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Central Intelligence Agency



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Directorate of Intelligence
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**New Soviet Army Corps Structure
and Its Operational Implications**

Summary

The Soviets have recently converted two or three ground force divisions into larger, reconfigured combat formations called Independent Army Corps. The corps' size, equipment, and employment in exercises indicate that they may be better able to conduct limited, self-contained actions while separated from the main body than divisions. This could make them useful for economy-of-force, forward detachment, counterpenetration, rear-area protection and operational maneuver group (OMG) missions. We believe additional selected divisions in some border military districts, in some internal military districts, and in the groups of forces in Eastern Europe may adopt this structure. [REDACTED]

NOTE: This memorandum was prepared in the Office of Soviet Analysis [REDACTED]

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Corps Structure

1. The new independent army corps have four or five subordinate tank and mechanized brigades. The brigades each consist of at least two and probably four battalions. (Figures 1 and 2 show our assessment of the likely structure and major items of equipment of a typical new corps and a typical brigade.) The battalions have from three to five companies. Tank and motorized infantry companies in the brigades are combined at the battalion level. Previously the Soviet Ground Forces had not combined tanks and infantry below the regimental level. [REDACTED]

2. Analysis of photography indicates that at least two divisions have this corps organization and a third may be converting to it. The 5th Guards Tank Division at Kyakhta in the Transbaikalian Military District (MD) and the 120th Guards Motorized Rifle Division at Minsk in the Belorussian MD began to reorganize in 1982.¹ (See map for locations of independent army corps and potential corps.) [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the Kyakhta and Minsk units as the 48th and the 5th Guards Independent Army Corps. (See Annex for a detailed description of the organizational and equipment changes at Kyakhta and Minsk.) In 1982 the 24th MRD at L'vov in the Carpathian MD received additional equipment not usually assigned to a division. This may indicate that it also is converting to the new structure, but we have yet to identify a composite battalion structure within brigades like that seen at Kyakhta and Minsk. [REDACTED]

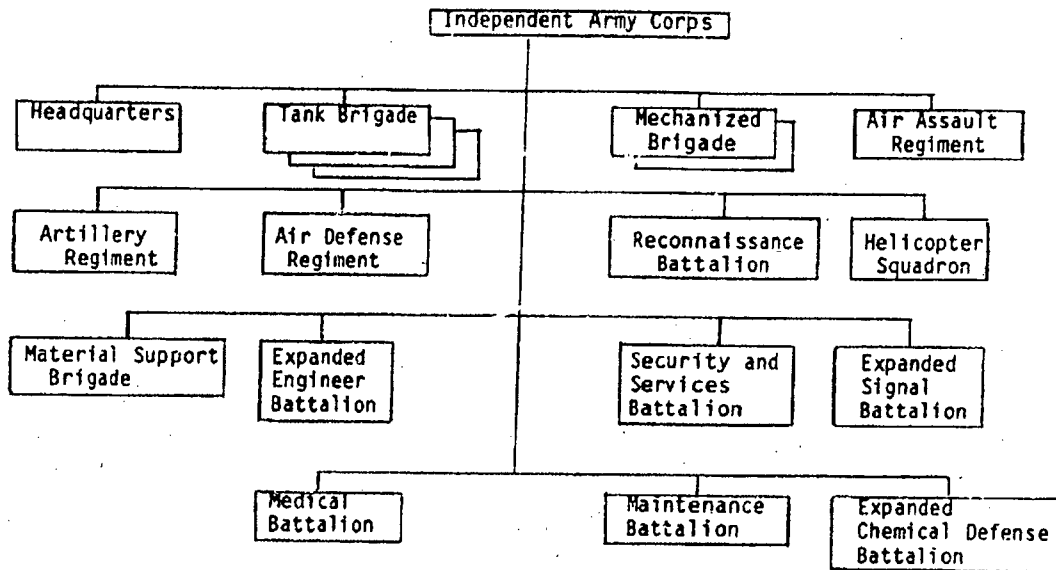
3. The conversion of divisions to corps has included the addition of BMPs, artillery, and tanks. Air defense elements were both increased and placed at lower echelons. Engineering equipment has been added to the corps, but the type of equipment and the echelon which received it has varied. The surface-to-surface missile (SSM) battalion that had been a divisional asset was removed and a BM-27 multiple rocket launcher (MRL) battalion was added. [REDACTED]

¹ The division at Kyakhta was a reduced-strength ready category II division with all its equipment but manned at 55 to 70 percent of authorized wartime strength. The division at Minsk was a reduced-strength ready category I division with all its equipment but manned at 70 to 85 percent of authorized wartime strength. [REDACTED]

