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# RADIO PROPAGANDA REPORT

POLITICS AND DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES  
AMONG THE SOVIET MILITARY ELITE

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POLITICS AND DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES AMONG THE SOVIET MILITARY ELITE

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POLITICS AND DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES AMONG THE SOVIET MILITARY ELITE

Introduction and Summary

The involvement of the military elite in top-level Soviet politics, already manifest in the doctor-plot two months before Stalin's death, has been increasingly indicated in overt Soviet information. Various members of the Party Presidium, in their efforts to establish publicly their preeminence over their rivals, have appeared to rely on credit for wartime distinction accorded them by military spokesmen. Military leaders have also made pronouncements bearing on foreign policy, a number of them addressed to the West. Whether the military have directly influenced foreign policy or have only expressed the views of political leaders, their ostensible role in the decision-making process is far greater than in the past.

These developments have been accompanied by evidence of a change in Soviet military doctrine and presumably in military strategy, with respect to which there are subtle differences in the declarations of the top professional military leaders (Zhukov, Konev, Vasilevsky and Sokolovsky). This paper investigates into the respective positions of these military leaders on questions of military-political strategy and into lines of factionalism among the military elite, and seeks where possible to pursue the extension of these lines into the membership of the Party Presidium.

Part I presents in working-paper detail the substantial evidence of deep military involvement in Soviet politics and of factionalism among the military and explores for lines of allegiance from individual military leaders to individual members of the Party Presidium. It can establish conclusively only the alignment between Konev and Khrushchev, but it presents evidence suggesting that Bagramyan and Chuikov may also be adherents of Khrushchev.

Part II is a chronologically developed analysis of changing elements in Soviet military doctrine whereby the decisiveness of the surprise element in atomic war is recognized by some spokesmen as requiring a reassessment of military-political policy.

Part III examines possible differences among the top military leaders on Soviet military-political strategy, concluding that Sokolovsky is in conflict with Vasilevsky on doctrinal issues which have implications for strategy and for defense allocations. Bulganin's July 1954 statement on the danger of a surprise atomic attack by the United States suggests that he may support Sokolovsky's belief in the need for a new strategic concept. Zhukov and Khrushchev have remained silent on these issues, and Konev's position is ambiguous.

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POLITICS AND DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES AMONG THE SOVIET MILITARY ELITE

I. The Involvement of the Military in Soviet Politics

A. Publicity for the Marshals after Stalin's Death

In the days before Stalin's death top military leaders were drawn into the conflicting currents of Soviet politics, at least as symbols and probably more substantially, by the 13 January 1953 announcement of a thwarted assassination plot on the part of seven doctors. All the intended victims named in the "disclosure" of the plot were from the ranks of the top marshals, generals and admirals.\* Whatever the intended consequences of the doctor-plot for the military leadership, they were apparently nullified by Stalin's death.\*\* The doctors were exonerated on 4 April 1953, and in the following months some members of the military group whose prestige had been enhanced by the announcement of the plot seemed to decline in authority. Konev, one of the highest-ranking targets, dropped from public view. Zhukov, previously in disfavor, became a First Deputy Defense Minister; his name began appearing prominently at receptions in early April 1953, although during Stalin's reign the military had been represented chiefly by the inactive Budenny.

\* One of the targets, Marshal Govorov, writing in RED STAR on 23 February 1953, referred to the plot, recalled the purges of the thirties in discussing Soviet defense capabilities, and called for one-man leadership in the Army--a rare injunction from a top marshal. Govorov's involvement in Soviet politics was explicitly acknowledged at his funeral (22 March 1955) by the Moscow Party Secretary Kapitanov: "Govorov...devoted much attention to political work and took an active part in the Moscow Party organization of the capital." Sokolovsky, who was not among the alleged targets of the doctor-plot, did not mention it in a PRAVDA article appearing at the same time as Govorov's.

\*\* A strong reassertion of Party authority over the military following Beria's arrest was evident in Moskovsky's RED STAR article on revolutionary vigilance (24 July 1953):

Army and Navy Communists, discussing the results of the July plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU, pointed to the serious shortcomings in Party propaganda, Party work and methods of Party leadership--shortcomings which may facilitate the enemy's infiltration into military ranks. The political organs and army and navy Party organizations are called upon to draw the proper political conclusions from that. It is a matter of irreproachable implementation of the Party statute requirements, of the strictest observance of the Lenin principles of collective leadership, and of putting an end once and for all to lack of control by the Party of any worker since the departure from Party control, as practice has shown, leads to the deterioration of the worker and his loss of vigilance. It is a matter of abandoning the narrowly practical approach to the selection of cadres and of strict adherence to the Party principles of selecting workers on the basis of political and business qualifications. It is a matter of constantly expanding and strengthening the ties between the Party organizations and the masses and of being responsive to their demands.

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Lag in Konev's Recovery

Konev's name failed to appear in the Soviet press for several months and was absent from the obituary notice for Lieutenant General Vershinin on 6 September 1953, although it would normally have been included in the long list of signatures. Shortly afterwards, however, it reappeared on an obituary (for Colonel General Trofimenko, 20 October), and in December Konev presided over the trial of Beria. This change in his fortunes may have been related to the announcement on 14 September that Khrushchev had been appointed Party First Secretary eleven days previously. Perhaps to balance Konev's rise, PRAVDA announced a week after the trial that a long-due memorial to Zhukov was being unveiled in his home town.

