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Grozny 2000: Urban Combat Lessons Learned

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Today, Grozny is no more. The contrast between the damaged Grozny before the latest battle and the utter destruction afterwards could not be more pronounced. The literal leveling of the city points to lessons that the Russian Armed Forces learned from their earlier battles for Grozny.

The January 2000 battle was the second major battle for Grozny in five years along with two minor battles in 1996. In fall 1994 Grozny was the scene of fighting between opposing Chechen forces, those of President Djokhar Dudayev versus the Dudayev opposition, which received covert support from President Boris Yeltsin's government in Moscow. In late November, the opposition attacked Grozny with a few tanks and armored vehicles and was quickly annihilated. A month later, the first major battle for Grozny took place. It involved Russia's armed forces and turned the city into a bloody battleground before the Russians drove Dudayev's forces from the city. In August 1996 the Chechens retook the city.

In late 1999 and early 2000, after a very well planned advance to the Terek River, Russian forces again assaulted Grozny—this time with artillery fire and air power instead of tanks and infantry—turning the city into rubble.¹ This battle for Grozny proved different from the infamous January 1995 battle in both the attackers' strategy and tactics.

This article examines what lessons the Russian army learned from the 1995 battle for Grozny and applied to the January 2000 battle. It also examines what lessons the Russian army either failed to learn or chose not to apply.²

Background and Observations

Russian use of force in the North Caucasus finally came as a response to a raid by Chechenled forces into Dagestan in August 1999. Sergei Stepashin, who had replaced Evgeniy Primakov as prime minister in May, sought international legitimacy by labeling this an antiterrorist action. As

the fighting escalated and a series of bomb blasts ripped through apartment houses across Russia, President Yeltsin appointed a new prime minister, Vladimir Putin, the former head of the Federal Security Service and then the Security Council. Putin ordered Russian forces to begin a deliberate advance into Chechnya across its northern plain to the Terek River and tasked the forces with neutralizing Chechen terrorists and bandits.

The bombings in Russia had a telling effect on Russian public opinion, underscoring the Russian perception that Chechnya was a bandit state without law and order and where terror and kidnappings were common, thereby directly threatening the Russian population. Putin and Russian military commanders stressed that Russian society would not be safe until the Chechen threat was completely eliminated. To



Approximate size of the Shugart-Gordon training area at the JRTC.

their credit, this time the Russians did not attempt an initial coup de main against Grozny but instead maneuvered toward the Terek. The intervention force initially numbered 80,000 ground troops of the Ministry of Defense and 30,000 men from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD). Russian analyst Dmitrii Trenin, a retired officer now working at the Carnegie Institute in Moscow, noted the following improvements:

- Commanders of the Combined Federal Troops considered many mistakes from the first Chechen War of 1994 to 1996 and drew to some extent on NATO experience in Kosovo as well. From the very outset of the war, when attacks were made they were massive and as precise as possible. The size of the federal force exceeded by two to three times the average number of troops used in the first war with Chechnya.³
- President Yeltsin promised the military that he would abandon the former tactic of frequent moratoriums and ceasefires that led to irritation and the suspicion of treason at the highest levels of the government among the troops in the previous Chechen War. The federal military command made independent decisions concerning the momentum of the offensive and deadlines of specific missions.
- Russian authorities limited the distribution of information about the progress of the war. Major television channels in Russia strangely consented.

In preparation for the general advance on Grozny, reconnaissance units moved up to the city outskirts in mid-November. By the beginning of December Russian forces had surrounded the city. The Russian command ensured that the advancing force would not be surprised on their entry into the city and deployed special small units for urban reconnaissance. Four Russian sniper companies, two from the Army and two from the MVD, quietly took up positions in the city with 50 to 60 snipers in each unit. The sniper teams, supported by the army and MVD special forces units, found targets and, equally important, provided intelligence on the

whereabouts and movements of Chechen forces in the city. The snipers served as spotters and called down artillery fire on suspected rebel positions.

Russian forces employed maneuver-by-fire to destroy Chechen positions, including air strikes, artillery fire and fuelair strikes. The Russians cite this as a lesson they learned from US fighting against Belgrade, to fight from afar or while in "remote contact." There was, however, very little concern for collateral damage, despite Russian claims that attacks were more "precise" than previous battles. Grozny was a freefire zone. But the Russians had warned city residents in early December to leave the city, hoping to minimize civilian casualties.

