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# The Nature of Soviet Military Doctrine

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# The Nature of Soviet Military Doctrine

A Research Paper

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## The Nature of Soviet Military Doctrine

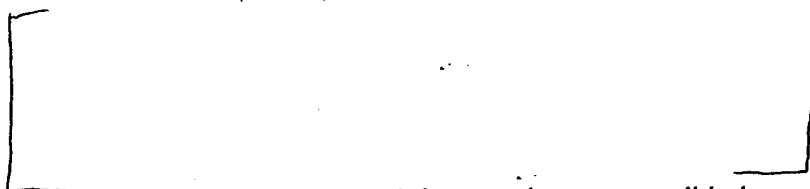
### Preface

The Soviet approach to national security planning has never been static. Changes in the leadership's perceptions and its general approach to national security, nevertheless, seem to be occurring at an unusual pace. Lengthy and, at times, bitter discussions over the "correct" approaches have taken place, mostly in public forums. Western analysts have offered dramatically different interpretations of these debates and their implications for Soviet military forces and their potential use.

Throughout this paper we note indications of change and characterize its nature. The aim of the paper is not, however, to set forth another set of hypothetical Soviet force structures and policies. Its purpose is to explain the role of Soviet military doctrine in the *process* and *context* of Soviet national security policymaking. Such fundamentals are almost certainly going to remain in one form or another, no matter how radical Gorbachev's "new thinking" appears. Therefore, our judgment of the import and, indeed, the uniqueness of Gorbachev's initiatives must be placed in this broader context.

The Soviet Union has proposed that NATO and Warsaw Pact military specialists discuss the question of military doctrine in the new conventional arms control negotiations. As part of this report, therefore, we have included in an appendix an unclassified discussion of how the Soviets may approach such an exchange of views.

This study makes use of public statements and writings by Soviet and non-Soviet Warsaw Pact (NSWP) sources



—requires that we draw inferences about recent political decisions primarily from open sources and authoritative military sources.

## The Nature of Soviet Military Doctrine

### Summary

*Information available  
as of 1 March 1989  
was used in this report.*

The Soviets view military doctrine as the core of a state's national security policy. Military doctrine, according to them, contains two dimensions—sociopolitical and military-technical. The state's political leadership is responsible for formulating the sociopolitical dimension, which concerns core issues of the state's security such as:

- Which countries are likely allies and opponents of the USSR?
- How probable is war, and should the political leadership shift resources from the general economy to support a military buildup?
- How can war be prevented?
- What would be the likely nature of a future war; in particular, would it escalate to nuclear use?
- What would be the political goals of a war?

The military-technical dimension of doctrine is largely the preserve of the professional military leadership—the Soviet General Staff acting as a central coordinating body for the Soviet armed forces and Ministry of Defense. This dimension focuses on the structuring of the armed forces, their technical equipping and training, and planning for the conduct of war.

The Soviets have long claimed that the political and military leaderships are deeply interconnected and that there exists a unity of leadership in the USSR. Nevertheless, responsibilities traditionally have been more sharply divided between political and military authorities in the USSR than is the case in the NATO countries. In the Soviet Union, the party has formulated general guidance—with input from the military and possibly other organizations—and the military has implemented and interpreted that guidance with limited explicit direction from political authorities.

Soviet military doctrine has been in a state of ferment during the last decade. Recent developments, including announcements of cuts in defense and procurement spending and unilateral force reductions, as well as the public dialogue by top party and military authorities on the concept of "reasonable sufficiency," suggest major changes in Soviet military doctrine may be under way. In a major break with past practice, civilian experts have been brought into the debate over Soviet national security policy—apparently under the sponsorship of the top party authorities. Issues being discussed by political and military leaders include the utility of nuclear weapons; the likely effects of new, high-technology weapon systems; and the increasing difficulties of mounting and sustaining a theater offensive against NATO. Changes in how the Soviets view these core issues will affect their willingness to devote scarce economic resources to defense efforts, as well as their interest in significant arms control negotiations.

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## The Nature of Soviet Military Doctrine

### How the Soviets Define Military Doctrine

Military doctrine, as it is described by authoritative Soviet sources, is the state's official national security policy. It takes into account the state's sociopolitical and economic system, the level of development of its economy, the technical equipping of its armed forces, and its geographic location in relation to its expected allies and probable opponents.

According to Marshal Ogarkov in his 1982 pamphlet *Always in Readiness To Defend the Homeland*,<sup>1</sup> the military doctrine of any nation must answer the following fundamental questions:

- What is the probability of a future war, and who are the likely adversaries?
- What is the likely nature or character of a future war?
- What armed forces must a country possess to achieve its goals?
- What goals and tasks can be assigned to the armed forces in anticipation of a future war?
- How should the military be structured or organized, and how should the army and country prepare for war?
- If a war breaks out, how should it be fought?

Military doctrine, according to the Soviets, contains two dimensions—*sociopolitical* and *military-technical*. The sociopolitical dimension, which derives from the class nature of a society, constitutes the basic framework of a state's national security policy and is formulated by the political leadership. The military-technical dimension is formulated within the sociopolitical framework. It focuses on the structure of the

<sup>1</sup> Nikolay Vasil'yevich Ogarkov, *Always in Readiness To Defend the Homeland* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1982), translated as Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) JPRS L/10412, 25 March 1982. Ogarkov was Chief of the Soviet General Staff when this book was published. Similar points are made by Ogarkov in a later work—published after he was removed from the chief's position—*History Teaches Vigilance* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1985), translated as FBIS JPRS-UMA-85-021-L-CORRECTED.

armed forces, their equipment and training, and planning for the conduct of war.<sup>2</sup> Military-technical doctrine takes into account the conclusions of military theory and practice and is largely the preserve of the professional military leadership.

Because of the character of their concerns and the division of responsibilities within the Soviet system, political and military authorities look at the same issue from different angles, and on occasion derive what appear to be contradictory conclusions. An example of such an apparent contradiction is the traditional characterization of Soviet military doctrine as both defensive and offensive.

### The Sociopolitical Definition of a Defensive Outlook

The Soviets have long stated that their military doctrine is inherently defensive. No socialist state would find cause to initiate a war, according to Soviet doctrine, because socialism will inevitably triumph over capitalism without war. The Soviets have asserted, however, that war could be forced upon them by economically and politically troubled capitalist states. Soviet writings have held that ruling capitalist classes might undertake aggression to prevent the loss of their privileged positions and the inevitable decline and collapse of "imperialist" states built upon "exploitacionist" principles. Soviet political theorists examine the conditions that might lead their ideological opponents to undertake desperate acts and what indicators of hostile intentions could forewarn the "socialist community."

### The Military-Technical Dimension Defines the Best Defense as a Good Offense

The Soviets also assert, however, that, if war is forced upon the socialist states, their armies should fight it in

<sup>2</sup> For a fuller discussion of the military-technical dimension of Soviet military doctrine and the General Staff's role in its formulation, see [redacted]

the most effective manner allowed by available technology. If authorized by the political leadership, the Soviet military would attempt to seize the strategic initiative as early as possible, carry the war to the opponents' territory, and destroy the military and political coalition that brought about the war.

