

COMMAND OF THE 549<sup>th</sup> mtbr /Motorised Brigade/

Strictly confidential number

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30.03.1999

Submission of the Analysis of the operation of the 549<sup>th</sup> mtbr  
in routing of the ŠTS /*Shiptar* Terrorist Forces/ in the general area  
of Retimlje and lifting the blockade on the Suva Reka – Orahovac road

TO: COMMAND OF THE PrK /Priština Corps/

In the period from 25.03 until 29.03.1999, pursuant to the Order by the Commander of the 549<sup>th</sup> mtbr for providing the support to the MUP /Ministry of the Interior/ forces and pursuant to the Order by the PrK, strictly confidential no. 455-63 dated 23.03.1999, the ŠTS forces were routed in the general area of Retimlje and the Suva Reka – Orahovac road was unblocked, and the full control has been established in the territory from the Prizren – Zrze road up to the Suva Reka – Orahovac road.

Following your Order, strictly confidential no. 880-235 dated 14.09.1998, we submit you herewith the Analysis of the conducted operations.

1. Strength, disposition and organisation for the defence /?against/ the ŠTS

The general area of Retimlje was completely prepared for the defence along the directions: Suva Reka – Studenčane, Velika Kruša – Brestovac, Pirane – Retimlje, Opteruša – Samodraža and Opteruša – Retimlje, as well as Brestovac – Mala Hoča, with securing /?and/ garrisoning the Amovac facility from the direction of the Zrze – Orahovac road. The settlements were included in the organisation of defence, including the villages of Zojić, Medvedce, Mamuša and Neprebište. We estimate that the total numerical strength of the ŠTS during the operation was 1,500 *Shiptar* terrorists.

The positions for defence were fortified at the 3<sup>rd</sup> level, and the road connecting Velika Kruša, Vran Dubrava, Donje Retimlje and Samodraža was constructed within the scope of the controlled territory. The Command, the set-up barracks and the

dispensary that can accommodate around 500 wounded persons were located in the village of Retimlje.

The positions for defence were placed facing the road. The focus of defence was around the Suva Reka – Studenčane road, with the support point in the village of Studenčane and the Grab facility and the directions leading from the Prizren – Zrze asphalt road towards Retimlje.

The characteristic feature of the organisation of defence was that in the villages of Retimlje, Studenčane and Opteruša there was no civilian population, only the ŠTS members.

The overall organisation for the defence /?against/ the ŠTS was concentrated on holding the well-fortified positions, with the support point in the settlements and in setting up the obstacles along the roads and concavities.

During the operation, the ŠTS did not throw their weapons and combat equipment before the crucial moment, when they started changing into the civilian clothes and attempted to make a breakthrough along the Gurit Mahala – tt /trig point/ 1613 (Rapuf) direction, where they encountered our units in the line of blockade.

In the village of Studenčane, the ŠTS were grouped in three well-prepared, big tents /?in/ the various parts of the village.

The large quantities of food received from the OSC /Organisation for Security and Cooperation/ were found in all settlements. On several occasions during the combat operations, the reinforcement was sent from the general area of Mališevo – Pagaruša, in an attempt of preserving the positions. The ŠTS have put up a strong resistance. There was neither withdrawal nor a pull-out from the positions, they were held until the ŠTS forces were attacked from the flank or the attack was launched from the back.

We estimate that the ŠTS casualties were the following:

- around 85 /members/ were killed;
- there were no prisoners.

The part of the ŠTS forces, together with the part of the population, had withdrawn through the village of Dobrodeljane into the general area of Pagaruša – Belanica, before our forces were linked on the Orahovac – Studenčane road. During 26.03., a part of the ŠTS forces attempted to break through the encirclement through the village

of Pirane towards the border belt, but they were prevented. While they were making attempts to pull-out, a group of the ŠTS opened fire from the village of Landovica, and it was not the case before that the ŠTS were engaged in operations from that village. Once the ŠTS were routed and this area was taken, some small, dispersed groups were found in the valleys.

In the course of carrying out the task, the aggressor's NATO aviation was flying over the general area every day and on several occasions they attacked our forces, but we suffered no consequences.

2. The formations of the VJ /Yugoslav Army/ forces engaged in routing the ŠTS in the wider area of the village of Retimlje and unblocking the Suva Reka – Orahovac road were of the following:

- BG-1 /Combat Group -1/ - 160 men; BG-2 - 220 men; BG-5 - 180 men; BG-6 - 150 men; BG-7 - 90 men, in total - 820 men. The BG-1/243<sup>rd</sup> Mbr /Mechanised Brigade/ with the strength of 180 men and 10 tanks joined our forces in the coordinated action.

- The following important armament was engaged: twenty-one T-55 tanks; six 122mm howitzers; fourteen 30/2mm PAT /anti-aircraft gun/; four 90mm SO /self-propelled gun/; four 120mm MB /mortar/; two 82mm MB; nine 20/3mm BOV /armoured combat vehicle/; six M-83 BOV; four BOVs from the Military Police; four 128mm *sv/r* /self-propelled multiple rocket launcher/; one BRDM /wheeled reconnaissance amphibious vehicle/ and one OT /armoured personnel carrier/.

- The following MUP /Ministry of the Interior/ forces have been engaged: 37<sup>th</sup> Od /Detachment/ of the PJP /Special Police Unit/ with the strength of 500 men; 23<sup>rd</sup> Od PJP with the strength of 400 men; the 5<sup>th</sup> č /company/ of the Prizren PJP with the strength of 120 men. The total strength of the MUP forces was 1,020 men. The total strength of all forces engaged in routing and crushing the ŠTS /Šiptar Terrorist Forces/ and lifting the blockade of the road was around 2,000 men.