Grozny had 20,000 to 30,000 residents still huddled in basements when the battle for the city began. These residents were too old, too afraid or too isolated to exit the city. Reportedly, about 4,000 Chechen fighters remained in the city. Russian psychological operations depicted the defenders as Muslim fanatics and agents of an international, fundamentalist terror network. Russians alleged that Osama Bin Laden had sent a force of 650 men to support "bandits" in the city. In the January 1995 battle for Grozny key terrain symbolizing victory was the Presidential Palace in which President Dudayev lived. In January 2000 Minutka Square, where many roads and underground communication lines met, was designated as the key piece of terrain that both sides fought to control.

With the exception of one probe by the ground forces that turned out to be a disaster, the Russians did not initially penetrate the city center as they did in the 1995 battle. The term "assault force" was seldom used until late January. One infantry soldier stated that he would not enter the city until all of the buildings were destroyed. Special MVD units, the Special Purpose Police Detachment (OMON) and the Special Rapid Reaction Detachment (SOBR) and regular MVD forces were initially used for this task. The ground forces later reinforced or replaced them. While Russian forces encircled and slowly moved into Grozny, Russian air power continued to hammer selected targets—suspected terrorist hideouts, cellular relay towers and communication facilities—across the republic. They sought to isolate the defenders in Grozny from any external support and supply.



Graffiti for Russian troops: *Welcome to Hell, Part II.*

On 13 December 1999 Russian forces took the eastern suburb of Grozny (Khankala), and attempted a breakthrough on 16 December. The breakthrough failed and Russian ground forces, who spearheaded the move, allowed MVD forces to move in and do most of the fighting until mid-January. Heavy fighting for the city outskirts began on 23 December. In the meantime the Russian command regrouped forces for another attempt to take the city by larger-scale probing actions. A decisive yet cautious and deliberate assault began on 17 January and lasted three

weeks. During the fighting, possession of several suburbs and key buildings adjoining the city center changed hands several times. On 1 February Chechen leaders ordered a general withdrawal from Grozny. Their forces suffered heavy casualties and faced isolation and annihilation. The Chechen command in the city tried to organize a withdrawal in the southwest direction to seek refuge in the city of AlkhanKala. On the way out of the city, the Chechens ran into a minefield, suffered heavy casualties and lost several key leaders. Shamil Basaev, one of the most infamous Chechen leaders, was very seriously wounded.⁴ This route, which had opened just the day before, proved treacherous.

Winning the Information War

In 1995 the Russian government lost the propaganda war by default. This time it made every effort to control the media and ensure that its view of the war dominated public opinion. Russia won this information war from day one of the fighting and is still winning. The government and military control access to combatants and censor reporting that could undermine support for the war. Reports of Russian military successes have fueled support for military activities among the populace. However, some military spokesmen have altered the facts and limited independent reporting so much that it is difficult to separate fact from fiction.

With few exceptions, Russian journalists have not complained about the media management, and instead have picked up much of the military's jargon, such as references to "working" in the city instead of bombing or assaulting. Media control was formalized in December 1999 through the mechanism of Resolution Number 1538. The President of the Russian Federation created the Russian Information Center whose job it was to filter information before providing it to the mass media and to control the dissemination of foreign information.⁵ Such tight media control was absent in the first fight for Grozny, and it cost the Russians dearly. One analyst noted that "after the first Chechen war, the Russian military came to the conclusion that they had to first play out the information war against the Chechen resistance, as in their opinion the Chechens had succeeded in morally disarming public opinion in Russia. Therefore, the Russian strategy of reprogramming the mass consciousness became their main mission in their struggle against Chechen separatism—fixing societal apathy towards the task of retaining Chechnya as a part of Russia and guaranteeing support for radical actions."⁶ Efforts to analyze Russian and Chechen activities during this most recent battle for Grozny must account for the Russian information campaign. Interviews with or about top Russian and Chechen military leaders continued, however, and they provided information used to shape public opinion.

