



Russian MoD Considers a “Pocket” Iskander

OE Watch Commentary: The accompanying excerpted article from *Izvestiya* discusses Russian plans for a “pocket” Iskander, a small (likely) Ground Launched Cruise Missile (GLCM) system, known as the Precision Guided Tactical Missile System (VTRK) [высокоточный тактический ракетный комплекс (ПТРК)]. Apparently, just as the Army Group (Combined Arms Army, Tank Army, Army Corps) commander has an Iskander system, brigade and division commanders will have a VTRK. The VTRK is intended to give brigade and division commanders an organic capability to conduct deeper strikes to the full extent of the tactical depth, approximately 100km. (Currently, these commanders’ organic artillery assets, such as howitzers and 122mm MLRS, can only hit targets up to approximately 20-60 km, depending on equipment types and availability of extended range munitions.) Unlike the Iskander that is mounted on a heavy multi-axle chassis, the VTRK is envisioned to be mounted on a two-axle utility vehicle similar to a U.S. Humvee. Since UAVs with a 120 km range are already found at the brigade and division level, these units already have the capability to provide necessary targeting data to the VTRK, thereby creating a substantial deep strike capability. The deployment of this system to the brigade and division level demonstrates the Russian confidence in the up-down and down-up integration of their reconnaissance fire complex and their ability to communicate in an electronic warfare and cyberwar environment. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

“Divisions and brigades must have their own weapon systems, which are capable of conducting precision-guided strikes in the depth of the entire tactical zone.”

Source: Aleksey Ramm and Bogdan Stepovoy, “Карманный «Искандер»: военные получат высокоточные ракетные комплексы (The Pocket ‘Iskander’: The Military Will Receive Precision-Guided Missile System),” *Izvestiya*, 12 October 2018. <https://iz.ru/795530/aleksei-ramm-bogdan-stepovoi/karmannyi-iskander-voennye-poluchat-vysokotochnye-raketnye-kompleksy-vysokotochnykh-takticheskikh-raketnykh-kompleksov---BTPK>

The Ministry of Defense has begun the development of precision-guided tactical missile system (VTRK). These items have already received the unofficial designation “pocket Iskanders”. The launchers of the compact VTRKs will be able to be mounted on Tigr or Tayfun armored motor vehicles. Despite their miniature dimensions, the system should destroy any targets – equipment, fortifications, and also communications and command and control posts. They are designed to conduct precision-guided strikes in the probable enemy rear at a depth of up to 100 kilometers. The VTRKs will assist divisions and brigades to organize close coordination with unmanned aerial vehicles, reconnaissance systems, and signals formations...

That close coordination with the reconnaissance personnel and UAVs will permit the “pocket Iskanders” to successfully accomplish missions for the destruction of the probable enemy’s targets in the depth of battalion offensive operations – up to 100 kilometers.

The new system will be able to conduct strikes against the pressure points of the probable enemy’s defense, first of all, against headquarters, communications centers, the tactical reserves’ deployment areas, depots, and important infrastructure facilities, for example, against bridges or railroad junctions, in order to disrupt the supply of some or other grouping...Forward airfields, tactical air defense missile system batteries, rocket-propelled and tube artillery, EW vehicles, and supply columns can be worthy targets for those missiles. But, if necessary, the missiles will be able to directly reach even such small targets as individual tanks, field fortifications, and weapons positions on the battlefield. In coastal areas, the probable enemy’s vessels, boats, and even ships will become the VTRK’s targets...

There is one more fundamental difference – the new tactical missiles, in contrast to the Soviet missiles, will not be nuclear warhead platforms...

Precision-guided system will seriously assist ground units, Military Expert Viktor Murakhovskiy thinks. “Divisions and brigades must have their own weapon systems, which are capable of conducting precision-guided strikes in the depth of the entire tactical zone”, he pointed out. “They don’t exist right now. The Iskander-M system – are of the operational level and are not subordinate to the division commanders. The Smerch multiple rocket launcher system – is long-range but it doesn’t have powerful precision-guided missiles. There are only guided submunitions”. They will have to develop an entire line of munitions for the new missiles. They will include high-explosive fragmentation, cluster, and penetrating munitions, and also munitions that are designated for below-ground targets, for example, bunkers, the expert pointed out...

Reconnaissance-in-Force Russian Style

By Lester W. Grau

“Integrated fires, rapid detect-destroy systems and the controlled, merciless onslaught of smaller robot tanks and assault vehicles may rip through robust defenses to determine the true nature of the defense and prepare the main attack to totally dismantle it. To the Russian way of thinking, the reconnaissance-in-force remains a viable method of tactical intelligence. Learning how to employ it optimally is the current challenge.”

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<https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/fmso-monographs/230764>

