



Red Storm over the Balkans: The Failed Soviet Invasion of Romania, Spring 1944 (Modern War Studies)

David M. Glantz

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Germany's Eastern Front in World War II saw many campaigns and battles that have been "forgotten" by a Soviet Union that tried to hide its military failures. The Red Army's invasion of Romania in April and May 1944 was one such campaign, which produced nearly 200,000 casualties and tarnished the reputations of its commanders. The redoubtable David Glantz, the world's leading authority on the Soviet military in World War II, now restores this tale to its proper place in the annals of World War II.

Working from newly available Russian and long-neglected German archives—plus Red Army unit histories and commanders' memoirs—Glantz reconstructs an imposing mosaic that reveals the immense scope and ambitious intent of the first Iasi-Kishinev offensive. His re-creation shows that Stalin was not as preoccupied with a direct route to Berlin as he was with a "broad front" strategy designed to gain territory and find vulnerable points in Germany's extended lines of defense. If successful, the invasion would have also eliminated Romania as Germany's ally, cut off the vital Ploiesti oilfields, and provided a base from which to consolidate Soviet power throughout the Balkans.

Glantz traces the 2nd Ukrainian Front's offensive along the Tirgu-Frumos, Iasi, and Dnestr River axes and the 3rd Ukrainian Front's simultaneous advance to the Dnestr River and dramatic struggle to seize bridgeheads across the river and capture Kishinev. He discloses General Ivan Konev's strategic plan as the 2nd Ukrainian Front prepared its Iasi offensive and fought a climactic battle with the German Eighth Army and its Romanian allies in the Tirgu-Frumos region in early May, then the regrouping of General Rodion Malinovsky's 3rd Ukrainian Front for its decisive offensive toward Kishinev, which aborted in the face of a skillful counterstroke by a threadbare German Sixth Army. Glantz describes how the Wehrmacht, with a nucleus of survived combat veterans, was able to beat back Soviet forces hampered by spring floods, while already fragile Soviet logistical support was further undermined by the Wehrmacht's scorched-earth strategy.

Although Konev's and Malinovsky's offensives ultimately failed, the Red Army managed to inflict heavy losses on Axis forces, exacerbating the effects of Germany's defeats in the Ukraine and making it more difficult for the Wehrmacht to contain the Soviet juggernaut's ultimate advance toward Berlin. By re-creating this forgotten offensive, Glantz commemorates a rich and important chapter in the history of a war that brought down the German Army and reshaped the map of Europe.

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