

Colonel-General Nikolai M. Dimidyuk, Commander of Rocket Forces and Artillery Troops, Ground Forces, Federation of Russia

The Russian God of War in Transition— From Quantity to Quality

by Patrecia Slayden Hollis, Editor



Smerch from us. It is a 300-mm caliber system with 12 rockets that can fire from 20 to 70 kilometers very precisely.

We have an excellent free rocket system that's called *Tochka* (Rocket Point) with a range of 120 kilometers. It was tested in the United Arab Emirates and deviated from the target by only eight meters. So you see, our standards are high.

Our ammunition has to be completely new. The rounds must be more lethal, more precise—for example, *Krasnopol-M* [a laser-guided, top-attack, antitank projectile similar to the American Copperhead round.]

I demonstrated the round in the United Arab Emirates at a military exhibition there. We fired

Krasnopol-M projectiles at a range of 15 kilometers and hit tank turrets with 39 rounds of 40 rounds fired. That's a good indicator. Only its fire control system might be a little less capable than the American Copperhead.

This precision capability is the direction in which we must be going to develop our munitions. It must take fewer munitions to destroy targets.

In addition to precision munitions, we must have improved command and control systems. We are developing a system similar to your AFATDS [advanced Field Artillery tactical data system] with a certain amount of success. But any command and control system cannot stand alone; it needs to be matched with a reconnaissance system. The goal is to decrease the time from the moment the target is acquired until it's destroyed to

no more than one minute—targets are mobile—with a 97 percent probability of kill. To do all that, it takes a combination of a system of systems: reconnaissance, command and control, and precision munitions.

I have looked thoroughly at the US reconnaissance capabilities and see some problems—universal problems, for example, in detecting firing batteries when you can't observe them, when you need to determine the coordinates of your target at a distance.

We use methods that the United States Army doesn't. For example, we use sound reconnaissance. Using sound, in one minute, we can detect many targets. We both use radars to detect rounds of rockets and missiles. An army needs an entire complex of reconnaissance means—ground and aerial observation—now TV observation via unmanned aerial vehicles is possible.

This turning point from quantity to quality means less artillery. For example, the task that required three artillery battalions will be done by one battalion using new technology. Officers will have to be more technically capable to fight on the future modern battlefield.



The *Smerch* 300-mm Multiple-Launch Rocket System. *Smerch* fires 12 rockets from 20 to 70 kilometers.

Q You wrote the article, "The God of War—The Turning Point" for *Armeyskiy Sbornik* [Army Digest], Number 7 in 1995. What's the turning point for the Russian artillery?

A The Russian artillery is turning from quantity to quality. We used to have a lot of artillery pieces to mass fires. Now we must use artillery applying a different principle: less quantity with the same effectiveness. We can achieve this effectiveness by using new equipment, ammunition and reconnaissance and automation means.

In terms of equipment, I can assure you the designs are up to the highest world standards. Let me give you an example. The entire world is interested in our new *Smerch* MLRS [multiple-launch rocket system]. Kuwait bought

No country is standing still—all are trying to develop these technologies. Recently, I visited the military exhibition in Paris and saw the new German self-propelled howitzer—the PzH2000. It's very modern. Of course when the Germans designed it, they designed it for a purpose—not just because they didn't know what else to do with their money.

Q *Of the US systems you've seen this week while visiting Fort Sill, which one would you most like to have for the Russian Field Artillery?*

A Your command and control system—AFATDS. It would give us advantages—expedite the time it takes to fire. It also would allow us to be more aware of the situation on the battlefield. But with all its advantages, I'm a little critical about relying completely on any one system. You must have a backup system; you must have redundancy.

Let me give you an example of what I mean using GPS [global positioning system]. We use GPS systems. But we don't count only on GPS. We also use geodetic determination because, eventually, the enemy will knock out the satellites that support GPS. Soldiers must be ready to use both systems—to switch quickly from one to another.

Another example is we teach our artillerymen to use the pencil and calculator. We have computers and computer classes, but we also teach them manual calculations and not to depend only on computers.

