

The Role, Place, and Mission of the RF Internal Troops in Ensuring State Security

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The history of the organizational development, service and combat activity of the Russian Interior Ministry Internal Troops shows that at all stages of their development they have occupied an important place in the general system of state agencies designed to strengthen public and personal security, law and order, and the defense of the country. However, the changes that occurred in the political and legal system, as well as in socio-economic conditions, brought about changes in the place and role of the Internal Troops in the system of ensuring the country's national security. During the period of their existence the Internal Troops have undergone numerous reorganizations. At the same time their *principal mission*—ensuring the state's national security against internal threats—has always remained unchanged.

As a new geopolitical situation is emerging, a special role is played by the state's efforts to eliminate crises, which are accompanied by rampant crime and armed conflicts in the territory of the Russian Federation.

Therefore, alongside political and socio-economic measures, preparedness for practical action by security forces, including the Internal Troops, acquires special importance. One of the basic documents regulating activity in ensuring the security of the individual, society and the state is the National Security Concept of the Russian Federation¹ which defines *n a t i o n a l s e c u r i t y* as the insurance of the guaranteed and stable functioning of the “individual—society—state” system in all spheres of life. This condition is achieved by ensuring the country’s defense against internal and external threats in the interest of ensuring its integrity, internal stability, and sovereign and progressive development. In accordance with the National Security Concept of the Russian Federation and the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation,² at the present stage, the problem of ensuring national security of the state has become more acute in the domestic sphere. It should be noted, however, that a regulatory legal framework determining the organization of the system of ensuring the state’s internal security is lacking today. The entire process of the formation of a scientific and theoretical basis and the legal foundations of ensuring it is compounded by the fact that the term “internal security,” unlike many other forms of security, has not been defined by federal laws or regulatory enforceable legal documents of the Russian. True, the section “Russia’s National Interests” of the National Security Concept of the Russian Federation refers to the internal political sphere of Russia’s national interests, which consist in maintaining the stability of the constitutional system, the institutions of state power, ensuring civil peace and national accord, territorial integrity, the unity of the legal space, law and order, as well as the neutralization of the causes and conditions conducive to political and religious extremism and ethno separatism, and their consequences—social, interethnic, and religious conflicts, and terrorism.

Analysis of the content of the terms “public security” and “state security” suggests that they do not make full provisions for measures to deal with an array of internal threats to the state’s security at the present stage. Although the section “Ensuring the National Security of the Russian Federation” of the National Security Concept of the Russian Federation gives priority to the timely forecasting and identification of internal and external threats to the national security of the Russian Federation. The most dangerous *internal threats* to national security are: attempts to forcibly overthrow the constitutional system; unlawful activity by extremist nationalist, religious, separatist, and terrorist movements, organizations and structures, aimed at disrupting the unity and territorial integrity of the Russian Federation and destabilizing the internal political situation in the country; planning, preparation, and conduct of actions aimed at disrupting the operation of federal agencies of state power, and attacking state, industrial, and military installations, and elements of vital infrastructure; creation, arming, training and operation of illegal armed formations; illegal circulation in RF territory of arms, ammunition, explosives and other means that can be used in the perpetration of bomb attacks, terrorist acts, and other unlawful actions; organized crime,

terrorism, smuggling, and other unlawful activities on a scale threatening the military security of the Russian Federation; threats to Russia's national interests in the economic realm; unregulated immigration policy; and the loss of the information space.

Generally, ensuring the state's national security against internal threats is the task of internal affairs agencies of the Russian Federation, the RF Interior Ministry Internal Troops, and other law enforcement agencies which, in conjunction with various state bodies, public organizations and citizens, are duty bound to create an atmosphere of public calm, normal conditions for the functioning of state and public organizations, the work and recreation of citizens by identifying and averting violations of the law and conflict situations, and neutralizing threats that can emerge.

Therefore, the concept of *internal security* of the Russian Federation, which is an essential element of the country's national security, can be defined as the protection of the constitutional system and sovereignty of the state, the legitimate interests of society and the individual against threats arising from actions dangerous to the public, and other unlawful activities on a scale threatening the integrity of the Russian Federation, as well as emergency situations. Almost each of the existing official legal enforceable documents directly or indirectly points to the important *role* of the Internal Troops in ensuring the internal security of the state, enforcing law and law in peacetime, as well as in an emergency situation and under martial law regulations, which consists, first, in that being as they are the principal force component of the Russian Interior Ministry in curbing, localizing and neutralizing internal armed conflicts, they address these and other missions assigned to them in accordance with the law by using military means in peacetime, and are the principal component of the state's military organization in ensuring the internal security of the Russian Federation, and second, the Internal Troops perform the tasks of ensuring internal security, as a general rule, in conjunction with internal affairs agencies of the Russian Federation and agencies of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation.

