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SOVIET *DESANT* OPERATIONS AND US AIR BASE GROUND DEFENSE

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

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19. ABSTRACT

This study reviews the historical development of the Soviet *desant* concept and analyzes Soviet capabilities, as they currently exist, to implement this concept. A similar review and analysis is conducted on the development of the US Air Base Ground Defense concept and current US capabilities. These two sides are then compared to determine whether the US forces are prepared to protect USAF resources against Soviet forces.

The parameters of this thesis assume a conventional war. The focus of this study is central Europe, specifically Germany. Soviet covert operations during peacetime are not addressed except for those which might take place right before the outbreak of a general war.

The research methodology is centered on a review of available literature and a critical assessment of declared Soviet intentions, their capabilities, and anticipated or planned US countermeasures. Sources comprise both secondary materials, which are numerous, and a more limited number of primary sources.

The study concludes that the US forces are not adequately trained and equipped to deal with the likely Soviet threats. Soviet forces targeted against air bases have more firepower and mobility than the defenders. Also, joint Army and Air Force base defense doctrine is in a state of flux. Both the Army and Air Force base defense units need more firepower and better equipment, and most of all, the Air Force Security Police units need to be allowed to establish a defensive area off base. To achieve such improvements in air base ground defense capability will necessitate a re-initiation of the cooperative effort which resulted in the 1984 Army and Air Force Chiefs of Staff Memorandum of Agreement broadly setting out cooperative air base ground defense responsibilities.

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

SOVIET *DESANT* OPERATIONS AND US AIR BASE GROUND DEFENSE: A comparison of Soviet and US Capabilities, by Major N. Wijbrandus, USAF, 80 pages.

This study reviews the historical development of the Soviet *desant* concept and analyzes Soviet capabilities, as they currently exist, to implement this concept. A similar review and analysis is conducted on the development of the US Air Base Ground Defense concept and current US capabilities. These two sides are then compared to determine whether the US forces are prepared to protect USAF resources against Soviet forces.

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The study concludes that the US forces are not adequately trained and equipped to deal with the likely Soviet threats. Soviet forces targeted against air bases have more firepower and mobility than the defenders. Also, joint Army and Air Force base defense doctrine is in a state of flux. Both the Army and Air Force base defense units need more firepower and better equipment, and most of all, the Air Force Security Police units need to be allowed to establish a defensive area off base. To achieve such improvements in air base ground defense capability will necessitate a re-initiation of the cooperative effort which resulted in the 1984 Army and Air Force Chiefs of Staff Memorandum of Agreement broadly setting out cooperative air base ground defense responsibilities.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Are US forces prepared to protect USAF resources against those Soviet units designated for employment under the *desant* concept in the Central European theater? Organized and trained to operate in enemy rear areas, Soviet *desant* forces pose a threat to US air bases that is frequently raised during exercises in the European theater. But the nature and scope of this potential Soviet threat and the capabilities of the Soviet forces associated with it are rarely examined. This paper will address the historical development of the *desant* concept and the capabilities of the Soviet forces to execute it, as well as the history of air base ground defense and current Air Force and Army capability to defend air bases in Germany.

The term "Spetsnaz" is often used as a generic term describing the Soviet threat to air bases. Although Spetsnaz is an important part of this study, research is not intended to be limited to just these forces. Rather, it is more useful and accurate to describe and characterize those forces posing a threat to the US/NATO rear areas as Soviet planners do--that is, by the term *desant*.

The Soviet Military Encyclopedic Dictionary defines the Soviet concept of *desant* as "forces, specially prepared and landed or designated for landing on the enemy's territory for the purpose of conducting combat actions."[1] Thus "the term encompasses both the force and the landing of the force,"[2] the introduction of which may be from the air, the sea, and over land.

As the Soviet military specialist David Isby noted, a *desant* force "can be transported by any means, but they will most frequently be heliborne or air-dropped."[3] Isby further points out that such missions:

> ...will involve units as large as a regiment or as small as a sabotage squad, dropped beyond the Soviet main forces to destroy nuclear-capable weapons and installations, attack headquarters and lines of communication, spread confusion and demoralisation, gather reconnaissance information in co-operation with long-range patrols and, along with forward detachments, seize routes for the Soviet advance.[4]

While some analysts may include such large combined arms forces as the Operational Maneuver Group or forward detachment under the *desant* concept, these forces are not included within the scope of this study nor are civilian saboteurs or terrorists most typically associated with peacetime security requirements. Rather, this paper will address the range of air-delivered *desant* forces concentrating on those that pose the most likely threat to US air bases.

The selected research methodology is centered on a review of available English language literature and a

critical assessment of declared Soviet intentions and capabilities and anticipated or planned US countermeasures. Sources comprise both secondary materials, which are numerous, and a more limited number of primary sources.

Data on Soviet capabilities is based in large measure on secondary sources and translated Soviet primary sources. Primary sources on US capabilities consist of regulations, manuals and agreements. The research traces Soviet *desant* activities from 1930 to the present as a way to better understand current capabilities. The focus of this study is current Soviet planning and US doctrine.

Air Force Security Police (SP) capabilities at the base level, the level tasked with providing the physical security for USAF war resources, have rarely been measured against a specific threat within a specific theater of operations. Current Air Force security doctrine, training, and equipment are geared to a generic world wide threat. This approach is convenient but does not necessarily match in-theater enemy capabilities. Defining the enemy's capability within one theater and measuring it against existing US defensive capability to determine its adequacy is the focus of this study. Findings may be useful for validating or correcting the training and tactics of the Security Police and Army rear area forces.

The major assumption in this research project is that Soviet *desant* operations indeed pose a threat.

Pre-World War II concepts, and the war experience itself point to this. Also, the historical precedent of Czechoslovakia in 1968, where airfields and other key facilities were seized by *desant* forces, and Afghanistan since 1979, where the Soviets used *desant* operations extensively, demonstrate this. This assumption is further supported by a wealth of open source material, including official sources such as the US Department of Defense publication Soviet Military P wer.

The parameters of this thesis assume a conventional war in Europe. Geographically, the focus of this study is Central Europe, specifically Germany. Soviet covert operations during peacetime are not addressed except for those which might take place right before the outbreak of general war. In other words, a major NATO/Warsaw Pact conflict provides the context for this study.

The subordinate questions of this thesis are as follows: what are the tactics associated with the *desant* concept, the organization and equipment of forces to be employed, and the capabilities of the Soviet forces? What are the tactics and capabilities of the US forces and how well does their training prepare them to deal with the *desant* concept? The comparison of the answers to these two questions may lead to the conclusion that the US forces are adequately prepared. However, if they are not, one must determine in what way they are not prepared and what

measures are required to prepare them. It is the author's assessment that the US forces are not adequately trained and equipped for threats above squad level. A lack of published joint Army-Air Force doctrine, detailed planning, exercising and coordination creates this situation.

Discussions and fluctuations on the roles of the Army and Air Force in protecting Air Force bases have been going on for many years. On 22 May 1984, the Chief of Staff of the Army and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force reached an important agreement. This Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) contained two initiatives which applied to the defense of Air Force bases.[8] Initiative #8, which applies only overseas, gave the Army the mission of providing external defense against ground attack for USAF bases. This study proceeds from the premise of that agreement and addresses the Air Force, and thus SP, role as delineated in that agreement.

Initiative #9 stated the Army and Air Force would combine training for Air Base Ground Defense (ABGD). As a result, SP ABGD training recently shifted from Air Force conducted training at Lackland AFB, TX, to Army-Air Force conducted training at Ft Dix, NJ. This will eventually have an impact on SP capabilities. A Joint Service Agreement a year later, 25 April 1985, elaborated on the MOA. In this instance, the two Chiefs of Staff agreed on

the need for joint doctrine and stated the Army and Air Force were jointly responsible for creating such doctrine.[8]

This detailed doctrine on joint Army and Air Force ABGD operations has not yet been written. Current Air Force ABGD doctrine was published in 1983 in Air Force Regulation 206-2, "Air Base Ground Defense." It predates the latest agreements. US Army Field Manual 90-14, "Rear Battle", dated June 1985, will be deleted once new doctrine has been incorporated into other regulations. FM 19-1, "Military Police Support for the Airland Battle", is a recent publication dated May 1988. It mentions ABGD, but it is only a single service regulation, not a joint doctrine. The only joint written ABGD guidance available to the field consists of a July 1986 pamphlet titled "Joint Operational Concept for Air Base Ground Defense." It is applicable to the Army and Air Force only, and it outlines the general operating procedures for ABGD. Basically, the Air Force SPs defend inside the air base perimeter while the Army defends outside. Thus, although the two service Chiefs have defined the respective roles, operational guidance still needs to be developed.

NOTES

1. Military Encyclopedic Dictionary (Voennyi entsiklopedicheskii slovar') quoted in James F. Holcomb and Graham H. Turbiville, "Soviet Desant Forces, Part 1: Soviet Airborne and Air-assault Capabilities," International Defense Review 21 (September 88): 1077.

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3. David C. Isby, Weapons and Tactics of the Soviet Army (London: Jane's Publishing Co, 1988), 387.

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5. US Army and US Air Force, Memorandum of Agreement on U.S. Army - U.S. Air Force Joint Force Development Process, (Washington, DC: HQ Department of the Army and Air Force, 1984).

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CHAPTER 2

SOVIET *DESANT* DEVELOPMENT

To understand the concept of *desant* operations requires a review of the historical development of airborne operations in the Soviet Union. This development, started before World War II, was influenced by the airborne experience of the war, and has been practiced and refined since the war.

The Soviet military has had an interest in airborne forces and their application in neutralizing airfields for a long time. Marshal M. V. Tukhachevsky, then commander of the Leningrad Military District, charged an experimental

> ...detachment to conduct airborne operations to achieve tactical aims; specifically, a parachute echelon would seize airfields and landing strips in the enemy rear to secure an area for landing the main force.[1]

This took place during a 1931 excercise. The Soviet Union credits Tukhachevsky "with laying the foundation for the creation and development of Airborne Troops."[2]

The date of 2 August 1930 is considered the birth of the Soviet airborne forces. On that day 24 parachutists were dropped near Voronezh in the Moscow Military District. Viktor Suvorov, an oft quoted former Soviet Army officer and

defector who has written extensively on Soviet special operations forces (usually termed "Spetsnaz" in the Western press), considers this also the birth date of the spetsnaz concept.[5] Some would disagree with such a claim, but most believe the development and employment of the airborne and special operations forces have been closely connected. In some respects they share the same roots.