Beginning in February 1954 the top marshals began to express themselves in Soviet publications far more frequently than before. On Army Day (23 February) Sokolovsky and Vasilevsky had articles in the central press. There had been articles by two top military men on the previous Army Day; but on V-E Day 1954 articles by Zhukov, Sokolovsky and Vasilevsky appeared where there had been none by top marshals the previous year. In early December 1954 PRAVDA published a Vasilevsky article which did not commemorate any Soviet holiday, a thing it had not done for years. The article constituted a message to Field Marshal Montgomery, addressing him personally as one professional military man to another, warning him against atomic war. Two weeks later a comparable article by Zhukov appeared, attacking Churchill for his revelation that he had considered the use of German troops against the Soviet Army if it advanced beyond the agreed sectors. Konev, however, published no articles during 1954.

2. Rise in Konev's Fortunes with Khrushchev's

Konev did not break his long silence until February 1955, when he addressed the Supreme Soviet session at which Khrushchev succeeded in deposing Malenkov. He spoke as representative of the military on this occasion and again on V-E Day in May. He wrote in RED STAR on Army Day (23 February). In the listing of officials attending Govorov's funeral on 21 March Konev's name appeared before Sokolovsky's, immediately after Zhukov and Vasilevsky, and he has now been designated a Deputy Minister of Defense.

Both on Army Day and V-E Day, Konev pointed to the power which had enabled him to rise when he listed "the outstanding leaders of the Party and State" who were sent to the front during World War II, naming Khrushchev first, and only Bulganin among other living leaders. This device of singling out certain members of the Party Presidium in honor of their war work had been used on a number of occasions in 1954 and 1955 prior to the February meeting of the Supreme Soviet to signal the rise of Khrushchev (and Bulganin) and the decline of Malenkov. The development of its application to the struggle for power in the hierarchy is reviewed in detail in Section C below.

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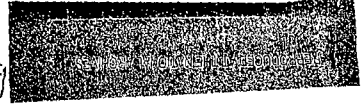
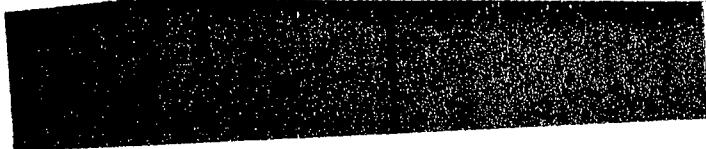
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## B. The Struggle of the Party-Military Lists

### 1. First Lists Slight Khrushchev

In 1953, while Malenkov still enjoyed preeminence among Soviet leaders, two listings of Party leaders engaged in military work during the war were published in the article on the CPSU in the LARGE SOVIET ENCYCLOPEDIA (Volume 22, signed for the press on 9 September). The article first lists the members of the State Defense Committee: Stalin as chairman, Molotov as deputy chairman, Voroshilov, Malenkov and Mikoyan, and notes that Kaganovich and Bulganin were added later. Beria and Voznesensky, of course, do not appear. The second listing includes "political leaders" sent by the Party "to leading work in the armed forces and placed at the head of decisive sectors of the Soviet economy"--Malenkov, Molotov, Khrushchev, Voroshilov, Zhdanov, Bulganin, Kaganovich, Mikoyan, Andreev, Shcherbakov, Shvernik and others. Thus, with the exception of Pervukhin and Saburov who are not mentioned in either list, Khrushchev is the only member of the Party Presidium not included in both lists.

### 2. Malenkov Loses to Khrushchev in 1954 Lists

In 1954 Khrushchev's rise was reflected in the gradual elimination of listings of members of the State Defense Committee where he was not included and in the appearance of new lists restricted to leaders "directly" engaged in military work and not including names like Malenkov and Mikoyan cited in the second ENCYCLOPEDIA list presumably by virtue of economic wartime work.

Such listings were first used on Stalin's death anniversary, 5 March 1954. An article by Zelenov in TRUD said that "the Central Committee of the Party assigned N. A. Bulganin, A. A. Zhdanov, A. S. Shcherbakov, N. S. Khrushchev and other members of the Central Committee directly to military work." Khrushchev appeared at the end of the list although he then should have preceded Bulganin in order of rank and Shcherbakov alphabetically. The same listing was published in RED STAR on 16 April.

Malenkov, however, continued to enjoy support from some quarters. SOVETSKAYA BELORUSSIYA published on 20 April 1954 a list similar to the one included in the ENCYCLOPEDIA in September 1953, citing the names of leaders in military and war work and including, in the then prevailing hierarchical order, Malenkov, Molotov, Khrushchev, Voroshilov, Bulganin, Kaganovich and Mikoyan. Other publicists, while using the new list of leaders "directly" engaged in military work which excluded Malenkov, hedged somewhat by adding the membership of the State Defense Committee, where, however, Malenkov is subordinated to Stalin's deputy, Molotov. These dual lists were employed in the Stalin death anniversary editorial in KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA (5 March), by SOVETSKAYA MOLDAVIYA (9 May) and in a V-E Day article by Lieutenant General Gritch in of DOSAAF which appeared in several regional papers and was carried in radio press reviews. Gritch placed Khrushchev's name ahead of Bulganin's, perhaps to counter Bulganin's unique inclusion on both lists.