Q *What has been your main purpose in coming to Fort Sill? What have you learned?*

A Our President has tasked us to switch to a professional, contractual, voluntary army by the year 2000—a volunteer army approximately like your army. In the process of downsizing the Russian Ground Forces, we have fewer divisions...but the organization of our battalions and regiments, including artillery units, is basically the same. So our goal is to have a smaller, well-trained army of volunteers by 2000. I came to Fort Sill to learn how you train your volunteer army at all levels—specifically, artillerymen. One thing I've learned is that you have a very expensive army.



I am particularly impressed with the attitude your soldiers have toward their profession. Your soldiers, sergeants and officers consistently drive to master their artillery profession.

In addition, I learned many interesting things about your system of training your volunteer army. First, your system emphasizes sergeants, something new to us.

We don't have that type of training because we have a compulsory draft. The drafted soldier goes immediately to the combat unit, not to a training center. Therefore, each military district has two separate training programs, one for new soldiers and one for soldiers in the unit at least six months.

We have training centers similar to your centers, but they are for sergeants and their scale is much smaller than yours. We train sergeants at two levels—I train the sergeants for the army and corps artillery for six months in my center. That's my job. The other level of training is for division and lower artillery conducted by the military districts' training units. After the sergeants get to their units, they receive reinforcement training one day a week.

Q *What about officer training?*

A You have a different system of training for officers also. In the beginning, your officers get general or

basic training. Then you reinforce this training with various kinds of schools and experiences at the different levels.

Our system is somewhat different. In the beginning, our officers receive their fundamental training in one of the three artillery and one rocket training schools for five years. Each receives an engineering degree. After graduation, they don't need training for the next 10 years—except for leadership training. Two days per month, the regimental commander sponsors organized leadership training for his officers.

Once every two years, we determine the best artillery battalion commander and once a year the best battery commander. The commanders compete at the regimental and then the divisional levels. In competition, the battery commander must fire his artillery, solve probability problems and conduct a tactical meeting. He has to drive all his transport vehicles and achieve certain standards on his equipment. Only one battery commander goes to the finals from each military district.

Once we determine the best battery commander in the Russian Ground Forces, we put his picture on the cover of a military magazine and write an article about him—you could do that in your journal. The winning battery commander has an opportunity to enter the artillery academy. In our system, after five years of education in the military officers' school, some go to the artillery academy for three more years. The winner also is featured on Russian television, so it's a big honor to be the best battery commander in Russia.

Q *Now I want to shift the focus to military operations in Chechnya. How have you packaged artillery for fighting in Chechnya?*

A It depends on the situation. If we face a large guerilla force, we use more artillery. We really haven't "packaged" artillery—for example, the artillery may provide support for a smaller operation by firing as platoons, but it's still organized by batteries and battalions.

We have several artillery battalions in Chechnya, but in the Ground Forces, they are part of the task force organizations—a motorized rifle brigade still has one artillery battalion as part of its

combined arms force. [The Russian Ministry of Interior Forces fighting in Chechnya with the Russian Ground Forces have attached artillery.] We use both self-propelled and towed artillery in Chechnya, depending on the type of artillery in the combined arms force. Percentage-wise, the ratio is about 60 percent self-propelled to 40 percent towed.

I want to make a point here. Our artillery in Chechnya only fires on visible targets, observed targets. Sometimes we use direct fire because our targets are so close. When we discover a group of guerrillas, we fire at them. Direct firing doesn't take as much ammunition, and it guarantees the peaceful population won't be hit—reduces collateral damage.

When military operations in Chechnya started, the artillery was ordered not to fire on unobserved targets—that's to protect the peaceful population. If we have information about a certain target but we cannot observe it, we cannot fire on it.

The main fire support problem in Chechnya is that the situation is very complicated; we can't employ artillery to its full capacity. The Chechen population is mixed—guerrillas live next door to peaceful people. That's the only problem.

Q *How have operations in Chechnya affected Russian Field Artillery doctrine or procedures?*

A Affected doctrine? Not at all. You really can't change doctrine based on this operation. Maybe it has affected tactical methods of fires somewhat. For example, when we discover a guerrilla group, we encircle them with fires so they can't get outside the circle.