This offensive military orientation is driven by the Soviet belief that only the strategic offensive offers the possibility of decisively defeating the opponent; it reflects Russian historical experience (a long series of devastating invasions, and in this century the Russian Civil War and World War II), and the desire to avoid destruction of Soviet territory. Furthermore, only offensive operations could prevent the mobilization of additional forces by the capitalist states

**The Hierarchical Character of Soviet Military Doctrine**

The primacy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in the political, economic, and social life of the USSR applies equally to the arena of national security. Decisions, statements, and resolutions made by the party provide the basis for developing and formulating Soviet military doctrine. The political leadership assesses these core issues:

- *Which countries are likely allies and opponents of the USSR?* The answers to this question, which change with time and circumstances, provide the focus of Soviet foreign policy—including intelligence actions, diplomacy, and economic policy—as well as military planning and preparations.
- *What are the prospects for war?* The party's perception drives the distribution of resources between the general economy and military forces.
- *How can war be prevented?* This task is a relatively recent addition to declaratory Soviet military doctrine. It is related to the new emphasis General Secretary Gorbachev and the leadership have placed on political measures for promoting national security.

- *What would be the political goals of a war?* While the military will attempt to provide itself with the forces and training required for any conflict, senior military officers readily acknowledge that their political superiors will determine what they would be required—and allowed—to accomplish.

- *What would be the likely nature of a future war?* The party appears to dominate the assessment of whether—given the state of current technology, economics, and politics—a future war would escalate to nuclear use, and what the general consequences of that use would be for the USSR. There is evidence that the military attempts to play an influential role in determining the likely nature of a future war—especially when it believes the political leadership is relatively weak or malleable.

Soviet political authorities have traditionally focused their attention on these higher order concerns—areas in which the military's role is supposed to be circumscribed—and have appeared to give the military largely free rein within its areas of expertise—technical assessments of potential opponents' capabilities and plans, Soviet force programming, disposition of forces, and military science (see inset, "Soviet Military Science"). The Soviets have long claimed that the political and military leaderships are deeply interconnected. Nevertheless, interests and responsibilities have generally been more sharply divided between political and military authorities than is the case with NATO countries. Moreover, national security issues have not been debated, decided, or implemented in a pluralistic manner, and participation in the process has traditionally been very restricted.

An example of the division of responsibilities between party and military authorities is the way the Soviets address the likely origin of war [

[ ] political conclusions about how a war may break out provide the framework for how the military analyzes



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**Soviet Military Science**

*According to authoritative Soviet military writings, military science concerns the laws and nature of armed conflict and the military preparations by the country and armed forces for war. It is based on Marxist-Leninist teachings and methodology and takes into account the findings from other sciences that influence the military sphere. Military art is the most important component of military science and is composed of:*

- Strategy. *The planning and conduct of war, the training of the armed forces, and the support of combat operations.*
- Operational art. *The planning and conduct of operations by large forces.*
- Tactics. *The preparation for and conduct of a battle.*

*Military scientific work includes the synthesis of research and experience and the introduction of new principles into regulations; the development of mathematical models of operations and battles and the use of these in forecasting the results of combat; the preparation of military science publications; and the conduct of military science conferences.*

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the likelihood of war. (The appendix describes how Soviet political authorities view the causes of war.) Military authorities take as a given political dictates about which countries may begin hostilities and under what political and socioeconomic conditions war is most likely to occur. Military warning indicators are founded on political premises. The Soviet experience in June 1941 demonstrates how guidance from political leaders can induce a degree of rigidity in military plans and preparations that can contribute to disasters when events do not unfold as expected. Before the Nazi invasion, Stalin changed Soviet military planning assumptions, imposing his belief that the main attack would come south of the Pripet marshes. Because of this change, Soviet forces were poorly disposed strategically to meet the German attack. In the weeks just before 22 June 1941, Stalin refused to allow the military to take prudent preparatory defensive

measures for fear of provoking the Germans. The lack of Soviet preparedness led to massive losses and initial strategic defeats

**Relationship Between Soviet and NSWP Military Doctrines**

Soviet military doctrine dominates the national security planning of individual NSWP countries and the Warsaw Pact as an alliance. The individual national military doctrines—and the Warsaw Pact Military Doctrine announced in May 1987—are essentially copies of Soviet military doctrine. The Pact allies are required to accept the tenets of Soviet military doctrine as their own. [

] any attempt by an NSWP country to develop a military doctrine not in keeping with the Soviets' would not be tolerated by Moscow.

[ suggests that the military aspects of the Czechoslovak reform movement in 1968—which included the development of a national military doctrine—may have been a factor in the Soviet decision to invade that year.

In conjunction with Soviet political, military, and economic might, Soviet military doctrine provides the keystone to a Pact-wide defense, in place of individual national defenses. NSWP field-grade officers are brought to Moscow for senior command and staff training courses. Soviet field manuals and regulations serve as guides for derivative NSWP manuals and regulations. Directives and war plans are crafted by the Soviet General Staff, and only strictly limited portions are provided to each NSWP national general staff. The Soviets have taken political and military measures—ranging from Warsaw Pact treaty statutes to the creation of high commands of forces [

[ ]  
The obvious exception to this rule has been Romania. Even the Soviets, in arms control and other forums, describe Romania as hopelessly heretical

### How Soviet Military Doctrine Evolves

#### Marxist-Leninist Framework

Soviet doctrinal precepts are shaped by Marxist-Leninist philosophy and beliefs—although they are also influenced by the legacies of Russian military history. Marxism-Leninism defines not only the substantive content of Soviet sociopolitical doctrine, but also the methodology to be used in reasoning and argument. For example, discussions of the likely nature of a future war center on statements about the impact of technology, economics, and politics. Analysis of each of these factors is determined by their “scientific,” historical, and class bases. Equally important, Marxism-Leninism explicates the hierarchy of rule in the Soviet system, legitimizing the CPSU’s unique political authority.

Marxism-Leninism has traditionally provided answers to several of the fundamental questions Soviet political authorities must answer. Likely allies, neutrals, and opponents have been defined in terms of their socioeconomic and political structure. In the simplest of terms, capitalist countries are potential enemies, socialist states potential allies. As discussed in appendix A, the conditions under which war might arise have been analyzed by Soviet theorists within a Marxist-Leninist framework. Furthermore, Soviet military theorists regularly argue points of military science in terms of dialectics, historical materialism, and other Marxist analytical and rhetorical constructs. Thus, military writers addressing offensive and defensive operations discuss them in dialectic terms—pointing out historical shifts in their relative superiority caused by actions, reactions, and results.