3. Civil War Lists Omit Malenkov Again

The use of these listings, which now represented a distinct gain for Khrushchev, ceased suddenly in May 1954 and was not resumed until December. The resumption, it proved, marked Malenkov's imminent fall; and the six-month hiatus may have been the result of efforts on the part of his faction to stave off the rise of the Party First Secretary. As the occasion for the first listings of leaders engaged "directly" in military work had been Stalin's death anniversary, the anniversary of his birth provided the peg for resuming them. In editorials devoted to the anniversary, PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY and NEW TIMES listed Bulganin, Zhdanov, Shcherbakov and Khrushchev as leaders assigned by the Party to military work. The editorials mentioned the State Defense Committee and Stalin's leadership of it, but did not include a list of membership, which was replaced by a new listing of organizers of the Red Army during the Civil War. The Civil War list omits Malenkov's name, making him the only Presidium member not mentioned on either list except Pervukhin and Saburov, who were too young to have served at that time.

Bulganin, the only other Presidium member not named in the Civil War list, could like Malenkov presumably claim participation in the Civil War as validly as Khrushchev.\* The list seems to have been designed to set Khrushchev's status clearly above all others, including Bulganin's, since Khrushchev is the only living leader represented on both lists. These Civil War lists used by PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY and NEW TIMES were originated by BLOKNOT AGITATORA (No. 54) and were also published in December in OGONEK (No. 51) and PROBLEMS OF ECONOMY (No. 12).

In what may have been a final effort by the Malenkov faction, the Premier's name was included in a list published during the meeting of the Party Central Committee in January 1955 only ten days before his resignation. The issue of MOLODOI KOMMUNIST signed for the press on 29 January included Malenkov in an alphabetical list of Party leaders directed to "military defense work" in World War II. The list includes all living Presidium members except Pervukhin and Saburov.

4. Molotov Loses Rank with Malenkov's Elimination

Following Malenkov's resignation on 8 February his name disappeared from all such lists, which came to be employed almost exclusively by military sources. Major-General Moskovsky, chief editor of RED STAR and thus a top Party-military publicist, used two lists in his article in ZNAMYA signed for the press on 10 February while the Supreme Soviet was still in session. Moskovsky named Bulganin, Zhdanov, Shcherbakov and Khrushchev--in the order established in March 1954--as leaders sent into military work during World War II and included the same names on his list of organizers of the Red Army during the Civil War, where he moved Voroshilov ahead of Molotov. Similar lists were published in the military journal VOENNYE ZNANIYA (No. 2) in February.

\* Khrushchev's claim to Civil War participation was authoritatively established in the telegram of the Central Committee and Council of Ministers congratulating him on his sixtieth birthday in April 1954. The telegram to Bulganin on the analogous occasion (May 1955) failed to acknowledge his role in the Civil War, although the broadcast version of his biography qualified him for such tribute.

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These, then, were the precedents available to Konev when he wrote his 23 February article in RED STAR. Against this frame of reference he took the final step in favor of Khrushchev by moving his name from the fourth and last place it had occupied in virtually all earlier lists to first place, with Bulganin second. Later, in a V-E Day speech, Konev indicated even more flagrantly Khrushchev's precedence over Bulganin. As delivered and broadcast live, the speech listed "Comrade Khrushchev, Comrades Bulganin, Zhdanov, Shcherbakov." This version did not appear in the press, which listed the four names without separation, presumably as they had appeared in the text of the speech approved for delivery. There were no other variations between the spoken and printed texts. Konev added to the four the names of Voroshilov and Kaganovich, thus singling out two other living leaders for special honor while still omitting Molotov.

With the exception of a ZARYA VOSTOKA article on 7 May, the only other known listings of Party leaders active in World War II military work occur in articles by military men: Colonel General Zheltov (article in KOMMUNIST signed for the press on 7 May), Lieutenant General Radetskii (in provincial papers, including SOVIET ESTONIA, LENINSKOYE ZNAMYA, LENINGRADSKAYA PRAVDA, and the Armenian KOMMUNIST on 8 May); and Marshal Bagramyan (article in OKTYABR signed for the press on 13 May).

Zheltov's list was the same as that in the published version of Konev's V-E Day speech. Radetskii omitted Kaganovich and placed the other three living leaders at the head of his list in alphabetical order--Bulganin, Voroshilov, and Khrushchev--followed by Zhdanov and Shcherbakov. Bagramyan restricted his list to the four leaders included in Konev's Army Day article and, like Konev, placed Khrushchev first and Bulganin second, but he reversed the order of the two deceased leaders, placing Shcherbakov before Zhdanov.