Tukhachevsky's concept for the airborne forces not only included regular military forces but also special purpose forces. As the US Defense Intelligence Agency specialist John Dziak noted,

> The main body of airborne forces, operating in advance of the Red Army, would employ Special Purpose battalions trained to conduct special operations in foreign countries and cities."[6]

He considers this the "conceptual forerunner" of the present day configuration. By World War II these small beginnings had grown to approximately 50,000 men in five regular airborne corps.[7] Each corps had one or two Special Purpose battalions.[8]

As the numbers grew, concepts evolved in which airfield attack began to take a more significant role. A draft document accompanying a Red Army order, dated February 1932, "Temporary Regulation on the Organization of Deep Battle," stated that in addition to being tasked to work closely with the ground forces, airborne missions included destruction of "aircraft at forward airfields."[9] The Chief of Airborne forces of the Red Army Air Force staff, E. I.

Tatarchenko, outlined the procedure for airfield capture in an article in 1932 entitled "Technical, Organizational, and Operational Questions of Airborne Forces". A small advance party establishes a foothold, a larger group arrives to secure the site, and finally the main units arrive for further operations." The above concepts were limited to operations at the tactical level, i.e. at relatively shallow distances from the front.

These concepts continued to evolve at a rapid rate, however, and by 15 June 1933, airborne landing missions at the operational level were envisioned. On that date, S. A. Mezhenikov, the Red Army Assistant Chief of Staff, published the "Temporary Instructions on the Combat Use of Aviation Landing Units." He distinguished tactical and operational levels by the size of the units and the depth of operations behind the enemy lines. The tactical level involved companies or battalions while the operational level entailed regiments and brigades." Still, the main emphasis continued to be on airborne operations in support of the ground forces.

Final pre-war airborne doctrine was prescribed in the 1936 Field Regulation:

> In coordination with forces attacking along the front, parachute landing units can go a long way toward producing a complete rout of the enemy on a given axis.[10]

After the war, of course, this concept would take on new

meaning as modern technology, such as the helicopter, opened up additional options.

The 1933 and 1936 regulations mentioned three principles. They have been adhered to since and receive major emphasis in current Soviet doctrine. The airborne forces constitute an important means by which these principles can be satisfied. They are generally listed as "the achievement of surprise, speed in the attack, and the need to carry the battle deep into the enemy rear."[11]

Numerous personnel changes also influenced Soviet doctrine. These resulted from the purges of the late thirties and the Russo-Japanese and Russo-Finnish wars. During these years, the "capture and destruction of airfields and bases" remained high on the target list.[12] However, the German invasion of 1941 caught the Soviets unprepared. The airborne forces saw no action in their airborne role during the initial battles. They were used as additional, albeit elite, infantry.

Reconstitution of airborne units started soon. By 4 September 1941 the airborne forces had been placed under the control of the office of Administration of the Command of Airborne Forces. This raised the control level from *front* commands to the Headquarters, Supreme High Command. Although the mission approval process changed, and the missions continued to include enemy airfields,[13] operational use of

large airborne units was extremely limited. Only two major Soviet airborne operations took place in World War II.

Neither the one at Vyaz'ma in January-February 1942 nor the one on the Dnepr river in September 1943 involved operations against airfields. Both were also largely unsuccessful from an airborne perspective. The remainder of the airborne actions in the war were "low level tactical or minor diversionary operations."[14] Still airborne operations remained a valid military tactic and airborne missions continued to be listed unchanged. The Field Regulation of 1944 again included the mission to "seize and destroy enemy air bases."[15]

If the two major World War II airborne operations were not overly successful, more impressive results were achieved in the tactical realm. Numerous operations took place in direct support and close proximity to the front. In several cases, attacks on airfields were involved and in those instances Tatarchenko's method of attack was used. The attacks around Medyn and Zhelan'ye in January 1942 are cases in point.

Each confirmed the concepts outlined in 1932. First a jump was conducted by units to secure the airfield. In addition to securing the field their responsibility included establishing a defensive perimeter two to three kilometers from the airfield. This was followed by a second parachute party tasked to prepare the field for aircraft landings,

and, finally, the main force landed in transport aircraft.

In both instances the airfields were secured, even though the larger missions of which they were a part were not very successful. In the case of Medyn, only phase one was successfully achieved. At Zhelan'ye all three phases were ultimately successful. Both demonstrated basic airborne capability but showed the need for more careful planning. Airborne forces were too light to operate independently for any length of time. Link-up with *front* forces, or extraction, was necessary in short order.

Despite unsuccessful large-scale operations and only limited success in tactical operations, small group attacks had significant results. The tactics, depth, and missions varied and support from partisan forces in the area frequently increased the chances of success. The Maikop operation in the Caucasus region of the USSR near the Black Sea is but one example of a small unit operation. In this instance, forty paratroopers attacked a German airfield to reduce an aerial threat to Soviet forces. The Germans were interdicting Soviet bases, airfields, and lines of communications from Maikop field. A Naval paratroop unit, including partisan guides, was selected to be airdropped on the field to destroy the German fighters. Soviet Lieutenant General I. I. Lisov summarized the plan of action as follows:

> After landing, the control group would gather in the center of the airfield, from which the

> commander would control the actions of the other groups, retargeting them from one objective to another with the aid of prearranged signals. The cover, or screening, group would destroy the airfield guard and take up the defense on the axis of probable approach of the enemy. After landing, the diversionary group, like the cover group, would not assemble, but each parachutist would independently go to the given sector where aircraft were parked to destroy them.[16]

A one hour fight resulted in forty-two out of fifty-four aircraft destroyed or damaged[17] at a price of fourteen paratroopers killed.[18] These impressive results were certainly satisfactory for a World War II landing of this scale. This small scale action continues to be used by contemporary Soviet planners as a model for a successful special purpose assault. As the military value of aircraft has increased significantly since then, such results would be even more important today.

Similar effective uses of airborne forces took place in Manchuria during the end of the war in 1945. These included the landing of airborne units near major Japanese installations and the use of airborne special purpose forces in combination with special naval units to facilitate the Manchurian operation.

In the first instance, the airborne operations attempted to achieve Japanese surrender and to occupy key locations in the confusion of a concluding war. Air-landings by units ranging from 50 to 200 people were made at some 20 locations throughout Manchuria. In the case of special purpose landings a specific contribution was made to the

advance of the main forces. Teams were airdropped, made their way to the target in a variety of ways, to include captured Japanese cars, and secured railroad tunnels for the 1st Far Eastern Front.[18]

What would have to be characterized as overall limited success during World War II did not preclude the Soviet Union from rebuilding and expanding its airborne forces after the war. This included a range of *desant* forces intended to conduct special purpose, tactical, operational, and strategic operations and actions in enemy rear areas.

Despite these ambitious concepts, airborne forces were initially only capable of being used in relatively close proximity to the front and only to assist in the achievement of *front* objectives by facilitating the advance of tactical units. This changed gradually with new and improved technology. Airborne operations which had been limited to influencing only the tactical level of the battlefield now became able to influence the course of operations from the tactical to the strategic level. The introduction of helicopters, improved airlift capability, air-droppable vehicles and guns, and better equipment for the airborne forces all made new concepts possible. Airfields remained high on the target list, however.

As the range and staying power of airborne operations were extended, a new mission for the airborne units was added: to capture or destroy enemy nuclear

delivery and storage sites--target sets that included aviation units and support systems. The special purpose forces were included in both this technological development and the targeting development.

Employment concepts for Soviet airborne forces since World War II have been evidenced in theoretical writings, excercises, and training programs. In combat, Soviet special purpose and airborne forces were heavily used during the invasion of Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan. The operation in Czechoslovakia in 1968 was carried out in classical style involving an advance party, a landing party, and the main force. It constituted a cooperative effort between special operations, airborne, and regular ground forces.

On the evening of 20 August 1968, according to some accounts, a Soviet cargo aircraft carrying a homing beacon requested permission for an emergency landing at the Prague airport. Immediately upon arrival special purpose forces, attached to the 103d Guards Airborne Division,[20] took over the airport in cooperation with those personnel who had arrived earlier as tourists. As soon as the control tower and other key facilities had been seized, transports began arriving with troops of the 103rd Guards Airborne Division.

At the same time regular ground forces began crossing the frontier. The Soviet invasion had been masked by a series of announced major exercises which took place

prior to the actual intervention. Meanwhile, the forces from the airport proceeded into Prague and took control of vital facilities and the government. With a minimum loss of lives, the Soviets achieved their goals in a highly efficient and speedy fashion. The basic airfield capture tactics espoused since the 1930's were well executed and would be highlighted again in Afghanistan in 1979.

In the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, the Soviet objective was the removal of the Dubcek regime. The initial intent of the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan was the removal of President Hafizullah Amin. Accounts of this action closely parallel the 1968 operation in Prague. Advance parties arrived in Kabul in civilian clothes via regular Aeroflot flights. Several days later, two transport aircraft landed at Kabul airport with special operations forces in Afghan uniforms and vehicles with Afghan markings. The previously arrived personnel joined this force and together took control of the airport. Author Peter Bunce reports that the 105th Guards Airborne Division spearheaded the take over of Kabul.[21] Advance parties proceeded into Kabul, took control of key facilities and killed President Amin.

The entire effort was again highly successful and initial control over major population centers was achieved in days. The presence of Soviet personnel in country favored this operation while air superiority was not a factor to be reckoned with. In short, much was on the side

of the Soviets before the operation began. Both the Czechoslovakian and Afghanistan cases demonstrated that much can be gained from the ability to rapidly interject forces into the rear area of the enemy. Even small forces can have a major impact.

Overall, this chapter has shown the long standing Soviet interest in airborne forces and how they can influence events well in the depths of enemy forces and territory. The Soviet Union has always maintained large forces of this type, but employment now ranges from the introduction of small special operations units to forces of division size to accomplish operational/strategic missions. Small unit operations during World War II showed significant results although major operations were less successful.