#### The Impact of the Political-Military Environment

Soviet military doctrine is also shaped by underlying perceptions of the fluid political and military environment in which the Soviet Union exists. Changes in both the sociopolitical and military-technical dimensions of military doctrine result from changes in the perceptions of Soviet leaders. Changes in the sociopolitical dimension of doctrine do not occur often, but, when they do, they echo throughout Soviet national security planning. Khrushchev and the top military

leadership, for example, keyed Soviet national security planning to the concept that any future war with the West would involve the massive use of nuclear weapons. The implications for resource allocations in military programs included the creation of the Strategic Rocket Forces. Nonetheless, the actual mechanism of change within the sociopolitical dimension of doctrine has never been fully revealed. Traditionally, debate appears to have been confined to a very small group of party authorities. [

] that the preparation of opinion papers may be farmed out to a wider group, [

] Under Gorbachev, however, we have seen discussions of such issues in open writings (see inset, “A Public Debate on Fundamental Issues”).

#### Change Within the Military-Technical Dimension

We have a good understanding of how changes occur within the military-technical dimension of doctrine. The Soviet General Staff—acting as a central coordinating body for the Soviet armed forces and Ministry of Defense—largely determines the content of the military-technical realm and has developed a highly structured system for reviewing and revising it when needed.<sup>4</sup> The means through which changes are developed and implemented include:

- Five-year military science plans for the armed forces, which serve as the basis for five-year plans of each branch of the armed forces, military academies, groups of forces, military districts, and fleets—as well as for the five-year plan for the Warsaw Pact.
- Military exercises, which test the validity of current doctrine and are used to experiment with new concepts or weapon systems.

<sup>4</sup>

**A Public Debate on Fundamental Issues**

Since Gorbachev's accession to power, open-source writings in the USSR have taken on the appearance of a debate about fundamental national security issues. For example, a recent article by V. V. Zhurkin (a deputy director of the Institute of the USA and Canada), S. A. Karaganov, and A. V. Kortunov in the authoritative party journal *Kommunist* states emphatically that NATO does not pose a threat to the Soviet Union and its non-Soviet Warsaw Pact allies: "There is no conflict in East-West relations today which could give rise to the temptation to resort to war as a solution." Most other articles by military writers, however, continue to make the case that NATO presents a very real threat and that the USSR must continue to devote considerable resources to countering that threat.

The participants in the debate do not split clearly along civilian and military lines. Neither are stands based upon reductionist arguments, such as civilian or military control of defense policy. Rather, the issues include basic assessments of "how much is enough" for defense and the proper methods of reaching such conclusions.

The nature of the public debate and the participants indicate that, under Gorbachev, the party has reasserted its control over all aspects of Soviet military policy and brought in people from outside the military to consider various aspects of military policy and doctrine. The evidence suggests that the debate is continuing, and it is still too early for us to determine with any degree of certainty what the outcome will be.<sup>a</sup>

a. [

]

- Military regulations, which codify existing military-technical doctrine and constitute a body of laws governing the employment of all the branches of the armed forces in wartime.

In addition to this structured procedure, Soviet and NSWP military officers have several forums in which to discuss and debate potential changes in the military-technical dimension of military doctrine—the most notable being journals such as *Military Thought*.

[ ] Because many articles are published in open-source journals (such as the *Military History Journal*), arguments are often cast in historical terms or ascribed to foreign thinkers. The issues discussed, however, are no less serious for their historical or foreign veneer [ ] have in fact confirmed that historical military works are specifically included in the Soviet military's five-year research plan. Thus, for example, the basic outlines of the 1980 reorganization of the Soviet Air Forces (SAF) and Air Defense Forces—an aspect of the military-technical dimension of doctrine—were advocated by the future commander of the SAF in a series of articles in the unclassified journal *Aviation and Cosmonautics* in the mid-1970s [ ] we had on the 1986 reorganization of Soviet air defense appeared in a series of articles in *Military History Journal* in the early-to-middle 1980s.

A recent publication by Col. Gen. M. A. Gareyev, Deputy Chief of the Soviet General Staff, sums up the process of change and the role of the military-technical dimension of doctrine:

*The question is frequently raised of why, along with scientific knowledge (teachings about war and the army and military science), there is also military doctrine. The problem is that in military science various views can and should exist on the methods of carrying out one or another*

*task. For a science this is completely admissible, as the clash of opinions encourages its development. But at a certain stage, doctrine takes the most effective views and reinforces them in official documents and regulations as obligatory guiding concepts for all. . . . Without unified doctrinal views it is impossible to provide effective organizational development and preparation of the Armed Forces and the strengthening of the country's defense as a whole.'*

#### Turmoil in the Sociopolitical Dimension

Potentially major changes in Soviet leadership perceptions of the political, economic, and military environment may be under way. Indications of high-level authorities questioning hitherto firm assumptions appear in [ ] regularly. As the civilian party leadership under Gorbachev reevaluates the country's standing in world affairs and reasserts its authority, the sociopolitical dimension of military doctrine could undergo vast changes

In an important sense, Gorbachev represents a *return* to an active role for the civilian political leadership in Soviet national security. Unlike Brezhnev in his later years—and much more like Khrushchev—Gorbachev has asserted the dominance of the sociopolitical over the military-technical dimension. He seems to follow more nearly the traditional pattern of decisionmaking in Soviet national security than that of general secretaries in the 1970s and first half of the 1980s. At the same time, unlike earlier party authorities, Gorbachev has encouraged the participation of outside experts to stimulate thinking and public rumination on national security issues

#### Outlook for Soviet Military Doctrine

Significant changes in the leadership's perceptions will almost certainly redirect the way the Soviets view a future conflict and prepare to fight it. It is too early

to tell whether the announced unilateral reductions in forces and defense spending reflect enduring fundamental decisions in the sociopolitical dimension of Soviet military doctrine. We can identify the issues and trends that apparently continue to dominate the discussion, however.

