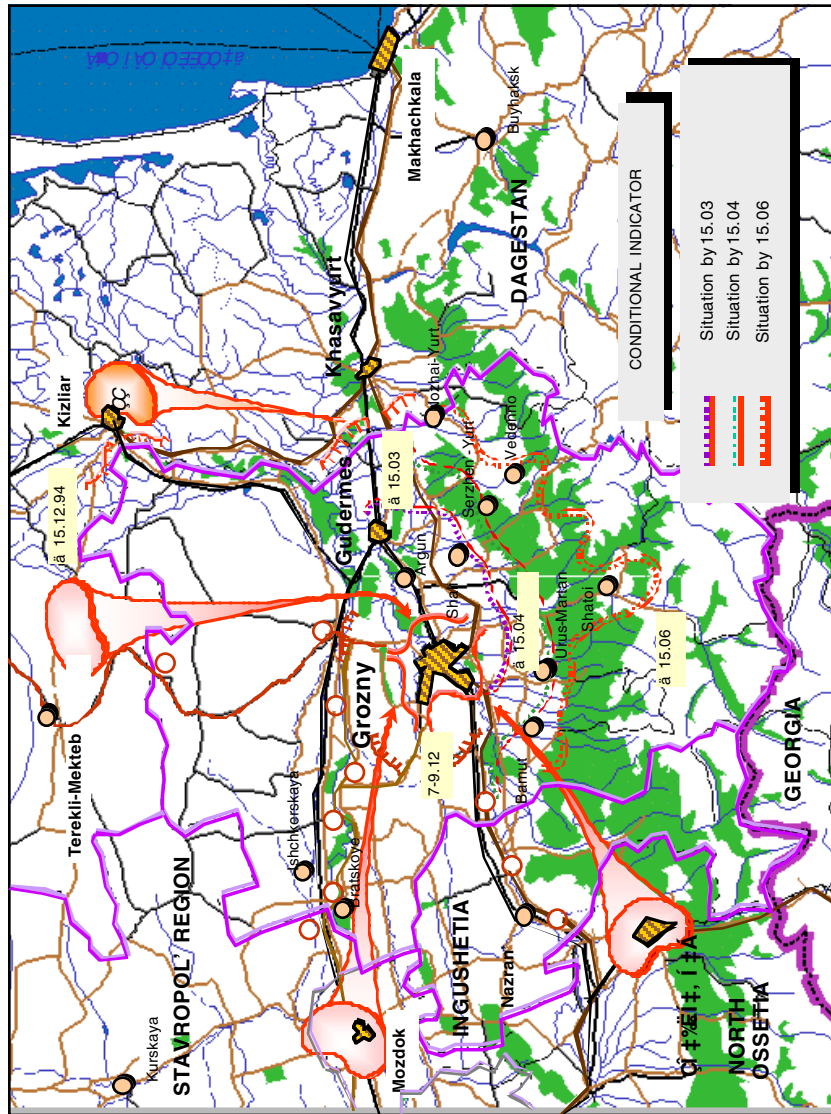
From the South:

- The 47th Operational Designation Regiment from Nazran to Assinovska
- The 46th Operational Designation Regiment at Bamut, Novi Shatoi, and the eastern edge of Samashka

From the North:

- The 451st Operational Designation Regiment from Brastoye and Verhniy Naur
- The 21st OBRON at the eastern edge of Galyugaevskiy and Lenposelok
- The 51st Operational Designation Regiment at Podgornoye and Ken'-Urt

The inner ring around Grozny was to be effected by the 19th Motor Rifle Division, the 76th and 106th Paratroop Divisions, the 131st Independent Motor Rifle Brigade, and the 21st and 56th Independent Paratrooper Brigades.



- First (Mozdok) axis: The 131st MRB was to move on the city from a position 4 km southeast of Terskaya. The paratrooper regiment and battalion, respectively, of the 106th PD and the 56th PB were to approach from the Mozdok airfield.
- Second (Vladikavkaz) axis: The 693rd MRB of the 19th MD was to begin from a position 1 km east of the Chermensk circle, the paratrooper regiment of the 76th paratrooper division from 3 km northeast of Beslan, and the paratrooper battalion of the 21st Independent Paratrooper Brigade from 2 km south of Kanti-shevo.
- Third (Kizliar) axis: The 20th Motor Rifle Division moved toward Grozny from the northern edge of Averyanovka.

Force movements were thus to follow six separate paths

- Mozdok, Bratskoye, Znamenskoye, Nadterechnoye, Kem'-Urt, Pervomayskoye
- Mozdok, Predgornoye, Novi Redant, Garagorsk, Kerla-Urt, Pervomayskoye
- Chermen, Verkhniye Achaluki, Karabulak, Sernovodsk, Alkhan-Kala, Alkhan-Urt
- Chermen, Gamurgiyevoye, Northern edge of Yandirka, Novi Shatoi, Alkhan-Urt
- Kizliar, Hamamat-Urt, Nizhni Gerzel', Gerzel'-Aul, Novogroz-nensiy
- Terekeli-Mekteb, Baklan, Lugovoye, Chervlennaya uzlovaya, vinogradnoye, Petropavlovskaya

The first four of these routes covered a distance of 80–90 kilometers each, the last two 110–190 kilometers.

The operational plan was approved by the National Security Council of the Russian Federation on November 29, 1994.