Interviews with Russian Commanders

Several noteworthy interviews with Russian commanders demonstrated a desire to apply lessons learned from the January 1995 battle for Grozny and covered a wide range of topics. First, the Russian commanders made every effort to ensure secure communications among their forces. Colonel General Yuriy Zalogin, Chief of the Signal Troops of the Russian Armed Forces, gave a speech to journalists in mid-October. He cited the lack of encryption devices for secure communications during the 1994-1996 Chechen conflict as a serious shortcoming for the federal forces. Zalogin noted that the latest *Akveduk* communication equipment would be delivered in

November/December of 1999 to almost every soldier. Now everyone from the troika sniper teams (they were called "troikas" because they contained a sniper, grenade launcher and machine gunner) to the front commander would have the capability to send and receive scrambled communications, making it impossible for unauthorized persons to intercept or decipher transmissions.

The Chechens, according to Zalogin, continue to maintain several centers to intercept discussions and even have devices that can change or imitate the voices of Russian military commanders. However, as in the last war, the Chechens continue to use foreign communication devices, particularly the Iridium satellite system handsets produced by Motorola. This is the same company from which the Chechens purchased the radios used in the first fight for Grozny (and probably used in the 1999-2000 battle). Zalogin noted that the rebels are still using cellular communications—most probably using relay stations in Dagestan and Ingushetiya since those on Chechen territory have been destroyed.⁷

Second, maneuver-by-fire played a key role in the Russian advance to the Terek and in the siege of Grozny. This technique was not used sufficiently during the January 1995 battle. In November 1999, Colonel General Mikhail Karatuyev, Chief of the Missile and Artillery Troops of the Federal Forces, stated that the successes of the Russian forces were predetermined by the adjustments for establishing and using artillery groups. This included the introduction of four special features:

- Each motorized rifle company and each airborne company was supported by an artillery or mortar battery under its direct command.
- For the first time in practice, Russia used a decentralized zonal target fire strike method instead of their standard and centralized method of artillery fire.
- Fire strikes were conducted against remote approaches from a secure distance, keeping the enemy away from Russian troops.
- Topogeodesic, meteorological and other types of support were more organized and deliberate.⁸

According to Karatuyev, for zonal target strikes at battalion and above, units stipulated their own zone of responsibility for reconnaissance and fire strikes. The corresponding commander was in charge of conducting fires in that zone. This decentralized fire control allowed lower echelons initiative for more active, responsive and effective artillery use. Historically, to conduct a fire strike against an enemy, information from all of types of reconnaissance flowed into the highest headquarters, which then assigned targets for all firing weapons, including mortars. Only then did information flow down the chain of command.⁹ This inefficient use of timesensitive reconnaissance data often allowed the target to move before the fire mission could be conducted. Journalists called Russian operations in Grozny "salami tactics," accusing the Russians of dividing the city into sectors, the sectors into subsectors and then slicing these piece by piece. During the first battle for Grozny, dividing the city into sectors (using the railroad lines and the Sunzha River as dividers) was also part of the Russian plan.



Chechen leader Shamil Basaev (who later lost a foot departing Grozny).; Former Grozny mayor Bislan Gantamirov confers with the commander of the Combined Grouping of Federal Forces, General Victor Kazantsev.

Third, taking a page from NATO's recent conflict in Kosovo, Lieutenant General Gennadiy N. Troshev, first deputy commander of the Combined Troop (forces) Grouping, stated in early February, after Grozny was all but taken, that the plan had been not to enter the city but only to blockade it. Bandits were to be destroyed from afar using aircraft and artillery. This slowed the troops' advance (tanks were not sent in as they were last time; however, they were used for direct-fire support to advancing storm teams). The federal forces maintained their external ring around the city and prevented the guerillas' organized withdrawal. Troshev noted that the force was much better prepared eventually to enter the city this time, since planners "painstakingly studied not only the streets and the routes of approach to some regions of the city, but also to all its public utilities. We raised all of the archives, found maps . . . based on them we determined where the sewage lines are and how and where the heating lines go . . . there are labyrinths as tall as a man and 2 to 3 meters wide. Therefore, before we began to storm the city, combat engineers and reconnaissance personnel went out to these public utilities."¹⁰

Troshev also touched upon the issue of stress, noting that soldiers received time for rest and rehabilitation. Engagements in a city are the most complex type of combat, and the army lived up to the motto of "save the people." Only 100 men died from the federal forces during the entire Grozny operation, Troshev added.¹¹ Reportedly, a few hundred rebels in small groups are still hiding in underground communication tunnels and basements.¹² Combat deaths during November and December, however, reached nearly 1,000.