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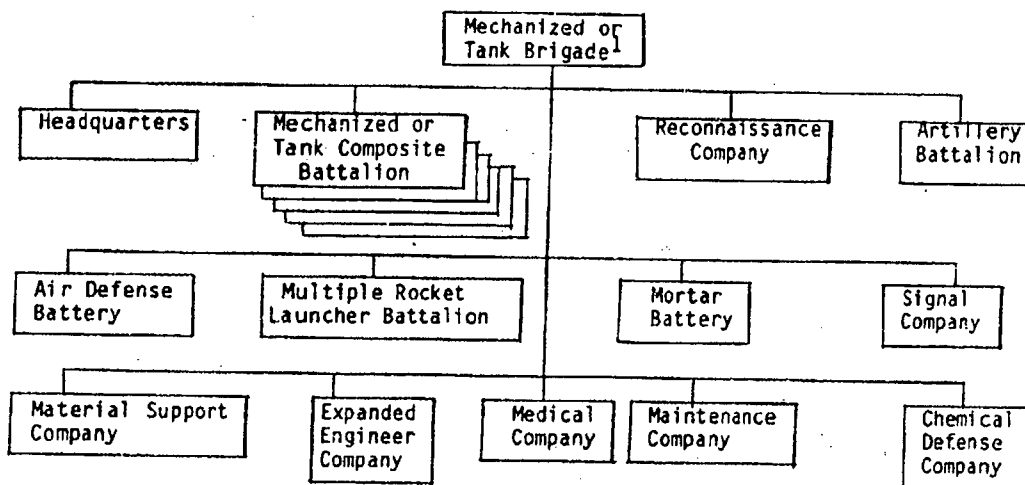
Figure 1: Projected Organization of Independent Army Corps



Manpower and Major Items of Equipment of an Independent Army Corps

25,000	Personnel
652	Tanks
783	BMP infantry fighting vehicles
100	ZSU-23-4 self-propelled antiaircraft guns
40	SA-8 surface-to-air missiles
20	SA-11 surface-to-air missiles
100	SA-13 surface-to-air missiles
90	122-mm self-propelled howitzers
54	152-mm self-propelled howitzers
90	BM-21 or Grad 1 multiple rocket launchers
18	BM-27 multiple rocket launchers
96	120-mm mortars

Figure 2: Projected Organization of Mechanized and Tank Brigades



Manpower and Major Items of Equipment in a Tank Brigade

3,350 Personnel
 134 Tanks
 149 BMP infantry fighting vehicles
 20 ZSU-23-4 self-propelled anti-aircraft guns
 8 SA-8 surface-to-air missiles
 20 SA-13 surface-to-air missiles
 18 122-mm self-propelled howitzers
 18 BM-21 or Grad-1 multiple rocket launchers
 16 120-mm mortars

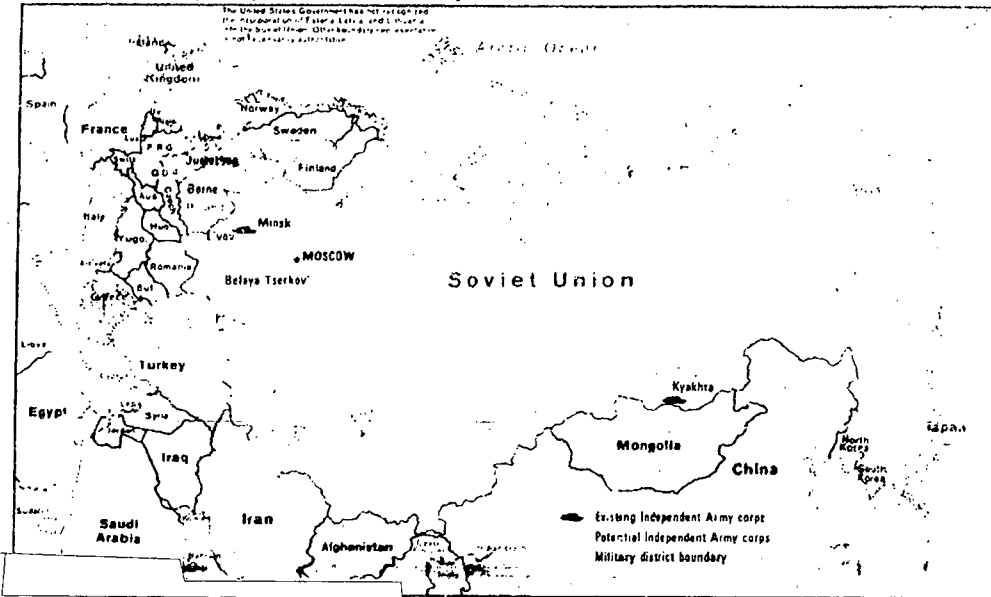
Manpower and Major Items of Equipment in a Mechanized Brigade