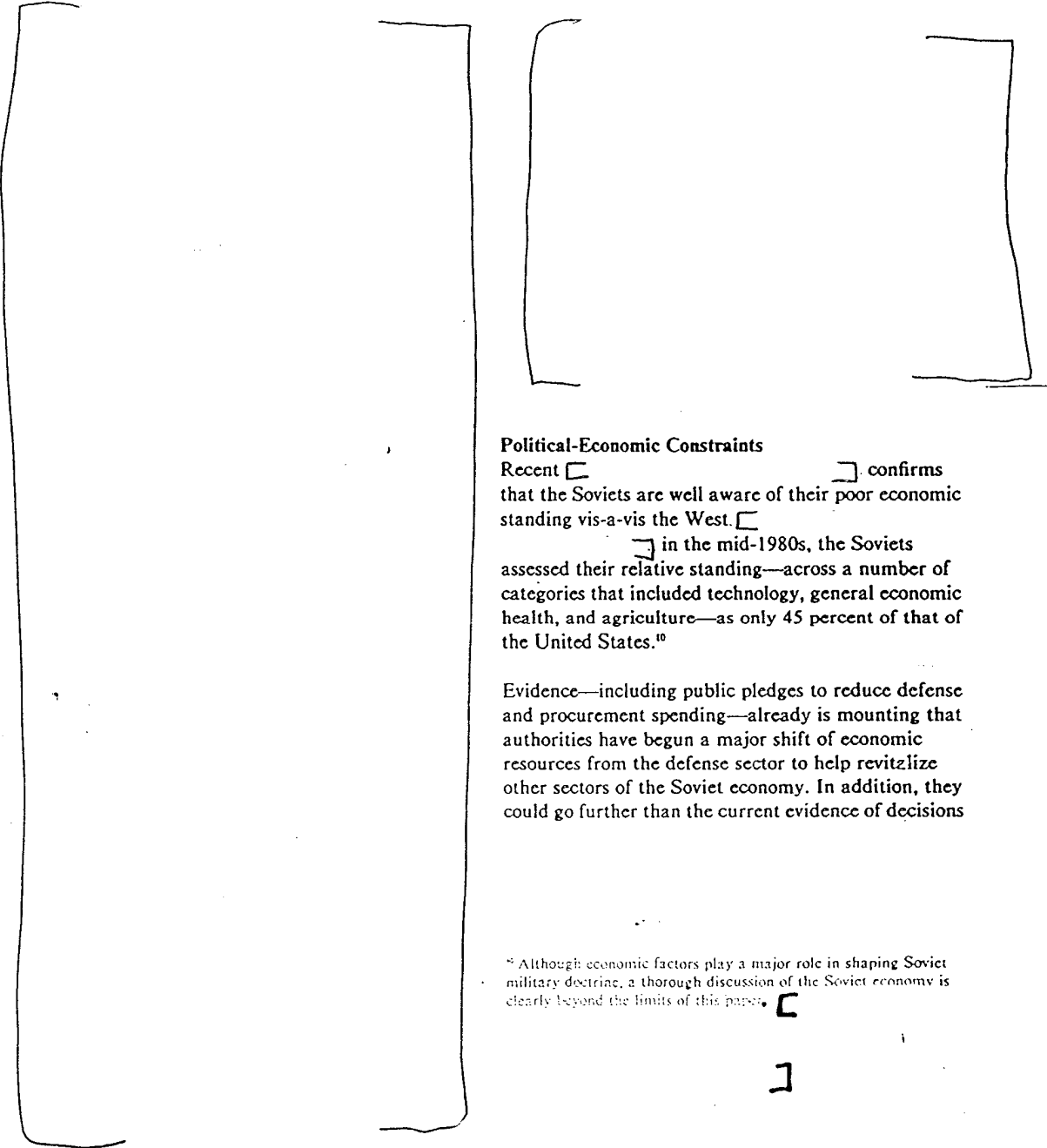
#### Gorbachev's "New Thinking" and Soviet Military Doctrine

Gorbachev's initiatives related to "new political thinking"—the most important in the military realm is "reasonable sufficiency"—appear to call for a new basis for establishing how much is enough for defense. Moves to implement Gorbachev's initiatives have concentrated on a greater drive for efficiency and accountability throughout the military and military-industrial sector as well as on arms control. Although the Soviets have announced dramatic unilateral cuts in forces and in resources to be devoted to the defense sector, they may not yet have formally determined the specific meaning of nor derived implications of reasonable sufficiency for many aspects of the military-technical dimension of doctrine—although the core issues of discussion are apparent.

Furthermore, the traditional division of issues into sociopolitical and military-technical dimensions may be breaking down. The deep interconnections between party and military authorities that the Soviets have long proclaimed are coming to pass and, in fact, are expanding with, for example, civilians commenting in detail on highly technical issues. Moreover, military authors are commenting at length on the effects of technical changes on political issues. For this reason, we cannot separate the following topics into clear political and military spheres



<sup>1</sup> Col. Gen. M. A. Gareyev, *Defense of the Homeland: Soviet Military Science*, No. 11 (Moscow: Znaniye, 1987).



**Political-Economic Constraints**

Recent [ ] confirms that the Soviets are well aware of their poor economic standing vis-a-vis the West. [ ]

[ ] in the mid-1980s, the Soviets assessed their relative standing—across a number of categories that included technology, general economic health, and agriculture—as only 45 percent of that of the United States.<sup>10</sup>

Evidence—including public pledges to reduce defense and procurement spending—already is mounting that authorities have begun a major shift of economic resources from the defense sector to help revitalize other sectors of the Soviet economy. In addition, they could go further than the current evidence of decisions

<sup>10</sup> Although economic factors play a major role in shaping Soviet military doctrine, a thorough discussion of the Soviet economy is clearly beyond the limits of this paper. [ ]

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on force size and structure indicates and order specific doctrinal changes at the military-technical level—such as the adoption of a truly defensive doctrine that denies the possibility of large-scale offensives. If left to their own choices, Soviet military leaders almost certainly would attempt to preserve an offensive capability, however reduced, in the face of politically mandated cuts in forces.

The current mixture of continuities and discontinuities in the Soviet national security calculus results in considerable ferment in military doctrine. We may witness a major divergence on some issues—such as the utility and desirability of planning for a preemptive conventional attack in a future war. Today's convergence on other issues—particularly in the realm of strategic nuclear policy—might dissolve in the face of major breakthroughs in the US Strategic Defense Initiative program. Perhaps the most important long-term development is the emergence of civilians in the analysis of issues that have traditionally been the preserve of the military. The degree and nature of the civilians' influence could introduce volatility and divisiveness hitherto unseen in Soviet national security planning.

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## Appendix A

### Soviet Views on the Causes of War

The views of Soviet political and military authorities on the causes of war are laid out in *Marxist-Leninist Teaching on War and the Army*, edited by Lt. Gen. D. A. Volkogonov, a former deputy chief of the Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army and Navy." The authoritative character of this source is suggested by its authors, the reviews of it in Soviet periodicals, and its frequent citation in other military-political writings.

[ ] Our analysis follows the structure laid out in Volkogonov's unclassified text, [ ]

In his adaptation of Clausewitz, Lenin stated that "war is a reflection of that *domestic* policy which the given country pursues prior to war." According to Soviet doctrine, capitalist or "imperialist" states are grounded in a system of economic exploitation. As capitalistic systems yield more and more to their internal contradictions, inefficiencies, and inequalities, the ruling classes may try to augment their system's poor economic performances by expropriating other states' economic assets. According to this theory, capitalist states are by nature predatory because the seizure of territory or raw materials provides them with an alternative means of production. Thus the "imperialism" that characterizes the international policies of the ruling classes in capitalist states, the Soviets claim, is rooted in the same system as their domestic policies. The relative inefficiency of the Soviet economy in the late 20th century—particularly in comparison with Western economies—may cause the current Soviet leadership to question this theory of the root cause of war

#### Fundamental Causes

The Soviets divide the historical causes of war into three levels. The most basic level consists of the predominant general or root causes. A European war, according to the Marxist-Leninist view, would be the result of profound socioeconomic processes occurring *within the opposing capitalist states*. The Soviets reject what they describe as inaccurate and falsely deterministic causes of war enumerated by "bourgeois" theorists. Soviet writers thus explicitly deny that wars may result from purely psychological or sociological drives; social Darwinist imperatives; or racial, neo-Malthusian, or scientific-technical determinants

#### Specific or Special Causes

A second level of the historical causes of war as viewed by the Soviets links the exploitative drive of capitalist states to specific historical conditions and social situations—for example, to the effects of territorial, ethnic, racial, or religious affiliations and antagonisms and the crises that emerge from them. The following are some of the specific causes described in authoritative Soviet sources.

