

PROGRAMED TEXT

**SOVIET TACTICS:
THE DEFENSE**



U.S. ARMY COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF COLLEGE

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

July 1981

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ATZL-SWT

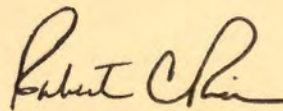
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SUBJECT: PT 100—3, Volume IV: *Soviet Tactics: The Defense*

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1. This text was prepared at the CGSC to provide source material and to support instruction in Soviet tactics. It consolidates research efforts and other writings regarding the Soviet Army by the United States Army Intelligence and Security Command and the Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth.
2. This text replaces PT 100—3, Volume IV, February 1980.
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FOR THE COMMANDANT:



ROBERT C. RICE
Colonel, Infantry
Secretary

DISTRIBUTION:

Special

PREFACE

This self-teaching text is designed to assist you in understanding the defensive employment of Soviet Army units and to facilitate your participation in forthcoming classroom instruction.

Read the introduction. Then read the essential information in the first part of each frame of the programed instruction, and provide the answer in the second part of the frame, based on this information. Work through each frame in this manner. The correct answer is given on the following page.

It is not necessary to memorize the answers that are given in narrative form. Try to understand the key points and apply them when analyzing the graphic depictions of unit deployments. The key to understanding Soviet defensive tactics is the positioning of units on the terrain and the function the units perform. If you can accurately depict the manner in which Soviet units will deploy in the defense and describe their mission in your own words, you will accomplish the learning objectives for this lesson.

INTRODUCTION

Soviets emphasize the offensive as the only means to achieve decisive victory. The constant repetition of offensive themes in their exercise scenarios, after only a short defensive play, confirms the offensive spirit of Soviet doctrine. However, defensive doctrine has not been totally overlooked. The Soviets have developed a doctrine grounded in the experiences of World War II and the great defensive Battles of Stalingrad, Moscow, and Kursk that is also mindful of recent technological developments, such as antitank guided missiles (ATGMs) and nuclear weapons.

The Soviets' stated reasons for defending are to—

1. Await additional resources when temporarily halted by the enemy during the course of an offensive.
2. Protect the flanks of a formation or a seacoast.
3. Repulse an enemy counterthrust.
4. Regroup after suffering severe losses from nuclear weapons.
5. Free resources for other elements of the formation who are on the offensive.

In most of these cases, the defense is clearly temporary and will lead to the resumption of the offense.

The two major forms of defense are the deliberate defense and the hasty defense (defense in the course of the offensive). A hasty defense may ultimately turn into a deliberate defense if conditions and availability of resources do not favor the resumption of that offensive in that particular sector.

The defense at *front* and army levels may involve the entire formation during the initial stage of hostility or in a sector where no offensive action is planned. Normally, only a portion of the formation will be on the defensive while the remainder undertakes offensive action.

During World War II, entire theaters were on the defense and extremely dense defenses were developed. These defenses consisted of three or more static defense belts, with the majority of the combat forces developed in the first defensive belt.

PROGRAMED INSTRUCTION

FRAME 1

The Soviets believe that decisive results in combat can be achieved only through offensive action but they recognize that *certain conditions* may require a defensive posture. Soviet doctrine emphasizes the *temporary* nature of the defense and stresses that it is to be used only to create the conditions for the resumption of offensive action. According to the Soviets, the defense is to be assumed only in order to *gain time*, to *economize* in one area so that forces may be made available for offensive action in another area, to *consolidate* successes, or to *repel* the attack of the decidedly superior enemy force.

Read the following statements and place an X in front of those that are *true*.

- A. One of the purposes of the defense is to economize in one area so that forces may be made available for offensive action in another area.
- B. Soviet doctrine recognizes that a defensive posture may achieve decisive results.
- C. The Soviets emphasize the temporary nature of the defense and stress that it is to be used only to create the conditions for the resumption of offensive action.
- D. Two of the reasons for assuming a defensive posture are to gain time and to repel the attack of a decidedly superior enemy force.

ANSWER:

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

A, C, and D.

1982

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FRAME 2

The Soviet defense is organized around a series of mutually supporting, self-sufficient motorized rifle battalion-sized *strongpoints*. Elaborate, detailed *antitank* defenses are an essential element of Soviet defensive organization. Strongpoints normally are *reinforced* with tanks, artillery, and antitank weapons. *Gaps* between strongpoints are covered by fire. *Obstacles* are constructed forward of, between, and within strongpoints to slow the enemy's advance, canalize his forces into areas favorable to the defending Soviet force, or to cause the enemy to mass his forces creating a profitable target for conventional or nuclear fires. Wire communications are used extensively. Strong, mobile, tank-heavy *reserves* are retained as a counterattack force.

In the space provided below, explain how Soviet defenses are organized.