The absence of Molotov from any of the latest lists on World War II military work and the fact that his name fell behind Voroshilov's in Moskovsky's Civil War listing in February after having preceded it in December suggest that Molotov suffered a loss in status concomitant with Malenkov's February defeat. The belated inclusion of Voroshilov and less frequently of Kaganovich in some World War II listings may be an indication that these two either have fully allied themselves with the victorious faction or, more probably, that their support is being cultivated.

## C. Politicking Among the Marshals

### 1. Support for Politicians

A review of this use of a device calculated to make invidious distinction among members of the "collective leadership" suggests several conclusions. Of the eight known instances in which it was used after Malenkov's resignation, all but one were by high-ranking military men (Konev twice, Bagramyan, Radetskii), by military-political figures (Moskovsky, Zheltov) or by a military journal. In addition, Lieutenant General of the Guards Rodimtsev gratuitously introduced Khrushchev's name into his PRAVDA article on the anniversary of the Stalingrad victory (2 February 1955).\*

\* "On February 4, 1943, a large number of soldiers and working people met in one of the squares in liberated Stalingrad. On behalf of the Party Central Committee, Comrade N. S. Khrushchev congratulated them on the victory and called for new strength to be drawn from the victory for further struggle and further advance... This passage was deleted from TAEGELISCHE REUNDSCHAU when the article was reprinted



These six military men, three of them professional soldiers, have thus made themselves useful to political forces maneuvering for prestige and power. The variations in the composition of the lists, sometimes including Voroshilov and less frequently Kaganovich along with Khrushchev and Bulganin, suggest that there is not complete agreement among the military regarding support for individual political leaders.

The members of the top political elite who have used these military figures for personal political ends have herein based their claim to pre-eminence on their military-political achievements. This tactic had its origins in the struggle of the Khrushchev faction against Malenkov, but its continued use and the appearance of new variations in the formulas used suggest that it has taken on new functions. Where the formulas initially tended to favor Bulganin over Khrushchev (March through May 1954), Khrushchev subsequently gained the preeminence most recently emphasized by Konev, Bagramyan and Zheltov. That this reduction in prestige for Bulganin is not simply a recognition of his official status is indicated by the May Day 1955 posting of portraits of Party leaders in Moscow, which accorded Bulganin a virtually equal place with Khrushchev; except in two groupings they were placed together in the center, with other Presidium members on the flanks. Another instance in which the precedence accorded Presidium members by these military formulas introduces a variation from their official rank is the continued exclusion of Molotov, although he ranks well ahead of Kaganovich, whose name Konev and Zheltov added in May 1955 along with Voroshilov's.

2. Rivalries Among the Military

After thus assisting certain political leaders to exploit their wartime roles, some military leaders began in 1955 to claim wartime glory for themselves and to accord it to each other. The practice was apparently initiated by Zhukov, in response to a direct question in his 7 February interview with Hearst:

By decision of the Committee of State Defense, I was appointed commander of the forces during the defense of Moscow. I directed all the preparations for the Stalingrad operation. The operation itself was carried out by Marshal Vasilevsky.

Zhukov and Vasilevsky were given the same joint credit for the Stalingrad victory by Zheltov (KOMMUNIST, 7 May), but without distinguishing between their respective roles.

This version of World War II history was contradicted a month later by LITERARY GAZETTE in an article by Rudny (2 June) devoted to the All-Union Conference on military-artistic literature which called Marshal Chuikov "the hero of the Stalingrad defense." Khrushchev had been credited with a political role in the defense of Stalingrad by Lieutenant General Rodimtsev on 2 February, a few days before Zhukov attributed the operation to himself and Vasilevsky. Chuikov himself acknowledged (2 May in PRAVDA) a Zhukov role in the conquest of Berlin, placing him however alongside Konev and Rokossovsky by listing the three front commanders in alphabetical order. Apparently his only precedent for listing the front commanders who participated in a wartime victory was Marshal Nedelin's article in PRAVDA on 13 April 1954, which noted the participation of the troops of Marshals Tolbukhin and Malinovsky in the capture of Vienna.

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This evidence of varying agency that conflicting claims of wartime glory are being pressed by the top military leaders is supplemented by a passage in the Rudny LITERARY GAZETTE article which conspicuously draws distinctions among the top Soviet marshals:

Recently the whole world learned about the appointment of Marshal Konev as commander in chief of the united armed forces of the Warsaw Treaty powers. Imagine now how necessary--not only for us but for the readers abroad--is a book describing him both as a man and as a commander. It seems that books are also necessary about Zhukov, Bagramyan, Govorov, Rokossovsky, and the hero of the Stalingrad defense, Chuikov, and about other marshals, generals, and admirals. Why are there no such books?

Rudny seems to be acting as a partisan in the possible rivalry among the top marshals when he singles out Konev and magnifies his new appointment while placing his superior, Defense Minister Zhukov, in series with the lower-ranking Bagramyan and Chuikov. Glaring also is his omission of Vasilevsky, former Defense Minister and second ranking Soviet marshal, credited by Zhukov and Zheltov with the Stalingrad operation, and of Sokolovsky, Army Chief of Staff for two and a half years and presently at least fourth ranking Soviet marshal.