Current Soviet *desant* doctrine continues to see great merit in going deep beyond the immediate front and plans accordingly. Airfields were, and remain, major targets in this concept. The fact that airfields often contain nuclear delivery means, nuclear storage sites, and command and control facilities only increases their importance as targets. But, concepts must be executable to be effective. We will next look specifically at the capabilities of the forces which could be used against airfields under the *desant* concept.

NOTES

1. David M. Glantz, The Soviet Airborne Experience (Combat Studies Institute, Research Survey No 4, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1984), 5.

2. Graham H. Turbiville Jr., Soviet Airborne Operations in Theater War (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Soviet Army Studies Office, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, 1986), 161.

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4. John J. Dziak, "The Soviet Approach to Special Operations," in Special Operations in US Strategy, ed. Frank R. Barnett (National Defence University Press in cooperation with National Strategy Information Center Inc., 1984), 100.

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12. Glantz, The Soviet Airborne Experience, 20.

13. Ibid., 28

14. Ibid., 33-34.

15. Ibid., 35

16. I. I. Lisov, "Parachutists - Airborne Landing," trans. by Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence for U.S. Army Foreign Science and Technology Center, FSTC-HT-23-27-70 (Desantniki - Vozdushnyye Desanty, 1968), 172.

17. Ibid., 173.

18. Glantz, The Soviet Airborne Experience, 132.

19. Suvorov, Spetsnaz, 29.

20. David R. Kohler, "Spetsnaz," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings 113 (August 87): 48.

21. Peter L. Bunce, "Soviet Airborne: The Quiet Revolution," Military Intelligence (October-December 1982): 5.

CHAPTER 3

SOVIET CAPABILITIES

There is no doubt that the Soviet military is capable of attacking air bases in Central Europe with air delivered ground forces. It is only a question of how and with what resources. Under the *desant* concept this could range from airborne divisions to small Spetsnaz teams. This chapter will look at the threats these units pose to air bases based on their missions, size, and equipment.

While Western estimates of force strength vary, it is clear that they are both large and diverse. For example, the well-known Soviet analyst David Isby suggests the

> ...Soviet Union today musters the world's largest jump-trained force - seven Guards airborne divisions, at least one independent Guards airborne regiment, 11 air assault and four airmobile brigades, about 30 independent air assault battalions, plus four regiments, 16-24 brigades and over 40 companies of special operations forces.[2]

The Soviets assign these forces four types of missions: strategic, operational, tactical and special purpose. Air bases play an important role in all of them. According to Isby, the "need to locate and pre-emptively strike enemy nuclear weapons, their targeting assets and the

headquarters that control them has always been a Soviet priority."[m] The operational depth associated with these missions are subject to some debate and they should only be considered approximate. (Figure 1).

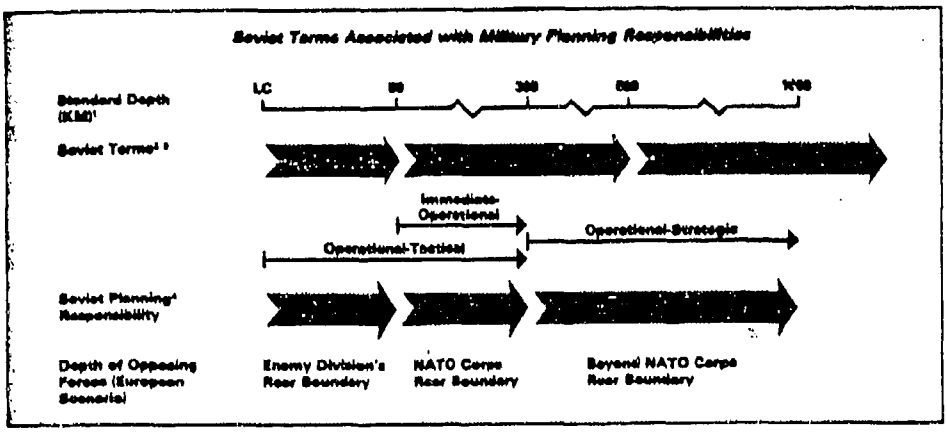

Figure 1. Key Soviet Terms.

NOTES:

[1] Planning depths are standardized in Soviet military writing. However, in wartime, depths would vary greatly depending on the natural and political geography of the theater of military operations (TVD) and, to some extent, upon the composition and deployment of the opposing forces.

[2] The terms listed are used by the Soviets to indicate: 1) the level at which military plans are prepared, 2) the nature of the objective or the depth of the objective, and 3) the classification of weapon systems based upon the depth of the enemy targets they can engage from standard deployment distances behind the line of contact.

[3] The depths associated with the terms *tactical, operational,* and *strategic* are as of the start of an offensive operation. As the Soviet forces accomplish their objectives, the corresponding *tactical, operational,* and *strategic* depths could change. Accordingly, on the second day of an operation planned at army level, the *tactical* depth may be 50-100 km from the original line of contact.

[4] The nature of an objective rather than its depth is the overriding determinant of what organization has planning responsibility. For example, a target located within 50 km of the LC may be of *strategic* importance and thus would fall under the planning responsibility of either the *front*, a TVD, or the Supreme High Command.

Source: James H. Brusstar, The Soviet Airborne Forces (Washington, DC: Defense Intelligence Agency, April 1982), viii.

Strategic missions are deep missions with broad objectives, such as national capitals, ports, industrial and economic centers, and other major target complexes that would often include air fields. These airborne units could comprise several regiments or even one to two divisions and would be controlled by the Soviet Supreme High Command.

Operational missions typically would involve airborne battalions, regiments or a division controlled by the Front or army. Targets include command posts, communication facilities, mountain passes, and air fields among others. Tactical operations are controlled at division level and generally involve key terrain, command posts, communication sites, nuclear weapons and delivery means and air fields. A fourth category is special purpose missions.

Special purpose missions, although only involving small teams, may themselves be delineated as strategic, operational and tactical. Strategic in this instance would involve unconventional warfare operations in the enemy's heartland to include destruction of headquarters, nuclear weapons and key communications and logistics facilities. Operational missions are oriented to support *front* operations at depths of 350 to 1000 km. This would include reconnaissance or destruction missions against enemy nuclear weapons, air fields, railways, communication systems, and other targets. Tactical missions are in support of the *front* forces but generally at division level and at distances limited to 100 km or less.[3]

This breakdown has been refined further as Soviet capabilities have increased. One western author defines the missions as "operational-strategic, operational or tactical."[4] Soviet planners themselves now delineate airborne missions even more specifically. Based on current Soviet

capabilities, there now exist: operational-strategic, defined as 200-1000 km from the Forward Edge of the Battle Area (FEBA); operational, at distances of 50-300 km; operational-tactical in the 20-200 km range; and tactical 20 to 50 km out.*

These breakdowns can be refined further or in different ways, but three points should be noted:

1. Air fields and nuclear weapons are mentioned as likely targets in every category.

2. Within the European theater, air bases fall in either the operational or operational-strategic mission category based on distance from the East German border.

3. By virtue of their mission category, *desant* operations against air fields will range in size from squad up to division size.

Strength estimates vary, but an airborne division is thought to be about 6,500-8,500 personnel, while an airborne regiment numbers about 1,500-2,000 personnel.* Though these airborne forces are equipped with a range of firepower and mobility assets, the Soviets and the US Army consider such formations light. They would require reinforcement and relief within about three days after insertion. But, to the average SP unit of about 400 people at an air base in West Germany, such divisions or regiments would be considered overwhelming.

The existence and availability of these assets does not necessarily mean that they will be used against every airfield. The limited number of airborne divisions requires careful target selection. These divisions are considered "a strategic asset of the Soviet Union" which "comes under the direct control of the Ministry of Defense."[7] It is calculated that out of the total of seven divisions available, only 1 2/3 division would be available to the Western Theater of Military Operations (TVD) opposite the NATO Central Region.[8] This might have increased somewhat with the recent withdrawl of forces from Afghanistan but should still not exceed the Soviet allocation of two divisions per TVD.[9]

Not only are the number of divisions limited, but the aircraft to transport them are also limited. The Soviet Military Transport Aviation (VTA) is thought to have about 600 aircraft.[10] The civil aviation organization, Aeroflot, augments the TVA during wartime, however, the civilian crews would not be expected to make drops over a war theater due to the pilot training required for such missions.[11]

Estimates of airlift requirements vary widely depending on the assumptions used, but a division would require about 200 IL-76, a four-engine jet transport. With only 270 in the force,[12] and the many competing requirements, even when supplemented by other transport assets, require some critical decisions prior to the allocation of

airlift resources and missions to divisions. Only a major target would warrant the concentraton of air assets needed to lift divisions. As important as airfields are, particularly containing nuclear assets, they probably do not warrant the allocation of a division. Those air fields falling within target complexes hit by airborne forces would clearly be subject to attack by at least tactical elements of the force.

The use of smaller forces is most likely. Looking first at special purpose forces, i.e. Spetsnaz, these units are to be used as an advance party or as the sole executor of small unit operations. Numbers again are hard to come by and differ widely depending on which author is used. A brigade is anticipated to have about 1,000-1,300 personnel and would field about 100-135 teams of six to ten men. These resources can be combined to fit specific targets but generally would fit the mission categories outlined above.

The number of special purpose forces available and the variety of possible targets demand close coordination and a prioritization of targets. Central control is therefore maintained by the Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) of the Soviet General Staff.

The GRU is expected to consider targets in the following order:

1. Incapacitation, or destruction of NATO nuclear and chemical warheads, delivery systems and associated command

and control.

2. Interruption and disruption of NATO's political, strategic and tactical command, control and communications elements.

3. Incapacitation of electronic warning and reconnaissance equipment.

4. Capture of key airfields and ports to prevent reinforcement or redeployment.

5. Disruption of key industrial targets/facilities.[13] Most air bases in Germany fit into one or more of these categories and can expect to be the target of Spetsnaz forces during wartime.

As stated, a team is likely to consist of six to ten men. Size and rank structure depend on the mission. The team has specialists with skills in demolition, the local language, communications, and reconnaissance, but sufficient cross-training is conducted so the loss of any one individual does not imperil the mission.

Training is rigorous and realistic. It is believed that full-scale mockups of Western bases and sites are available. Parachute training plays a major role. This includes high altitude, low opening jumps as well as use of steerable parachutes. Day and night jumping in a variety of weather conditions are all part of the rigorous program.