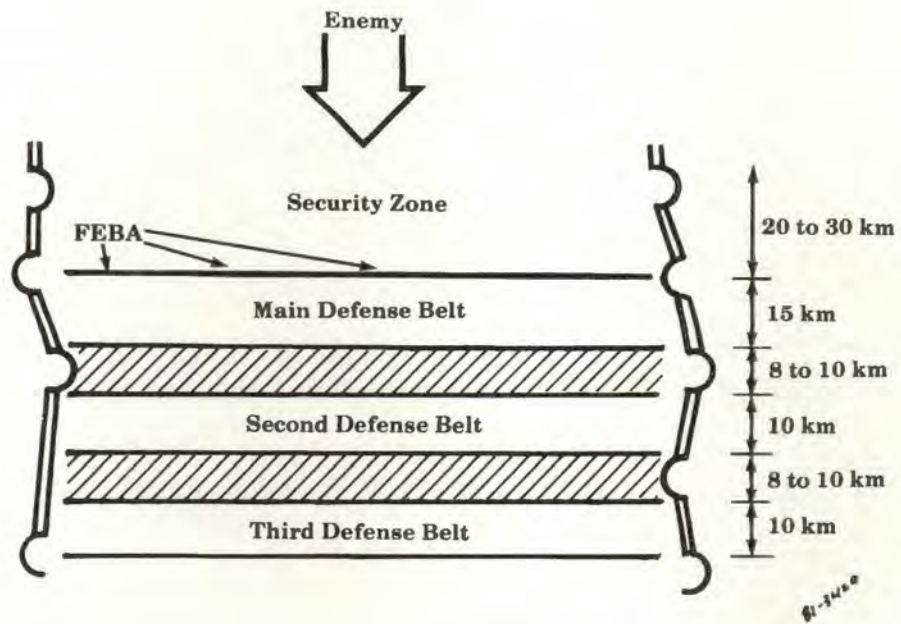
ANSWER:

The Soviet defense is organized around a series of motorized rifle battalion-sized strongpoints arrayed in depth and reinforced with tanks, artillery, and antitank weapons. Antitank defense is the essential element of any Soviet defensive organization. Gaps between strongpoints are covered by fire, and maximum use is made of artificial and natural obstacles. Wire communications are used extensively. Strong tank reserves are used as counterattack forces.

FRAME 3

Combined arms armies, rather than tank armies, will normally establish the defense because of the tank-infantry ratio of their various subordinate elements. Motorized rifle units secure or retain key terrain while tank units counterattack. When the Soviets organize a defense, it is referred to as a series of belts.

Look at the sketch below, then respond to the statements that follow:



Place an X in front of the *true* statements.

- A. The security zone extends forward toward the enemy beginning at the forward edge of the main defense belt, and it may be 20 to 30 kilometers deep.
- B. The second defense belt begins 8 to 10 kilometers to the rear of the main defense belt and is normally 15 kilometers deep.
- C. The main defense belt begins immediately behind the security zone and ends 8 to 10 kilometers in front of the second defense belt.

ANSWER:

1947

A and C.



Place an X in front of the correct statement.

- 1. The density of an object is directly proportional to its volume and inversely proportional to its mass.
- 2. The second deflection of a beam is directly proportional to the square of the length of the beam.
- 3. The work done by a force is directly proportional to the distance over which the force is applied.

FRAME 4

Based on the sketch in frame 3, we can see that an attacker will first encounter the forces of the security zone. When the defending Soviet force and the attacker are not in contact, the security zone may extend out from the main defense positions to a depth of 20 to 30 kilometers. Of course, when the attacker is close to the forward edge of the battle area, the depth of the security zone will be reduced proportionately, and the number of forces located there will be reduced. The missions of the units in the security zone are: delay the attacker, force the premature deployment of his units, deceive him as to the location of the main defensive positions, and provide early warning.

In the space provided, explain the factor that governs the depth of the security zone.

ANSWER:

The depth of the security zone is determined by the distance between the attacker and defender at the time the defense is established.

FRAME 5

Units in the security zone are referred to as "contact and delay" forces. When the security zone is 20-plus kilometers deep, units from the second defense belt *may* establish company and/or battalion strongpoints at the outer edge. If there are no units assigned to the second defense belt, this outer line of defense will not be established. If such units are available, they will remain as long as necessary to protect units of the main defense belt while the main defensive positions are being prepared. Once the defenses of the main defense belt are adequately established, the troops from the second defense belt will withdraw from the security zone.

Place an X before each statement that accurately describes the actions of second defense belt units in the security zone.

- A. Units on the outer edge of the security zone will withdraw to the second defense belt when the main defense belt is prepared to defend.
- B. Units in the security zone are referred to as contact and delay forces.
- C. Units on the outer edge of the security zone will never come in contact with an attacker.
- D. An attacker may encounter battalion-sized units at the outer edge of the security zone if the depth is 20 kilometers or more.