The dangers of a public contest among the military leaders in the sharing out of credits for World War II may have been recognized by RED STAR's chief editor Moskovsky when in a 1955 V-E Day article in TRUD he revived an epithet for Stalin, "the greatest commander of our time," which had earlier died with its subject. Zheltov's simultaneous credits for Zhukov and Vasilevsky and Rudny's subsequent honor to a select group of marshals, however, indicate that Moskovsky's bid for a return to Stalinism has not been effective. If there is a cleavage among the top military leaders it is to be supposed that members of the top political elite have a hand in it. It is not likely that LITERARY GAZETTE would have printed Rudny's prejudicial passage without support from a segment of the political leadership.

An indication that a serious split in the leadership may have been threatening may lie in an unusually emphatic statement of Konev's on the need for Party unity. Konev voices it in his 1955 V-E Day speech, possibly in an effort to impose his own or Khrushchev's views under the slogan of unity:

Comrades, it is necessary to make special reference to the monolithic solidarity during those difficult war years of the Bolshevik ranks of our Party and its leading core the Central Committee.

Since military figures are well represented on the Central Committee and especially among its candidate membership, Konev may have been calling for unity among the military representatives on the Central Committee while ostensibly supporting the leadership of the Party as a whole. Earlier Moskovsky had suggested the possibility of differences of opinion within the political-military leadership (ZNAMYA, 10 February 1955):

In the days of the difficult trials of the Fatherland War the Communist Party acted as a single military organization which knew no vacillation or difference of opinion in its ranks. That was the decisive condition for insuring our victory.

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While the recent practice of according credits to professional military leaders for their wartime exploits yields evidence of conflict among them, it poses also a number of apparent paradoxes. Thus Zheltov, who seemed to accord Khrushchev the top position among the political leadership, credited Zhukov and Vasilevsky with the Stalingrad victory, while Rudny, apparently a supporter of Konev and hence of Khrushchev, credited it to Chuikov. While Konev's alignment with Khrushchev is well established and there are indications of rivalry between Zhukov and Konev, there is at least one instance in which a Khrushchev policy was endorsed by Zhukov more strongly than by Konev. Konev was cautious and restrained in discussing the Yugoslav question, but Zhukov (on 1 May) gave an accolade to the Yugoslavs and to Tito for their wartime roles and appealed personally for a rapprochement.\* This statement was apparently designed either to support Khrushchev's Belgrade visit or to establish a claim for credit for the rapprochement.

3. Status of the Military in the Leadership

Despite the evidence of increasing involvement of military figures in the political maneuvering of the Party elite at the time of the February 1955 meeting of the Supreme Soviet, the top military leaders suffered a simultaneous loss in status. In the rigidly formalized listing of attendance at official receptions each stratum of the leadership appears in its allotted order, which presumably demarcates its relative rank. On 14 February the marshals of the Soviet Union dropped three steps to a place below editors of the central press, the Chairman of the Supreme Court and the Prosecutor General.

The marshals had for the first time been placed above the last two officers only on 7 November 1954, so that in this respect the 14 February listing merely deprived them of their recent advance. But editors of the central press had not even been listed until mid-1953, and hitherto had subsequently always appeared after the marshals. Shortly before this downgrading of the marshals, on Stalin's birth anniversary, the publication of the lists of organizers of the Red Army referred to in Section B 3 above served to reemphasize the primacy of the Party over the military from the very beginnings of the Soviet state.

The top military leaders suffered a further loss of status in listings for the GDR Liberation anniversary (8 May 1955) and for Nehru (9 June) when the President of the USSR Academy of Sciences was elevated above them. The new protocol was maintained in subsequent listings until the 11 July reception at the Moscow embassy of the Mongolian People's Republic when Marshals of the Soviet Union were again placed before editors of the central press. Since the Chairman of the Supreme Court, the Prosecutor General and the Chairman of the Academy of Sciences did not attend, the current status of the marshals with respect to these three cannot be determined.

\* I, as a soldier who participated in the joint struggle of our peoples against fascism, would like to express my wish that these disagreements be quickly liquidated and that friendly relations between our countries be restored again. This would be beneficial to our peoples and all working peoples.

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These changes in protocol, originally to the detriment of the top marshals and now apparently in the direction of restoring their status, can be explained by conjecture. The dominant political group--or even, by agreement, the contending elite groups--may have been seeking to make clear by downgrading the marshals their subordination to the Party at a time when the use of individual military leaders for personal political ends was making Presidium members partially dependent upon them. If so, the listing for the 11 July Mongolian reception suggests that the military leaders have been able to halt this downgrading process.

One consequence of their drop in status had been to increase the distance between Zhukov, who since his appointment as Defense Minister has been placed in alphabetical order in the listing of USSR Ministers, and the other military leaders. Thus Zhukov had benefited at the expense of his rivals among the marshals.