3,450 Personnel
 122 Tanks
 162 BMP infantry fighting vehicles
 20 ZSU-23-4 self-propelled anti-aircraft guns
 8 SA-8 surface-to-air missiles
 20 SA-13 surface-to-air missiles
 18 122-mm self-propelled howitzers
 18 BM-21 or Grad-1 multiple rocket launchers
 24 120-mm mortars

1. A tank brigade probably will have three tank and two mechanized composite battalions. A mechanized brigade probably will have two tank and three mechanized composite battalions.

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Independent Army Corps and Potential Corps



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4. [REDACTED] corps have had an air assault unit not normally found with divisions. The air assault unit may be corps-subordinate. Helicopters capable of transporting troops and BMDs (airdroppable infantry fighting vehicles) probably would be provided by the front. The helicopters currently with corps could be used for fire support, artillery spotting, command and control, and limited troop transport. [REDACTED]

5. The structure of corps [REDACTED] has varied from three to five maneuver brigades, with various combinations of mechanized and tank brigades being depicted. [REDACTED]

6. Other Conversion Possibilities. Information [REDACTED] suggests that independent army corps will be formed in other areas. We believe that at least eight corps may be formed. We expect to see corps form in some border MDs, internal military districts, and in the groups of forces. [REDACTED]

7. In addition to the corps that has been established at Kyakhta in the Transbaikalia MD, we also may see another corps form opposite China in the Far East MD, or possibly in the Siberian MD. [REDACTED]

8. In May 1983 the 72nd GMRD at Belaya Tserkov in the Kiev MD was depicted as an independent army corps [REDACTED] it may have received new air defense elements in September 1983, which could be an early indication of conversion to a corps. [REDACTED]

9. We have identified a division in the Group of Forces, Germany (GSFG) which may convert to a corps. [REDACTED] the 32 Guards Tank Division (GTD) at Jueterbog [REDACTED] and although we have not yet detected further signs of a conversion to a corps, it is probable that the 32nd GTD will convert to a corps. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]
The 32nd GTD was converted from the 14th GMRD during the spring and early summer of 1982. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and it is the only division of the 20th Guards Army to have done this. [REDACTED] the 32nd GTD was reinforced by the 35th MRD. Both the 32nd GTD and the 35th MRD are subordinates of the 20th Guards Army. [REDACTED]

10. We will probably also see a corps form in the Northern Group of Forces (NGF) in Poland. Analysis of imagery has identified an increase in the equipment storage space and a shifting of units at the 90th Guards Tank Division at Borne. This division may also have received new equipment, including BMP-2s and self-propelled artillery, for familiarization training. These changes probably indicate that this division will be modernized. This could be an early indication that it may also convert to a corps. [REDACTED]

Historical Origins

11. We believe the organization and mission of the new corps at Kyakhta and Minsk, and possibly at L'vov, have historical roots in the Soviet tank and mechanized corps of World War II. During this time, the bulk of the Soviet army consisted of infantry divisions with few or no tanks or motorized transport. Soviet military historians have written that corps were created because a scarcity of qualified commanders forced the Red Army to adopt highly centralized, elitist organizations to get maximum value from their precious mobile forces. The corps structure centralized the scarce armored and motorized equipment under a single commander, maximizing its combat potential and increasing its responsiveness in battle. The corps became, in effect, a special formation at the disposal of the front commander. Larger and more powerful than the standard rifle division, it was able to conduct sustained operations while separated from the main force.² It was also smaller and

² The corps usually consisted of four mechanized and tank brigades reinforced with various special units (such as tank destroyers and assault engineers) to tailor the formation for specific situations. [REDACTED]

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more responsive than an army, making it well suited for rapid deployment in operational-tactical missions. [redacted]

12. While this created a powerful formation, the large number of specialists required to man the corps caused the Soviets, faced with staggering losses in 1941-42, to disband it in favor of independent brigades. These brigades did not require as much staff and special support and, therefore, could be more easily handled by less experienced commanders. In late 1942, when the Soviets had regained the initiative, the corps was reinstated. [redacted]