" This book, translated as FBIS JPRS-UMA-84-021-L, 19 October 1984, is the latest edition of a volume periodically updated and republished by Voenizdat, the Soviet military publishing house. Its authors include nine general officers and seven colonels, a number of whom are well-known military theorists. It is largely based on the 1977 publication of which Volkogonov was a coeditor, *War and the Army: A Philosophical and Sociological Study* (FBIS JPRS L/9649, 7 April 1981). A political-military officer, Volkogonov is a graduate of the Lenin Military Political Academy—a higher military school that, among other tasks, trains its graduates to investigate and explain the sociopolitical components of doctrine.

#### National Ambitions

Actions undertaken by key states may succeed in dragging alliances into war or so upsetting the world correlation of forces that war against the "socialist alliance" becomes feasible. The following are examples

that appear with regularity [ ]

[ ] and probably reflect, to some degree, actual concerns:

- The United States, according to the Soviets, is striving to retain its leadership over the West and to influence the distribution of global tasks and resources. Alleged US actions that could lead to local wars include attempts to preserve, expand, or secure "monopolistic, neocolonial" positions in the developing world. An example cited in several sources asserts that the United States seeks to gain access to and control over sources of critical raw materials, as well as markets for manufactured goods. In case of a European war, Soviet writers argue, the United States would probably play the major role in forging a consensus for aggressive action to roll back the European frontiers of socialism.
- West German revanchism is often depicted by Soviet and NSWP writers as endemic (see map). The Soviets believe German revanchism could manifest itself in demands for a reunited Germany and restoration of pre-1939 borders.<sup>12</sup> The growing West German influence within NATO is described by some Pact writers as a condition that could be exploited by revanchist German elements to drag NATO into aggressive adventures in the future.
- Chinese "hegemonistic" tendencies and hostility toward the USSR have been described in several [ ]—particularly from the mid-1970s through the early 1980s—as not merely a threat to regional peace in Asia, but as a key element in the calculations of Western powers. The threat China poses to Soviet military power is characterized as essential to allow the West to attain a favorable correlation of forces.

12.

[ ] in the late 1970s stated that maps of Germany published in West Germany that depicted the current northern and western regions of Poland as belonging to Germany were regularly shown in political indoctrination classes in the Polish military

#### Spread of War

The available evidence strongly suggests that, in the Soviet view, a European war is different from virtually any other conflict and would probably result from conditions that originate in Europe. Although socialist theoreticians since Engels have stated that non-European wars may detonate one in Europe, the mechanism for this detonation is generally left unstated. Some [ ] sources have theorized that the superpowers could be drawn into direct conflict through their support for regional allies, especially the use of their own forces. [ ]

[ ] cited the possibility of the Soviet Union and the United States being drawn into conflict over support for separate Yugoslav republics after Tito's death, or possibly over a Middle East war that threatened an Israeli takeover of Persian Gulf oilfields. Other [ ] sources imply that the West would, in some circumstances, intentionally shift the conflict from remote areas to the European theater.

#### Internal Crises and Threats

Pact writers argue that periods of severe internal tensions in capitalist countries may reach critical points at which they are transformed into a Western decision to prepare for war. Pact writers proclaim that capitalist states' inherent internal flaws and contradictions will inevitably produce inflation, unemployment, economic stagnation, and shortages of consumer goods. Class conflict culminating in disturbances, strikes, and riots is described as a likely result.

Although Pact writers do not elaborate on Lenin's writings about why capitalist countries would allow internal crises to push them toward a decision for war, Pact writings and statements imply that such a decision would be motivated by a desire to distract the people from the real causes of their problems.