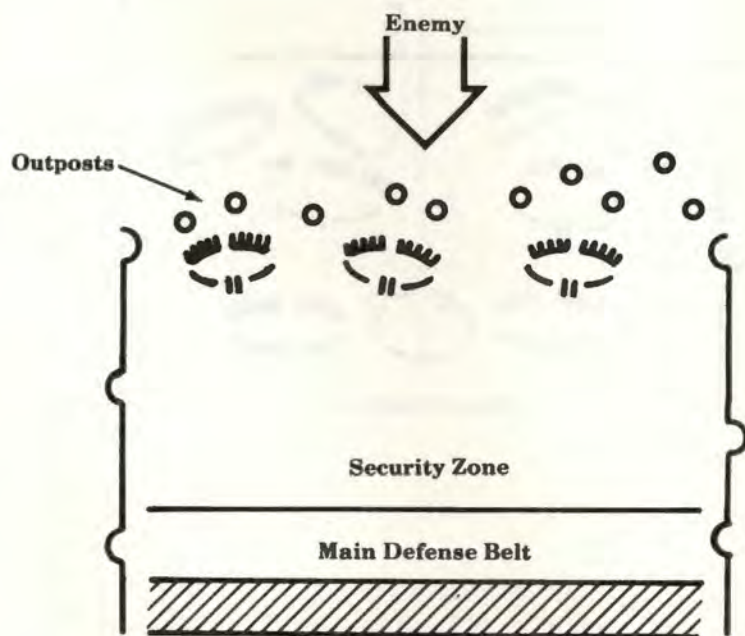
ANSWER:

A, B, and D.

FRAME 6

In addition to the battalions located at the outer edge of the security zone, an outpost line may be established forward of these positions which would include *reconnaissance* units from the division(s) of the second defense belt. These units will limit their activity to observation, reporting, and the direction of artillery fire and tactical airstrikes against the attacker.

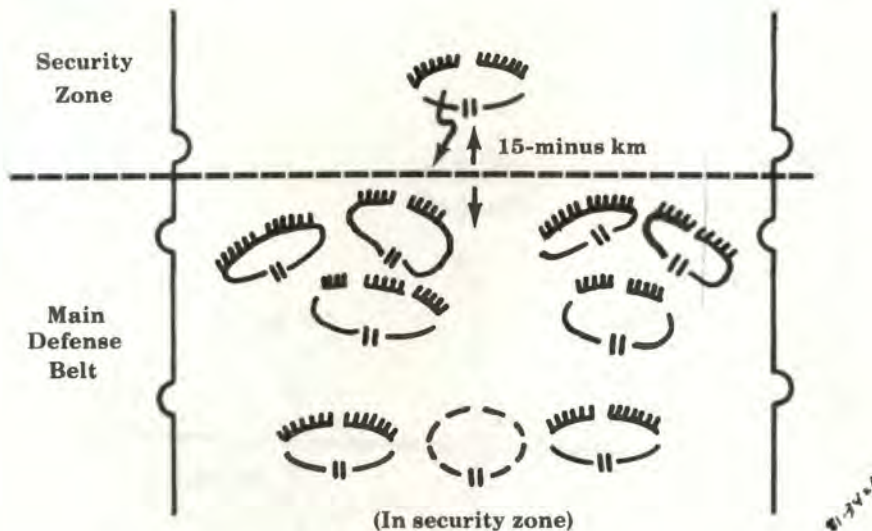
Study the sketch, then go on to frame 7.



FRAME 7

In addition to those second defense belt units that establish positions in the security zone, second-echelon units of the main defense belt will also establish positions there, but at less depth. The mission of these units, like those at the outer edge, is to delay the attacker and force him to deploy his units. Usually, each motorized rifle division of the main defense belt will deploy a single battalion forward at a depth not greater than 15 kilometers from the FEBA. This battalion will establish a position that blocks the most likely avenue of approach for the attacker.

Study the sketch and fill in the blank that follows:



An attacker whose force penetrates the defender's security zone may expect to encounter a reinforced motorized rifle battalion from the main defense belt _____ kilometers from the FEBA.

ANSWER:

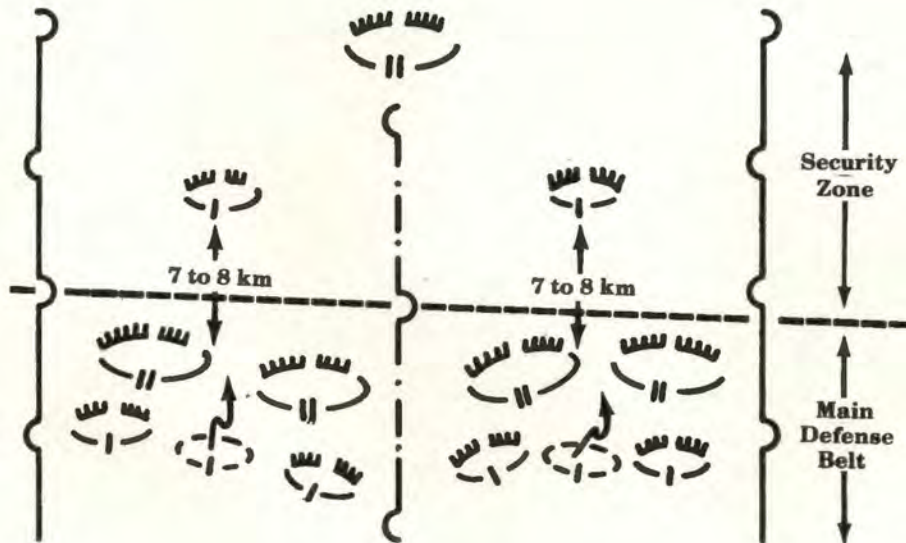
15 or less.