Because the operation was to be carried out on the territory of the Northern Caucasus Military District (NCMD) and would utilize a large number of its forces and units, responsibility for the details of operational planning, preparation of forces, and command of troops

was assigned to the NCMD leadership. Officially, this was formulated in Ministry of Defense Directive No. 3 12/1/00148 Sh of November 30, 1994. The NCMD was to report on plans for the operation on December 5. In order to assist with planning, organization, coordination of forces, troop preparation, and command and control, special Ministry of Defense operational groups were created.

On December 5, 1994, the Minister of Defense was briefed on the NCMD plans for the operation and approved them. He also directed that NCMD commander General-Colonel A. N. Mityukhin was to serve as the commander for the Joint Grouping of Forces. He was to have full command and decision authority over preparation for and implementation of the operation, including personnel issues, and he was to have this command and decision authority over all forces, including those of non-MOD ministries involved in the operation.

The Minister of Defense also directed that night operations were to be avoided in the interest of force protection and the security of the local population. He furthermore outlined the following schedule:

- All operational planning was to be complete by 1400 on December 6 as was force deployment to the region.
- Force groupings were to be formed by December 7 and communications training in all areas was to be carried out by 1600 on that date.
- Finally, force inspections were to be held on December 8.

This agenda was formalized by MOD Directive No. 3 12/1/002 Shr.

Per instructions from the President, it was also determined that the Minister of Defense would meet with representatives of the opposition forces and personally with D. Dudayev. These meetings were held on December 6 with unfavorable results.

The operation began on Sunday, December 11, 1994 at 0800 (rather than 0500 as the Ministry of Defense had decided the previous day). General-Colonel A. Mityukhin asked Minister of Defense Grachev at 2330 on December 10 to let the hour slip as the Vladikavkaz grouping was not yet ready to move. The delay resulted in a loss of any element of surprise. By 0900 the Vladikavkaz grouping had found its way blocked by unexpected and unarmed opposition from the local

residents of Ingushetia in the region of Nazran and Verkhni Achaluk. (Note that the Ingushetians have close ethnic ties to the Chechens.) Furthermore, the troops found their way blocked by an automobile market where by 0800 thousands of people had assembled to buy and sell vehicles near their starting point in Nazran. As a result, it took them nearly two hours to even reach the border with Chechnya.

The fact was that Russian force and unit commanders proved unprepared to take decisive action. Only forces moving from Mozdok and Kizliar were able to keep to the schedule initially, and only one of the six groups moving along their separate routes was actually able to maintain that schedule to reach its position on the Grozny perimeter at the planned time. These were the forces moving from Mozdok in the north. The other groups only reached their positions by the 20th and 21st of December. As a result the blockade of Grozny was never complete. The south of the city, in particular, remained open.



The decision to enter the city of Grozny was taken at a National Security Council meeting on December 26, 1994. The rationale was that the majority of rebel forces and a significant portion of their armament and materiel were concentrated in Grozny. Weapons supplies were also located in the city. The illegal armed bands, despite repeated calls on them to end their resistance, continued intensive armed attacks, effecting a partial redeployment of their forces to previously prepared bases in the south of the republic.

But Dudaev's allies paid particular attention to preparing for the defense of Grozny, where, not counting those forces withdrawing to the south or the local population, some 9,000–10,000 personnel were stationed. Chechen equipment included about 25 tanks, 35 BMPs and BTRs, and about 80 ground artillery systems (mostly the D-30 122mm howitzer).

To effect the defense of the city, the rebel command hastily prepared three concentric defensive rings.

- An inner ring, centered around the Presidential Palace, had a radius of 0.5–1.5 km.
- A middle ring, at a distance of about 1 km from the inner ring in the northwest and up to 5 km in the southwest and southeast.
- An outer ring along the perimeter of the city and stretching to Dolinsk.

The rebels created knots of resistance around the Presidential Palace for the inner ring of defense, making use of buildings in the vicinity. Lower and upper floors of those buildings were adapted for use as firing positions for personnel armed with rifles and anti-tank weapons. Positions for direct artillery and tank fire were prepared along Ordzhonikidze and Victory Roads and Pervomaysk Street.

The foundation of the middle ring defense was strong points at the beginning of Staropromislovsk Way, knots of resistance at the bridges across the Sunzhe River and in the area around Minutka Square as well as on Saihanov Street, and preparations to set fires and/or explosions at the Lenin and Sheripov oil processing factories and other oil-related commercial enterprises as well as at the chemical factory.

The outer ring of defense consisted of strongpoints on the Grozny, Mozdok, Deliysky, Katayama, and Tashkala expressways as well as in the Grozny suburbs of Neftiyanka, Khankala, and Staraya Sunzhe in the east, and Chernorech'ye in the south.

In summary, the scope of preparations to defend the city of Grozny made it clear that D. Dudaev and his allies were unlikely to voluntarily give up their weapons and dissolve the illegal armed bands. Thus, in order to fulfill the demands of the presidential decrees, government statements, and decisions of the Security Council, the Commander of the Joint Grouping of Federal Forces had only one option: to capture Grozny and begin the process of disarming Dudaev's illegal armed bands and associated foreign mercenaries in the Chechen capital itself.