Spetsnaz equipment and weaponry principally include light infantry weapons. A Kalashnikov rifle, a silenced

pistol, a knife, hand grenades and ammunition make up the basic equipment. For communications an R-350M radio with encryption, burst transmission and a range of 1,000 km is used. Depending on the mission, equipment could include explosives, directional mines and surface-to-air missiles. The distribution of team equipment combined with personal equipment brings the total weight being carried by a team member to about 40 kilograms (88 pounds).[14] The knife is reputedly spring loaded and can "shoot" the blade a distance of 15 meters. Silenced rifles have been used in Afghanistan along with "a larger than usual percentage of rifles with telescopic sights".[15]

Spetsnaz tactics are only limited by the imagination of the tactician. Postulated tactics include the use of chemical and biological agents[16] as well as atomic landmines.[17] More likely, the Spetsnaz will be used first and foremost for "special reconnaissance." This is

> ...so described not only because of the depth at which it can take place but also because it combines information-gathering with "influence" - destruction, capture, confusion - upon the target.[18]

Having acquired the location of a high-value target, the team would relay information back for artillery, air or missile targeting. The Ground Launched Cruise Missile (GLCM) units were an example of likely targets for Spetsnaz forces because the launchers were mobile and hard to target.

Prior to the outbreak of hostilities, Spetsnaz forces are expected to infiltrate into the target area.

Local so called "sleeper" agents would assist them with retrieving prepositioned equipment and directions. The number of units which move in advance of hostilities will depend on time available and the need for secrecy. After the start of war, Spetsnaz units will be introduced by any means available but most likely an airdrop of some type.

The US air bases in Germany, having been there a long time, have been plotted and targeted, so clearly Spetsnaz forces are not required to locate them. Spetsnaz equipment and small team size limits their destructive capability against hardened targets such as nuclear weapons storage sites. The aircraft itself is a different story. As long as an aircraft is secured in a hardened shelter, damage potential is limited, but an open ramp or shelter area with upload operations in progress would offer an attractive target. Also, aircraft taking off or landing are extremely vulnerable to enemy ground forces, as the Soviet experience with Stinger missiles in Afghanistan has repeatedly proven.

Attacks by airborne forces of division size are unlikely, while attacks by special purpose forces are very likely, though certainly limited in damage potential. Soviet literature, however, suggests that the optimum size forces to be employed against air bases in Germany are raids by airborne battalions (310 personnel) or companies (85 personnel).[10] Units of this size would require relatively little airlift while their numbers would provide the

possibility of a short holding action at least until they had accomplished their mission. Use of the BMD (Boevaya Mashina Desantnaya or airborne combat vehicle), an air-droppable fire support troop transport vehicle, would provide mobility and additional firepower and the possibility of operating in the rear area for some time against multiple targets.

Battalion-size exercises along these lines are conducted regularly and have received attention in Soviet military writings for a long time. Two Soviet officers, Candidates of Military Science, (a degree falling roughly between a Masters and Doctoral degree in the U.S.), described the concept and use of airborne battalions in a 1978 article in some detail.

> An airborne battalion in the enemy's rear can operate as part of a regiment or independently. In any case it is capable of solving various tasks: destroying control points, nuclear attack systems, airfields, communications centers, bases, and depots; seizing important areas and favorable lines; and holding them until the arrival of advancing forces from the troops' front."[20]

The authors make the point that training is the key to this capability and go on to analyze a battalion training exercise prepared by the commander.

> The regimental commander did not select by accident the topic, 'Assault of an airborne battalion, seizing an enemy airfield and putting it out of operation, conducting raid operations to destroy important objectives, seizing and holding crossings on a water barrier.' First, it rather fully takes into consideration the nature of the combat missions which are solved by the battalion and, second, it includes various types of combat operations."[21]

These articles were written from the perspective of combat actions at the tactical level, 20 to 50 km beyond the front. Current Soviet capabilities go considerably beyond this range into the operational level of 200 to 300 km. We have already discussed fixed wing lift capabilities in connection with divisional size units. The Soviets also possess considerable helicopter lift capability, however.

The Mi-6 Hook and the Mi-8 Hip have been the mainstay since the early 1960s. The Hip could only carry 24 personnel, but the Hook can transport 70 personnel or one BMD. In the early 1980s, the Mi-26 Halo was added to the inventory. It is capable of carrying over 85 personnel or two BMDs, a capacity roughly equal to a US C-130. The operating radius of the Hook is 300 km, while the Halo's radius is 370 km. It is estimated that it requires 40 Hooks or 21 Halos to move a BMD equipped battalion.**

With the improvement of lift there has also been significant improvement in ground mobility. The addition of the BMD has radically altered the maneuver speed of airborne units once on the ground. Each battalion is assigned 35 of these vehicles, while a company has 11. Capable of carrying an airborne squad in addition to its crew of three, the BMD provides the unit with a road range of about 300 km at speeds up to 80 kph. Its armament includes a 73-mm main gun, three machine guns and an anti-tank missile launch rail.** With the mobility and firepower provided by this

vehicle, airborne forces can now function as raiding parties in the enemy's rear and can be dropped further from their objectives. A combination of rapid forward movement of the forces on the border, helicopter lift capability and BMD ground transportation could put even tactical battalion size raiding parties far enough forward to strike any US air base in Germany early in the war and increasingly so if the Warsaw Pact forces advance at 40-60 km per day as planned.

As stated in the opening paragraph of this chapter the Soviet forces, planning, and capabilities for operations against US airfields exist. How and when such forces would be employed remains to be seen. The special purpose forces are numerous and their missions will certainly include air bases. Their efforts will affect air operations, but these effects in themselves are likely to be of short duration and limited impact. They would be serious but not vital from a ground attack standpoint. Operations by Soviet airborne forces of division/regimental size could be vital. Such landings, however, would clearly go beyond an impact on air base defense only. Rather, such operations would affect an entire area of operations. The limited number of operational and operational-strategic landings along with limited lift requirements, the need for air superiority, and other complicating factors make use of division size units a difficult proposition. It is the Soviet capability to insert battalion and company size units which are better

armed, more mobile, and outnumber rear area defenders, which pose the most likely threat to air bases.

NOTES

1. David Isby, Weapons and Tactics of the Soviet Army (London: Jane's Publishing Co, 1988), 386.

2. Ibid., 43.

3. US Army, FM 100-2-2, "The Soviet Army: Specialized Warfare and Rear Area Support" (Washington, DC: HQ Department of Army, 1984), 2-2, 2-3, 5-1, 5-2. Chapter 5 of FM 100-2-2 is a reprint of Robert Williams' and Arthur A. Zuehlke's article listed in the bibliography.

4. Isby, Weapons and Tactics, 386.

5. James F. Holcomb and Graham H. Turbiville, "Soviet *Desant* Forces, Part 2: Broadening the *Desant* Concept," International Defense Review 21 (October 1988): 1262.

6. Isby, Weapons and Tactics, 398-399; Stephen S. Beitler, "Spetsnaz: The Soviet Union's special operations forces" (MA thesis, Defense Intelligence College, 1985), 21, citing Peter L. Bunce, "Soviet Airborne: The Quiet Revolution," Military Intelligence (October-December 1982): 7, Friedrich Wiener, Die Armeen der Warschauer-Pakt-Staaten (The Armies of the Warsaw Pact)(Vienna: Carl Uberreuter, 1981), 180, and Graham H. Turbiville, "Soviet Airborne Forces: Increasingly Powerful Factor in the Equation," Army (April 1978): 21.

7. Peter L. Bunce, "Soviet Airborne: The Quiet Revolution," Military Intelligence (October-December 1982): 5.

8. James F. Holcomb Jr., Soviet Airborne Forces and the Central Region: Problems and Perceptions (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Soviet Army Studies Office, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, June 1987), 17.

9. Ibid. citing M. Cherednichenko, "Razvitie teorii.strategicheskoi nastupatel'noi operatsii v 1945-1953 gg.," (The Development of the Theory of Strategic Offensive Operations, 1945-1953), VIZh, No. 8 (1976): 42.

10. U.S. Department of Defense, Soviet Military Power: An Assessment of the Threat 1988 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1988), 93.

11. Holcomb, Soviet Airborne Forces, 8.

12. Ibid.

13. C.N. Donnelly, "Operations in the Enemy Rear: Soviet Doctrine and Tactics," International Defense Review 13 (No 1, 1980): 36.

14. Robert S. Boyd, "Spetsnaz: Soviet Innovation in Special Forces," Air University Review (November-December 1986): 67.

15. Isby, "The Spetsnaz in Afghanistan," 139.

16. Joseph D. Douglass Jr. and Neil C. Livingstone, America the Vulnerable: The Threat of Chemical and Biological Warfare (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1987), 101.

17. Aleksei, Myagkov, "The Soviet Union's Special Forces," Soviet Analyst (9 January 1980): 4; quoted in Beitler, "Spetsnaz," 53.

18. Isby, Weapons and Tactics, 392.

19. Overton Day, Soviet Divisional Organizational Guide (Washington, DC: Defense Intelligence Agency, 1982), 92-93.

20. A. Tereshchenko and V. Bibikov, "Airborne Forces," Military Herald (No. 3, 11 July 1978): 113.

21. Ibid.

22. Holcomb and Turbiville, "Soviet *Desant* Forces, Part 2," 1263.

23. James H. Brusstar, The Soviet Airborne Forces (Washington, DC: Defense Intelligence Agency 1982), 5 and 26. New BMD variants are likely to include the near term introduction of a version with an automatic cannon (of approximately 30mm size) in place of the 73mm main gun.

CHAPTER 4

AIR BASE GROUND DEFENSE DEVELOPMENT

The history of Air Base Ground Defense (ABGD) in the U.S. military is one of untried and unproven concepts. Much debate still surrounds the issue and considerable uncertainty still exists regarding the delineation of responsibilities between the Air Force, Army and host nation support resources. This chapter will look at the roles of the Army and Air Force during the defense of air bases from World War I to the present. Recent agreements between the Army and Air Force attempted to clarify the issue but much remains to be done to implement these agreements and make them effective.