Finally, the most interesting interview with a Russian military leader was with a Chechen! The federal forces had acquired the services of former Grozny Mayor Bislan Gantamirov. The head of a Chechen police force, Gantamirov stated that he wanted to rehabilitate the Chechen people in the eyes of the Russian and world communities. If successful, he would offer the Chechen people something they had wanted for the past three years—a law enforcement system that would create order for the entire population. He formed several battalions of fighters from

internal agencies, to include a special rapidreaction detachment and a patrolpost service company. Gantamirov was imprisoned by the Russians until October 1999. He stated that he was wrongly imprisoned and that the current leaders of the Russian forces (General Staff Chief Anatoliy Kvashnin, North Caucasus group commander Colonel General Viktor Kazantsev and Troshev) not only supported him but also helped arrange his release.¹³

Gantamirov called for a new government made up of young, devoted people. "This government must not be a puppet of Russian bayonets," he added. "Rather, the federal army must become a rearguard and vanguard for the Chechen government." When asked if there would be difficulty controlling all the clans and tribes in Grozny, Gantamirov added that the issue of *ties* and family relations would not be raised. The only people who would be put in jail would be those with blood on their hands.¹⁴

Chechen Tactics

The Chechens made it difficult for the Russians to acquire any territory in Grozny. Again, the Russian force, while better prepared than in January 1995, was still weak in urban tactics. Privately, one Russian officer told a reporter that "a Chechen company can match head for head a Russian brigade" in Grozny.¹⁵ The Chechens boarded up all first-story windows and doors, making it impossible to simply walk into a building. While trying to climb ladders or knock in doorways, Russian soldiers became targets for Chechen snipers positioned on upper floors. Reportedly the Chechens were divided into 25-man groups that were subdivided into three smaller groups of eight each that tried to stay close to the Russian force (again, "hugging" the Russian force as during the 1995 battle to minimize the Russian artillery effort).



A Russian tank sits on a forward-slope firing position overlooking Grozny's urban sprawl.

The Chechen force had two months to prepare the city and they constructed a number of ambush points. The rebels had two defense lines, with the least-skilled personnel in

the front. Snipers occupied roofs and upper floors of buildings, controlling distant approaches to specific intersections. They attempted to draw the Russians out into the street, according to the Chief of Grozny's defense force, General Aslanbek Ismailov.¹⁶ Snipers also could be found in trenches and under concrete slabs that covered basements. These slabs could be raised with car jacks when Russian forces approached, provide ambush firing positions, and then drop back

down. The attacking Russian force struggled to discern what was merely rubble and what was a kill zone.

The Chechens spent an inordinate amount of time digging trenches and antitank ditches for the city's defense. Journalists reported that many men and women were taken from basements to dig the trenches. The Chechens used the trenches to move between houses and as sniper positions.¹⁷ As the Russian force focused on the tops of buildings or on windows, they were often attacked from the trenches, a sort of attack by misdirection.¹⁸ The Chechens stated that in the city they did not use body armor because it slowed them down, or tracers, which revealed their positions too precisely.

At times, when the fight was dragging on, the Chechen force would move out of the city and attack the Russian force in the rear, especially in cities already taken. This was a daring exploit if one report is accurate—that 50,000 Russian soldiers surrounded the city.¹⁹ Five days after that report President Putin's coordinator for information and analysis in the region, Sergey Yastrzhembskiy, noted that the Combined Grouping of Forces amounted to 57,000 members of the Ministry of Defense and 36,000 from the MVD in January 2000. Thus, the 50,000 figure is possible if both forces are taken into account. Further, Yastrzhembskiy added that there is no censorship or filtering of mass media representatives. Rather, he noted, "the ratio of Russian to foreign journalists is being held at one to three in favor of the domestic media."²⁰ This statement clearly was at odds with the impression of Russian journalists.

Finally, the impressive mobility of the Chechen force included escape routes from firing positions, interconnected firing positions and again the sewer network to move about the city. Reportedly a computer in Grozny kept track of everyone in the city and other areas of Chechnya who reported in by radio. Russian forces especially feared the nighttime, when the Chechens would move against and reclaim abandoned positions. The Chechen force allegedly used chlorine and ammonia bombs, set oil wells on fire to obscure fields of vision and rigged entire building complexes with explosives. Other reports indicated that the Russians offered the Chechens safe passage out of the city and amnesty for those who could prove they were not involved in the fight.