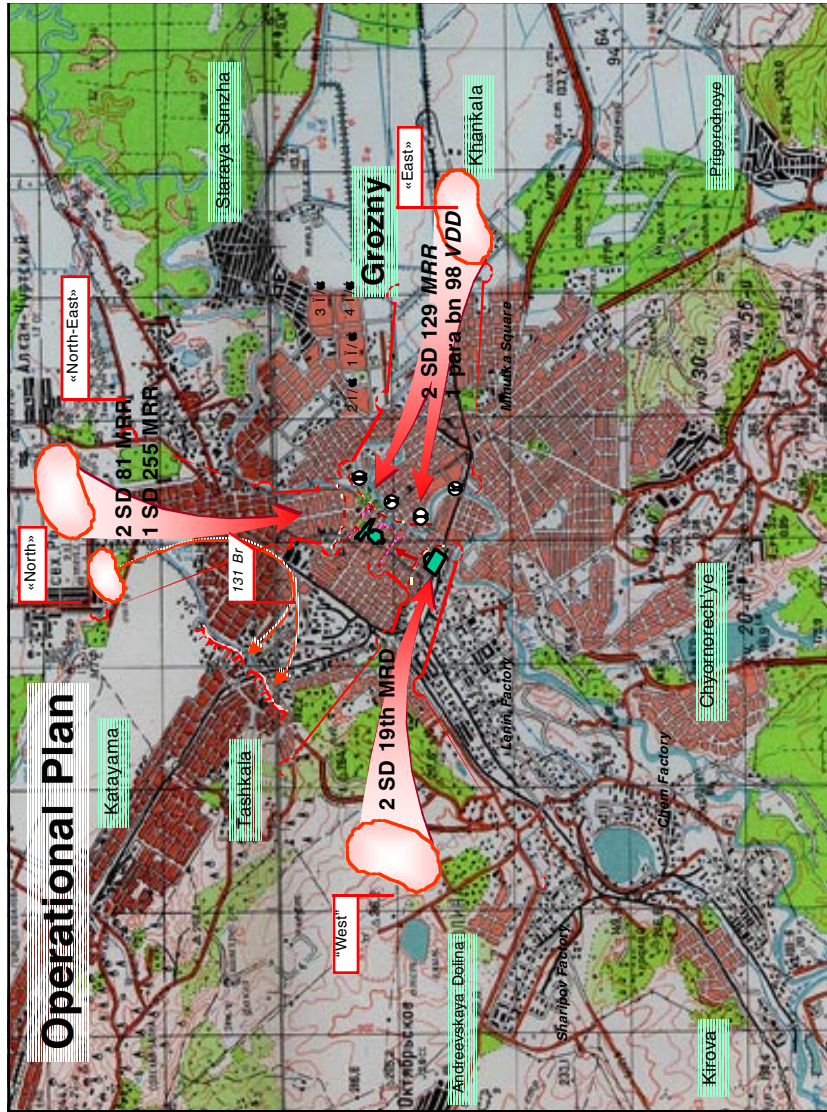
The plan to capture the city began, of course, with its blockade. However, as already noted, delays of most of the forces in approaching the city meant that the blockade was never accomplished. Only the northern portion was in any way covered. The south of the city remained, for all practical purposes, completely open. If the failure to move at 0500 on December 11 was the first mistake made by the Russian forces, the failure to initially wait until the blockade was complete was the second mistake. But the decision was eventually made to attack the city regardless.

The operational plan called for the separation of Grozny into areas or zones, with the railroad tracks and the Sunzhe River serving as boundaries in the east-west and north-south directions respectively. Storm detachments were to attack from several directions at once: the north, the west, and the east as indicated. Upon entering the city they were to coordinate with special forces of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the FSB to capture the Presidential Palace, other selected government buildings, television and radio stations, the train station, and additional important sites in the city's center and then blockade the central part of the city and the Katoyama region.

The attack from the north was to be carried out by two storm detachments from the 81st Motor Rifle Regiment of the Northern Force Grouping and a storm detachment of the 255 Motor Rifle Regiment of the 20th Motor Rifle Division of the northeast grouping, attacking along a zone bordered by Yuzhnaya, Mayakovskoyo, Krasnoznamenaya, and Mira Streets on the right and the Sunzhe River on the left. In this way they were to block off the northern part of the city and the Presidential Palace from the north.

Furthermore, the 131st brigade, attacking along Mayakovskogo Street and then along Staropromislovkogo Road, was to take up defensive positions along the Altaiskaya Street and on the border between the Staropromyslovsk and Leninsk regions of town.

From the west, two storm detachments of the 19th Motor Rifle Division (Western Force Grouping) were to attack along a zone bordered on the right by the railroad tracks and on the left by Popovicha Street. They were to capture the train station, then, moving north, to blockade the Presidential Palace from the south.



The combination of these attacks and blocking of major streets was to create a corridor in a zone bordered on the right by Bohdan Khmel'nitsky, Pervomaysk, and Ordzhonokitze Streets and on the left by the Sunzhe River (and further west by Lenin Park).

In order to prevent combat in the western part of the city where the chemical and petroleum processing complexes were located, and to prevent enemy movement into the rear of our forces, detachments of the 76th and 106th Paratrooper Divisions were to block off the Zavod and the Katoyama regions.

From the east, two storm detachments of the 129th Motor Rifle Regiment and a paratrooper battalion of the 98th Paratrooper Division (all from the Eastern Grouping) were to move along the railroad tracks from Gudermes to Lenin Square and then to the Sunzhe River. There they were to capture the bridges across the river and link up with the Northern and Western Force Groupings to block off the central part of the city and the river from the east.