The forces engaged to carry out the task had been realistically planned, ensuring the successful completion of the assigned task; the coordinated action among the forces and the coordination with the MUP forces were functioning well.

Before the combat operations started, the early professional, material, morale and security preparations were made as well as the reconnaissance of the ground, which had a positive impact on the completion of the task.

Bringing and deploying the forces, taking the line of blockade and the initial positions were carried out taking advantage of the night, so the attack started simultaneously from all planned positions.

During the first day, the immediate task was achieved and the 23<sup>rd</sup> Od /Detachment/ of the PJP /Special Police Unit/ made a fierce breakthrough from the direction of Bela Crkva and Brnjača towards the village of Celina and Mala Hoča and the forces of the BG-7/549th mtbr and the 5<sup>th</sup> Company of the Prizren PJP made a breakthrough along the directions Velika Hoča – Brestovac and Velika Hoča – Osmanica facility, so already in the course of the first day, our forces came in front of the village of Retimlje, in an energetic attack and breakthrough, which had noticeably positive impact on the further course of the combat operations.

The forces of the BG-1, in a planned manner, took hold of the line: village of Zojić, village of Pirane, 400 metres to the north, and from Mala Kruša made a breakthrough up to the dominant facilities in front of Randubrava.

The forces of the BG-6, in an energetic capture from the left, raided and crushed the ŠTS in the area of Trlište, which dominates over Opteruša and Samodraže and attacked the flank of the ŠTS forces that were pulling out along the Samodraže – Dobrodeljane – Pagaruša road. The strong resistance was put up along the direction of Suva Reka – Studenčane, where our forces finished with the routing of the part of the ŠTS in the eastern part of the village of Raštane. Before the nightfall, our forces were linked in order to prevent the pull-out of the ŠTS. During the night, the ŠTS /Shiptar Terrorist Forces/ sent a part of the forces from the general area of the village of Milanović in an repeated attempt to take hold of the Trlište facility, but the attempt failed.

During the second day of combat operations, the ŠTS that were blocked in V. Kruša were routed, the village of Randubrava was taken, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Od PJP reached the general area of Brestovica slopes, the village of Retimlje and the Command of the ŠTS forces and the villages of Opteruša, Samodraže and Studenčane were taken. The characteristic feature of the combat operations conducted on the second day was that

the decisive defence was put up by the remaining parts of the ŠTS forces, a part of the forces pulled out to the villages of Neprebište and Mamuša, and our units – BG-6 and BG-5 - were linked along the Orahovac – Suva Reka road before the nightfall, thus blocking the ŠTS forces that remained in the valleys and in the villages of Mamuša and Medvedce. Before the nightfall, our forces were linked again in order to prevent the pull-out of the remaining ŠTS.

In the course of the third day of the b/d /combat operations/, the mopping up operation of the remaining area around the village of Donje Retimlje was conducted and the routing of the ŠTS in the villages of Medvedce, Mamuša and Neprebište. The part of the ŠTS forces attempted to pull out along the creek to the villages of Trnje and Lešane. The forces under the blockade along the asphalt road and in the area of Široko, Smać and Donja Srbica were still in their positions.

In the course of the fourth day (29.03.1999), the ŠTS /*Shiptar* Terrorist Forces/ were completely routed and the full control of the territory was established; the units of the BG-5 and the part of forces of the 37<sup>th</sup> Od /Detachment/ of the PJP /Special Police Unit/ forces, taking the advantage of the overall situation, made an energetic breakthrough towards the village of Dobrodeljane, took hold of the access peaks at the entrance of the village and took hold of the village of Dobrodeljane up to the northern borders of the village where they found themselves when the night fell, and the reached positions were kept. The ŠTS that had pulled out into the villages of Trnje and Lešane during the night, were also routed and crushed.

In the course of carrying out the task, 3 soldiers were killed and 8 were wounded among our forces. There was no damaged MTS /material and technical equipment/ on our part.

The functioning of the PoOb /Logistical Support/ was with some difficulties, with the support point in the units of the 549<sup>th</sup> Mtr /Motorised Brigade/ deployed in the area. The overall PoOb did not adversely influence the completion of the assigned task.

The ammunition consumption was according to the Order for routing and crushing the ŠTS and lifting the blockade of the road. The commanding over the envisaged forces was under the joint command of the MUP /Ministry of the Interior/ and the VJ /Yugoslav Army/ forces.

During the performance of the combat task, the communications were functioning well, with the interruptions and interferences in the operation of the communications by *Shiptars*, which points out to the fact that they were monitoring the commanding during the combat operations.

The period when the task was performed - the month of March; weather conditions – difficult; terrain - completely rugged, soaked and partly wooded.

Conclusion:

The task the unit /as written/ had been charged with has been completed successfully. The ŠTS were routed, the control of the territory was established, the blockade of the Suva Reka – Orahovac road was lifted, the units of the 549<sup>th</sup> mtbr and MUP forces in the area were no longer exposed to fire in provocation, the pressure on the towns of Suva Reka and Orahovac by the ŠTS was eased and the Prizren - Đakovica road was not insecure any more.

The conditions and the favourable disposition of forces were made for the continuation of the attacks of our forces for the complete routing and crushing of the ŠTS which withdrew to Milanovac Mountain and to the general area of Pagaruša, Mališevo i Banja.

In the course of performance of the assigned task, the aggressor's NATO aviation flew over intensely, carried out the reconnaissance and, on several occasions, attacked our forces, but our forces suffered no consequences.

COMMANDER

Colonel

Božidar DELIĆ

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