MVDArmy Problems and Psychological Operation Lessons

Federal forces still do not appear to possess a reliable system for identifying friend or foe. This shortcoming continued to cause problems between the armed forces and the MVD, a situation made worse since the Army and MVD forces even encode coordinates differently off the same map. Thus, one force may be unable to understand the other. Some maps are merely photocopies of other maps, and even regulations governing the use of signal rockets differed between services. These communication inconsistencies understandably caused problems between units such as the army and the MVD.²¹ While some Russian sources could not understand others, the enemy often could hear both—using the same radio sets (available on the open market) used by the Special Purpose Police and Special Rapid Reaction Detachments—on the easily found "frequency of the day."

There were other problems between the MVD and armed forces. In Dagestan, Army operations were initially conducted under the leadership of the MVD, but then quite suddenly Internal Force commander Colonel General Vyacheslav Ovchinnikov was removed as overall commander of the fighting (but not from his post as Internal Force commander). A Ministry of Defense official took over when aircraft and armor, which the MVD does not possess, were needed to complete the operation (another story is that Ovchinnikov and his forces did not coordinate with the armed forces as well as some would like).²²

Then in late January, Ovchinnikov was removed a second time, this time from his command during the hottest combat activity for the battle for Grozny, and replaced by Colonel General Vyacheslav Tikomirov, an army officer who had previously commanded the Ural Military District.²³ Some blame the failure of the initial attack on 25 and 26 December for Ovchinnikov's dismissal, while others cite the death of an army General (who was in Grozny on the front lines trying to motivate Internal Force soldiers to advance in mid-January). Still others attest that General Staff Chief Kvashnin simply wanted to put his own men in charge and that MVD Minister Vladimir Rushalyo, who had little or no combat experience, was easily persuaded by Kvashnin to undertake the dismissal.

Friction between the MVD and the armed forces has continued. Some Internal Force soldiers believe that the Ministry of Defense throws the MVD mercilessly into attacks, sometimes without artillery preparation. Therefore, relations are not calm between these two groups. Perhaps that is why military officers were assigned key MVD positions (to include MVD coordinator of all activities in the North Caucasus) to either help with this situation or to replace those who appear unable to perform satisfactorily. From the MVD's point of view, Tikomirov may not try to protect the Internal Troops from being used as cannon fodder, as Ovchinnikov has reportedly tried to do.²⁴ Unfortunately, the MVD is in no position to make counter claims.

The psychological factor also remained an important aspect of city combat. Using leaflets, Russian psychological operations tried to convince the civilian population in Grozny to leave. The Russians used loudspeakers to regularly appeal for surrender and attempted to establish an assembly area for Chechen fighters who wanted to surrender.²⁵ The Russians and Chechens ran several reflexive control operations (a type of psychological activity that resembles perception management) against each other. One infamous reflexive control technique was the Chechen attempt to exit the city. Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov had publicly declared that the rebels were to remain in the city until 23 February. In reality, he apparently authorized the rebels to abandon their defensive positions as early as 1 February. Maskhadov attempted to control the Russian force by making it appear that his forces would remain in place for at least three more weeks.

Another reflexive control operation was the Russian attempt to convince Chechen defenders that they might safely withdraw southwesterly from the city under the cover of darkness. The Russians achieved their goal using fake radio nets purposely left open to the Chechen force and over which they communicated this vulnerability openly. In reality, the Russians were waiting for and crippled the withdrawing Chechens with mines and blocking forces.²⁶

Russia's armed forces appeared to have learned and implemented many lessons from the January 1995 battle for Grozny. They made the information war a priority and controlled the media. Artillery, tanks and even ground forces acquired a supporting role initially, with the latter designated as the intervention force only after the enemy had been adequately suppressed. This caution undoubtedly saved the lives of many Russian soldiers, a greater concern this time around than in 1995.

Armor was not used in an attack into the city as it was in January 1995. Instead of conducting a frontal assault against welldeveloped enemy defensive positions, the federal forces chose to send in reconnaissance units and call artillery fire on suspected enemy positions. This type of "indirect approach" was based on fighting from remote locations. Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) may perform more Russian reconnaissance missions if such a fight develops in the future, although UAVs were probably used in the battle for Grozny and simply have not been reported. This use is implied since UAVs were used in theater during the 1995 war in Chechnya.