D. Conclusions

The following general conclusions from these observations are proposed:

1. Factionalism among the top military leadership has advanced to a point where it is publicly expressed by differing formulas in the allowance of credits for World War II victories. A single piece of evidence, Rudny's article, suggests that the conflict could issue in a radical change in the relative positions of the military leaders, with Konev in first place and Vasilevsky and Sokolovsky downgraded.
2. This factionalism is not limited to military circles but extends upward into the political sphere. Konev is aligned with Khrushchev, and Bagramyan and perhaps Chuikov seem to belong to the same faction. Chuikov's adherence is less certain than Bagramyan's. He was included in Rudny's list which elevated Konev and Bagramyan, who alone among the marshals have publicized Khrushchev, and was credited therein with the Stalingrad victory in denial of Zhukov's claim. Molotov ranks low with the military. It is possible that the four living Presidium members listed by Konev--Khrushchev, Bulganin, Voroshilov and Kaganovich--represent a cohesive force. However, Konev's emphatic subordination of Bulganin to Khrushchev after May Day posters had ranged them as peers raises the question whether Bulganin may not himself have ties with a military faction opposed to Konev and to Konev's political sponsors. The lines of cleavage extending from the military into the political leadership are obscured by several irregularities, suggesting that the opposing factions have not fully crystallized.
3. The political elite, in accepting the support of military leaders for their factional purposes, are being careful not to endanger their dominance over the military.

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II. Change in Soviet Military Doctrine

Active Defense, Based on Constant Factors, Versus Strategic Surprise

Soviet military doctrine in the past half year has been radically altered by a reappraisal of the decisiveness of surprise attack in modern war, particularly in view of developments in nuclear weapons and the means of their delivery. Indications of this change occur in recent pronouncements of the top Soviet marshals, but the only extended discussions of it to date are by a professional military man, Marshal Rotmistrov (in the 24 March RED STAR) and by a Party-military official, Lieutenant General Shatilov (in the 28 May LITERARY GAZETTE).<sup>\*</sup> These discuss the enhanced significance of strategic surprise in Soviet military science and the consequent downgrading of the reciprocal concepts of "constant factors" in war and "active defense." By asserting that surprise attack could under certain conditions decide the outcome of a war they in effect deny to the constant factors the preeminence they had tended to acquire in Soviet military thinking during the years following World War II. The new significance attached to strategic surprise has even more serious implications for "active defense," a nebulous military-political concept which has nevertheless occasionally been given a precise meaning in military contexts, particularly in discussions of the "first phase" of World War II.

The military doctrine based on constant factors and active defense took form during World War II, most notably in Stalin's addresses, and has subsequently assumed critical importance in military-political discussions of Soviet policy, particularly by professional military men and military publicists. This survey of its historical development is directed at indicating the degree and nature of the changes in it which have occurred recently and at providing a framework for gauging the respective readiness of the top marshals (Zhukov, Vasilevsky, Konev and Sokolovsky) to accept these changes.

1. Strategic Surprise and the Constant Factors

Soviet discussions of the relative significance of surprise and the constant factors in war have almost invariably invoked the authority of Stalin, especially of a single sentence in his Order of the Day on Army Day, 23 February 1942, during the Soviet winter offensive which followed the German failure to capture Moscow in the first months of the war:

Now [Teper] the issue of the war will not be decided by such a fortuitous [privchodyashchii]\*\* factor as suddenness, but by such constantly operating factors as the strength of the rear, the morale of the army, the quantity and quality of the divisions, the armament of the army, and the organizational abilities of the army commanders.

<sup>\*</sup> See Radio Propaganda Report CD.30, 15 June 1955, "General Shatilov on Surprise Atomic Attack: 'A Double-Edged Weapon'"

<sup>\*\*</sup> Voroshilov in December 1949 used both this adjective and "temporary" (vremennyi) to characterize these factors.

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Stalin did not deny that strategic surprise could determine the outcome of war and even seemed to admit the possibility that Germany's surprise attack might have been decisive. He asserted only that this was no longer possible "now," seven months after the attack, since "the momentum of unexpectedness and suddenness which constituted the reserve strength of the German fascist troops has been fully spent." Stalin not only did not depreciate the factor of surprise but even ascribed the deep Soviet retreat to it.

The usefulness of such a statement for maintaining Soviet morale, before the renewal of the onslaught by the intact German forces, must have been a factor in Stalin's arrival at this formulation. After the war, however, it evolved into a tenet of Soviet "military science" which by constant repetition tended to imply a general strategic depreciation of the surprise factor. Thus the LARGE SOVIET ENCYCLOPEDIA (1954) contended that "surprise and other accidental features of the situation...can only yield temporary successes." Marshal Malinovsky, writing in RED STAR on Army Day 1952, even came close to interpreting Stalin's remark as meaning that strategic surprise could not be decisive and that Soviet military strategy should be based only on the constant factors. After quoting Stalin, he asserted:

The Stalinist formulation of permanently operating factors provides the key to the understanding of the decisive conditions of victory in a modern war. The profound scientific analysis (sic) of these factors made by Stalin is of enormous theoretical and practical significance. In military and organizational work, the consideration of correct utilization of these factors make it possible to concentrate the chief attention on the solution of basic problems determining the fate of the war.

A similar passage appears in the 1950 edition of Stalin's official biography and thus certainly had Stalin's personal approval.