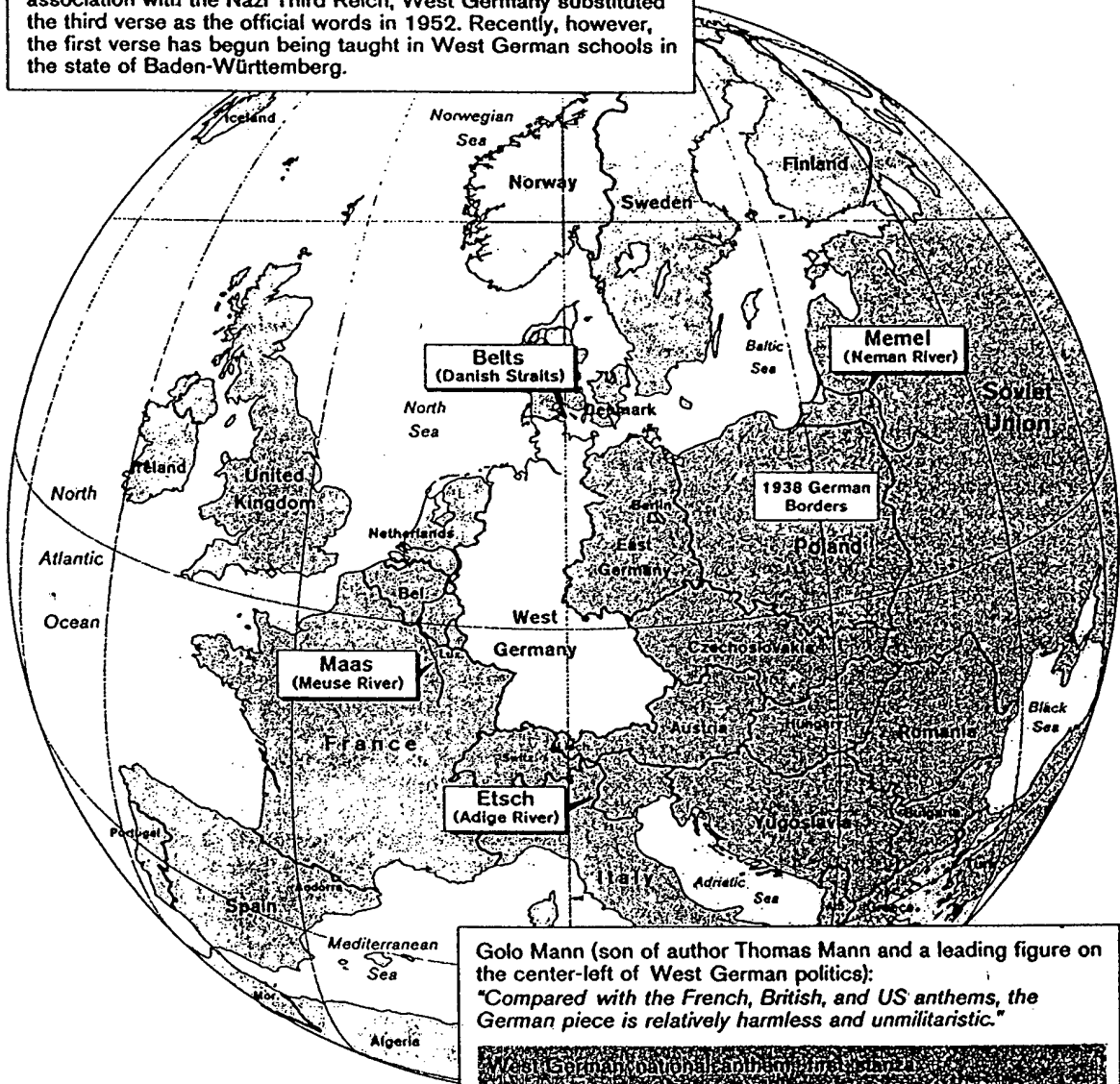
#### Arms Race

An arms race would not, in and of itself, cause a European war, in the Soviet view. The existence of a large, expanding pool of modern combat arms is, nevertheless, a sine qua non for aggressive capitalist



### Soviet Perceptions of German Revanchism

To Soviet ears, the first verse of the West German national anthem, "Deutschlandlied" (formerly "Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles") sounds like a revanchist call to war. Because of its association with the Nazi Third Reich, West Germany substituted the third verse as the official words in 1952. Recently, however, the first verse has begun being taught in West German schools in the state of Baden-Württemberg.



Golo Mann (son of author Thomas Mann and a leading figure on the center-left of West German politics):  
*"Compared with the French, British, and US anthems, the German piece is relatively harmless and unmilitaristic."*

West German national anthem (first verse):  
*"In the Maas (Meuse River) flows the Rhine (Rhine),  
in the Etsch (Adige River) flows the Belt (Danish Straits).  
Germany, Germany over all,  
Over all in the world."*

Boundary representation is not necessarily authoritative.

acts. Furthermore, [ ] often claim that the West will attempt to induce instability in the socialist countries through severe economic pressure prior to undertaking aggressive military actions. An arms race is one tactic the West might employ, according to these sources. Soviet writers have identified three reasons why the West would foster an arms race:

- To apply economic, political, and military pressure on the socialist states.
- To advance capitalist preparations for war.
- To support arms manufacturers in capitalist countries.

Recent [ ]

[ ] reflect a perception that the Strategic Defense Initiative was launched by the United States both to challenge the Soviet Union economically and to alter the strategic balance.

**Creation and Exploitation of Temporary Advantages**  
Socialist writers assert that it is possible for the West to gain temporary military-technical advantages over the "socialist commonwealth" because of the large amounts of resources devoted to preparing for war by the capitalist states. Temporary political advantages could be gained by inducing disarray in the Bloc—for example, by encouraging counterrevolutionary activities. Such advantages could be exploited by the West to encourage the withdrawal of one or more members of the Bloc, which could result in an increased threat of war.

#### Singular or Particular Causes of War

According to Soviet theorists, no individual decision-maker or random element will prove dominant or decisive in causing a war, but such factors—the third level in the Soviet formulation—will "impart a special hue to this process." [ ] assert that the actions of political leaders or ruling groups are merely concrete manifestations of root or specific causes. Thus, actions of aggressive, revanchist elements in West Germany and their contribution toward crisis and war would reflect endemic nationalist ambitions—not the personal motivations of individuals.

The playing down of the roles of individuals in the origin of wars is a logical derivative of Soviet theory. (Individual actions are notoriously unpredictable, thus hardly susceptible to Marxist-Leninist scientific analysis.) Marxism-Leninism is predicated upon the role and importance of class motivations and actions. Soviet doctrine, therefore, requires that major international events be rationalized in terms of class conflict, not the whim and error of individuals and small groups. One demonstrable manifestation of this doctrinal constraint is the difficulty the Soviets have had in reconciling the historical record concerning Stalin's role in the months and weeks before the Nazi invasion in 1941.

#### The Unstated Final Catalyst for War

Neither [ ] Soviet writings lay out in detail how the sociopolitical factors described above should be applied to analyze specific conditions at any given time. [ ]

[ ] Soviet security depends on preserving the postwar status quo in Europe as a whole. We infer from this that, in assessing the likelihood of war breaking out in Europe, the Soviets would pay particular attention to the general correlation of forces on the Continent and would react most vigorously to perceived changes in it.

An example cited by [ ] was the likely reaction of the Soviet leadership if Sweden, Austria, or Yugoslavia were to join NATO. In itself, such a change would only marginally affect the military balance in Europe, but the Soviets would probably interpret such behavior as indicative of a more fundamental, adverse shift in the general correlation of forces. [ ]

Soviet theorists state unequivocally that history does not repeat itself and that the interplay of historical and social elements in any situation is rich, unique, and difficult to foresee. Although they believe that war is subordinated to laws governing its outbreak, course, and outcome, the presence and influence of random factors means that "... the laws of war are not simple, rigidly operating laws, such as the laws of mechanics."<sup>11</sup> Rather, they operate as probabilities and according to trends, as do all social laws. Therefore, Soviet planners have not postulated specific scenarios that represent the culmination of their forecasts. They probably do not believe that they can identify a set of all-encompassing conditions necessary for the outbreak of war in Europe.

Although Marxist-Leninist theory underpins Soviet fears about the threat of war and there have been several periods of heightened apprehension, Soviet political and military leaders generally appear to regard the threat of war as distant. Soviet spokesmen have maintained in recent years that the USSR's achievement of strong military capabilities—especially parity in nuclear weaponry—has frustrated US scheming to use force against it. Indeed, it is the potential loss of Soviet superiority in conventional weaponry and, more likely, of parity in strategic nuclear weaponry, largely through technological revolution, that appears to induce serious concern in the Soviet leadership.

<sup>11</sup> Lt. Gen. D. A. Volkogonov, ed., *Marxist-Leninist Teaching on War and the Army* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1984), translated as FBIS JPRS-UMA-84-021-L, 19 October 1984, p. 58.