FRAME 8

In addition to a reinforced battalion from the second-echelon regiment, each first-echelon regiment of the main defense belt may be expected to deploy a company in the security zone. Each company will establish a blocking position on the most likely avenue of approach into each regiment's sector, but at a shorter distance than the battalion-sized unit.

Study the sketch, then go to frame 9.



FRAME 9: REVIEW

Match the descriptions in the right-hand column to the terms in the left-hand column.

- | | |
|--|---|
| _____ 1. Contact and delay forces. | A. Source from which company-sized units are deployed at a depth of 7 to 8 kilometers or less in the security zone. |
| _____ 2. Reinforced battalion in the security zone located 15 kilometers or less from main defense belt. | B. That area forward of the main defense belt which may extend for a distance of 20 to 30 kilometers. |
| _____ 3. Security zone. | C. Term used to identify units in the security zone. |
| _____ 4. First-echelon regiments of the main defense belt. | D. Provided by second-echelon regiment of main defense belt. |
| _____ 5. Unit of the second defense belt. | E. Source from which units are provided to protect main defense belt units while that area is being prepared. |

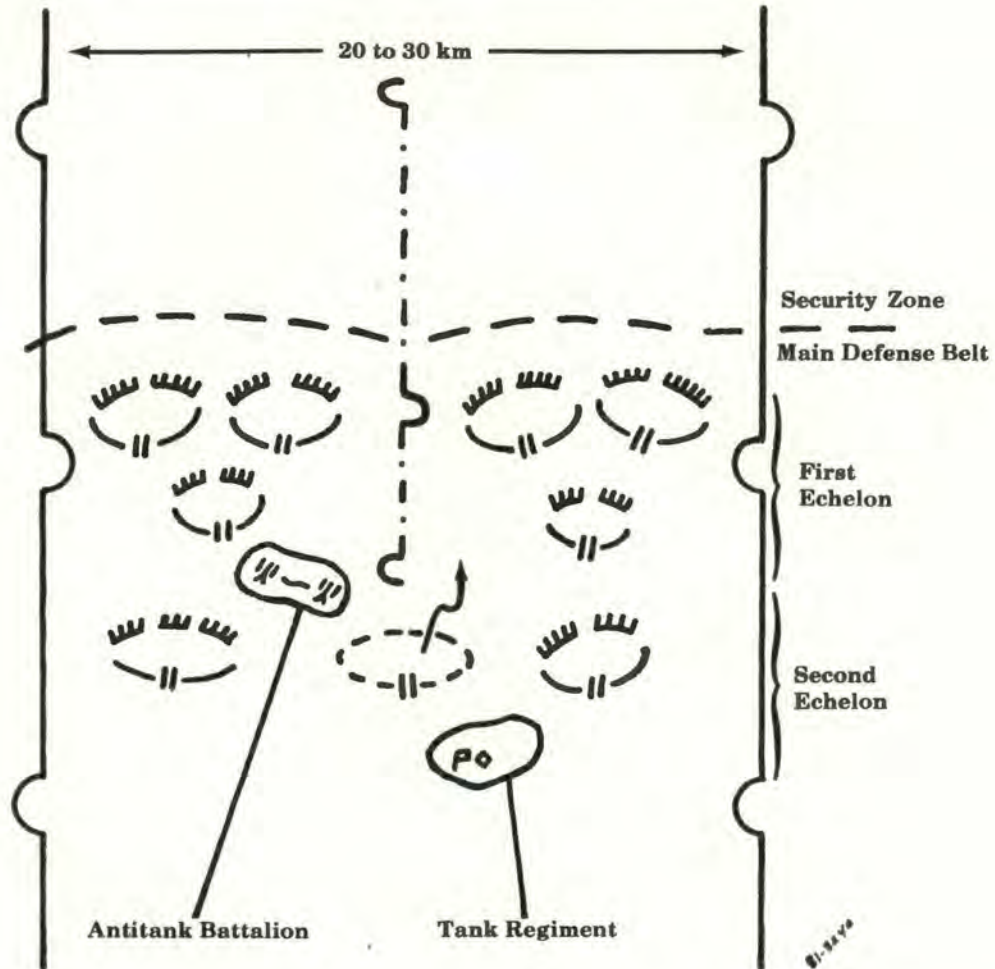
ANSWER:

1. C.
2. D.
3. B.
4. A.
5. E.

FRAME 10

The bulk of the defender's combat power is located in the main defense belt. It is here that the attacker is to be stopped. Soviet commanders will attempt to establish the main defense belt on the best terrain possible and will employ natural and artificial obstacles to enhance the effectiveness of the position. When possible, a river or built-up area will be incorporated into the plan. Soviet divisions assigned to a sector 20 to 30 kilometers wide for defense are considered to have a normal frontage and will defend in depth by deploying one of the motorized rifle regiments in the second echelon.