13. Soviet military historians claim the tank and mechanized corps were used primarily as mobile groups during the war. Their specialty was exploiting breaks in the lines and striking deep into the German rear to seize important objectives. When its momentum was lost, the corps would dig in its infantry and hold off counterattacks until the Soviet main body could catch up.³ [redacted]

14. After the war, changes in doctrine, reductions in force, and accompanying reorganizations led the Soviets to abolish the corps formations. Doctrine was modified because by the end of the 1950s increased mechanization was thought to make all Soviet divisions capable of performing exploitation missions. [redacted]

Operational Implications

15. The Soviet Armed Forces' commitment to quick, mobile offensives to carry the fighting to enemy territory is unchanged since World War II, but their methods and forces have continued to evolve in response to doctrinal innovation, changing battlefield technologies, and the character of prospective opponents. In recent years Soviet writings and exercises have been particularly concerned with the difficulties of successfully implementing offensive doctrine given the increased lethality of the modern battlefield. This has led to increases in the infantry and artillery complements of tank divisions and consideration of doctrinal refinements like the OMG concept to restore high rates of advance. [redacted]

³ We believe recent historical writings may have given these formations more credit than is warranted. In many cases, the authors seem to be describing what they expect the modern corps to be capable of, rather than its historical performance. [redacted]

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16. The new corps at Minsk and Kyakhta will be better organized and equipped for operating apart from the main body than their predecessor divisions. Overall, their size and capability of accepting logistical and fire support attachments should give them greater staying power and combined-arms balance than motorized rifle or tank divisions. This should make them better able to roll over light opposition or pin down stronger enemy units until the arrival of more powerful friendly forces. [REDACTED]

17. The brigades observed at Kyakhta and Minsk provide their commanders with at least four preformed infantry-tank teams organized as composite battalions resembling US Army cavalry squadrons. We do not know why the Soviets have adopted this structure, which appears to be a change in their organizational philosophy. The Soviets have a well-known dislike of "ad hoc" solutions to combat problems. They may have concluded that composite units at the lower tactical levels would shorten deployment time by avoiding the need to assemble mixed infantry-tank task forces during combat. [REDACTED]

18. We expect, however, that the new corps structure will cause problems. For example, the assignment of tanks and infantry into composite battalions will require the development of new tactics and training in small-unit combined-arms operations. Battalion commanders, unaccustomed to managing a mixture of weapons types, will have to gain experience. Battalion staffs will need to be expanded, and logistics and maintenance problems will be compounded. [REDACTED]

19. The Corps as an Operational Maneuver Group. In Soviet doctrine, the OMG mission is generally given to an armor-heavy formation varying in size from division to army. A corps-sized OMG generally would be committed after the start of an offensive operation and used for preliminary exploitation prior to introduction of the second operational or strategic echelon. Once in the enemy rear, it would pursue military-geographic objectives such as nuclear delivery systems, airfields, and river crossings. The OMG is intended to be logistically self-contained and able to operate separated from the main force. [REDACTED]

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20. Stronger and more versatile than a division, the new corps should also be faster and more responsive to march orders from higher headquarters than an army. This is because speed and responsiveness usually are inversely related to the size of a combat formation. As a front's OMG, where commitment could come as early as the third day of battle and rapid exploitation is crucial, a corps-sized formation might be committed faster and more effectively than an army. The successful use of the corps in an OMG role would be contingent upon solving the difficult problem of providing logistics support to the corps while it is separated from the main force. [REDACTED]

21. Economy-of-Force Missions. In the US Army, armored cavalry serves in an economy-of-force role to find the enemy and develop the situation with the smallest force possible. It acts as a screen to provide reaction time and maneuver space for the main body and allow it to engage the enemy under favorable circumstances. Armored cavalry conducts reconnaissance-in-force missions, relying on its heavy firepower to destroy the enemy or at least force it to stop and deploy. [REDACTED]

22. Although we have no evidence of corps being used as armored cavalry the new corps are organized and equipped for such a role. The brigade structure is well suited to cavalry operations, and the mix of tanks and armored fighting vehicles in the composite battalions resembles that found in US cavalry squadrons. The Soviets already have a reconnaissance (armored cavalry) brigade in Mongolia that has composite battalions structured like those of the new corps indicating they consider such a force useful, at least in the Far East. [REDACTED]

23. The force requirements of armored cavalry and OMG missions--firepower, responsiveness, speed, and ability to operate independently of the main force--are almost identical. Therefore, the testing of a new corps in the OMG role does not preclude its use as cavalry. [REDACTED]