**Appendix B**

**The Soviet Approach to East-West  
Discussions of Military Doctrine**

This unclassified appendix describes how the Soviets are likely to represent both their own military doctrine and those of NATO countries and characterizes that representation in ways that may be useful in face-to-face meetings

## The Soviet Approach to East-West Discussions of Military Doctrine

Recent articles in the Soviet press suggest why the Soviets are interested in multilateral discussions about national and alliance military doctrines, and what their likely approach would be in such talks. The Soviets believe that the West has been successful in portraying the Warsaw Pact as a military threat. Moreover, the Soviets appear genuinely concerned that Western leaders view the Pact as an actual military threat. The Soviets see these Western perceptions as the underlying reason for NATO's willingness to invest heavily in military means to offset the Pact's military capabilities. The Soviets would like to persuade the West that the Pact's military doctrine is basically defensive and that a rational basis exists for serious arms control agreements, including large cut-backs in Western military forces. As a fallback and a means of appealing to NATO publics, the Soviets would depict the Pact, for instance, as defensive and desirous of arms control while NATO fumbles for a consensus and fends off Soviet accusations of harboring an offensive military doctrine.

The specific points on which the Soviet case would be built would probably be those that have previously appeared in one forum or another. They can be grouped under three topics: NATO's doctrine; the Warsaw Pact's doctrine; and the imperatives derived from the current military balance.

### The Soviet Case Against NATO's Doctrine

The Soviets might argue that NATO's espoused military doctrine is inherently offensive, destabilizing, and costly to implement. Spokesmen would detail technical characteristics of NATO's military strategy, tactics, forces, and deployments, claiming that these indicate nothing less than the West's intention to launch offensive operations in a war. Specific arguments would probably include:

- *Flexible response* assumes the first use of nuclear weapons by NATO in a war and the explicit rejection of the denuclearization of Europe, including regional nuclear-weapons-free zones.

- *Forward defense* is but an excuse for the deployment of substantial NATO forces along the East German and Czechoslovak borders, ready to launch an attack into Pact territory with little warning.
- *Follow-on forces attack* and the employment of offensive airpower "aimed at depriving the Pact of the ability to repulse NATO aggression" require surprise attack by NATO to work as planned.
- *Large field training exercises* by NATO increase the risk of war because of the increasing difficulty of distinguishing between exercises and actual preparations for hostilities.
- *Nuclear deterrence* is a flawed concept because it attempts to assure one state's (or alliance's) security at the cost of another's through intimidation.

### The Soviet Case for Its Own Military Doctrine

The Warsaw Pact Political Consultative Committee's statement issued at Berlin on 29 May 1987 briefly lays out the Soviet case. The Soviets argue that:

- Their military doctrine focuses foremost on the prevention of any war—conventional or nuclear—and the resolution of all international problems through peaceful means.
- Their military doctrine is strictly defensive. Military action will never be initiated by the Pact in an attempt to resolve international political problems. Furthermore, Pact members will never initiate military action against any state or alliance unless they are themselves the target of an armed attack.
- They will never be the first to employ nuclear weapons.
- They are committed to maintaining armed forces and armaments at a state of readiness strictly sufficient for defense and for repelling any possible aggression.

### **The Soviet Case for Imperatives Derived From the Current Military Balance**

The Soviets state that the nature of current international relations and the state of technology make resolution of international disputes by military means unacceptable. The colossal destructive potential of nuclear weapons, in particular, has escalated the risks and costs of war to the point that war can no longer be viewed as a rational extension of politics by other means. Specifically, the Soviets argue that:

- Contemporary conventional weapons threaten to make a war in Europe vastly more destructive than previous wars, especially given the existence of nuclear power plants and chemical plants that could be hit with conventional weapons.
- A rough military-strategic parity—although asymmetric in specific systems—exists between NATO and the Pact. Mutual arms reductions will not upset the balance, but instead will reduce the financial and societal burden of arms and lower the risks of a spiraling arms race and conflict. Specific asymmetries should be righted by reductions as necessary.
- The prohibition and elimination of certain types of weapons—above all nuclear and chemical—are particularly desirable because of their massive indiscriminate destructiveness. Nuclear-weapons-free and chemical-weapons-free zones may be precursors to the worldwide elimination of these classes of weapons.
- Conventional forces on both sides can be structured to eliminate the possibility of surprise attack and offensive operations. Such measures would introduce an element of predictability, hence stability, ensuring that no aggressor could count on a successful “local blitzkrieg.”

### **Weaknesses in the Likely Soviet Arguments**

Misstatements and contradictions in the Soviet positions provide a number of points for exploitation in discussions. We divide these into two categories: misrepresentation of NATO military doctrine and misrepresentation of Soviet military doctrine. First, we outline the Soviet definition of military doctrine.

According to the Soviets, all states possess a military doctrine derived from the nature of the state. A recent article stated that “the main postulates of military doctrine are stipulated by the sociopolitical and economic system, the level of production, the state of the means of waging war, and the geographic position of the country and that of the probable enemy, and stem from the domestic and foreign policy of the state.”

The Soviets define two aspects or dimensions of military doctrine—sociopolitical and military-technical. The sociopolitical aspect is the bedrock of a state’s national security policy. Subject to the strict control of state (in the Soviet case, Communist party) civilian authorities, it defines likely enemies, national objectives, and the gross allocations of a state’s resources to defense. The military-technical aspect of doctrine is largely the domain of military authorities. It deals with force structure, armaments, and methods of waging war.

In general terms, the Soviets describe their military doctrine as wholly defensive—in both its sociopolitical and military-technical aspects. Western “imperialist” nations, on the other hand, must by definition have aggressive military doctrines resulting from their “reactionary expansionist political course.” The Soviets thus describe NATO’s doctrine as wholly offensive, concentrating on what they describe as NATO’s intention and capability to wage offensive operations.

*Misrepresentation of NATO Military Doctrine.* The Soviet military’s descriptions of NATO’s military doctrine impute a single Alliance-wide doctrine rather than 16 individual national doctrines, neglect the political aspects of NATO member-state doctrines, and falsify the military-technical character of NATO planning. To some degree, such misrepresentations may result from the Soviets’ mirror-imaging their own dominance over the Warsaw Pact.

Contrary to Soviet declarations, NATO is not an alliance like the Warsaw Pact, controlled by a single dominant state. Each state in NATO determines its

own national military doctrine. Certain defensive contingency plans and command arrangements—a narrow slice of what the Soviets define as the military-technical aspect of military doctrine—are prepared for collective defense. Within the Pact, only the USSR possesses nuclear and chemical weapons; in NATO, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States all possess independent nuclear forces and (to varying degrees) independent nuclear doctrines. Soviet references to a single NATO-wide military doctrine are thus demonstrably false.

Because the Soviet Union and NATO states do not share common definitions of doctrine, they often talk past each other. NATO members generally look upon their national military doctrines as encompassing strategy and tactics, but not the grander issues of national security policy—the dimension of military doctrine the Soviets refer to as sociopolitical. Thus, commonly held Alliance views of those grander issues are seldom formally identified or enunciated in doctrinal statements. NATO states do, however, share a set of common views and objectives that parallel the Soviet's sociopolitical aspect of military doctrine, including the following:

- The existence of unprovocative military forces can contribute to the prevention of aggressive war through deterrence. Deterrence has both an aspect of denial (the prevention of successful aggression) and a punitive aspect (ensuring that the potential aggressor could be punished through military action so that the costs of war to a would-be aggressor would outweigh any possible gains).
- A belief in collective security against external aggression is manifested in the concept that an attack on any one state is, and should be treated as, an attack on all.
- Military force will be used only for defensive purposes, including the defense of allies and peacekeeping missions.
- Nuclear and chemical weapons would be used only for defensive purposes.