During World War I, the use of air power was in its infancy. Air bases were behind lines of a relatively static nature and the use of unconventional forces was virtually non-existent. Security for the bases was limited to internal security, a concept which dominates Security Police (SP) activities to this day. The duties of Air Force personnel were seen as "different" from Army personnel and infantry training and ground defense missions were not part of their responsibilities. In case of need, it was assumed,

sufficient training could be provided in short order to insure a defense capability existed.[1]

World War II saw a change in the attitude towards air bases initially, but this did not ultimately result in a change in procedures. The rapid advance of German forces using the Blitzkrieg concept included attacks on air bases. Two methods were used. One was to attack an air base and destroy it's operational capacity, while the second focused on capturing the base intact and making use of its operational capabilities--approaches also reflected in current Soviet philosophy, as noted in preceding chapters, in more fully developed form.

The German attacks on the allied bases in England are an example of the former. The classic example of the latter approach was the capture of Maleme airport by German airborne forces and the resultant loss of Crete by the western allies in 1941. The capture of the airfield was key to the success of the Crete operation. This event resulted in a review of air base defense procedures by the allies. The British created the Royal Air Force Regiment in 1942 for the specific purpose of providing air base defense. They have continued that force to this day.[2]

The British approach included use of anti-aircraft functions within the RAF Regiment. Thus, their defense function included not only ground defense but a limited air

defense capability as well. The US took a different tactic and only looked at ground defense.

By 1942 allied air bases were no longer threatened as the allies gained strength on the ground and in the air. This did not mean that air bases were no longer vulnerable targets. The Russians, as shown, repeatedly attacked German airfields and achieved considerable success during the Maikop operation at relatively low cost. In North Africa the use of limited mobile strike forces against airfields also returned high dividends. It is estimated that the jeep-mounted Special Air Service (SAS) commandos destroyed more German aircraft than did any RAF squadron despite those aircraft being guarded by the very capable Afrika Corps.[3]

The British base defense force reached a peak of 85,000 personnel while the US approved a force of 53,299.[4] Neither effort lasted long. The RAF strength soon declined again as the allies took the offensive. Similarly in 1943, the US started de-activating base defense units again. By the end of the war the last of the ground defense units was disbanded. The demands of the fronts were such that the allocation of major forces for air base defense in rear areas could not be justified. This choice of balancing scarce resources against potential threats continues to face the decision-makers to this day.

The National Security Act of 1947 established the US Air Force as an independent service. Neither this act nor

subsequent agreements did much to resolve the question of responsibility for air base defense. A follow-on 1947 Army-Air Force agreement assigned each department security responsibility for its own installations. A year later the Key West agreement of 21 April 1948 determined base defense to be a common function for all services. However, there were shortcomings in this agreement. As Roger Fox of the Office of Air Force History noted:

> Nowhere did the Key West Agreement assign the Air Force the mission of defending its air bases. It also neglected to tell how base defense (common to all Services) would tie in with area defense (chiefly an Army duty).[6]

An attempt to resolve this issue did not take place until 1984.

At the start of the Korean war, the services operated base defense under the guidelines of the Joint Action Armed Forces (JAAF) regulation published by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) on 19 September 1951. The Commander-in-Chief has overall responsibility within his command for bases while the "commander of the area, or the commander of the subarea, in which a base is located is responsible for the overall defense of the bases in the area."[6] The Base Commander meanwhile is "responsible for local base defense. The forces of Services other than his own, assigned to the base primarily for the purpose of local base defense, will be under his operational control."[7] The JAAF has been renamed over the years, but the guidance has

remained essentially unchanged to include the current issue, JCS Pub 2, "Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF)", dated December 1986.

The Korean war did not put air base ground defense issues to the test. Even so, Air Force security manpower expanded drastically during the initial years of the war from 10,000 in 1950 to 39,000 by the end of 1951.[9] In addition, there was emergency acquisition of appropriate weaponry such as armored vehicles, machineguns, and recoilless rifles. But with US air supremacy and North Korean guerillas ignoring air bases as potential targets, internal security against pilferage became the main base defense concern. The Far East Air Forces after-action report cited "no air base attacks by guerillas or other irregular forces and no aircraft lost or damaged by such action."[9]

Stateside, meanwhile, the October 1952 edition of Strategic Air Command (SAC) Manual 205-2 appeared, which, according to Fox, contained the "most lucid statement of prevailing Air Force base defense rationale."[10] SAC viewed self-defense as a base commander's basic responsibility. Air Force base commanders should thus have the personnel and equipment to perform such functions. Furthermore, as Fox indicated, the SAC regulation's philosophy was that

> ...the Army's limited and temporary defense role might well run counter to, or coincide only accidentally with, the USAF mission at specific air base locations. The Army in such instances could

> scarcely be expected to confine its operations to the defense of Air Force elements not vital to its own mission.[11]

In short, air base defense was an Air Force responsibility. Its equipment and personnel should include the capability to secure sufficient real estate to allow for uninterrupted operation of the air base. This philosophy reached its culmination point in the early 1980s.

After almost three years of fighting in Korea, base defense doctrine was formalized on 3 March 1953 with the publication of Air Force Regulation 355-4.[12] Viewing air base defense as an emergency mission, and certainly not including sustained ground defense operations, it did recognize that effective base defense had to include terrain adjacent to the base and could not be limited to the base proper. Responsibility for executing this mission rested with air base personnel. The base Air Policemen formed the core of this force while the base commander exercised command.

The end of the Korean war saw a rapid shift in the security being provided air bases. A number of factors contributed to this development. On the strategic level, massive retaliation did not involve much need for air base ground defense. On the tactical level, the manpower requirements associated with implementing an ABGD doctrine contrasted sharply with the threat experience during the Korean war and seemed redundant and costly. The Air Force

SP base defense doctrine was replaced by an internal installation security doctrine.

The emphasis by the end of the 1950s was on protecting the resources on the air base, particularly nuclear assets. The SP forces would provide security for those assets through limited access and personnel circulation controls. The threat was viewed as limited to "attacks by clandestine teams of highly trained agents against the U.S. nuclear strike installations. Overt ground assaults were deemed unlikely."[25] Off-duty or stand-by SP personnel would provide backup to on-duty forces in case such clandestine teams attacked. This program of "protecting critical weapon systems, equipment, materiel, and facilities from sabotage" remains an integral part of day-to-day SP operations today.

Developments in Southeast Asia and a growing US involvement in military assistance and direct participation in combat operations there changed this picture. The immediate catalyst was the 1 November 1964 Vietnamese Communist (VC) attack on Bien Hoa Air Base. During that night, the VC attacked with 81mm mortars from off-base, firing 60-80 rounds in about a ten minute period. The result was 4 people killed and 30 wounded along with 5 B-57 jets destroyed and 15 damaged. As Fox noted, the "VC then withdrew undetected and unmolested, leaving behind damage

all out of proportion to the effort expended."[14] Stand-off attacks on air bases became routine from then on.

The attack brought to a head several questions which needed resolution. What was the role of the host nation forces in providing protection to US installations? What was the role of US ground forces in providing protection for US air bases? And, how far should the Air Force go in protecting its resources if neither the host nation nor the US ground forces could provide the necessary protection? These questions, in regard to Central Europe, are still pending.

To answer the first question, one must examine how the US Military Assistance Command Vietnam (USMACV) looked to the Vietnamese forces for security, despite obvious Vietnamese inability, or unwillingness, to do so. As a result of the Bien Hoa attack, General Harris, Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Air Forces, recommended to General McConnell, USAF Chief of Staff, "deploying to each base adequate U.S. ground forces under a single commander whose sole mission was to defend the base." Also, he suggested "development of an Air Force security force along the lines of the RAF Regiment."[15] Despite this high level of attention, USMACV's position remained the same. "There are no plans to tie down US troops to defend US air bases against mortar and sneak attack, it costs too much in troops."[16] The policy

> ...was to hold the Government of Vietnam to its responsibility for static defense and to take a

> calculated risk on air base security. This would free U.S. Army forces for offensive operations and thus successfully conclude the war.[17]

In September 1965 the question reached the Joint Chiefs of Staff but they disapproved General McConnell's request for a specific role for ground forces in defending air bases.

General William C. Westmoreland terminated the discussions with a policy letter in December 1965. While deleting any reference to Vietnamese responsibilities, he made it clear that US ground forces would not be dedicated to base defense. He felt "their commitment to static defense would cripple decisive offensive operations and delay enemy defeat."[18] The responsibility for installation defense rested with the commander of that installation and he was to organize and train all his personnel for that purpose. General Westmoreland stated:

> ...I desire that all service units and all forces of whatever service who find themselves operating without infantry protection ... will be organized, trained and exercised to perform the defensive and security functions which I have just discussed...[19]

This position was, of course, in line with the guidance outlined in JCS Pub 2 cited above.

The Air Force position was that it would do the best it could with the forces it had organically available and would coordinate with other forces present. However, it would not unilaterally take on an external base defense role. General Westmoreland's letter was interpreted to apply only to the ground forces in-country. Air base defense

by Air Force personnel was limited to internal and perimeter security. Fox concluded

> ...the Air Force too was prepared to take a calculated risk on base security rather than assume external ground defense duties. Henceforth to the end of the war, this became fixed USAF policy and practice. Except for air operations, the Air Force local ground defense mission did not extend beyond the legal perimeter of its installations.[20]

The results of this policy, along with enemy capability, during the Vietnam War were 155 personnel killed, 1702 wounded, 75 aircraft destroyed and 898 damaged. Of the 475 attacks which took place against air bases, 447 were stand-off attacks, 16 involved sapper actions and the remaining 8 involved a combination of these methods.[21]

After the Vietnam war, HQ USAF Security Police Staff initiated a review of air base defense policy. This was based not only on the results of the Vietnam war but also on an appreciation of the Soviet threat. The Soviet special operations threat, in the form of 6-10 man teams, was added to the concerns.[22] As a result of Vietnam, it was clear, however, that effective base defense had to include off-base operations. In Vietnam this had been the responsibility of the host nation forces or the US Army. Now the USAF was going to assume this role. These efforts culminated in the doctrine of Distributed Area Defense (DAD). This was defined in AFR 206-2 as a scheme

> ...of active defense in which widely dispersed, relatively small units, moving out and about from a defended location, and distributed laterally and in-depth, seek to dominate a large area by taking

advantage of familiar terrain and precision employment of integrated weapons systems.[23]

To achieve adequate protection for Air Force resources this doctrine required "security in-depth."