Finally, federal troops had an additional reserve composed of the 131st Motor Rifle Brigade and the 8th Motor Rifle Regiment. These were assigned to the Northern Group, which was ultimately to have the most success in accomplishing its tasks. They had a unique mission: to isolate the rebel formations in the northwest from the city proper.

The role of the Internal Affairs Ministry Forces, in turn, was to defend and guard communications and join the armed forces in disarming the illegal armed bands once the city was captured.

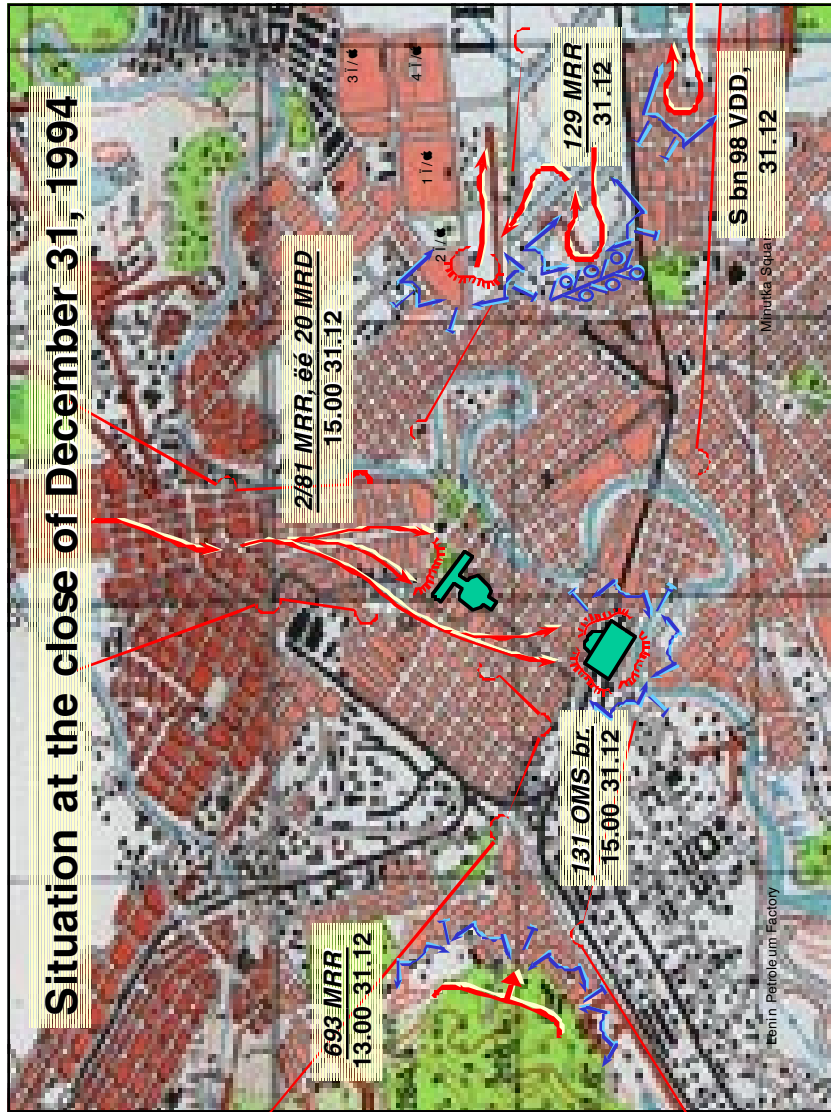
The expectation was that the federal forces, approaching a single point from three directions, would fully surround Dudaev's forces located in the center of the city. Casualties among the Russian troops would be minimized, as would collateral damage to the city of Grozny. But the success of this operation depended on the element of surprise.

There was a contingency plan in the event that Dudaev's forces presented active resistance. Russian forces were to capture the city over the course of several days. This contingency was the reason that the storm detachments had been created. Those forces had even received additional training to prepare them for their mission. This

training was not, however, sufficient to overcome the fact that these detachments were composed of subcomponents and even individuals from a range of different divisions and forces who had never before fought or trained together. This significantly hampered operational effectiveness.

The attack on the city began on December 31st. The Western Grouping met with resistance in the industrial region of the city and found itself engaged in close combat. The Eastern Grouping encountered resistance and decided to take a detour, maneuvering to the right. However, they encountered additional resistance and minefields along this new route. In the end they were forced to retreat. The Northern Grouping was able to approach the Presidential Palace but encountered fierce resistance near that building. Thus, at 1500 on December 31st, all three groupings had failed to attain their goals. Recall, however, the role assigned to the 131st Motor Rifle Brigade. They were supposed to move south along with the rest of the Northern Grouping, but then turn west to isolate rebel forces in the northwest. The brigade's commander met with no resistance during the move south but failed to make the turn, instead continuing south. He reported his situation and was told to continue on to the train station. He and his forces did so, again encountering no resistance. Upon arriving at the train station, however, the brigade failed to carry out the key tasks of securing the area, encircling the station, and posting guards at strategic elevated positions in nearby multi-story buildings. Instead, the 131st MRB was extremely careless, leaving their BMPs and many of their weapons in the square in front of the station while most of the personnel congregated inside the building. As a result they were easy prey for the rebel forces that soon surrounded and attacked them. Most of their weapons and BMPs were lost in the fight and the majority of their vehicles were destroyed. I personally saw the remains of a tank close to the train station. It had been demolished, taking some 20 direct RPG hits.