References to the thesis on constantly operative as against fortuitous factors continued after Stalin's death, when its place in postwar Soviet military doctrine was no longer dependent on his personal influence. It was affirmed by Vasilevsky after Stalin's death (9 March 1953) and by Lieutenant General Kozlov (16 February 1954). Although indications of increased respect for strategic surprise were evident in early 1954, the strongest depreciation of the surprise factor, and apparently the only explicit elite denial that strategic surprise could be decisive, came more than a year after Stalin's death, in an article by the second ranking professional soldier of the USSR, Vasilevsky, on 9 May 1954, ten months before Marshal Rotmistrov was to attack underestimation of the surprise factor and declare that it could be decisive in war.

## 2. Active Defense

While strategic surprise and the constant factors are correlative and usually discussed together, the concept of "active defense" is infrequently related to them explicitly. The connection is firmly established, however, by Sokolovsky's PRAVDA article on Army Day 1953, which contends that an active defense strategy relies on the constant factors in war:

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The key to the understanding of this regularity [in war] is the thesis worked out by Stalin on the permanently operating factors which determine the outcome of war. This thesis makes possible a genuine scientific approach to the preparation of the country and the army for active defense and the solution of most important strategic problems in the course of the war itself on the basis of a thorough assessment of the economic, moral and military potential of the fighting countries.

The correlation among the three concepts is also evident in the fact that Rotmistrov's and Shatilov's recent articles revising upward the significance of the surprise element also depreciated the concept of active defense.

The general concept of active defense has served as a political doctrine and propaganda slogan as well as a military doctrine. Sokolovsky's 1953 Army Day article declared that:

preparing the country for active defense goes far beyond the framework of purely military problems. These preparations comprise an economic, political, ideological, scientific-technical and actual military approach affecting the whole sphere of life and work of both State and people.

a. Active Defense as a Military Doctrine: Active defense has been used to characterize the strategy of assuming a defensive posture in order to exhaust the enemy before launching the counteroffensive. It was applied by Stalin to the early stages of World War II:

It is a well-known fact that following the temporary withdrawal caused by the German imperialists' perfidious attack, the Red Army turned the tide of war and went over from active defense to a successful offensive against enemy troops.

Shatilov, in his 28 May 1955 article revising Soviet military doctrine, strongly criticized active defense. Bulganin's statement on Stalin's birthday in December 1949 spells out the view with which Shatilov took issue:

Shatilov

It must be pointed out that our literature on the Great Fatherland War often portrays and idealizes the initial stages of the war as a classic form of defense--so called "active defense"--and that in addition authors are trying, in contradiction to reality, to portray the events themselves as if "active defense" had been planned ahead of time and was included in the consideration of our command; in fact the initial stages of the war, constituting a sudden enemy invasion with numerical superiority in tanks and planes, were unfavorable for our country and its Army which...experienced

Bulganin

Stalin's outstanding service as a military theoretician is his solution of the questions of active defense and the counteroffensive. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the Stalin theory on these questions and the Stalin art of its application for the victory of the Soviet armed forces in the Great Fatherland War. To realize that importance, suffice it to recall the part in the war played by the Moscow, Stalingrad and

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the bitterness of withdrawal. A primitive interpretation of the initial period of the war, perverting living reality in any sector, be it in fiction or scientific works, cannot be tolerated.

Kursk battles which were classic examples of active defense and counteroffensive.

It is possible that Bulganin in this statement was not expressing his own views and was merely seeking to please Stalin. Voroshilov, however, writing on the same occasion (BOLSHEVIK, December 1949), expressed himself with sufficient caution on the question of active defense in World War II to make his statement invulnerable to criticism such as Shatilov's.

Since Stalin's death professional military leaders have rarely characterized the early stage of World War II as one of active defense. In the weeks before his death Chuikov said that Stalin's strategy at Stalingrad comprised "the use of active defense to exhaust the enemy, grind down his manpower and material, and then launch a counteroffensive" (2 February 1953) and Sokolovsky discussed active defense strategy in World War II (PRAVDA, 23 February 1953); Vasilevsky, in a commemorative article immediately afterwards, put unusual stress on Stalin's application of active defense even when he had the means of attack. But the only subsequent known instance is another article by Vasilevsky almost a year later, on Armed Forces Day 1954 (RED STAR):

Already in the first period of the Great Fatherland War-- the period of active defense--the Soviet Army showed in the great battle of Moscow that it was capable of beating the vaunted Hitlerite troops. Implementing the active defense, the Soviet Armed Forces frustrated Hitler's plan of blitzkrieg war....

Here again, as in his depreciation of the surprise factor on 9 May 1954, Vasilevsky persisted in affirming Stalinist military doctrine until midway in the interval between Stalin's death and the current revision of doctrine, well after other top leaders had discarded it.

b. Active Defense as a Political Doctrine: In its more general meaning, as a way of describing those elements in national policy which are directed toward maintaining the security of the Soviet State, active defense received special prominence at the XIX Party Congress in October 1952, when it was introduced into the Party Statutes: One of "the chief tasks of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union now is to strengthen in every respect the active defense of the Soviet country against aggressive actions of its enemies." This provision was cited, along with other calls for strengthening active defense, by professional military leaders and by Bulganin at the Party Congress and in the following months, most notably on Army Day 1953.