24. Operational-Level Forward Detachment. Like armored cavalry, the force required for a forward detachment is almost identical to that of the OMG because of the need to operate in advance of the main body. The main difference between the OMG and the forward detachment is that the latter is under the command of the formation it is serving, while an OMG would have its own command-staff element [REDACTED]

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(termed an "operations group"), which could provide greater independence. [redacted]

25. The corps' size makes it well suited to operate as a forward detachment of an army. However, we have no evidence yet of an entire new corps being used as a forward detachment. [redacted]

26. Counterpenetration Force. A corps like those at Kyakhta and Minsk could be used to counter penetrations of Soviet lines. A front or army commander could hold the corps in reserve, relying on its responsiveness, mobility, and firepower to thwart advancing enemy forces before they could fully exploit their breakthrough. While we have no evidence that the Soviets are considering this role for the new corps, counterpenetration operations could assume greater importance for the Soviets in light of the revived emphasis on offensive operations in the US Army. [redacted]

27. Rear-Area Protection. In forming the corps at Kyakhta, the Soviets may have decided that a quick-reaction combined-arms formation would be useful to protect the Transbaikal-Mongolia region from Chinese incursions during a Soviet advance into China. The corps' unique structure might enable it to do the job of several divisions when acting in this role. The composite battalions provide a large number of small, preformed tank-infantry teams that could be dispersed to counter rear area threats. Relative to a division, a corps' longer range BM27 fire support would enhance its ability to protect an area with fewer troops. [redacted]

28. We do not, however, have evidence of the new corps training for rear area protection--a role traditionally assigned to the Internal Troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. We consider it less likely that the corps would be used in this role than for the other potential roles discussed. Smaller units could also be used effectively for rear area protection and the corps might be considered too valuable to leave in the rear. [redacted]

Implications

29. We conclude that the Soviets probably are not satisfied with their present force structure's suitability for certain types of operations. They may have decided that an army is too large to have the mobility required in operational-tactical missions like the OMG, while a division is too small to have the firepower and sustainability to conduct self-contained actions separated from the main [redacted]

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body. The Soviets may be exploring whether the corps, as a mid-sized formation, would help solve the problems of conducting a high-speed offensive in the lethal environment of the modern battlefield. [REDACTED]

30. Although the Soviets must see some utility for these corps against NATO, they might be less effective against NATO than against other potential opponents in roles other than counterpenetration. Strong NATO air forces, numerous attack helicopters, and modern mechanized forces well equipped with precision guided munitions could pose a serious threat to a corps operating in advance of the main body. For the corps to attain its full potential as an OMG, we believe it would require further improvements in logistics, air defense, and reconnaissance. [REDACTED]

31. We see many advantages for Soviet use of the new corps against China or targets in the Persian Gulf area. There the Soviets would have a better opportunity to control the air, and their opposition would not be as mobile or as well equipped. [REDACTED]

Outlook

32. [REDACTED] we believe that the corps structure that will develop over the next year or so will consist of five maneuver brigades and an air assault regiment. From analysis of imagery we have identified several trends in the structure of the corps which we expect to continue, including more air defense elements placed at lower echelons than in divisions, a more balanced ratio of tanks and BMPs within brigades than in regiments, and an increase in engineer equipment at both corps and brigade levels. Differences in the engineer equipment added to the corps will probably reflect the needs of different geographical areas. Although some logistical support can be provided by the front, substantial improvements will be needed in the logistical support for the corps at Kyakhta and Minsk to enable them to function as OMGs. [REDACTED]

⁵ The OMG of a front would probably tend to operate toward the first-echelon armies' subsequent objective, generally 150 to 200 kilometers in depth. A corps-size OMG could be vulnerable to ambush and destruction if the enemy had adequate mobile reserves. [REDACTED]

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33. Authorized wartime manpower levels for a fully manned corps would depend on the number of brigades and other subordinate units in the corps. We believe that the projected structure of a corps with a five-company, five-battalion, five-brigade organization (probably with three tank brigades and two mechanized brigades and an air assault regiment, an air defense regiment, and a material support brigade) would have a wartime manning level of approximately 25,000. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] We estimate that the authorized wartime strength for a tank brigade would be approximately 3,300 and for a mechanized brigade would be approximately 3,400. [REDACTED] in 1981 [REDACTED] the manning of a tank brigade at 3,000 men, or about double the manpower level of a tank regiment [REDACTED]

34. The mixture of tanks and BPs in composite battalions, which is a new development in Soviet ground forces, indicates that the Soviets will need personnel in these corps who have been trained in combined arms tactics. We expect that in the next year or two, until more officers and NCOs are trained for these combined-arms units, the manning level will not be higher in the brigades than it had previously been in the regiments. [REDACTED]

