

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

-3 JUL 1984 07 36

July 2, 1984

OFFICE OF THE  
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

MEMORANDUM FOR:

Mr. Caspar W. Weinberger ---- 8418465  
Secretary  
Department of Defense

Mr. William J. Casey ----- 8418466  
Director  
Central Intelligence Agency

Mr. Robert C. McFarlane ---- 8418467  
Assistant to the President  
for National Security Affairs  
The White House

FROM:

George P. Shultz *GPS*

SUBJECT:

A Reordering of Soviet Military Priorities

The attached analysis of Ogarkov's views of current and emergent Soviet military priorities caught my attention. I would be interested in your reactions.

Attachment:

As stated.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DECL: OADR

CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM: A Reordering of Soviet Military Priorities?

On May 9 (Victory Day), the Soviet military newspaper, Red Star, published a lengthy and authoritative interview with Marshal N.V. Ogarkov, Chief of the Soviet General Staff (relevant section attached). U.S. commentary on this interview has focused on the relative moderation of Ogarkov's anti-American rhetoric. A not unrelated, but much more distinctive and noteworthy feature of the interview is its implicit questioning of some long-established Soviet military priorities.

Unlike most other recent Soviet commentaries on defense matters (including those by other Soviet marshals), the Ogarkov interview does not dwell on the threat posed by the deployment of Pershings and GLCM's and the modernization of U.S. strategic nuclear forces. On the contrary, Ogarkov describes our continuing nuclear buildup as "senseless," since the already existing "overkill" capacity on both sides has made it "impossible to destroy the enemy's systems with a single strike." No matter how destructive an initial attack, the victim will "inevitably" retain enough weapons for "a crushing retaliatory strike -- a strike inflicting unacceptable damage."

In the absence of corroborating evidence, it would clearly be unwarranted to conclude that Ogarkov has been converted from a proponent of nuclear war-fighting (the long-established Soviet military doctrine) to a proponent of mutual assured destruction. But he has gone out of his way to discount the military significance of the alleged U.S. quest for nuclear superiority. One can infer from his argument that there is no urgent need either to cap the U.S. nuclear buildup through early arms-control agreements or to respond to that buildup through matching nuclear countermeasures. Despite new U.S. programs, a continuing nuclear standoff can be taken for granted so long as the Soviet Union maintains a survivable retaliatory ("second-strike") force and the U.S. lacks reliable strategic defenses. (Notably, Ogarkov says nothing whatever about the SDI.)

Ogarkov's disparagement of a U.S. first-strike threat is accompanied by obvious concern about an adverse shift in the conventional balance. He argues at length that conventional weaponry is on the threshold of a technological revolution that will radically transform current methods of waging war. Furthermore, he clearly implies that the U.S. has built a considerable lead in conventional modernization, thereby threatening to deprive the Soviets of a long-standing and potentially decisive competitive advantage. In Ogarkov's judgment, this is a threat that must be addressed "right now" -- with such urgency and concentration that other established priorities are bound to suffer in the absence of a sizeable increase in military spending.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

Although Ogarkov may well be a proponent of such an increase, in this interview he seems to take it as a given that the Soviet military can not afford both a crash program in conventional weaponry and an accelerating buildup of its nuclear capabilities. If this is regrettable, it is nonetheless a fact of life, a reflection of what Ogarkov describes as "an objective law discovered in his time by Frederick Engels" -- to wit, that "nothing depends on economic conditions as much as the Army and Navy." Fortunately, however, the unattainable is unlikely to prove indispensable. While Ogarkov clearly does not view the existence of a stable nuclear balance as a guarantee against the outbreak of a conventional war (the gravamen of his entire argument is precisely the contrary), his case nonetheless rests on an assumption that the current period is a period of relative security.

Ogarkov has been a leading contributor to Soviet efforts to generate a war-scare (something he probably finds useful, among other things, in pressing his overall budgetary claims). But in this interview he argues that it is possible to concentrate resources on the development and testing of necessarily uncertain emergent technologies and weapons systems because there is no clear and present danger of war. Attempts to argue the contrary within military circles are nothing more than poorly disguised expressions of illegitimate inter-service rivalry. More generally, they reflect precisely the sort of "conservatism and inertia" that must be "resolutely overcome" by leaders who appreciate Engels' further "discovery" that innovations in military affairs often have to be imposed "almost forcibly and against the will of the military command."

If this reading of Ogarkov's interview is correct, there are a number of implications that are worth bearing in mind and exploring further:

- The Soviet military is far from monolithic and traditional inter-service rivalries may have been considerably intensified as a result of work on the new Soviet Five Year Plan.
- Soviet economic stringencies are such that the Soviet high command faces -- and is more-or-less resigned to facing -- hard choices among competing weapons systems and mission priorities.
- The Soviet high command does not believe that the risk of war (let alone of a U.S. first strike) is particularly high.