Another example of a new method is when our troops are attacked, we set up a wall of fire. If we are ambushed, we create a wall of fire 50 to 100 meters from our soldiers and use that wall of fire to push the guerrillas away.

Of course, we also fire illumination rockets at night to provide light for infantry or reconnaissance operations. Otherwise, our general tactical principles have not been affected.

As for procedures for fighting guerrillas, we've learned a lot. We've learned how to fight a large group of guerrillas

in populated areas. In such a situation, you cannot employ fires according to the "rules." Sometimes you have to surprise the enemy.

You plan fires for certain directions—for example, along routes or between mountains to create fire traps. The fires start about 30 seconds after the guerrillas are in, say, the valley. At night, we surprise the guerrillas with illumination and then fire on them.

I want to say something to American artillerymen. You have to fight terrorists cruelly. Terrorism doesn't have a place on earth.

Recently in Paris, eight heads of states condemned terrorism—your President Clinton addressed this meeting. Russia completely supports their position on fighting terrorism.

You need to understand that Chechnya, if not stopped, could turn into a center for world terrorism. The Chechen Muslim regime gets help from Arab terrorists—Iran, Afghanistan. Chechnya uses some mercenaries. Can we forgive that? No—and we shouldn't.

The Chechens had plenty of warnings from our President Yeltsen to lay down their arms, that they would receive amnesty. We tried to find a peaceful solution. But they didn't lay down their arms, so we must deal with them cruelly.

Let me give you an analogy for the United States. Let's say a vigilante group decided to separate the State of Oklahoma from the Union to claim it as their territory...and they raped and killed the peaceful population. Do you think the United States would allow this to happen? No, of course not. Terrorism has to be stopped.

Q *Currently, you have a Russian airborne brigade with mortars working with the 1st Armored Division (US) in Task Force Eagle in Bosnia-Herzegovina. What have been the challenges of a Russian brigade working for an American commander?*

A There haven't been any difficulties because we had a good advance agreement. We all agreed that Task Force Eagle would be a US command but that all issues would be resolved together with the Russian command. Also, you must remember it's a peacekeeping mission—we're all working on one objective: to stop the war.

I think this first experience working together in Bosnia will produce results. So, to solve peacekeeping problems or fight terrorists, I think other joint operations are possible in the future.

Q *What message would you like to send US Army and Marine artillerymen stationed around the world?*

A First, I wish to thank General Rigby, your Chief of Field Artillery, for the invitation to come to Fort Sill and the chance to see everything I wanted to see.

Then—I wish American artillerymen further successes in enhancing your combat skills.



Colonel-General [Lieutenant General] Nikolai Mikhailovich Dimidyuk has been Commander of the Rocket Troops and Artillery of the Ground Forces of the Russian Federation since 1992. In his previous assignment, he was the first Deputy Chief of Rocket Troops and Artillery for the Ground Forces of the United Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR). Also as a general officer, he served as the Chief of the Rocket Troops and Artillery for the Southwest (Strategic) Direction and the TransBaikal Military District, Deputy Commander of Rocket Troops and Artillery for the Far East (Strategic) Direction and Deputy Commander of Rocket Troops and Artillery of the North Caucasus Military District. As a colonel, he was the Deputy Chief of Rocket Troops and Artillery of the Motorized Rifle Division for the USSR's Central Group of Forces. General Dimidyuk also commanded the Guards Artillery Regiment of the Central Group of Forces (Czechoslovakia), an artillery battalion in the Guards Artillery Regiment of the Guards Tank Division in the Kiev Military District; a battery; and an artillery platoon. He is a 1957 graduate of the Sumy Artillery School; a 1974 graduate of the Artillery Academy, receiving a gold medal; and a 1986 graduate of the Military Academy for the General Staff. General Dimidyuk has been published in several military magazines, including the article "The God of War at the Turning Point," *Armeyskiy Sbornik [Army Digest]*, Number 7, 1995, and the interview "Old Deformities and New Priorities," *Sovetskiy Patriot [Soviet Patriot]*, Number 11, 1993.