> Security in-depth is provided by occupying a series of defensive positions on and offbase that enable Air Force personnel and units to engage and defeat the enemy before the enemy can destroy resources on the ground, or before sortie generation or sustaining air operations can be interrupted, diminished or terminated.[24]

The DAD philosophy envisioned the Air Force SPs securing an area of operations large enough to insure uninterrupted air operations. This entailed going 3 to 5 kms off base. It was left to the local Air Force base commander to establish coordination and integration with any US Army or host nation units which might be available to assist in the base defense effort. The Air Force felt it had to take care of itself by itself.

> Therefore, Air Force personnel must be resourced, equipped, and trained to protect and defend Air Force resources against likely enemy ground threats wherever these resources are located...[25]

Several events had added emphasis to this effort. One was the 12 January 1981 terrorist attack on the Muniz Air National Guard Base in Puerto Rico. This attack destroyed nine Corsair A-7D II jet fighters and damaged two others for an estimated total of $45 million damage.[26] The second was the attack on the USAFE Headquarters at Ramstein AB, Germany on 31 August 1981 injuring 20 people, including an American general.[27]

Both of these attacks were part of a worldwide increase in terrorist activity directed in part against US military personnel and facilities. But both were also a part of the threat the new doctrine was supposed to address. It envisioned three threat levels: Level I was considered a peacetime threat involving terrorist activity; Level II addressed special operations forces activities; Level III involved airborne, airmobile and airlanded, and amphibious operations. Additional Level III threats listed included advance units of armor or motorized rifle units which had penetrated the front.[88]

This DAD doctrine did not constitute solely a new philosophy and regulation but was "the cornerstone of a completely funded program costing approximately $300M over the Five Year Defense Plan beginning in 1982."[89] Furthermore, the effort was paralleled by a 1982 agreement with the Federal Republic of Germany. Their wartime Host Nation Support funding effort was almost $100M over a 7 year period starting in FY 83.[90] The doctrine was formalized with the publication of AFR 206-2, "Ground Defense of Main Operating Bases, Installations, and Activities", dated 22 September 1983.

But these ambitious efforts were put in limbo by a 22 May 1984 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Chief of Staff of the Army and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. The agreement included 31 items of which initiatives

#8 and #9 involved air base ground defense. The intent behind the agreement was to "organize, train, and equip a compatible, complementary and affordable Total Force that will maximize our joint combat capability to execute airland combat operations."[21]

The Chiefs saw the agreement as "the initial step in the establishment of a long-term, dynamic process whose objective will continue to be the fielding of the most affordable and effective airland combat forces."[22] Initiative #8 appeared to resolve one long standing question by tasking "Army units to provide air base ground defense (ABGD) outside the base perimeter."[23] It is still being implemented. Initiative #9 tasked the Army to "provide initial and follow-on training for Air Force on-site security flights."[24] This latter initiative was implemented quickly and smoothly and by 1987 Air Force SP personnel were being trained by a Joint Army/Air Force cadre at Ft Dix, NJ.

On 25 April 1985 the Army and Air Force Chiefs of Staff signed the Joint Service Agreement (JSA) which they had developed in accordance with the MOA. This agreement reiterated that the Army was "responsible for providing forces for ABGD operations outside the boundaries of designated USAF bases and installations". It also made the Army and Air Force jointly responsible for developing "joint doctrine for rear battle, to include ABGD."[25] But neither

agreement directed the Army to dedicate forces to the air base defense mission.

At this writing the only joint document published, a pamphlet entitled "Joint Operational Concept for Air Base Ground Defense", appears to return the situation to the time of Vietnam. The Air Force is basically restricted to security activities inside the perimeter. The host nation may "elect to provide external security for U.S. operated air bases. In this case, the rear battle mission remains the responsibility of that nation."[86] In all cases when the Army conducts the rear battle, the Army echelon commander allocates forces for rear battle operations based on the threat, the availability of host nation assets, the overall concept of operation, and the theater commander's priorities."[87] It remains to be seen what the theater commander's priorities will be.

The critical importance of air bases has been recognized over the years as has been the need for their protection. Who would perform this function outside the the base perimeter, and how it could be done most effectively, has been the subject of considerable debate, as we have seen. Until the end of the Vietnam war it was viewed as an Army function. After Vietnam the Air Force accepted it as its own responsibility, while in 1984 it was declared to be a joint responsibility. How well this joint effort is working will be discussed in the next chapter.

NOTES

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2. Gp Capt Kingsley Oliver, RAF, and Wg Cdr M. Keith Batt, RAF, The Royal Air Force Regiment, A Short History (40th Anniversary Edition), (Dorking: Bartholomew Press, 1982), 14; cited in Michael I. Wheeler, "The Reality of Air Base Ground Defense." (USAWC Military Studies Program paper, US Army War College, 1986), 5.

3. Dana Lombardy, "Defending NATO's Airfields." NATO's Sixteen Nations 31 (December 1986-January 1987): 94.

4. Fox, ABD in Vietnam, 3.

5. Ibid., 4.

6. Joint Chiefs of Staff, JCS Pub 2, "Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF)" (Washington, DC: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1986), 4-2.

7. Ibid., 4-2/4-3.

8. Fox, ABD in Vietnam, 5.

9. Far East Air Forces Report on the Korean War, 2 Vols, 26 Mar 54, II 132-33; cited in Fox, ABD in Vietnam, 6.

10. Fox, ABD in Vietnam, 6.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., 5.

13. Ibid., 8.

14. Ibid., 1.

15. Msg, CINCPACAF to CSAF, 270339Z Aug 65; quoted in Fox, ABD in Vietnam, 26.

16. Gen Throckmorton, Deputy COMUSMACV; cited in MR, Col Charles E. Kenworthy, Dir/S&LE, subj: External Defense in Depth, 24 Sep 65; quoted in Fox, ABD in Vietnam, 26.

17. Fox, ABD in Vietnam, 27.

18. Ibid.

19. Ltr. COMUSMACV to Cmdr, 2d Air Div, et al, subj: Tactical Employment of US Forces and Defensive Action, 10 Dec 65; quoted in Fox, ABD in Vietnam, 27-28.

20. Fox, ABD in Vietnam, 28.

21. Ibid., 206-207.

22. Stephen E. Heppell, Robert A. Owen Jr. and Lars V. Vedvick, "Air Base Survivability: Air Base Defense in the Soviet Combined Arms Threat Environment." (Research Report, Air War College, 1983), 21.

23. US Air Force. AFR 206-2, "Ground Defense of Main Operating Bases, Installations, and Activities" (Washington, DC: Department of the Air Force, 1983), 69.

24. Ibid., 4.

25. Ibid.

26. Jo Thomas, "Puerto Rico Group says it struck Jets," New York Times, 13 January 1981, A1.

27. Associated Press, "Blast Hurts 20 at U.S. Base in Germany," New York Times, 1 September 1981, A3.

28. AFR 206-2, 7-8.

29. Wheeler, "Reality of ABGD," 17.

30. Ibid., 24.

31. US Army and US Air Force, Memorandum of Agreement on U.S. Army - U.S. Air Force Joint Force Development Process, (Washington, DC: HQ Department of the Army and the Air Force, 1984).

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid., 2.

34. Ibid.

35. US Army and US Air Force, Joint Service Agreement: USA-USAF Agreement for the Ground Defense of Air Force Bases and Installations, (Washington, DC: HQ Department of the Army and the Air Force, 1985).

36. US Army and US Air Force, DA Pam 525-14/AFP 206-4, "Joint Operational Concept for Air Base Ground Defense" (Washington, DC: HQ Department of the Army and the Air Force, 1986), 8.

37. Ibid., 5.

CHAPTER 5

US CAPABILITIES

The current joint ABGD doctrine is especially critical to air bases in Germany. This is the geographical arena where US warfighting is primarily focused and where airpower is required to play its major role. This chapter outlines how Air Force resources are protected, the responsibilities of the Air Force and Army during various threat levels, and weaknesses of the current ABGD doctrine.

In Germany the USAF has seven major air bases. Geographically all those bases, except one, are located in the German state of Rhineland-Palatinate in central Germany. This is also the narrowest part of Germany, opposite the Fulda gap. Distances from the East German border are minimal. The closest base, Rhein Main AB outside Frankfurt, is about 100 km from the border, while even the farthest ones, Bitburg AB and Spangdahlem AB in the vicinity of Trier, are only 260 km. In between, there are Ramstein AB and Sembach AB near Kaiserslautern, Hahn AB by Hahn, and Zweibrucken AB by Zweibrucken. Clearly these bases are well within the range the Soviet *desant* concept defines as "operational", 50 to 300 km. Figure 2 shows the areas

included by ranges of 50, 200, and 300 km from the East German border.