CONFIDENTIAL

- 3 -

- The Soviet high command may not be as eager to cap the U.S. strategic buildup through a START agreement as we often suppose.
- Within the Soviet high command support for nuclear arms control may be strongest among conventional force commanders who feel it is more important to increase spending on conventional modernization than to match us nuclear missile for nuclear missile in a continuing cycle of deployments and counterdeployments.
- Pressing ahead with our conventional arms modernization programs may be one of our most effective means for limiting the modernization of Soviet strategic and theatre nuclear forces.
- The Soviets may be on the verge of launching conventional force modernization programs that will tip the conventional balance even further in their favor unless we in fact justify their apprehension and exploit our technological advantages in the field of conventional weaponry.

Attachment:

Relevant Section of Ogarkov Interview

Ogarkov Interview

PMO81625 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 9 May 84 First Edition pp 2-3

[Interview with MSU N.V. Ogarkov, chief of General Staff of the USSR Armed Forces and USSR first deputy defense minister: "The Defense of Socialism: Experience of History and the Present Day" — first paragraph is editorial introduction]

[Text] The Soviet people's victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-45 is being celebrated widely and solemnly in our country today. On the eve of this great and resplendent holiday, the editorial office of KRASNAYA ZVEZDA asked Marshal of the Soviet Union N.V. Ogarkov, chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces and USSR first deputy defense minister, to answer a number of questions connected with the defense of socialism's gains.

Question: It is nearly 40 years since the Great Patriotic War. What changes have taken place in military matters in that time, and how are they taken into account in our military building, in the training of troops and fleets?

Answer: In his time, F. Engels discovered an objective law: "Nothing depends on economic conditions as much as the Army and Navy. Armaments, personnel, organization, tactics, and strategy depend, above all, on the level of production achieved at a given moment and on the means of communication," and "successes of technology, the moment they have become usable and have been applied in practice in military matters, have immediately -- almost forcibly, and often against the will of the military command -- caused changes and even revolutions in the methods of waging war."

In present-day conditions, this law is manifested with particular force. In the postwar years, several generations of weapons systems and combat hardware have already succeeded one another.

What do the basic changes in military matters consist of today?

First, the quantitative accumulation of nuclear weapons, which has continued over several decades, has led to radical qualitative changes in the conditions and potential for the use of these weapons. The stockpiles of nuclear ammunition and various means of delivery that the sides created have reached such a size and quality that they are sufficient to destroy all the important targets on enemy territory many times over in a short space of time.

III: 9 May 84

For instance, in just one salvo (launch) of strategic (not counting battlefield) nuclear forces, the United States could today use about 12,000 nuclear charges with a total yield hundreds of times greater than the yield of all the explosives and ammunition used by all states throughout the 6 years of World War II. With the deployment of American medium-range missiles in Europe, this potential of U.S. strategic nuclear forces will further increase. You do not have to be a military man or a scientist to realize that a further buildup is becoming senseless. Nonetheless, this buildup is continuing, through the fault of the United States.

As a result, a paradox arises: On the one hand, it would seem, a process of steadily increasing potential for the nuclear powers to destroy the enemy is taking place, while on the other there is an equally steady and, I would say, even steeper reduction in the potential for an aggressor to inflict a so-called "disarming strike" on his main enemy. The point is, with the quantity and diversity of nuclear missiles already achieved, it becomes impossible to destroy the enemy's systems with a single strike. A crushing retaliatory strike against the aggressor, even by the limited quantity of nuclear charges remaining to the defender — a strike inflicting unacceptable damage — becomes inevitable in present conditions. The calculation of the strategists across the ocean, based on the possibility of waging a so-called "limited" nuclear war, now has no foundation whatever. It is utopian: Any so-called limited use of nuclear facilities will inevitably lead to the immediate use of the whole of the sides' nuclear arsenal. That is the terrible logic of war. Their arguments about the possibility of a so-called "limited nuclear strike without retaliation" against the enemy's main centers and control points are even more groundless. Such arguments are pure fantasy. Put together, all this substantially changes both the conditions for the outbreak of modern warfare and the potential for waging it.

Second, rapid changes in the development of conventional means of destruction and the emergence in the developed countries of automated reconnaissance-and-strike complexes, long-range high-accuracy terminally guided combat systems, unmanned flying machines, and qualitatively new electronic control systems make many types of weapons global and make it possible to sharply increase (by at least an order of magnitude) the destructive potential of conventional weapons, bringing them closer, so to speak, to weapons of mass destruction in terms of effectiveness. The sharply increased range of conventional weapons makes it possible to immediately extend active combat operations not just to the border regions, but to the whole country's territory, which was not possible in past wars. This qualitative leap in the development of conventional means of destruction will inevitably entail a change in the nature of the preparation and conduct of operations, which will in turn predetermine the possibility of conducting military operations using conventional systems in qualitatively new, incomparably more destructive forms than before.