Study the sketch and fill in the blanks that follow:



1. A normal division frontage is considered to be ____ to ____ kilometers in width.
2. When a division defends on a normal frontage, it deploys ____ motorized rifle regiment(s) in the first echelon and ____ motorized rifle regiment(s) in the second echelon.
3. A regiment normally defends on a frontage of ____ to ____ kilometers.

ANSWER:

- 1. 20, 30.
- 2. Two; one.
- 3. 10, 15.

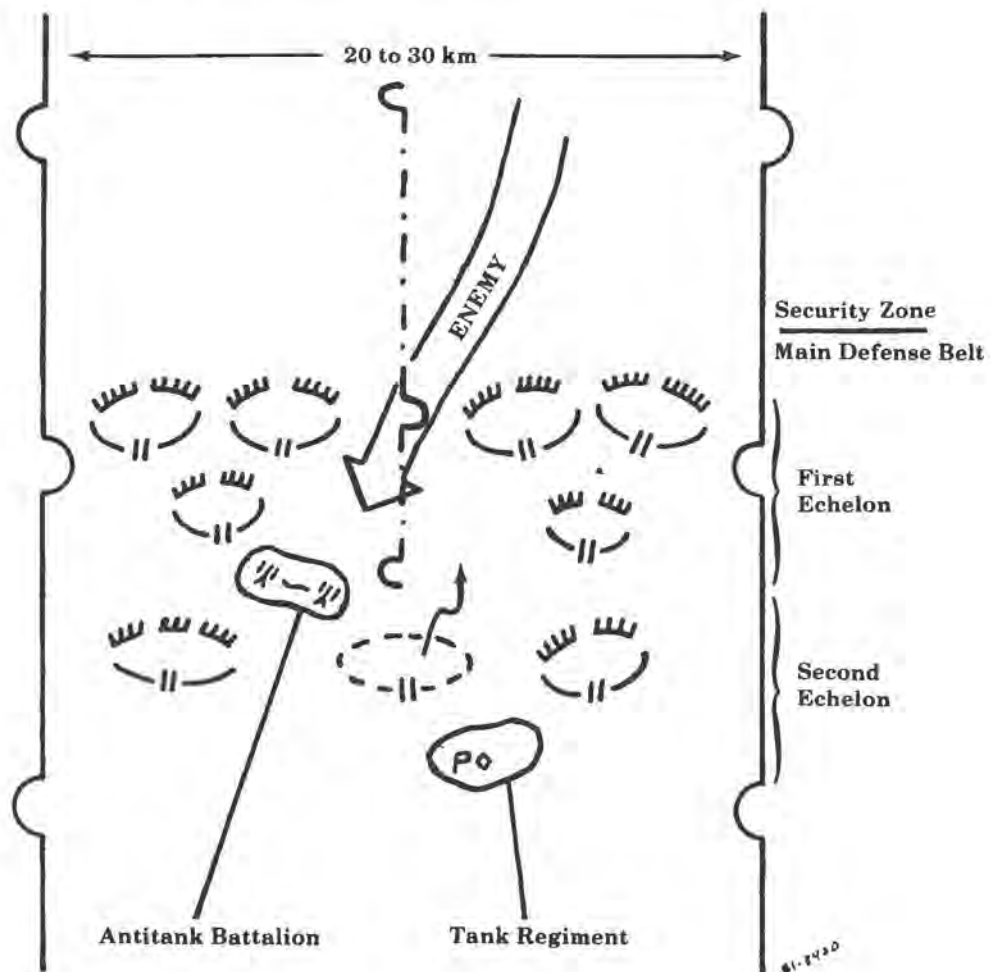
Study the following in the blanks that follow:



FRAME 11

A division defending on a normal frontage (20 to 30 kilometers) deploys two motorized rifle regiments in the first echelon and one in the second. In addition to these units, two other units have important functions to perform. The first of these, the tank regiment, is the division counterattack force. It will be located in an assembly area in the second echelon from which it can launch a counterattack against an enemy force that has penetrated the main defense belt first echelon. It is positioned to deploy against the most likely enemy avenue of approach. The second unit, the division antitank battalion, is located in an area from which it can fire on an attacker. Like the tank regiment, it attempts to interdict the most likely enemy avenue of approach.