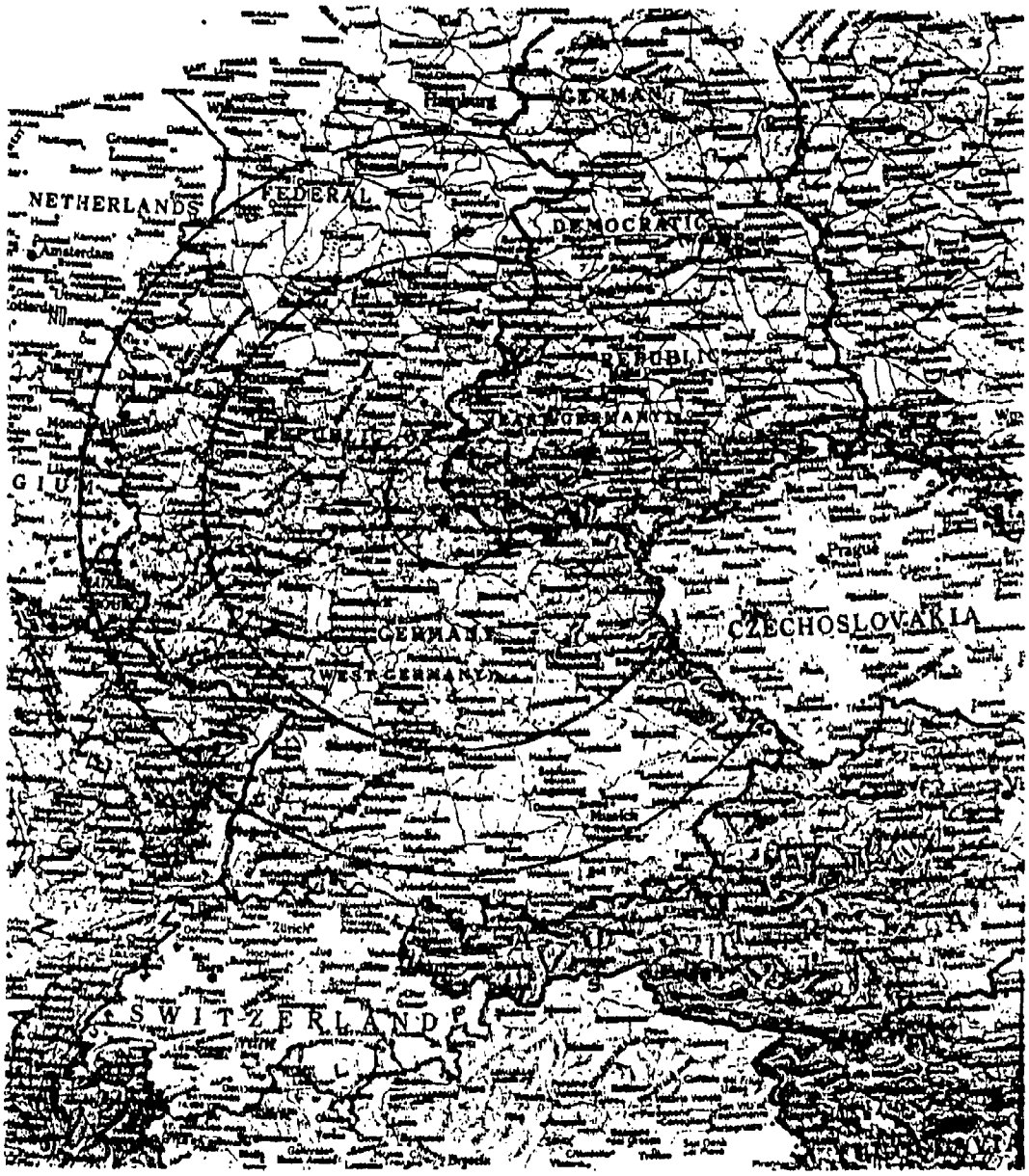

Figure 2. Ranges into West Germany.

Source: Universal World Atlas (Rand McNally & Company, 1989), R.L. 89-S-66.

The day-to-day level of security USAF resources receive is based on a priority system. The priority designation is determined based on three factors outlined in AFR 207-1:

1. The relative politico-military importance of the resource to our nation.
2. The uniqueness and cost of the critical resource.
3. Threats to the resource.[1]

Using these three factors, the resource is assigned either a Priority A, B, or C designation, as approved by HQ USAF, and security is provided accordingly. Nuclear weapons are the most obvious example of Priority A type resources. Non-nuclear alert aircraft would generally be classified as Priority B while non-alert aircraft are Priority C. This classification does not apply solely to aircraft. Command and control facilities, communication facilities and space resources are all included depending on their importance to overall defense. Priority designations will change as the status of the resource or the threat changes.

The areas, or buildings, containing priority resources are designated as restricted areas. Priority A resources are secured in hardened structures, or igloos, containing the resources. These reinforced concrete structures are locked with heavy steel doors and have alarm systems installed. The area itself is surrounded by two barbed wire topped fences. A perimeter sensor system warns the security forces of any intrusion attempts and the

perimeter is monitored by closed circuit television. A centrally-controlled area and perimeter lighting system supports the security forces.

Areas containing Priority B resources have a similar, but less stringent, protection system. Only one fence is used and, although perimeter sensor systems might be used, closed circuit television is generally not included.

Areas with Priority C resources require even less protection. In Europe, hardened structures are available for the aircraft. These structures may, or may not, have alarm systems installed. Perimeter sensor systems, and television coverage is not included and the area perimeter fence frequently consists only of triple strand barbed wire.

Base Security Police manning varies from installation to installation. A large base in Europe is likely to have an authorized strength of about 700 personnel while smaller bases are around 300.

Manning levels in each type of restricted area depend on the designated priority and include both stationary and mobile forces. Reinforcements have to be readily available. Any incident involving nuclear weapons requires a force of 15 personnel within 5 minutes, a backup force of 17 personnel, and an augmentation force of 44 personnel available within 4 hours.[5]

These are all lightly armed and equipped forces. Weapons include M-16 rifles, M-203 grenade launchers, and various numbers and combinations of the M-60 machine guns, MK-19 automatic grenade machineguns and M2 50 caliber machine guns. Anti-tank, engineer (mines/obstacles), and air defense weaponry is not included. Vehicles range from standard pickups and four wheel drive vehicles to lightly armored convoy escort vehicles.

AFR 207-1 operates from the premise "that there will be sufficient time to transition" from this peacetime mode "into a base defense posture." Also the regulation assumes

> There will not be sufficient inplace security forces available, particularly in the early stages of a conflict, to satisfy all peacetime security requirements and simultaneously provide adequate security for defended localities.

Therefore, the regulation continues, as "the security of defended localities in the close defense area" is the "first priority" the majority of the forces should be allocated "outside specific restricted areas as opposed to the peacetime concept of close-in security."[8]

The close defense area (CDA) is the area within the base perimeter. This area is, and always has been, the responsibility of the USAF. The area outside the base perimeter is called the main defense area (MDA) and is the responsibility of the Army based on the 1985 Army/Air Force JSA. The air base commander is in the first instance responsible for the defense of the air base. Effective air

base defense, however, involves operations in both the CDA and MBA. As a result, as indicated in the joint Army-Air Force concept, the "MP assigned the external ABGD mission in the main defense area (MDA) will come under the operational control of or be attached to the air base commander."[4] This arrangement only applies to Level I and II threats. During Level III the Tactical Combat Force (TCF) commander takes operational control."

The problems USAF bases face, the ground threats and who will deal with them, are defined in the "Joint Operational Concept for Air Base Ground Defense"." The lowest level threat is defined as Level I and, as noted, consists of saboteurs, terrorists, agents and partisans. Basically these are small groups with limited weaponry and capabilities, not regular military. Dealing with this level threat is strictly an Air Force SP responsibility. The Level I threat is part of the day-to-day SP functions. Terrorist activities during the last decade have resulted in this level receiving increased attention.

Level II involves the threat from tactical units below battalion size to include airborne BMD equipped companies and Spetsnaz forces. The emphasis is still on relatively small forces but with increased ability to fight through defensive forces to achieve their objectives. Both the Air Force SPs and the Army MPs are, according to the

regulation, "organized, trained, and equipped to defend against" this threat.[7]

The highest threat level is Level III. This threat

> ...is posed by tactical military units of battalion size or larger resulting from overt enemy heliborne, airborne, amphibious, or ground force operations. A level III threat will probably include an air base as part of a larger, coordinated plan, rather than as an individual or separate target. Friendly force response to the level III threat involves the commitment of the requisite Tactical Combat Forces (TCFs) to destroy the threat.[8]

This level recognizes that there is a point where base defense transitions into area defense.

Level III threats involve the commitment of the TCF. These Army forces are made available to the rear battle officer responsible for the rear area containing the air base by the Army echelon commander. Once it is necessary to commit the TCF, all ground units within its area of operation come under operational control of the TCF commander. This includes the MP units provided to the air base commander and any available SP units. According to the joint concept, "the air base commander will retain those assets necessary to ensure disposition of critical Air Force resources."[9] At this point the ground defense of the air base is only incidental to the conduct of the rear area battle and has fully transitioned to an Army responsibility.

Rear area defense clearly belongs to the Army and is beyond the capability of an air base defense force. As a result, this last level, as it pertains to area defense,

will not be discussed. What is open to question in the definition of the threat levels is where this dividing line between base defense and area defense should lie. Soviet planning and capabilities are such that battalion or company size *desant* operations should be judged extremely likely. If those are classified as Level III because they involve battalions, available TCFs might be overtasked. If they are classified as Level II because they involve bases as "individual or separate targets" versus area operations, the base defenders could be overwhelmed.

The Joint Operational Concept for ABGD views Level II threats as the "primary ground threat to air bases" and concludes that the "enemy is capable of conducting Level II actions against many bases simultaneously."[10] The problem is in the breakdown of the threat in these three levels. Neither Level I nor II goes above--or much above--the unconventional warfare level. Even in Level II, the main concern of the joint concept is with forces "whose primary tasks are covert reconnaissance and sabotage missions to disrupt friendly sortie generation." Further, "these enemy forces normally operate covertly in small groups, avoiding detection to increase their probability of success."[11] In short, this description fits Spetsnaz type forces. Likely as attacks by special purpose forces are, the Soviet *desant* concept also includes wide-spread assaults by larger size units.

If Levels I and II go little beyond unconventional warfare, Level III operates from the level of a rear area battle. In this transition, the capability of Soviet airborne units larger than unconventional forces, such as companies or battalions but not involved in area operations, is not addressed. As noted earlier, the Soviets could well use company or battalion size assault units to attack specific point targets such as air bases. A battalion size force of 310 personnel, equipped with surface-to-air missiles, grenade launchers, and RPGs, would constitute a considerable force-- particularly if it is a BMD equipped unit which, in addition to mobility, would also have greater firepower. Such a force would have the advantage of firepower over both an SP and MP force. Air base survivability is open to question under those circumstances.

Survivability of air bases has been a concern of high level U.S. planners for many years. This results not only from concern over possible ground threats but also from missile and air attacks. This, according to journalist Peter Almond, was "a reason why the 16 member nations of NATO decided to spend some $4 billion on a massive program of hardening aircraft shelters with thick concrete."[18]

Air base survivability was tested at Spangdahlem AB, Germany, in April and May 1985, during exercise "Salty Demo", the "first realistic test in Europe since the end of World War II."[19] This exercise highlighted a number of air

base survivability concerns but also validated the doctrine of Distributed Area Defensive which had been published in 1983. The Army/Air Force MOA, which changed the air base defense roles of the two services and was signed in 1984, was not addressed in this exercise and only Army Air Defense Artillery units participated. The exercise demonstrated, again, that any air base ground defense force, be it Air Force or Army, had to control the terrain off base. To do so effectively requires ground intelligence information. As the Air Force does not have this capability, close cooperation with host nation forces and the US Army is essential. This requires interoperable communication links which were not available.[14] As a result of "Salty Demo", improvements in air base survivability are being made. The status will be reevaluated in 1991 at Bitburg AB, Germany, during exercise "Constant Demo '91".