35. The long-term development of independent army corps will probably focus on refinement of tactics and the organizational structure for the corps as well as the introduction of new equipment. In many cases this would entail the complete conversion to self-propelled and tracked systems throughout the corps to improve its mobility and firepower. We expect the introduction of newer infantry fighting vehicles and tanks, a complete conversion to self-propelled artillery, and the introduction of self-propelled mortars. Corps air defense probably will be upgraded by replacing SA-6s and SA-8s with SA-11s and introducing the ZSU-23-4 follow-on system. We may also see the expansion of air assault regiments to brigades. [REDACTED]

36. The changes in the maneuver elements of the corps at Kyakhta and Minsk have been only partially matched by an increase in their support facilities and logistical assets. Although the front could provide some logistical support to the corps, we believe that there will have to be substantial improvements in the corps' logistical assets if [REDACTED]

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it is to be used as an OMG. We expect to see additional logistical support, especially in maintenance capability, and a further upgrading of engineer equipment. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The introduction of more self-propelled and tracked systems in these areas would enable this logistical support to keep pace with the corps. The logistical support for the corps would be smaller than that required for a tank army but probably more than twice as large as that required for a tank division. This may result in the expansion of material support battalions to brigades within the corps. [REDACTED]

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Annex

Kyakhta

1. Organizational changes in the 5th Guards Tank Division at Kyakhta were first detected in May-June 1982. The first indication that a new type of unit was being formed was the mix of tanks and BMPs parked together in battalions with ZSU-23-4 self-propelled antiaircraft guns and SA-13 surface-to-air missiles. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the unit's designator as the 48th Independent Army Corps. It currently has four subordinate brigades--one mechanized and probably three tank brigades. This corps has not yet completed its internal restructuring or equipment modernization, but we believe it will probably achieve its final structure within the next year. (Details of previous holdings and estimate of current equipment holdings are shown in Table 1 and are discussed below.) [REDACTED]

2. The three former tank regiments (TR) at Kyakhta are in various stages of conversion to what will probably be tank brigades. Analysis of imagery indicates the tank brigade furthest along in its conversion is probably composed of at least four and possibly as many as five composite battalions. These battalions contain at least two tank companies and one BMP company with air defense elements. All three tank brigades also have received a battalion of Grad-1 122mm multiple rocket launchers (three times the number normally found in tank regiments in the Far East). [REDACTED]

3. The motorized rifle regiment (MRR) was restructured between May 1982 and January 1983 [REDACTED] as a mechanized brigade. It now has at least four separate battalions. Each battalion consists of at least one tank company and at least two (or possibly three) BMP companies. This brigade also has received a battalion of Grad-1 122mm multiple rocket launchers, which are not normally found in motorized rifle regiments. [REDACTED]

4. The SSM battalion is no longer present at Kyakhta, and a 220mm BM-27 MRL battalion has been identified in the same area. The BM-27 MRL battalion may be subordinate to either the artillery regiment or directly to the corps. These multiple rocket launchers are normally found only in front-level artillery brigades and have an improved conventional munitions capability including scatterable antitank mines. [REDACTED]

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Table 1 Organizational and Equipment Changes in Kyakhta Unit

<u>Unit Type</u>	<u>Previous Status: Tank Division</u>	<u>Estimate of Current Status: Independent Army Corps</u>
Tank	3 Tank Regiments 94 T-62 tanks 45 BMP infantry fighting vehicles 4 ZSU-23-4 self-propelled antiaircraft guns 4 SA-9 surface-to-air missiles 12 D44 85-mm antitank guns	3 Probable Tank Brigades 94-134 T-62 Tanks 110-149 BMP infantry fighting vehicles 8 ZSU-23-4 self-propelled antiaircraft guns 8 SA-13 surface-to-air missiles 18 122-mm self-propelled howitzers 18 Grad 1 122-mm multiple rocket launchers (MRL) 16 120-mm mortars Engineer company
Motorized Rifle/Mechanized	1 Motorized Rifle Regiment 40 T-62 tanks 96 BMP infantry fighting vehicles 4 ZSU-23-4 self-propelled antiaircraft guns 4 SA-9 surface to air missiles 18 122-mm self-propelled howitzers 18 120-mm mortars Engineer company	1 Mechanized Brigade 52-122 T-62 tanks 96-162 BMP infantry fighting vehicles 8 ZSU-23-4 self-propelled antiaircraft guns 8 SA-13 surface-to-air missiles 18 122-mm self-propelled howitzers 18 Grad 1 122mm multiple rocket launchers (MR) 24 120-mm mortars Engineer company
Surface to surface missile Artillery Multiple rocket launcher	Battalion (4 FROG 7s) Regiment Battalion (18 BM-21 MRLs)	No longer present Regiment, expanded Battalion (18 BM-21 MRLs and 18 BM-27 MRLs) ^a Regiment (20 SA-6 SAMs) Battalion, expanded ^b Battalion Battalion, expanded with additional ABS bridging system ^c Battalion, expanded Battalion
Air defense Signal Reconnaissance Engineer	Regiment (20 SA-6 SAMs) Battalion Battalion Battalion	Regiment (20 SA-6 SAMs) Battalion, expanded ^b Battalion Battalion, expanded with additional ABS bridging system ^c Battalion, expanded Battalion
Chemical defense Motor Transport and Maintenance Air assault	Battalion Battalion none	Probable regiment with 46 air-droppable infantry fighting vehicles (BMDs)