Study the sketch and fill in the blanks that follow:



When a motorized rifle unit defends, the mission of counterattack is assigned to the _____ regiment, which is located initially in the _____ echelon. The division antitank battalion is located so that it can _____ the route of the attacker by fire.

ANSWER:

41 21 21 2

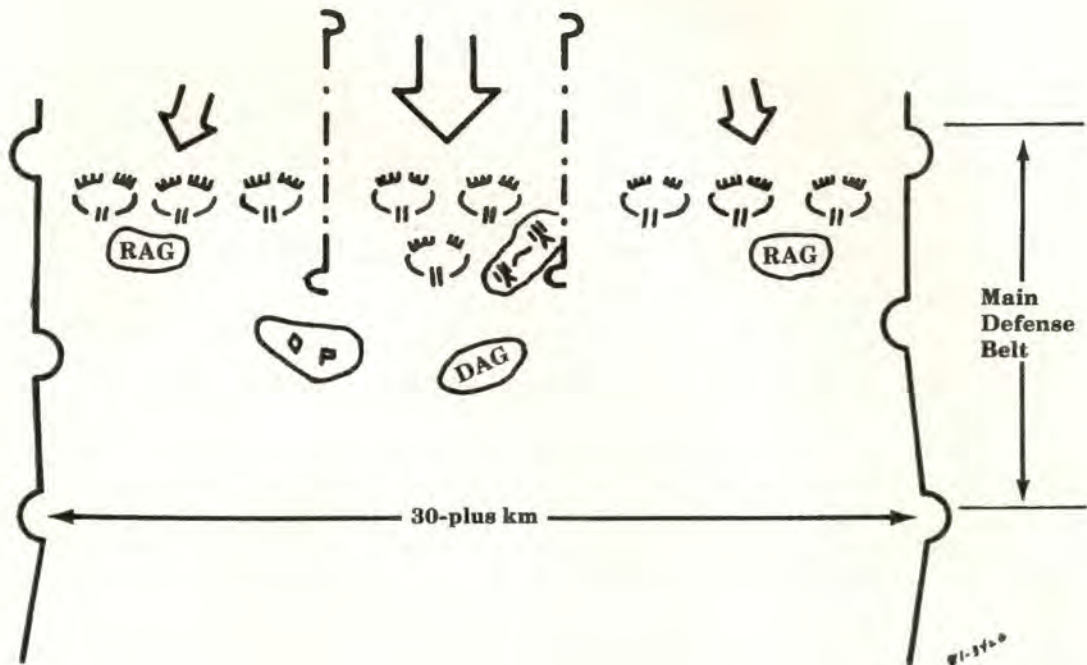
Tank, second; interdict.



FRAME 12

Soviet divisions that are assigned sectors of responsibility greater than 30 kilometers in width do not deploy their regiments in depth. Although the regiments may deploy their battalions in depth, the three motorized rifle regiments are deployed on line. Division commanders assign sectors to their regiments based on avenues of approach. Sectors are narrower in the areas most suitable for attack.

Study the sketch and fill in the blanks that follow:



Soviet regiments deploy in _____ in sectors that contain the most dangerous enemy avenues of approach. They may deploy all motorized rifle battalions on _____ in less dangerous areas. Soviet division commanders consider this when assigning _____ to their regimental commanders.

ANSWER:

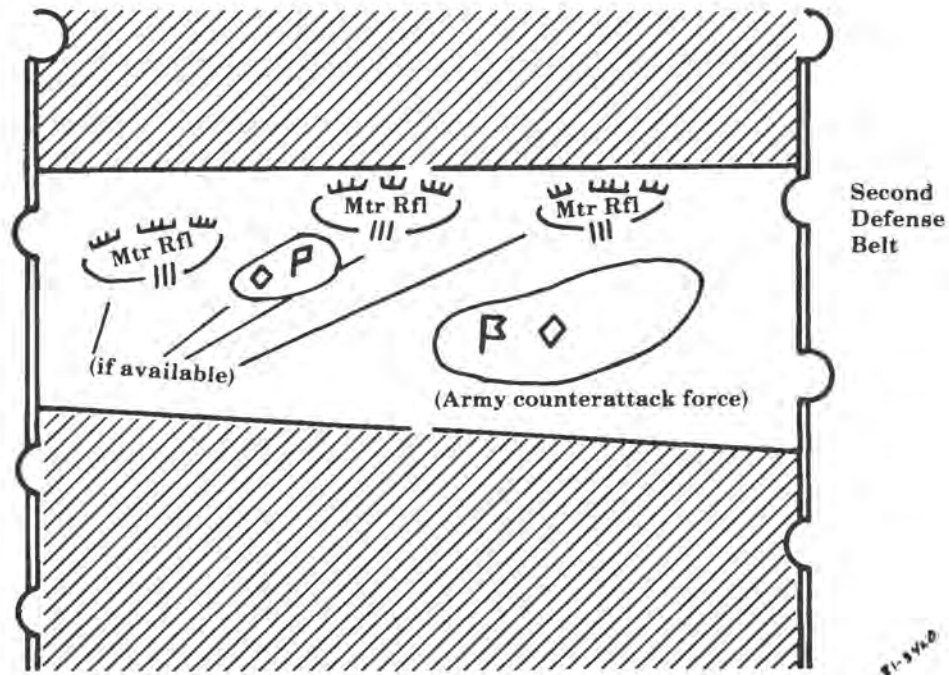
Depth; line; sectors.