Communications problems were overcome to some degree, to include the ability to send encrypted messages and the increased compatibility of batteries with various kinds of radios. Disabling cellular phone relay stations was an early priority since these phones work much better in cities than frequency modulated communications.

In a surprising and threatening move, the federal forces relied heavily on fuel-air explosives and tactical missiles (SCUD and SCARAB). These systems suppressed the Chechens both physically and psychologically and these assets were used to attack fighters hiding in basements. Such fire strikes were designed for maximum psychological pressure—to demonstrate the hopelessness of further resistance against a foe that could strike with impunity and that was invulnerable to countermeasures. The TOS-1, heavy flame system, (a multiple rocket launcher mounted on a T-72 tank chassis) played a particularly prominent role as a terror weapon.



A Russian ground crew prepares a munition personalized with the name "Basayev."

In addition, since the city was nearly depleted of people this time around, radar was much more effective for the Russian army. And, unlike the first battle, this time Chechens were used to fight Chechens (Gantamirov's force), a practice

which overcame many problems associated with tactics and language in the city. Chechen combatants friendly to the federal cause and led by Gantamirov could talk with the local

population and get intelligence on the rebel positions and dispositions. Chechen human intelligence often proved more valuable than Russian signal intelligence.

Two problems that did not get resolved appear to be coordination between Russian military and MVD forces, which remained contentious; and the inability of Russian forces to overcome Chechen hugging tactics, making it almost impossible to walk a wall of steel in front of advancing troops. Both problems were present in the first battle. And it was only in late November that it was noted that high-quality night sights must replace the inadequate current night systems for sniper rifles and ground attack aircraft.

If Russian forces received a *dvoika*, or an "F" in the Russian grading system, for their assault and a *troika* or "C" for their capture of Grozny in 1995, they would receive a *Chetvorka*- or "B-" for their combat performance during the January 2000 battle. They did better than in January 1995 and were prevented from obtaining a better evaluation (B or B+) simply because to obtain combat success they had to pound the city into rubble. Turning a major city inside Russia into ruins raises serious questions about the nature of the military-political lessons learned from the first battle.²⁷

In 1994 and 1995 the Russians also took Grozny, only to lose it 18 months later. Even now unresolved issues linger for Russia. First, military success is a necessary precondition for imposing a political settlement, but the Russian government has not tried to turn its recent victory into a political settlement. Second, a long-term commitment to operational momentum comes at the expense of quick victory in cities. Finally, the recent battle of Grozny teaches that while advanced weapons and sound military art contribute to final military victory, they are not self-sufficient. Combat success in cities ultimately depends on soldiers' fighting will and ability to overcome the stress, chaos and deadly conditions of urban operations.

1. For a comparison of the two battles for Grozny and a deeper portrayal of the context and topographical conditions of the fight, visit the FMSO web page at <http://call.army.mil/call/fmaso/fmaso.htm>.

2. For the author's views on Russian lessons learned from the first battle of Grozny, see *Parameters* (Spring 1999), 87102.

3. Dmitrii Trenin, "Chechnya: Effects of the War and Prospects for Peace," Carnegie Moscow Center's briefing #1, 2000, located at http://pubs.camegieru/briefings/br_title.asp.

4. Maksim Stepenin, "End of the Operation," *Kommersant*, 8 February 2000, 3, as translated by FBIS and downloaded from the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) website on 8 February 2000.

5. Emil Pain, "The Information Component in the Second Chechen War," paper presented at the US/Russian Information Warfare Seminar, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 24 January 2000, 2.

6.Ibid., 6.

7.Vladimir Mukin, "The Communications Equipment is Becoming Obsolescent," interview with Chief of Signal Troops Colonel General Yuriy Zalogin, *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, 22 October 1999, 3.

8.Sergey Sokuit, "The 'God of War' is Changing Tactics," interview with Colonel General Mikhail Karatuyev, *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, 19 November 1999, 12, as translated by FBIS and downloaded from their web page on 6 December 1999.