- ^a The BM-27 MRLs may be subordinate to either the artillery regiment or directly to the corps. BM-27s are normally found only in front-level artillery brigades and have an improved conventional munitions capability including scatterable antitank mines.
- ^b The signal battalion has expanded and now has additional support elements and extra communications equipment, including radio relay equipment.
- ^c The ABS bridging system can be used either as a ponton bridge or as a ferry.

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5. An air assault unit at Kyakhta, identified from November 1982 photography, is probably subordinate to the corps. By July 1983 the unit at Kyakhta had received at least 46 BMDs and probably now is a regiment. The helicopter detachment at Kyakhta has only nine helicopters and they lack the lift capacity necessary to transport BMDs. These helicopters could be used for fire support, artillery spotting, command and control, and limited troop transport. Additional helicopter support provided by the Transbaikal front, possibly from the independent transport helicopter regiment at Nerchinsk, would be required to airlift these assets. [REDACTED]

6. Other changes at Kyakhta include expansion of the signal battalion with additional support elements and communications equipment, including a doubling of the radio relay equipment. Increases in logistical support at Kyakhta include new barracks construction which indicates that housing capacity has expanded approximately 30 percent. A new petroleum, oil, lubricants (POL) depot that is two or three times larger than typical divisional depots also has been identified on photography near the Kyakhta area and may be associated with the corps. Because of the expansion of the division into a corps, we expect to see further increases in support facilities, (including further barracks construction and expansion of headquarters, maintenance, and repair facilities), as well as the augmentation of motor transport and engineer elements at both the brigade and corps levels. These improvements are needed to support the new corps structure and further increases in equipment and upgrading of these logistical elements would be required if the corps were to be deployed as an OMG. [REDACTED]

7. The restructuring at Kyakhta is well under way, but there are several areas in which we expect further reorganization and equipment augmentation. Additional BMPs identified in the tank brigade areas from July 1983 photography may indicate either that the battalions will expand from a four-company to a five-company structure. Alternatively, it may mean that a fifth brigade will be formed. We expect to see the replacement of the corps' T-62 tanks with T-72s. We anticipate that all the World War II era M-30s will be replaced by 152mm SP gun-howitzers. The air assault regiment may eventually expand to a brigade. [REDACTED]

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Minsk

8. The 120th Guards Motorized Rifle Division (GMRD) at Minsk has been identified from analysis of imagery as undergoing conversion to a corps since at least October 1982. [REDACTED] the unit as the 5th Guards Independent Army Corps. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] it consisted of at least two and possibly three tank brigades, two mechanized brigades and an airmobile assault regiment. Recent photography has confirmed tanks and BMPs parked together in the previously identified regimental areas (Details of previous holdings and estimates of current equipment holdings are shown in Table 2. and are discussed below). [REDACTED]

9. The 120th GMRD was a showcase division where new equipment was frequently seen before its introduction into other units. Prior to its conversion to a corps, the 120th GMRD was fully equipped with self-propelled artillery in all its maneuver regiments, had three self-propelled battalions in its artillery regiment, and its three MRRs were BMP-equipped. Its special status and unique equipment mix made it a good candidate for conversion to a corps. [REDACTED]

10. The first indication that the 120th GMRD was converting to a corps was the photographic confirmation in two of the three MRRs of additional engineering equipment usually found only with divisional engineer battalions. Analysis of October 1982 imagery identified two SA-8 SAM batteries in one MRR for the first time. These additional air defense assets supplemented the four ZSU-23-4s and SA-13 SAMs that were already in this unit. Additional BMPs have been added to at least two of the three MRRs and included some BMP M-1981s, which were the most modern infantry fighting vehicle in the Soviet army. [REDACTED]