FRAME 13

Immediately to the rear of the main defense belt is a zone 8 to 10 kilometers deep that contains no defending forces, although logistic units, command posts, and artillery may be found there. Behind this zone the second defense belt is located. The combined arms army's second-echelon motorized rifle division(s) and the tank division(s) will be located there. The tank division is the army commander's counterattack force. Should a penetration of the main defense belt occur that cannot be halted by units in that area, the army counterattack force will be committed.

Study the sketch below and fill in the blanks that follow:



When a tank division is assigned, the combined arms army commander will usually assign it to the _____ defense belt. The tank division's mission is to _____.

FRAME 14

In addition to the tank division, a motorized rifle division may be assigned to the second defense belt, if available. Its mission in the second defense belt will be to hold key terrain that controls the most likely avenue of approach. Since the bulk of the forces available will be assigned to the main defense belt, a second-echelon motorized rifle division will normally deploy all of its motorized rifle regiments on line due to the width of the sector. A combined arms army conducting a defense will seldom have sufficient forces available to deploy more than one motorized rifle division in the second defense belt.

Study the sketch in frame 13 again, then fill in the blanks that follow:

The unit that holds key terrain in the second defense belt will usually be a _____ division; the unit that counterattacks will usually be a _____ division.

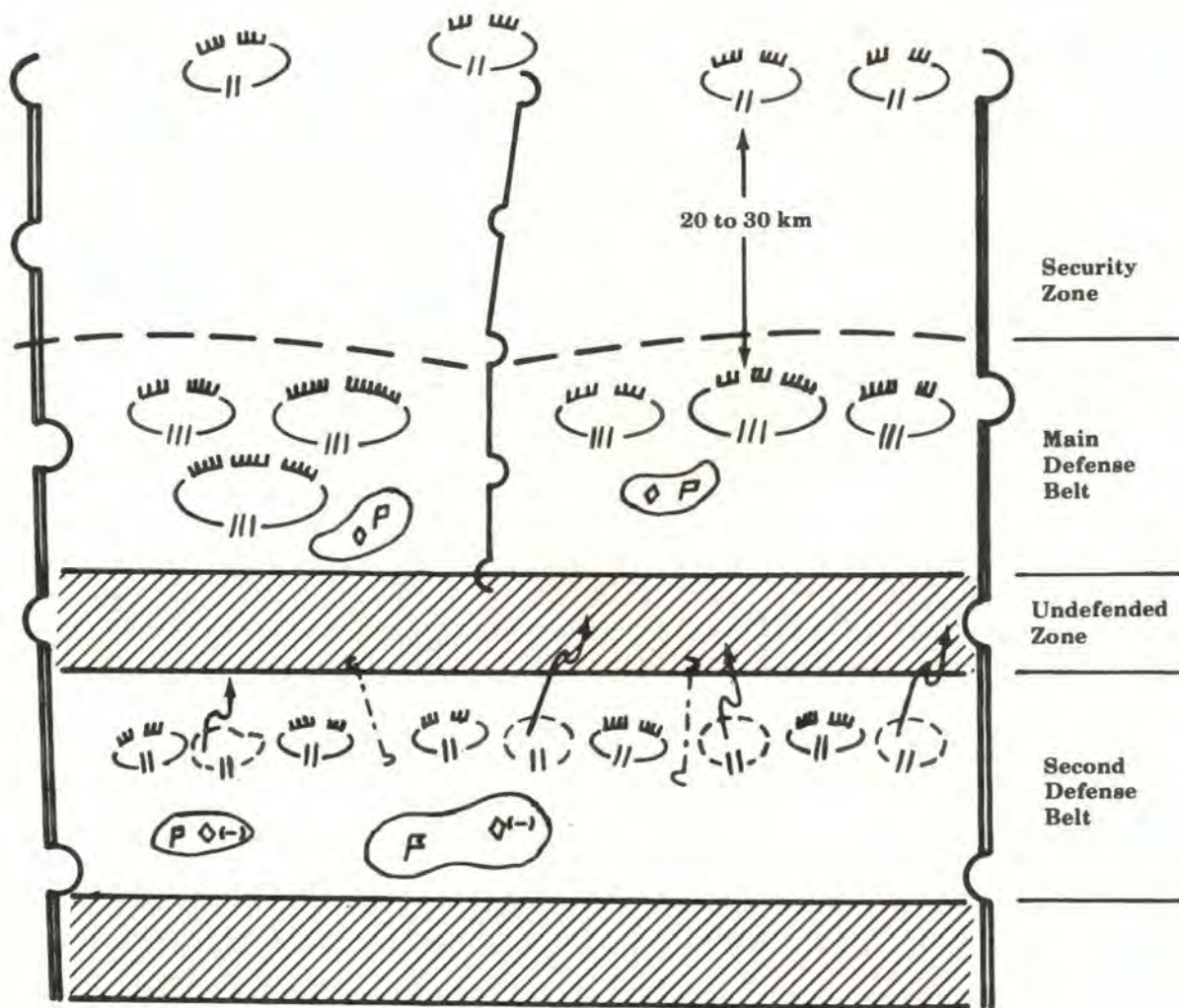
ANSWER:

Motorized rifle; tank.