With it increasingly clear that Russian plans for the Grozny operation were not going to be successful, Prime Minister Chernomyrdin held a meeting on January 9 with the Minister of Defense in attendance. I stated openly at this time that until we successfully sealed the city from the south we would be unable to capture it. The fighting in January caused a lot of casualties on the Russian side. Because the south remained open we were unable to stem the tide of rebel reinforcements. For practical purposes we were engaged in a battle with the whole of Chechnya. Still, we made some progress. The Presidential Palace was finally captured on January 19. On January 26, I was appointed commander of the Joint Federal Forces Grouping. At this time I was able to order the blockade of all of Grozny,



including effecting a seal in the south. Due to significant armored resistance we were unable to complete this mission until February 23, but in the end we were successful. Once the city was sealed, we were able to take control of it entirely within a week.

Grozny Operations 1999–2000: Lessons Learned?

This major error of the first war, the failure to implement a complete and effective blockade, was one of the lessons learned that was incorporated in operations in 1999. While MoD reconnaissance forces attempted to attack the city at the end of that year, they did not move until the city was isolated. Grozny was eventually captured in a campaign lasting from January 3 until February 7. This time Internal Affairs Ministry Forces took the lead with support from the Ministry of Defense. Tactics differed significantly from 1994. Four sniper companies were formed, two from the MoD and two from the Internal Affairs Ministry. These, supported by Spetsnaz forces, took control of key buildings within the city and operated at night with night vision goggles. They then supported the six storm detachments that entered the city by eliminating rebel forces when they attempted to approach Russian units.

The rebels, however, had also changed their tactics. They had prepared their underground communications networks and reinforced shelters, particularly those in basements. According to Russian officers who fought in the 1999–2000 Grozny campaign, these were set up to defend against air raids and aviation strikes; the basements were retrofitted and covered by concrete blocks which could be raised and lowered on jacks. In this way, the Chechens could lift the concrete blocks over their shelters when Russian forces approached and shoot at them, lowering the blocks once the troops had passed to protect those underneath from the subsequent aviation strikes called in by the Russians.

Federal Operations in the Plains

By the beginning of March 1995 the city was completely under Russian control. Having experienced defeat and heavy casualties in the battles for Grozny, the leadership of the illegal armed bands took time to regroup its forces. Dudaev's forces were generally well pre-

pared for armed resistance in the east. Rebel bases in the south and southeast were in place and forces were supplied with weaponry and materiel. With the coming of warm weather, the guerrillas shifted their tactics to an emphasis on diversionary terrorist operations.

There was reason to think that the strategy of D. Dudaev and his allies had all along been simply to buy time until spring and summer when they could shift to partisan warfare. In the meantime, the combination of stoic resistance and diversionary terrorist acts throughout the entire territory of Chechnya kept the fight going.

By the middle of March we had captured Argun, Gudermes, and Shali and disarmed the illegal bands in those cities. By first surrounding the cities we were able to minimize Russian casualties in these operations. By focusing attention first on the plains prior to turning to the mountains, we were able to establish control over these areas, which comprised the majority of Chechnya's territory, by April 15. The rebel forces were largely disbanded and a large portion of their heavy weaponry (which they were unable to replace without foreign assistance) was destroyed. Their command and control system was compromised. Russian forces for the most part had complete control over the "Northern Path" rail line between Mozdok, Chervlenaya, Gudermes, and Grozny in particular.

Engineer forces in Grozny demined and checked for explosives throughout the city, paying particular attention to facilities necessary to everyday life such as the water supply system and key administrative buildings. Over 70,000 explosives were removed and destroyed, not including ammunition and guns. In sum, 770 hectares of territory were cleared.

In this way, favorable circumstances were created for a return to everyday life in the Chechen Republic and in Grozny.

However, federal forces still had significant work left to do in disarming illegal bands in the Samashka, Achkhei-Martan, and Bamut areas. When completed, this operation would provide federal control over the "Southern Path" of the rail line to Grozny.

Federal Operations in the Mountains

In order to disarm the illegal bands in the mountain areas in the south of the Chechen Republic, border troops moved in the western (including Achkhoy-Martan, and Shatoi regions as well as parts of Ingushetia), central (Shatoi region), and eastern (Vedensk and Nozhait-Yurtovsk regions) directions to seal the borders.² In addition, a force grouping of armed forces and Internal Affairs Ministry forces was created to clear out the sealed-off area. The grouping commenced its work in the summer.

In the beginning of the summer, the Dudaev regime had sufficient forces and means to maintain partisan warfare, even with losses. They were able to do this due to the support that continued to exist from the local population as well as that received from representatives of the new administration of the Chechen Republic and other northern Caucasus republics.

The plan for the summer operation in the mountains called for it to be completed in 20 days.

In the course of operations in May and June of 1995, the illegal armed bands suffered significant casualties and were brought to the edge of complete destruction. Remaining guerrilla forces were forced to retreat to eastern regions of the republic near the towns of Dargo and Venoi and to southern territories near the Dagestan border, as well as east towards the town of Bamut. Guerrillas, understanding the futility of further resistance, began to leave the armed bands.