As individual states and as part of the Alliance, NATO members maintain forces, procure armaments, and develop plans to rebuff any aggressor or impose on any aggressor unacceptable damage. NATO's military strategy of flexible response is in keeping with these defensive political and military aims. Forward defense is necessitated by NATO's limited geographic depth, the political desire to preserve the Alliance's territorial integrity, and the aim of limiting damage to NATO members' populations and resources.

*Misrepresentation of Pact Military Doctrine.* The Pact's Berlin statement is the first to claim an Alliance-wide military doctrine for its member states. The claim that one doctrine can address the national security demands of seven countries is founded upon what the Soviets describe as a coincidence of political and socioeconomic systems and views. The claim, nevertheless, overlooks each Pact state's unique geographic position, population, economics, and technological situation, as well as other determinants—according to the formal Soviet definition—of a state's military doctrine.

Practically all Soviet statements have emphasized the sociopolitical dimension of the Pact military doctrine and have ignored and distorted its offensive military-technical dimension. The Pact's deployment of forces, the makeup of those forces, and—in the past—Pact public statements suggest its intention, capability, and preparations to wage offensive operations in the event of war:

- The Soviets have not addressed the inconsistency between their very favorable conventional force standing in Europe and their self-described defensive military-technical doctrine. Soviet military writings suggest that an attacker needs approximately 3-to-1 odds to be confident of success. Even after the recently announced troop cuts, Soviet and NSWP forces deployed in the forward region will still outnumber NATO forces in armaments, especially those suited for offensive operations (such as tanks).

- Numerous Soviet and Pact statements call for forces incapable of waging offensive operations, especially the Berlin statement that implies that Pact forces have converted or are converting to such a status. However, recent statements show clearly that no change in operational doctrine and planning has, in fact, occurred. General Gribkov, then Chief of Staff of the Warsaw Pact Joint Armed Forces, stated in 1988, "While repulsing aggression, [the Warsaw Pact] will also conduct counteroffensive operations." Defense Minister Yazov noted, "The defensive military doctrine of the Warsaw Pact, which is designed exclusively for parrying a military threat, by no means signifies that our actions will be of a passive nature." Forces that are configured for sustained counteroffensives are not easily distinguished from those designed for straightforward offensives, as Soviet sources say about NATO.

It is not apparent what would motivate the Soviets to make fundamental changes in their operational planning and doctrine. Soviet statements about parity, reasonable sufficiency, and other, related terms are inconsistent as to whether Pact forces and doctrine are independent of Western actions or direct reactions to them:

- Yevgeniy Primakov, director of the Institute of World Economics and International Relations, has contended that for too long the USSR has "followed the United States in almost mirror-like fashion" and can instead establish a level of defense sufficiency free of US actions.
- By contrast, Valentin Falin (then head of the Novosti press agency, now chief of the party's International Department) concluded that the Soviets would change their operational doctrine "... if we have the material guarantee that a conventional

attack against us is not possible." Similarly, Defense Minister Yazov stated that "... we are not the ones who set the limits of sufficiency, it is the actions of the United States and NATO."

Finally, it remains unclear how the concept of reasonable sufficiency applies in the Soviet view to conventional forces. The Soviets have now indicated that they will make substantial unilateral cuts in some conventional arms, but they have not detailed what a Pact "defensive defense" would look like.

There are signs of doctrinal ferment in the Soviet Union. Contradictions among civilian and military spokesmen are probably evidence of an internal Soviet debate. Nevertheless, even if such a debate is occurring and if it were definitely resolved in favor of the "defensive school" of Soviet thinking, we would find ourselves in the position of L. Semeyko, writing in *Izvestiya* on 13 August 1987:

*... The mere proclamation of one's military doctrine's defensive thrust ... is not enough. Confirmations of this are needed in terms of the size of the armed forces and their distribution and structure, the nature of their armaments, military activity undertaken and, of course, in terms of constructive actions to reduce the level of military strategic equilibrium. Without this, declarations will remain declarations and mutual suspicions will not only be a permanent feature but will also be capable of causing the swift emergence of crisis situations.*



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**Key Concepts in Soviet "New Thinking" About Military Affairs**

*Soviet political leaders, academics based largely at institutes such as IMEMO (the Institute of World Economics and International Relations) and IUSAC (the Institute of the USA and Canada), and military leaders are employing a new vocabulary in recent years to discuss changes in military affairs. The following concepts are among the most prominent used by these writers and can be expected to appear regularly in multilateral discussions about military doctrines:*

- *Mutual security. In the nuclear age, security for the superpowers can only be mutual. On the global scale, security can only be universal and comprehensive.*
- *No victory in nuclear war. There can be no victor in a nuclear war, and it would be suicidal, and thus irrational, to begin one. Furthermore, nuclear war may threaten the very existence of mankind.*
- *Impossibility of achieving military superiority. Neither the USSR nor the United States can achieve military superiority over the other superpower. Similarly, neither the East nor the West can achieve military superiority.*
- *Insufficiency of military-technical means to secure defense. National security cannot be attained by military-technical means alone. An increasingly important role is played by political means, especially arms control and disarmament.*
- *Rejection of deterrence. Deterrence perpetuates the arms race, increases the chance of military confrontations, and is immoral.*
- *Rejection of high levels of parity. Parity at ever-higher levels does not guarantee peace. It in fact threatens peace and is inherently wasteful. The levels of nuclear weapons held by both sides must be lowered, and eventually they must be completely eliminated.*
- *Strategic stability. A system of strong disincentives for the use of military force must be preserved during the transition from the present situation to the nonnuclear world. In addition, the development of new weapon systems may contribute to instability by ratcheting up the arms race.*
- *Reasonable sufficiency. The level of military strength and force planning should be based on the principle of limiting resources committed to the military to the lowest level consonant with national and alliance defense. In the nuclear field, forces should be enough to ensure the infliction of unacceptable damage on the aggressor. In the conventional field, forces should be able to defeat aggression but should not be able to carry out offensive operations.*
- *Defensive military doctrine. Both sides should adopt defensive strategies in formulating operational strategies. Both sides should deny themselves the means to carry out surprise attacks or offensive operations.*
- *Glasnost. In the military arena, excessive secrecy contributes to mistrust and should be replaced with a new openness about military doctrines, forces, levels of spending, and the like.*
- *Rejection of military means for resolving international conflicts. All conflicts should be resolved through peaceful means because any local conflict could lead to nuclear escalation involving the superpowers.*
- *Rejection of Clausewitz's formula. The axiom that war is an extension of politics by violent means is no longer applicable to confrontation involving nuclear powers.*