The *place* of the Internal Troops as an armed formation of state power, therefore, consists in ensuring the country's *internal security* in peacetime and fulfilling the tasks of ensuring the country's *territorial defense* in wartime with priority being given to the law enforcement function.

In the interest of ensuring the internal security of the Russian Federation, the Internal Troops perform the following *tasks*:³ participation, in conjunction with internal affairs agencies of the Russian Federation, in protecting public order, ensuring public security and emergency regulations; participation in the fight against terrorism and enforcing law and order during a counterterrorism operation; protection of important state facilities and special cargoes; participation in the territorial defense of the Russian Federation; and provision of assistance to the Border Troops of the Federal Security Service in protecting the state border of the Russian Federation.

It needs to be stressed that **due to their unique specifics, the main tasks of the Internal Troops are not duplicated by any other security, military or law enforcement structure.** A serious problem in this context is the use of military force in peacetime amid internal armed conflicts. The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation, fully in compliance with the norms of international humanitarian law, introduced the concept of “internal armed conflict,” while the Federal Law on Countering Terrorism defined the concepts of “terrorist activity,” “terrorist act,” “countering terrorism” and “counterterrorist operation.” These documents make provisions for various forms of the employment of forces and assets to ensure security in the event of the aforementioned threats.

Under the system of ensuring internal security that evolved in the country in the postwar [post 1945] period, the sheer possibility of the outbreak of an armed conflict was rejected as a matter of principle—due to the absence of “an internal enemy.” Following the disintegration of the USSR, which was accompanied by the emergence of a broad range of overt and covert internal conflicts and a fierce confrontation between political forces in the former Soviet Union, the country’s leadership was faced with the problem of ensuring the state’s internal security. In the course of its evolution, this problem subsequently acquired a concrete social, economic, ethnic, and political dimension.

In its significance, scale and the volume of the employment of forces and assets, ensuring internal security in the present day peacetime conditions is a principal task in ensuring the state’s national security against the main internal threats. In the interest of ensuring its internal security, the Russian Federation permits the use of military force in the country in strict compliance with the Constitution of the Russian Federation and federal laws in case of a threat to the life of its citizens or the country’s territorial integrity or the threat of a forcible change of the existing constitutional system.

Virtually all main tasks involved in ensuring internal security are, in accordance with existing laws, distributed between the Interior Ministry, the Federal Security Service, the Ministry for Civil Defense, Emergency Management and Disaster Relief, the Federal Protection Service, the Ministry of Justice, the courts, the prosecutor’s offices, and other federal executive power agencies. However, the tasks involved in the neutralization of internal armed conflicts have yet to be specified and allocated. In defining the armed conflict* as a form of resolving national, ethnic, religious, and other contradictions with the use of military force, where the country does not enter into a state of war, one could consider the possibility of expanding the scope of action by the Internal Troops in localizing (stopping) such conflicts. The *d i r e c t i o n s* of activity by the Internal Troops and other security, military and law enforcement structures in ensuring the state’s internal security, averting, localizing and terminating internal armed conflicts are as follows.

* Armed conflicts include military actions, military incidents and other armed clashes with the use of regular or irregular armed formations.

At the *initial stages* of a conflict (massive public rallies, violations of public order on a mass scale), when threats are still in the realm of public security, the main role in normalizing the situation belongs to security services and internal affairs agencies with support from the Internal Troops. During the *escalation* of a conflict within the bounds of one constituent member of the Russian Federation, it should be localized by internal affairs agencies with the employment of Internal Troops as necessary. In the event of a conflict *spreading* to the territory of two or several constituent members or within the bounds of one constituent member but with a higher level of intensity (mass disturbances, the use of firearms), accompanied by a sharp weakening in the role of territorial internal affairs agencies due to command and control problems, the lack of mobile reserves and insufficient capability to ensure command and control of mixed arms forces and assets, command and control of conflict resolution should be transferred to the level of a federal district with the establishment of a special operations headquarters (to ensure a better coordination of action) with the forces and assets of the Russian Interior Ministry. Immediate command and control of forces and assets should pass to the Internal Troops, which possess a mobile and flexible command and control system, in conjunction with internal affairs agencies and units, and large formations of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation. In this context, limited use can be made of reconnaissance, intelligence, and special purpose units, long range stand-off engagement, engineer, communication and EW assets, and in exceptional circumstances also Ground Force units, military formations of other security, military and law enforcement structures, all of them operating under Internal Troops command. In such conditions, command and control of Internal Troops assets is organized by auxiliary command and control posts deployed in operation areas via special district command groups and the Internal Troops Main Command.

