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## ОПЕРАЦИЯ «ДЖИХАД» КАК РЕШАЮЩЕЕ СРАЖЕНИЕ ПЕРВОЙ ЧЕЧЕНСКОЙ ВОЙНЫ

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### Аннотация

Настоящая статья посвящена событиям, связанным с историей Первой чеченской войны. В статье рассматривается процесс завершения боевых действий в Чечне, который ознаменовала проведенная чеченскими сепаратистами операция «Джихад» и подписание Хасавюртовских соглашений, которые официально завершили Первую чеченскую войну.

**Ключевые слова:** первая чеченская война, операция «Джихад», Д. Дудаев, чеченские сепаратисты, федеральные войска, Хасавюртовские соглашения.

## OPERATION "JIHAD" AS A DEFINITION BATTLE OF THE FIRST CHECHEN WAR

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### ABSTRACT

This article is devoted to events related to the history of the First Chechen War. The article discusses the process of ending the hostilities in Chechnya, which was marked by the operation "Jihad" carried out by the Chechen separatists and the signing of the Khasavyurt agreements, which officially ended the First Chechen War.

**Keywords:** First Chechen War, operation "Jihad", D. Dudayev, Chechen separatists, federal troops, Khasavyurt agreements.

The First Chechen War is one of the most difficult and controversial events in the history of modern Russia. The fighting on the territory of Chechnya led to great humanitarian problems. Questions about what prompted both sides to come to the signing of the Khasavyurt Accords that ended the conflict, as well as who emerged victorious from this conflict, cause controversy to this

day. However, it is worth noting that the events related to Operation Jihad, carried out by the armed forces of the self-proclaimed Republic of Ichkeria in August 1996, played an important role in the end of the First Chechen War.

By the beginning of 1996, it became clear that the war was taking on a protracted character. Despite the fact that the Russian army achieved relative success, the largest of which was the elimination of the leader of the Chechen separatists D. Dudayev, the political leadership of the country decided to negotiate with the leaders of the self-proclaimed republic. This decision was dictated by the fact that presidential elections were scheduled for June 16, 1996 in Russia [6].

After negotiations in two stages, first in Moscow on May 27-28, and then in Nazran on June 10, the parties came to an agreement on a ceasefire. Also, according to the agreement, the federal troops, with the exception of two detachments, were to leave the territory of Chechnya, the separatist detachments were to be disarmed, and the status of the republic was postponed until free and democratic elections were held in Chechnya [4]. True, it is worth paying attention to the fact that both sides violated the agreement reached.

July 3, 1996 B.N. Yeltsin was officially re-elected for a second presidential term. The new Secretary of the Security Council appointed by Yeltsin, General A.I. Lebed announced the resumption of hostilities in Chechnya. The Russian government also supported this decision, in particular, First Deputy Prime Minister A.B. Chubais [7: 201].

In parallel with these events, the leadership of the self-proclaimed Ichkeria considered the possibility of regaining control over the capital of the republic - the city of Grozny, which came under the control of federal troops. Thus was born the plan of the operation, which received the name - "Jihad". Chechen separatists presented this operation as revenge for the death of their leader D. Dudayev, who was liquidated by the Russian special services on April 21, 1996.

It is worth noting that the separatists had a certain tactical advantage over the start of the operation. The fact is that in March 1996, Chechen fighters had already made an attempt to capture Grozny. Despite the fact that federal troops remained in control of the city, the separatists inflicted significant damage, seizing military equipment and shelling Russian checkpoints.

Before the beginning of the operation "Jihad", the militants began to penetrate the territory of Grozny under the guise of civilians. The Russian secret services knew about this, but out of 130 roads that led to the city, only 33 were blocked, and therefore the separatists still penetrated the city. According to Dudayev's widow, the military command of the self-proclaimed Ichkeria considered the option of mass hostage-taking so that Russian aviation would not start cleaning the city from the air [2: 185].

The federal troops had a clear superiority over the separatist detachments. The number of Russian troops numbered about 12 thousand soldiers, and Russian military personnel also had an advantage in armored vehicles and artillery and full control over the airspace of the city. They carried out the defense of the Grozny division of the Internal Troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs under the leadership of Lieutenant General K.B. Pulikovskiy.

The Chechen detachments, as well as the entire operation, were led by A. Maskhadov. The number of separatists at the time of the start of the operation was 1.5-2 thousand people. However, in the process of hostilities, their number grew and by the second half of August reached 6-7 thousand people. As a reinforcement, the Arab terrorist Amir Khattab and his detachment joined the Chechen separatists [10: 44].

Operation Jihad began on August 6, 1996. According to the memoirs of the documentary writer P. Zherebtsova, the operation began at five in the morning. Detachments of armed Chechens entered Grozny from the side of the Staropromyslovskiy district, as well as the village of Chernorechye, which adjoined the Chechen capital [3: 256].

At the initial stage of the operation, the Chechen separatists acted carefully. They did not seize or destroy urban objects. Maskhadov set the main task of blocking Russian checkpoints so that the units of the internal troops were isolated from each other.