There is a sharp expansion in the zone of possible combat operations, and the role and significance of the initial period of the war and its initial operations become incomparably greater. A new war, should imperialism unleash it, will certainly be strikingly different in nature from the last war.

Third, the rapid development of science and technology in recent years creates real preconditions for the emergence in the very near future of even more destructive and previously unknown types of weapons based on new physical principles.

*lasers ?  
biotechnology ?*

III. 9 May 84

R 20

USSR NATIONAL AFFAIRS  
POLITICAL & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS

Work on these new types of weapons is already in progress in a number of countries, for example, in the United States. Their development is a reality of the very near future, and it would be a serious mistake not to consider it right now. This, in turn, cannot fail to change established notions of the methods and forms of armed struggle and even of the military might of the state.

This is a short list of only the basic changes currently taking place in the means of armed struggle. They are inevitably exerting their influence on the nature of war and the role and place of the branches of the Armed Forces in resolving operational and strategic tasks and on the further development and improvement of forms and methods of conducting military operations and military affairs as a whole.

All this must unconditionally be the subject of constant and in-depth analysis and must be generalized and taken into account in the practical building of our Armed Forces.

In consideration of this, the technical equipping, organizational building, and management of our Armed Forces are effected in such a way that they are always ready under any conditions to deal an immediate counterstrike against any aggressor. This capability must be guaranteed in all instances. The main component of the combat might of the Army and Navy and the basic factor in curbing the aggressor are our strategic nuclear forces, which are in a state of constant high combat readiness. All branches of the Armed Forces and categories of troops are developing harmoniously with them and are being equipped with the most modern weapons and combat hardware.

There is also a simultaneous process of honing and improving the system of operational, combat, and political training of troops and fleets; the procedure for mobilizing and provisioning them; troop and weapon control systems, and forms and methods of political-educational and party political work.

The Soviet Armed Forces' might is determined by not only the quantity but also the quality of their weapons and combat hardware. Our main strength is the Soviet people, who have an expert mastery of the awe-inspiring weapons entrusted to them by the motherland. Today, over 93 percent of our servicemen have secondary and higher education. Almost 90 percent of the servicemen are Communists and Komsomol members, who are transforming our Army and Navy into an invincible force.

The resolution of the tasks of military building and training of our Armed Forces is effected on the basis of comprehensive, in-depth analysis of the military-political situation and the development of the means of armed struggle. Therefore, our military cadres do not merely copy past experience, they use it creatively and enrich it. They must constantly improve the training and organizational structure of troops and naval forces and conduct scientific quests to this end, taking into account the continuous changes in military affairs and, if necessary, taking justified risks. It is better to test new forms in peacetime than to seek them in the course of a war. Furthermore, there would now be no time for this. We military men must, as Comrade K.D. Chernenko, general secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium, points out, "resolutely overcome any conservatism and inertia"; for us in the military "the slogan of the day must be: From a correct idea, fully armed with experience, to bold actions!"

III. 9 May 84

R 21

USSR NATIONAL AFFAIRS  
POLITICAL & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS

I would like to emphasize that the defense of the socialist motherland is the concern of every Soviet person a concern of the entire people. In this connection, work to educate the Soviet people in accordance with revolutionary, combat, and labor traditions and train reliable and skillful defenders of the motherland, and the active participation in this work of our party, labor, war, and Army veterans, are of great importance.

The main source of the Soviet Armed Forces' strength and invincibility and an important condition of their further strengthening and development has always been and remains the leadership of the Communist Party and the unbreakable unity between the Army and the people. The CPSU, its Leninist Central Committee, and our government are doing everything necessary to ensure that the Soviet state's defense potential and its Armed Forces' combat might are abreast of present-day demands and that no eventuality can take us by surprise.

The grim years of the Great Patriotic War are receding further and further into the depths of history. A great deal has changed in the world in the almost 40 years since then. However, time cannot wipe out from the memory of grateful mankind the unparalleled feat of the Soviet people and their Armed Forces who, in an unprecedentedly fierce confrontation with a perfidious enemy, not only defended the socialist fatherland, but also saved the peoples of many countries from fascist enslavement. The memory of the millions of people who gave their lives for the great victory makes it imperative today to rally the forces of the world's peoples in the struggle against the perfidious designs of the forces of imperialism and reaction, against the instigators of a new war. The imperialist pretenders to world domination should not forget that history savagely punishes those who ignore its lessons.