However, following Sh. Basaev's attack on Budennovsk, morale in the illegal armed formations rose significantly. Guerrillas began to return to their units, new formations were created, and new volunteers joined up. Basaev's success at Budennovsk and the support for it amongst many of the field commanders convinced the Dudaev leadership of the need to shift to a new tactic of armed resistance in which diversionary-terrorist acts would be carried out not just on the territory of the Chechen Republic but in central areas of Russia as

²Russian forces hoped to make it difficult for the rebels to maneuver in the mountains by destroying and mining roadways. They also used motorized rifle, tank, and paratrooper forces to destroy remaining weaponry and personnel of the illegal armed bands.

well. Furthermore, the Dudaev leadership did not reject the possibility of continuing to resist federal forces in defensive battles in zones of contact.

The Russian political command, and particularly Prime Minister Chornomyrdin, had made a grave mistake in its response to the Budennovsk situation. First, they entered into negotiations with the terrorists. Then they suspended military actions, which prevented the military from completing its job.

All in all, however, the thinking behind operations to disarm the bands in the mountain regions of the Chechen Republic was consistent with the goals and conditions of the situation. The major failing was that the planners did not anticipate the need for a reliable reserve force, an error that had significant operational impact.

Conclusions

One of the key lessons learned from our experience in planning the operations to disarm illegal armed bands in the Chechen Republic was our recognition of just how crucial it is to take into account all of the factors that can impact force operations: the need for a joint command, unity of command for all forces, the fact that we were conducting operations on Russian territory, the existence of constrained timelines for preparation and planning, and particularly the need to form and deploy forces.

Operational planning was conducted with the historical experience of the Second World War in mind. The overall plan was developed by the General Staff; detailed planning was the responsibility of the leadership of the Joint Federal Force Grouping that included officers of the Ministry of Defense, General Staff, and representatives of other ministries and organizations whose forces and components were participating in the operation.

One of our most significant problems turned out to be the organization of a single unified command for the forces. Incompatibility between different forces' technical equipment made it difficult to create a single system and impeded operations. Military operations in Chechnya also underscored the continuing discrepancy between

the potential of space systems and the limited resources in this sphere due to our current force infrastructure.

Harsh time constraints dictated by the operational plans made it impossible for traditional reconnaissance methods to provide timely information to commands and forces. In fact, the army and federal command had almost no reconnaissance whatsoever prior to the beginning of operations. Security and Internal Affairs Ministry forces similarly could not carry out reconnaissance as they had no access to the area before operations began. Such problems can only be effectively solved with the use of space-based reconnaissance, communications, and command and control systems. Joint Grouping forces must plan in advance to ensure that they are supplied with compact systems for reception of information from space-based reconnaissance assets, especially those supporting high-precision weaponry.

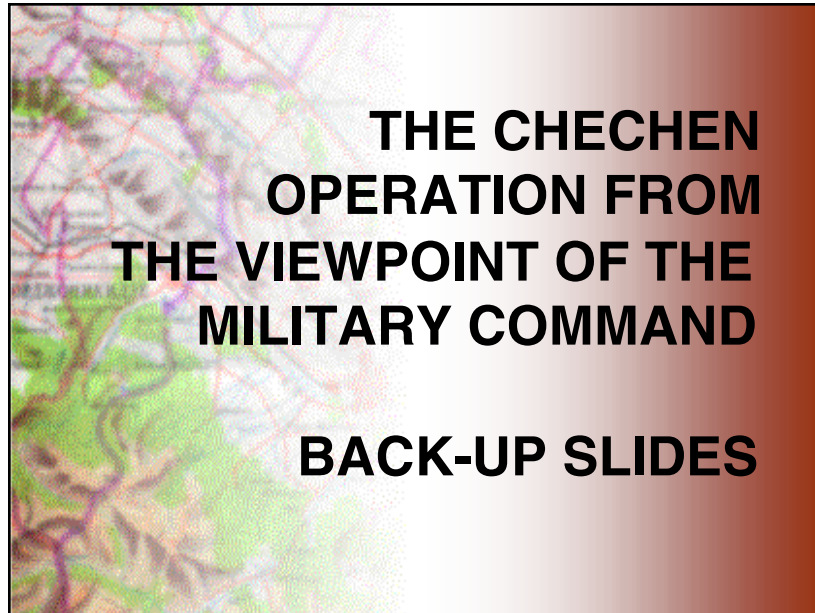
Problems of poor unit and personnel readiness further complicated preparation for operations. This demonstrated the need to improve not only coordination between forces in the theater but also the training of personnel. This occupied a significant amount of our time (ten or more days). Our experience highlighted the need to train and prepare personnel at their home base locations to make maximum use of the educational base in place there. Of course, the fact that operational units were created ad hoc by combining soldiers and components from a range of commands and organizations had a negative impact as well.