It should be noted that the **use of force in resolving internal conflicts is a controversial matter**. On the one hand, the use of force is objectively necessary to contain extremist manifestations and ensure people's security, but on the other, it is impossible to resolve an internal conflict by force alone. In this connection, higher demands are being set for the special training and preparation of the Internal Troops in handling a diversity of challenging tasks and goals.

In the past decade, many local and regional conflicts have acquired new dangerous *features*. They have become more extensive and aggressive, receiving active support from abroad and drawing substantial masses of the local population into their orbit, while *terrorism* has become one of the most glaring forms of armed conflicts. This country has for many years now been fighting against these negative practices. The cruel and inhuman terrorist attacks in Moscow, Beslan and other cities, resulting in heavy loss of life, require the state to take the toughest possible measures. It is necessary to thoroughly analyze ongoing events and respond to them effectively.

Not only internal affairs agencies and the Internal Troops, but also other law enforcement agencies started to be used in resolving local and regional conflicts

at different stages of their evolution. The adoption of the Federal Law on Countering Terrorism (No. 35-FZ)⁴ addressed one of the difficult and controversial issues—namely, the participation of the RF Armed Forces in the suppression of terrorism. In accordance with the law, the following forces and assets are employed to neutralize a terrorist attack: the Federal Security Service, as well as a special grouping of forces and assets, which can comprise subunits, units and formations of the RF Armed Forces, subunits of federal executive power agencies in charge of security, defense, internal affairs, justice, civil defense, emergency situations, fire safety and fire fighting, and other federal executive power agencies, as well as subunits of executive power agencies of constituent members of the Russian Federation.

On July 27, 2006, Federal Law No. 153-FZ⁵ was adopted, introducing amendments to the Federal Law on the Internal Troops of the Interior Ministry of the Russian Federation, in accordance with which, the Internal Troops were assigned an *additional mission*—i.e., participation in the fight against terrorism and ensuring the enforcement of law and order in the course of counterterrorist operations. This law is in conformity with at least three provisions of the National Security Concept of the Russian Federation, reflecting the main tasks of ensuring national security: implementation of short- and long- term measures to prevent and neutralize internal and external threats; ensuring the personal security of the individual and citizen, as well as constitutional rights and freedoms in the territory of the Russian Federation; streamlining the state power system in the Russian Federation, federative relations, local government and legislation of the Russian Federation; harmonizing interethnic relations; strengthening law and order, and preserving the socio-political stability of society.

Therefore, all state structures, including the military, are to be used to eliminate hotbeds of terrorism on the regional level, which has assumed an international scale. The action to fight off the terrorist invasion of Dagestan, eliminate bandit formations in Chechnya, prevent and neutralize terrorist acts and bombing attacks in Russia has assumed the form of a joint counterterrorist operation. The *principal role* of the Internal Troops is now to enforce law and order under emergency regulations (as established by the Federal Constitutional Law on the State of Emergency,⁶ which in particular said that “emergency regulations are ensured by forces and assets of internal affairs agencies, the penitentiary system, federal security agencies, and the *Internal Troops*, as well as forces and assets of agencies for affairs of civil defense, emergency situations, and elimination of natural disasters”).

It is important to note that the results of counterterrorist operations in the North Caucasus and the effectiveness of using security, law enforcement and military structures do not always meet modern requirements. Certain matters of command and control, and organization of operations by their place and time, as well as the tasks to be accomplished by forces and assets under different commands sometimes are not given sufficient priority. Thus, as the events of June

2004 in Ingushetia showed, the presence of even substantial security, law enforcement, military, and intelligence structures does not necessarily guarantee citizens' security.

In the interest of ensuring a more effective coordination of actions to prevent and neutralize operations by illegal armed formations and terrorist attacks in the territory of the Southern Federal District, in accordance with a decree by the president of the Russian Federation (No. 352rps, August 2, 2004), permanent rapid response groups were created in 12 cities of the Southern Federal District (Maikop, Makhachkala, Nazran, Nalchik, Elista, Cherkessk, Vladikavkaz, Krasnodar, Stavropol, Astrakhan, Volgograd, and Rostov-on-Don) to provide effective command and control of joint forces and assets in the interest of ensuring the prompt and effective action to eliminate illegal armed formations, as well as to stop terrorist attacks. Their principal *functions* are as follows:

- neutralizing the activity of unlawful armed formations and terrorist groups;
- planning and preparing special operations;
- organization and coordination of joint forces and assets; and
- organization and conduct of joint drills and training exercises.

The regulations on rapid response groups under the command of antiterrorism commissions (since August 2006, rapid reaction groups under special operations headquarters)⁷ establish the composition of joint forces and assets as part of these groups, and determine the organization and procedure of action by these groups. In case of direct threats of attack by illegal armed formations or terrorist attacks, available forces and assets are transferred under the command of operational command and control groups (senior officers of the Internal Troops) and action is taken to stabilize the situation in the Russian Federation. Rapid reaction groups have, in effect, become the final element in the system of antiterrorism activity in the Southern Federal District.