FRAME 15

It is important to remember that some of the second defense belt forces also constitute the contact and delay forces who occupy the most forward defensive positions of the security zone. They deploy initially to the security zone and cover the preparations of units in the main defense belt.

Study the sketch and fill in the blanks that follow:



Although assigned to the second defense belt, some units will deploy initially in the _____ zone to perform a contact and delay mission. Therefore, some of the positions in the second defense belt will initially be prepared but _____.

ANSWER:

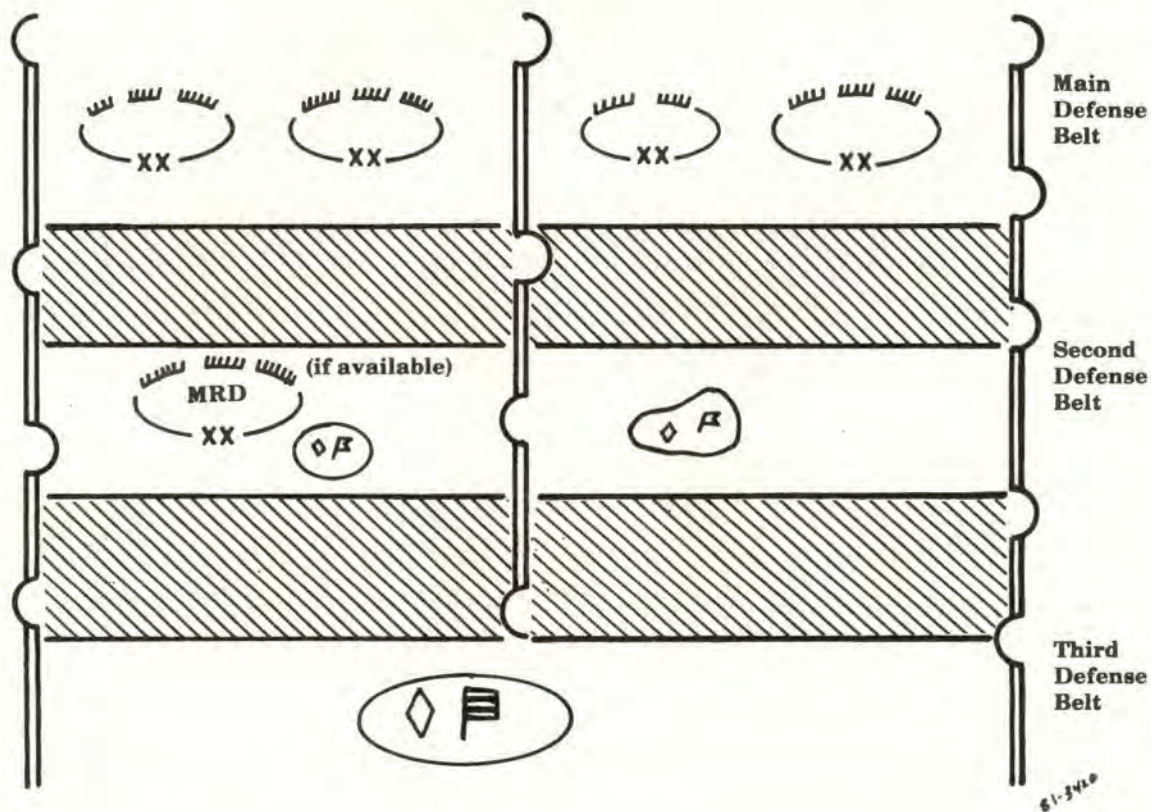
Security; unoccupied.



FRAME 16

The units that are the farthest to the rear are located in an area referred to as the third defense belt. It is separated from the second defense belt by a zone in which very few forces are located, similar to the zone between the main and second defense belts. Units of the third defense belt will vary in composition. Should an attacker penetrate the second defense belt, units from the third defense belt would counterattack. The Soviet *front* commander prefers to launch his counteroffensive from the third defense belt. A tank army will be the principal unit involved in such an operation.

Study the sketch and fill in the blanks that follow:



An attacking force which reaches the third defense belt will be subject to a _____ from forces located there. The front commander will attempt to launch his counteroffensive from the _____ defense belt.

ANSWER:

Counterattack; third.