11. By July 1983 the TR also received additional BMPs, some of which were BMP M-1981s. Mixed parking patterns of tanks and BMPs were identified on photography. The number of BMPs in this probable tank brigade almost doubled. This brigade also received the ABS-bridging system, which could be used as either a ponton bridge or a ferry. [REDACTED]

12. At least one BM-27 MRL battalion had been identified on photography by April 1983 in the artillery regiment. The BM-27 MRLs may form a separate unit that is [REDACTED]

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Table 2 Organizational and Equipment Changes in Minsk Unit

<u>Unit Type</u>	<u>Previous Status:</u> <u>Motorized Rifle Division</u>	<u>Estimate of Current Status:</u> <u>Independent Army Corps</u>
Tank	1 Tank Regiment 94 medium tanks 45 BMP infantry fighting vehicles 4 ZSU-23-3 self-propelled antiaircraft guns 4 SA-13 surface-to-air missiles 18 122-mm self-propelled howitzers 6 120-mm mortars Engineer company	2-3 Tank Brigades 94-134 medium tanks 57-149 BMP infantry fighting vehicles 8 ZSU-23-4 self-propelled 8 SA-8 surface-to-air missiles antiaircraft guns 8 SA-13 surface-to-air missiles 18 122-mm self-propelled howitzers 6 BM-21 multiple rocket launchers 16 120-mm mortars Engineer company, expanded ^a
Motorized Rifle/Mechanized	3 Motorized Rifle Regiments 40 medium tanks 129 BMP infantry fighting vehicles 4 ZSU-23-4 self-propelled antiaircraft guns 4 SA-13 surface-to-air missiles 18 122-mm self-propelled howitzers 18 120-mm mortars Engineer company	2 Mechanized Brigades 40-122 medium tanks 129-162 BMP infantry fighting vehicles 8 ZSU-23-4 self-propelled antiaircraft guns 8 SA-8 surface-to-air missiles 8 SA-13 surface-to-air missiles 18 122-mm self-propelled howitzers 6 BM-21 multiple rocket launchers 24 120-mm mortars Engineer company, expanded ^a
Surface-to-surface missile Artillery Multiple rocket launcher Air defense Signal Reconnaissance Engineer Chemical defense Motor transport and Maintenance Air assault	Battalion (4 SS-21) Regiment Battalion (18 BM-21 MRLs) Regiment (20 SA-6 SAMs) Battalion Battalion Battalion Battalion Battalion Battalion none	No longer present Regiment Battalion (18 BM-27 MRLs) ^b Regiment (20 SA-11 SAMs) Battalion ^c Battalion ^d Battalion, expanded Battalion, expanded Battalion Independent airmobile assault regiment (unlocated)

- ^a The additional equipment in the expanded engineer company includes ABS bridging system, tracked mine-layers, MCV M-1979 mine-clearer, IMR engineer vehicle and underwater reconnaissance vehicles. The ABS bridging system can be used as either a ponton bridge or a ferry. This engineer equipment is normally found in division-level engineer battalions.
- ^b The BM-27 MRLs may be subordinate to either the artillery regiment or directly to the corps. BM-27 MRLs are normally found only in front-level artillery brigades and have an improved conventional munitions capability including scatterable antitank mines.
- ^c The signal battalion has expanded and now has additional support elements and extra communications equipment, including a satellite communications system and extra radio relay equipment.
- ^d The reconnaissance battalion has expanded to include some air assault and/or special purpose elements--perhaps one or two companies.

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subordinate directly to the corps. The artillery regiment had previously been equipped with BM-21 MRLs. BM-21 MRLs are now found at a lower echelon in the brigades. It is unclear whether these were taken from the artillery regiment or are an addition to the corps artillery assets. [redacted]

13. The corps-level air defense elements at Minsk were improved with the introduction of SA-11 equipment, identified from July 1983 imagery, in the area of the former SA-6 regiment. [redacted]

14. At Minsk tanks and BMPs have been parked together, but we have not yet detected the four composite battalion structure seen at Kyakhta. We expect to see additional restructuring and further equipment augmentation as the conversion to a corps continues. We have not identified any expansion of the corps support facilities. We expect a substantial increase in the corps support facilities as well as in corps and brigade motor transport. As at Kyakhta, increasing and upgrading the logistical support would be necessary if the corps were to be used as an OMG. [redacted]

[redacted]
A 4

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