One of the *important missions* assigned to the Internal Troops is participation in the *territorial defense* of the Russian Federation, which is necessitated by the threat that the enemy could use special forces and assets designed to incapacitate important military and state installations in order to undermine the country's economic capability and the operational effectiveness of troops, and disrupt command and control. The general tasks of territorial defense are as follows: protection and defense of military and government installations and communication lines; suppression of the enemy's intelligence, reconnaissance, and terrorist forces; ensuring the introduction of emergency regulations or martial law regulations, and enforcing law and order in the Russian Federation as a whole or in certain parts of the country.

The role of territorial defense as a special form of warfare organized in the interest of protecting the population, important installations, and communication

lines against terrorist attacks and enemy raids is constantly growing today. This is due mainly to the nature and specifics of modern military actions by a possible adversary. As shown by the experience of armed conflicts in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, and Iraq, their core was constituted not by operations in the “classical” sense of the term, but by action to disable (eliminate) important installations of military infrastructure, power, utilities and vital supplies with the use of precision guided weapons and subsequent actions by special task forces.

The ongoing rise in international terrorist activity also compels the implementation of advance measures to secure the credible protection and defense of important installations, including communication lines and utilities, and organizing the fight against terrorist forces and various illegal armed formations.

Success in the performance of territorial defense missions will to a very large degree depend on close cooperation between all agencies, forces and assets involved in the effort, as well as putting in place a credible territorial defense system in peacetime.

The Interior Ministry of the Russian Federation makes available the Internal Troops as well as forces and assets under the command of internal affairs agencies to conduct territorial defense. The Internal Troops provide the following forces and assets: formations (military units) to protect important state installations and special cargoes, special operations and special purpose formations (military units), special motorized military units and training military units.

One territorial defense organization problem is the formation of *an optimal structure, composition, and numerical strength of military units* assigned to perform territorial defense missions. Forces and assets assigned territorial defense missions conduct military action and use other special forms and methods of action (special operations, combat service, special measures, combat actions and operations, etc.). The specific composition of forces and assets is determined by military district command in conjunction with commanders of respective formations and units of branches of service, troops, and military agencies.

The problem is that the limited numerical strength of troops (forces) conducting a territorial defense operation prevents them from performing the entire range of missions assigned to them, while the forces and assets of military units and formations to be deployed within specified time frames may not be sufficiently prepared to perform specific territorial defense missions. It would be more effective to use only the Internal Troops, which in peacetime are permanent readiness troops, have a unified command and control system, well trained personnel, and act in close cooperation with internal affairs agencies, the Armed Forces, and other security, defense and law enforcement services. In so far as they have well trained command and control agencies that are deployed in peacetime, they are able, in conjunction with federal executive power bodies, to ensure effective planning and during the period of threat and in wartime, to implement measures involved in the performance of territorial defense missions. However, one problem for the Internal Troops is the advance mobilization of manpower

and technical reserves during the period of threat. In order to solve this problem, it is expedient to resume the practice of conducting regular training exercises for reserve officers in the required specialties by using the assets and resources of active Internal Troops formations (units).

Analysis of the employment of the Internal Troops has shown that they are the state's major security and law enforcement structure in matters of preventing and neutralizing internal conflicts and restoring law and order in the country, which, in its entirety, predetermines their important role in ensuring the state's internal security. By performing essential tasks in enforcing law and order and ensuring public security in our cities and populated areas, protecting and defending important state installations, including the country's nuclear and military complexes and being in constant readiness to neutralize an armed conflict in any part of Russia, the internal affairs agencies and the Internal Troops of the RF Interior Ministry are a guarantee of the integrity of the state.

NOTES:

1. The National Security Concept of the Russian Federation, approved by RF Presidential Decree No. 1300 dated December 17, 1997.
 2. The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation, approved by RF Presidential Decree No. 706 dated April 21, 2000.
 3. The Federal Law on the Internal Troops of the Interior Ministry of the Russian Federation (No. 153-FZ of July 27, 2006).
 4. The Federal Law on Countering Terrorism (No. 35-FZ of March 6, 2006).
 5. The Federal Law on Introducing Amendments to Some Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation Following the Adoption of the Federal Law on the Ratification of the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism and the Federal Law on Countering Terrorism (No. 153-FZ of July 27, 2006).
 6. The Federal Constitutional Law on the State of Emergency (No. 3-FKZ of May 30, 2001).
 7. The RF Presidential Decree on the Amendment and Termination of Some Acts by the President of the Russian Federation on Matters of Improving Command and Control of Counterterrorism Operations in the Territory of the North Caucasus District of the Russian Federation (No. 832s of August 2, 2006).
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