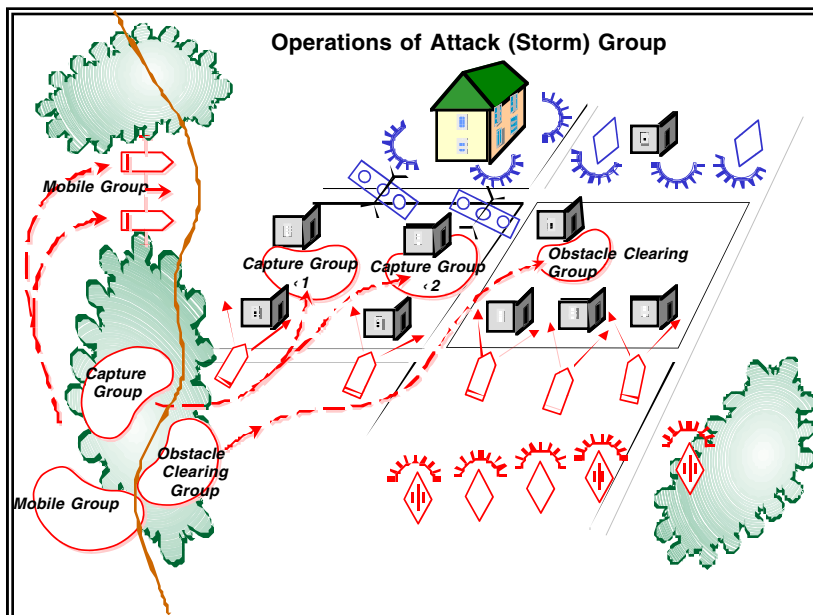
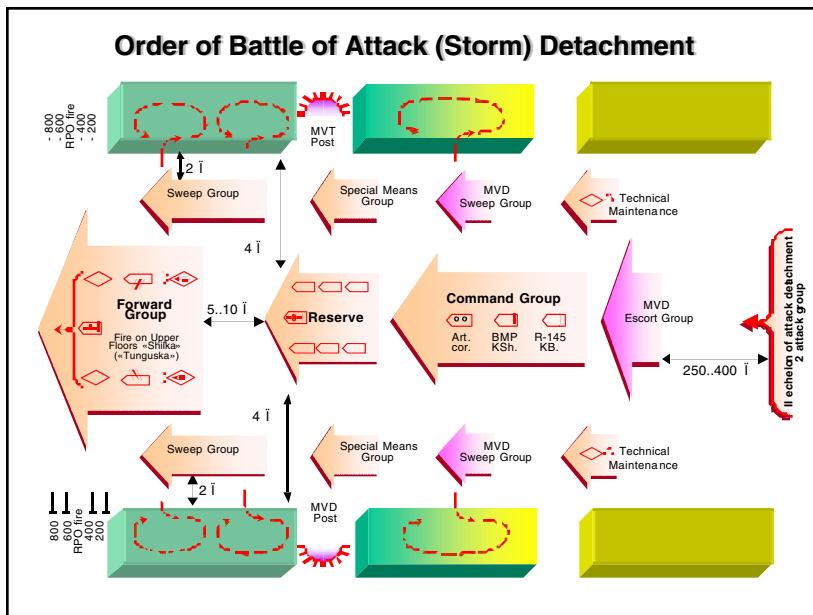
The rebel forces enjoyed a number of advantages over our troops. These included:

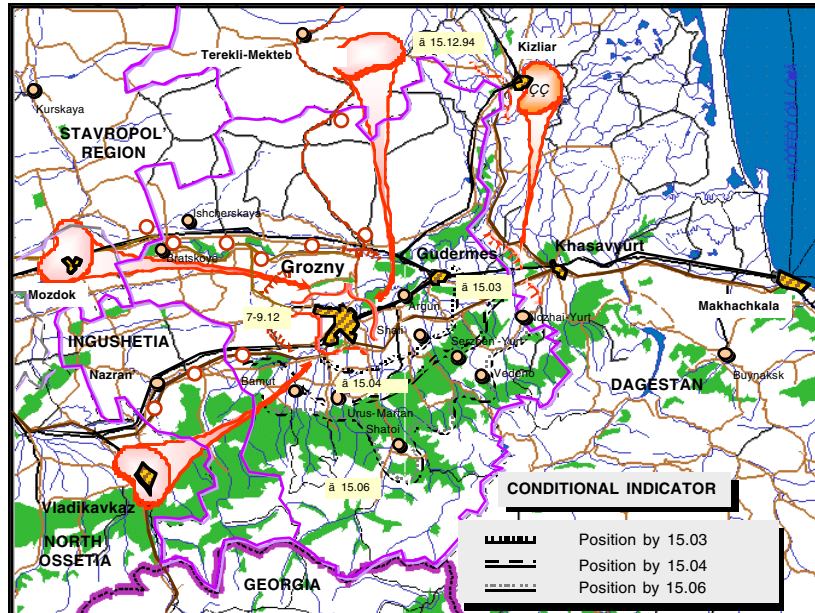
- Familiarity with the territory on which operations were conducted
- Support of the local population
- The ideological factor (based in Islamic nationalism)
- The use of professional mercenary troops
- Significant anti-tank assets
- Active use of snipers
- Effective use of defense against maneuver

The rebels also suffered from a number of weaknesses, however, including:

- A drop in morale after their defeats in the first stage of the conflict
- Dissent and disagreement amongst the military and administrative leadership
- Increasing dissatisfaction with Dudaev's regime
- Lack of educated personnel
- Dependence on outside sources of financing for ammunition, supplies, and other materials.