It is worth noting that the federal command made a serious tactical miscalculation. The fact is that the Russian checkpoints were badly located, most of them were sandwiched between houses and actually controlled nothing. In addition, units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs were withdrawn from the city and checkpoints, which consisted of pro-Russian Chechens, were removed. That is, most of the roadblocks were initially incapable of combat.

By 12 noon, more active actions began on the part of the Chechen separatists. The shelling of Russian checkpoints began, which were supposed to demoralize the divided units. The Chechens also managed to shoot down five helicopters of federal troops [6].

After that, the Chechens began to strike at administrative buildings located in the city center. The most important targets were the buildings of the House of Government, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the FSB. The most intense battles were fought in the area of the Dynamo stadium. Not only the military, but also journalists were blocked in administrative buildings. True, the journalists managed to be evacuated to the basement of the bomb shelter of the Coordination Center of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation.

Considering the difficult situation caused by the Chechen encirclement, General Pulikovskiy sent assault detachments into the city. The fighting was heavy and the losses were mounting. Of the three assault squads, only one managed to break through. However, after a week of fighting, by August 13, the initiative began to go over to the side of the federal troops.

According to the commander of the 58th Combined Arms Army, General G. Troshev, the situation began to improve after the checkpoints were unblocked. Thanks to this, the Chechen detachments, which themselves suffered heavy losses, found themselves surrounded by federal troops. Troshev assessed the operation of A. Maskhadov as daring, but adventurous [8: 51].

As successes increased, General Pulikovskiy began to act more decisively, who hoped to finish off the last forces of the separatists. It was believed that Pulikovskiy was so tough because his son died during the war.

The Russian military leadership gave the Dudayevs an ultimatum - to surrender within 48 hours, otherwise they would be destroyed by heavy artillery. The civilian population was to be evacuated through a corridor that passed through the village of Staraya Sunzha. The separatists also wanted to evacuate through the same corridor, but General Pulikovskiy only once again offered to surrender, refusing to release the Chechen detachments.

According to the memoirs of General Troshev, Pulikovskiy's uncompromising nature surprised even A. Maskhadov. On August 20, 1996, the head of the Joint Group of Forces, Lieutenant General V.V. Tikhomirov, speaking to the press, stated that the main task was to free Grozny from militants, and also specified that he had not canceled Pulikovskiy's ultimatum [8: 52].

Human rights activists and the Western press spoke much more critically about the successes of the federal troops. The Russian army was criticized for the poorly organized work of the corridor for the evacuation of civilians, shelling, including those refugees who tried to leave Grozny, as well as for massive air strikes on the city, despite the presence of civilians, who, according to various estimates, remained 50-70 thousand people. It should also be noted that in parallel with the fighting in Grozny, Chechen fighters managed to capture the cities of Gudermes and Argun [10: 45-46].

The situation changed when the Secretary of the Security Council arrived in Chechnya and, in parallel with this, the representative of the President of the Russian Federation in the Chechen Republic, General A.I. Swan. After assessing the state of the Russian soldiers, Lebed came to the conclusion that the army was demoralized and unable to fight, and therefore it was necessary to

move on to peace negotiations. The Russian military community considered that in this way General Lebed decided to win the glory of a peacemaker and criticized his decision [8: 55].

Lebed canceled Pulikovsky's ultimatum and allowed the Dudayevites to leave. For the militants, who themselves admitted that they were in a hopeless situation, this decision was a lifesaver. Generals Pulikovsky and Tikhomirov tried to defend their position, but the political leadership of the country did not take their side. According to General Troshev, such a strange decision of the Russian authorities is connected with intrigues that were woven by businessman B. Berezovsky [8: 56].

The losses of the federal forces amounted to a total of 2083 people: of which 494 were killed, 1407 were injured, another 182 people were missing. Losses in equipment amounted to: 87 armored vehicles, 23 vehicles, 5 tanks and 3 helicopters.

After the end of hostilities and the beginning of the negotiation process, control over Grozny passed to the Dudaevites, and Russian troops were withdrawn to the base in Khankala. The negotiations ended on August 31, 1996, with the signing of the Khasavyurt Accords, which marked the end of the First Chechen War.

Opinions about the results of the First Chechen War and Operation Jihad were divided. The liberal-minded part of Russian society positively assessed the signing of the Khasavyurt agreements, as well as the Western press. The Russian military community assessed the results of the war more negatively. The military believed that by defeating the Chechen detachments during Operation Jihad, it was possible to end the war with Chechnya and prevent future terrorist attacks on Russian territory and the Second Chechen War. The exception was General L.Ya. Rokhlin, who, despite participating in the war, advocated a diplomatic settlement of the conflict [1: 182].

According to General Troshev, if the Russian army had been given a little more time, then Russia would have been able to defend Grozny and win the war with Chechnya. According to journalist A. Lieven, who worked in the conflict zone She explains the signing of the peace agreements by the fatigue of the Russian society from the war, and characterizes the Jihad operation as a major victory for the Chechens [5: 181]. Professor of Brooklyn College M. Evangelista also believes that the Jihad operation was successful for the Chechen separatists, opining that the outcome of the First Chechen War was the victory of self-proclaimed Ichkeria [9: 44]. Historian O. Lukin believes that the operation "Jihad" played a major role in the signing of peace agreements, but does not give an assessment of the operation itself [6].

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