9.Ibid., The impressive artillery grouping deployed in the North Caucasus contained components of the Ground Troops, Airborne Troops and the Internal Troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Still, problems remained. The force faced a shortage of modern sensors and reconnaissance means. Military observers noted the need for better pilotless airborne vehicles (drones or UAVs used in reconnaissance), sound ranging complexes (especially of the AZK7 type) and highaccuracy weapons. A portable system of automated control was under development for mortar subunits, especially those using the *Santimeter* projectile. Already fielded are the Krasnopol highaccuracy projectile, and the *Smelchak* mortar shell, according to Karatuyev.

10.Oleg Falichev, "There is Not and Will Not be any Mercy for the Bandits," Lieutenant General Gennadiy N. Troshev answers *Krasnaya Zvezda's* Questions," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 1 February, 2000, 1.

11.Ibid.

12.Alan Kachmazov, "Hornet's Nest in Argun Gorge," *Izvestiy*, 9 February 2000, 2, as translated by FBIS and downloaded from the FBIS website on 9 February 2000.

13.Said Bitsoyev, "Federal Army Must Become Rear of Chechen Militia," interview with Chechen opposition leader Bislan Gantamirov, *NovyyeIzvestiy*, 13 January 2000, 1 and 5, as translated by FBIS and downloaded from the FBIS website on 19 January 2000.

14.Ibid.

15.Ibid.

16.*Moscow Interfax*, 30 January 2000, 0854 GMT, as translated and downloaded by and from the FBIS website.

17.*Moscow Interfax*, 27 January 2000, as translated by FBIS and downloaded from the FBIS website on 27 January 2000.

18.Moscow NTV, 0700 GMT, 23 January 2000, as translated by FBIS and downloaded on the FBIS website on 23 January 2000.

19. Ibid., Kalinina.

20. Mikhail Falaleyev, "We Are Protecting World Civilization," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 29 January 2000, as translated by FBIS and downloaded from the FBIS website on 31 January 2000.

21. See, for example, Alan Kachmazov, "Territory Under Control," *Izvestiya*, 18 January 2000, 1 and 2.

22. Aleksandr Igorev and Ilya Bulavinov, "General's Line," *Kommersant*, 25 January 2000, 1 and 3, as translated by FBIS and downloaded from the FBIS website on 25 January 2000.

23. Ilya Kedrov, "Defense Ministry Takes Over Internal Troops. Fighting for Grozny Will Continue Another Two Weeks," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 26 January 2000, 2, as translated by FBIS and downloaded from the FBIS website on 26 January 2000.

24. Yuliya Kalinina, "'Hawk' Becomes a Sacrificial Lamb," *Moskovskiy Komsomolets*, 24 January 2000, 1 and 2, as translated by FBIS and download from the FBIS website on 25 January 2000.

25. Moscow NTV, 0700 GMT, 23 January 2000, as translated by FBIS and downloaded from the FBIS web site on 23 January 2000.

26. Moscow Russian Television Network, 1600 GMT, 24 January 2000 as translated by FBIS and downloaded from the FBIS website on 24 January 2000. Of medical interest, Russian soldiers had painkillers in their pockets and rubber tourniquets wrapped around their rifle barrels. When advancing in early February, after the expulsion of most of the rebel force, the Russian military led with bomb disposal teams since the Chechens left behind many mines in buildings and on roads.

27. How would US forces do under similar circumstances? During a recent speech the US Army Chief of Staff reiterated his interest in four points regarding US war fighting concepts: initiate combat on our terms, at a time, place and method of our choosing; gain the initiative and never surrender it; build operational momentum over time; and win as rapidly as possible. Would these criteria apply in the case of urban operations such as Grozny? The short answer appears to be no. In the city, the enemy initiated combat on his terms, not that of the Russians. The Chechen force was able to prevent a quick victory and often deny the attacking Russian force any initiative—this in a city almost devoid of civilians. Once the initiative was gained, it was often returned to the Chechens at the end of the day. The Russians used an indirect approach to surround the city and inflict damage from afar, outside the range of RPGs that had decimated the Russian force in the city in 1995. However, it lasted longer than the direct approach, took a tremendous toll on international opinion and did not end Chechen resistance, which continues in the mountains South of Grozny and even in Grozny itself.

Photos:

ITAR - TASS

Kommersant

Alexandr Kuzenetsov, *Vlast*