During "Salty Demo", the Air Force conducted the active defense off base. As a result of the MOA, the Army has now assumed this role. Within the Army the "MPs have the primary responsibility to fight rear operations at the tactical level."[15] Their capabilities were tested during "Corps Defender 86", "the largest rear operations focused FTX ever."[16] The Deputy Exercise Director, Brigadier General Ralph C. Marinaro concluded that Army rear operations doctrine overall was "lacking."[17] The MP force,

as the primary rear area force, BG Marinaro felt, lacks the mobility, communications, and necessary level of armament to deal with Level II threats.

A December 1988 assessment of the Joint Army-Air Force air base defense effort listed a number of concerns. Among others the "US Army has had problems dedicating combat units for rear area protection of air bases." Not only are the number of units scarce, but those which are available "are already overburdened with such rear area duties as traffic control, movement of refugees, and POW missions." Joint doctrine development is incomplete. Only "the general doctrinal concept for ABGD" has been developed between the Army and Air Force, and "the tactics, techniques and procedures for base defense have never been jointly established." The report further notes that the Air Force policy of not training "all airmen in the basic protection skills of weapons firing or other self defense activities" limits manpower availability and "leaves only the limited security police assets to protect air bases." Also, "training for senior AF leaders in command and control of ABGD" is required.** Thus, although the joint agreements are now over four years old, much still needs to be done to achieve effective air base ground defense.

The Air Force system of a security level based on the priority of the resources is effective for an internal base security mission. SP personnel and equipment, combined

with the use of hardened facilities, provide the ability to deal with Level I threats. Above that level, even a superficial evaluation suggests that the successful defense of a US air base is questionable. Neither the MPs nor the SPs have the necessary armament or mobility needed to deal with Soviet forces larger than the special purpose units. Indeed, several exercises have shown that air base survivability is open to question. These exercises have also shown that much still needs to be done to make joint air base defense doctrine effective. Particularly the definitions of the three threat levels require refinement.

NOTES

1. US Air Force. AFR 207-1, "The Air Force Physical Security Program" (C), (Washington, DC: Department of the Air Force, 1988), 5-1.

2. Ibid., 9-3.

3. Ibid., 11-6.

4. US Army and US Air Force, DA Pam 525-14/AFP 206-4, "Joint Operational Concept for Air Base Ground Defense", (Washington, DC: HQ Department of the Army and the Air Force, 1986), 6.

5. Ibid., 7.

6. Ibid., 4.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., 7.

10. Ibid., 4.

11. Ibid.

12. Peter Almond, "Mudfighters, Tankbusters and the Air War Debate," The Washington Times, 12 January 1989, A8.

13. Ibid.

14. Michael I. Wheeler, "The Reality of Air Base Ground Defense." (USAWC Military Studies Program paper, US Army War College, 1986), 26-29.

15. Ralph C. Marinaro, "Rear Operations Doctrine: A Reevaluation, Part I," Military Police (Spring 1987): 8.

16. Ibid., 6.

17. Ibid.

18. James A. Kelley and Alan K. Huffman, "Air Base Ground Defense: Old Issues - New Resolve," Air Land Bulletin No 88-4 (31 December 1988): 6.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The debate over how, and who, will protect US air bases has gone on for a long time. Different methods have been tried, but the question of whether US forces are prepared to protect USAF resources remains. The initial allocation of manpower during World War II was quickly overcome by the reduced need for protection. The Korean war did not put the issue to the test as there was no threat. During Vietnam, the US military determined that primary responsibility should rest with the host nation. None of these historical precedents are indicative of the scale of operations projected for a conventional war in the Central European theater.

Army doctrine sees air operations, be it friendly or enemy, affecting all "ground actions above the level of the smallest engagements".[1] Air Force doctrine considers aerospace power as "a critical element of the interdependent land-naval-aerospace team" and aerospace power "can be the decisive force in warfare."[2] The Soviets also have a high appreciation for the criticality of NATO airpower. As Christopher Donnelly has noted, "the Soviets conclude 50

percent of NATO's firepower is in its aircraft. Success for them depends on destroying our airpower on the ground right in the first hours."[3] This attempt at destruction will include a variety of methods but ground attacks will be part of the strategy.

If airpower is to play a critical role, the air bases will have to be secure enough to allow operations to be conducted. From a ground attack perspective, this will depend on the security of the rear area. As we have seen, air operations require the ground around the air base to be secure.

The air base commander has primary responsibility for the security of his base. To achieve this he has base SP personnel for security inside the base perimeter while Army MP units generally secure the area outside the perimeter. All these forces have limited mobility and communications. Even the best armed units, the MPs, "have nothing more potent than the LAW (light antitank weapon) at this time,"[4] in addition to M-16s and machineguns. A Soviet force of one company with 85 people and 11 BMDs, which includes a 73-mm main gun, a Level II threat by doctrine, inserted in the rear area, would substantially exceed--in terms of firepower and mobility--the capabilities of these defenders even if they outnumber the attacking assault forces. Both Soviet writings and Western assessments indicate battalion size forces will typically be employed in

this role as well and it may be that forces of this size--so typical of Soviet force employment models--should be considered under Level II as well.

Exercise "Corps Defender 86" showed that the Army's current "doctrine for fighting rear operations cannot be supported with the equipment and training that combat support (CS) and combat service support (CSS) units currently possess."[6] This implies that the TCF will have to be activated frequently if air bases are to be secured.

Such a TCF "may be a mobile infantry brigade, an element of an armored cavalry regiment, or another force responding to the direction of the commander."[6] But, even though such forces might be able to deal with Soviet airborne battalions and companies, the price will be to fewer forces available to the front. This is not an option a theater commander gladly entertains. It is also questionable whether it is feasable. Brigadier General Marinaro concluded: "The addition of a major combat organization to the corps rear area to direct and fight rear operations will not be practicable on a sustained basis."[7]

The options, then, appear to be two. One, remove the bases from the threatened area. Two, improve the capabilities of the forces providing air base ground protection in particular, and rear area security in general, thus reducing the demand on TCFs.

The first option is not as unlikely as it might

appear. The Air Force is reportedly looking more and more at basing its high value, dual-capable and longer-range aircraft in Britain, Iceland, Portugal and Spain.[9] The Air Force Chief of Staff, General Larry D. Welch, has indicated that "the new, long-range F-15E deep-strike aircraft will probably be based"[9] in England. But here is a dilemma. As General Welch sees it

> ...we can't pull out of Germany and still declare a forward defense strategy. If an airplane is back (out of the immediate danger area), it doesn't serve as a proper deterrent. If deterrence works, then you don't worry about the fact that you have expensive things at risk.[10]

If deterrence does not work, however, it is necessary to have "expensive things" secured as well as possible. This involves the second solution, improving the capabilities of the ground defense forces of both the Army and the Air Force.

This is not to say that the SP and MP forces have to be equally equipped, but both have to be improved. The SPs need better mobility with an increased level of armor protection, something between a Soviet BMD and the US military replacement for the jeep, the high-mobility multi-purpose wheeled vehicle. They need some type of antiarmor capability. They need communication systems which will allow for effective integration of joint Army/Air Force ground operations. And most of all, the SPs need to be allowed to establish a defensive area off base, either because Army units are not available or because they need to

create an effectively integrated defense with those Army units which are available.

The Army MP units also need proportionally more firepower and better equipment if they are to perform their rear area protection role effectively against Soviet forces. Mobility, communication, and firepower are again the key areas here. BG Marinaro feels that:

> We must see to it that MP units can survive on their own long enough for a well-equipped, proactive MP response force to come to their aid. The MP response force must be big enough and possess sufficient firepower to quickly defeat the level II threat and to maintain contact with, disrupt, delay, or contain a level III threat until enough firepower (TCF/artillery/air) can be brought to bear to destroy the threat.[11]

The scale and capabilities of the forces the Soviets plan to bring to bear on air bases in Germany under their *desant* concept is such that the SP units will not survive long enough for the MP units to come to their aid. The MP units themselves are not big enough, nor do they possess sufficient firepower, to defeat the likely Level II threat. Under those circumstances, the TCFs will have to be brought to bear continuously and at a cost to the forces at the front. This situation is exactly what Soviet planners would like to see.

To achieve such an improvement in air base ground defense capability will necessitate a re-initiation of the effort which resulted in the MOA and JSA. Since those agreements were made, the Joint Actions Initiatives Office

has been disbanded and the ABGD working group, which should be meeting annually, has not done so.[12] The ground work has been laid. Now, a true Joint Army/Air Force effort will be required to make effective ABGD a reality.

NOTES

1. US Army. FM 100-5, "Operations", (Washington, DC: HQ Department of the Army, 1986), 9.

2. US Air Force. AFM 1-1, "Basic Aerospace Doctrine", (Washington, DC: Department of the Air Force, 1984), 1-3.

3. Christopher Donnelly, Soviet affairs expert at Sandhurst's Royal Military Academy; quoted in Peter Almond, "Mudfighters, Tankbusters and the Air War Debate," The Washington Times, 12 January 1989, A8.

4. Ralph C. Marinaro, "Rear Operations Doctrine: A Reevaluation, Part II." Military Police (September 1987): 12.

5. Ralph C. Marinaro, "Rear Operations Doctrine: A Reevaluation, Part I." Military Police (Spring 1987): 6.

6. US Army. FM 19-1, "Military Police Support for the Airland Battle", (Washington, DC: HQ Department of the Army, 1988), 2-6.

7. Marinaro, "Rear Operations, Part I," 7.

8. Peter Almond, "Mudfighters, Tankbusters and the Air War Debate," The Washington Times, 12 January 1989, A8.

9. Cited in Almond, "Mudfighters," A8.

10. Quoted in Almond, "Mudfighters," A8.

11. Marinaro, "Rear Operations, Part II," 14.

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24 January 2003

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ADB177317, Ronald A. Newton, "Are Special Operations Imperatives Applicable to Counterdrug Operations?," dated 1993.

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