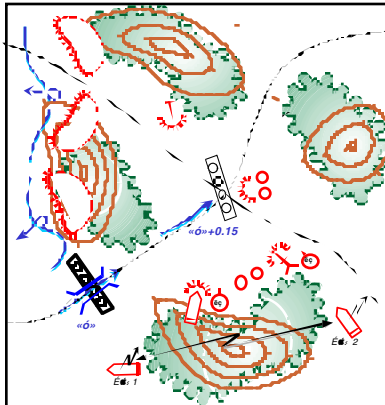
Complement, armament, and operations of sniper groups

COMPOSITION:

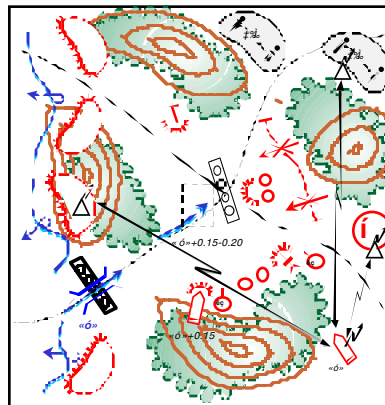
Snipers: 2-3; grenade launcher: 1
 Machine-gunners: 1-2; submachine-gunners: 2-5;
 BTR driver (mech. -BMP driver)

ARMAMENT:

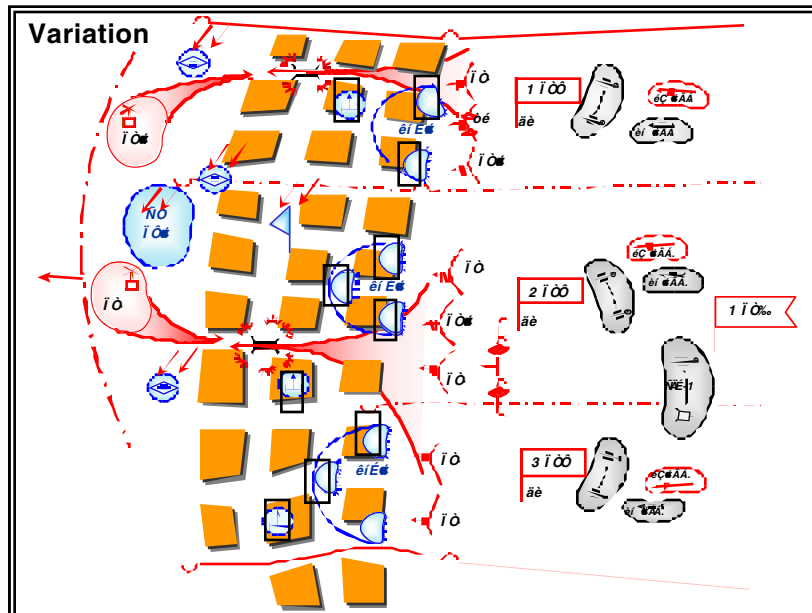
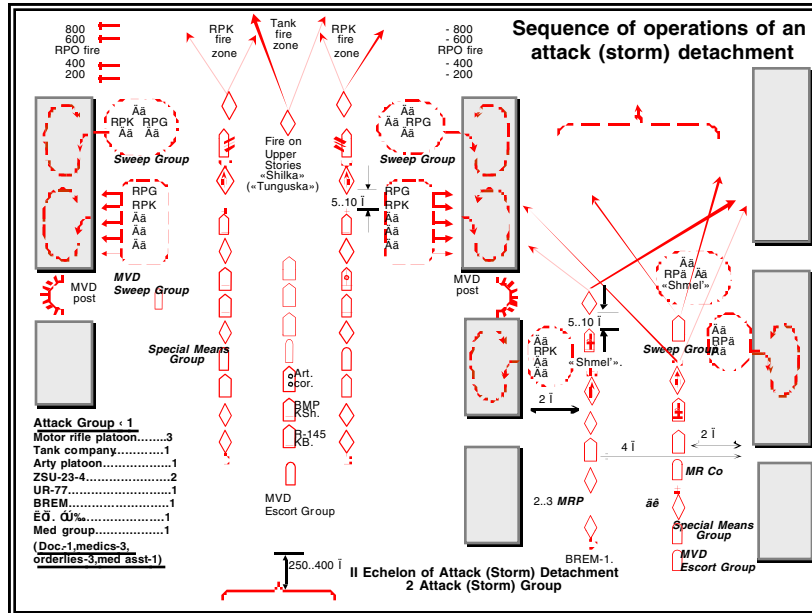
Self-loading rifles: 23; AGS-17: 1; PKM (RPK-74): 1
 AA-74: 2-5; grenade launchers GP-25: 2-3; 130-1, «Romashka» («Eucalyptus»); 1, BTR-1



A) Attack on an enemy of equal strength



B) Attack on an enemy of superior strength



Dependence of the Level of Casualties on the Degree of Destruction by Fire of an Object During Its Capture

Attacking forces and weaponry	Damage to target, %	Reduction in casualties, %	Saved forces and weaponry
	10	15	Up to one Motor Rifle Platoon
Motor Rifle Battalion [Attack (Storm) Detachment]	20	23	Up to one Motor Rifle Company
	30	60	Up to 1.5 Motor Rifle Company
Motor Rifle Companies (3); Tank Company (1); Artillery Battalion (1); Mortar Battery (1); Sapper Platoon (1); SAM Battery; Light Infantry Flamethrower Company (1)	40	80	Up to 2 Motor Rifle Companies
	50	88	Object capture can Become a task for an Attack (storm) group
60	92		