The Congress' emphasis on the task of active defense was particularly noted by Marshal of the Soviet Union Govorov, who mentioned the doctor-plot in his 23 February RED STAR article and was himself allegedly one of its intended victims. The Report to the Congress by Malenkov, in surveying the decade of "preparation for active defense" before the war, cited the purge of the thirties as one of these preparations. It seems possible that the political activation of the doctrine in the fall of 1952 and winter of 1953 was related to the doctor-plot which made top military leaders its chief target.

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Shortly after Stalin's death the concept of active defense lost its political meaning, just as it tended to lose its military meaning as a description of the first stage in World War II. It was used retrospectively to characterize the economic preparations for the war and in general calls for strengthening the country. Even with this dif-fused meaning, the concept was apparently no longer acceptable after February 1955, since no allusions to it have been noted since that date.

3. Strategic Surprise and Soviet Preparedness

The concept of active defense, based on the prime importance of constantly operative factors, was after the war repeatedly set against the "adventurist" strategy of reliance on such a fortuitous factor as strategic surprise with the goal of achieving a "blitzkrieg" victory. Pronouncements on Soviet political-military strategy stressed "preparations for active defense" and ability to mobilize rapidly if required: According to Bulganin at the XIX Party Congress, the Soviet people made "no secret of the fact that our economy can in the shortest possible time be switched to a war footing." Vasilevsky made the same point as late as V-E Day 1954, when he claimed that "the socialist structure made it possible to transform the whole economy of the country onto a war basis in the shortest time...."

While military preparedness has been stressed throughout the postwar period and there have been constant charges that the West was preparing for war against the Soviet Union, intimations of danger of a surprise attack were not evident until after Malenkov's announcement that the USSR possessed the hydrogen weapon, on 8 August 1953. In the following weeks two military leaders, Air Marshal Zhigarev on 9 August and Colonel General Radziewsky on 13 September, stressed that the Soviet Union would not be caught "unawares." These statements were not repeated, however, and there was no other indication of elite Soviet concern about surprise attack until 9 May 1954.\* In his RED STAR article on that date Vasilevsky, while stressing the constant factors in war and denying the decisiveness of strategic surprise, amplified the call for vigilance. It was necessary to

make short shrift of the provocations and hostile sallies of our enemies in good time, being on guard and in a state of fighting preparedness so that nothing unexpected can catch us unawares. Whoever forgets vigilance and is slack about it commits the gravest crime against the government and against the people.

This warning was repeated in PRAVDA on 25 July by another Deputy Defense Minister, Admiral N. G. Kuznetsov; and four days earlier in Warsaw Bulganin sounded an unprecedented alarm about the danger of a surprise atomic attack specifically by the United States against the Soviet Union.\*\*

\* Several articles in military journals--the most notable in MILITARY THOUGHT--around Army Day 1954 declared that the surprise factor had increased importance in view of modern military technology, but emphasized that such a "fortuitous" factor could not be decisive.

\*\* See Radio Propaganda Report IP.18, 4 August 1954, "Bulganin's Speech in Warsaw: Nuclear Weapons and the Chance of a U.S. Attack."

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There was no further reference to the danger of being taken unawares until the end of 1954, shortly after PRAVDA and IZVESTIA (21 December) had published conflicting views on questions of economic policy bearing on defense spending. On 25 December, a RED STAR editorial warned:

There occur in certain sub-units violations of regulations and instructions, negligence in carrying out service obligations and even direct gullibility. Sometimes these manifestations are not given the requisite Party censure and people take a resigned attitude toward them, arguing, as they say, that it is not war time. One should always be on the alert and remember that even the slightest slackening of vigilance in our ranks is just what the enemy wants and under certain circumstances could lead to serious consequences.\*

A week later this warning was reinforced by high political authority. Voroshilov, awarding medals to high military officers, described international conditions as requiring Soviet vigilance, alertness and preparedness "for unexpected occurrences." He was to repeat this call twice at the end of March to the RSFSR Supreme Soviet.

Molotov, in his comprehensive foreign policy report to the USSR Supreme Soviet on 8 February 1955, cited the danger of a surprise attack as justification for the new Bloc security treaty, a connection he had not made in his speeches to the December Moscow Conference which considered the new defense command.

This measure arises from the necessity to strengthen the defense capabilities of the Soviet Union and other peace-loving European states, having in view any accident or surprises. When we create a unified military command of peace-loving European states, then the aggressive circles also, one can assume, will restrain themselves from adventurous ideas and will behave more calmly.

This is the only explicit warning against the danger of surprise attack by a member of the Party Presidium who has not, like Voroshilov and Bulganin, been associated with military affairs.

Linkage of the establishment of the Bloc defense command with the danger of surprise attack was intimated, though not made explicit, by the chief of the Army Political Administration, Colonel General Zheltov. In a KOMMUNIST article (Issue No. 7, published just before V-E Day) which included a call for vigilance against "any accidents and surprises," Zheltov explained Soviet preventive maneuvering before World War II--a subject rarely discussed--and justified the Nazi-Soviet Pact as having secured "peace for the country for the following one and a half years.... The Soviet Government had no doubt that sooner or later the Hitlerite army would attack the USSR." He rationalized the Soviet moves into the states on its Western borders (the Baltics, Poland, and Rumania) as having created an "eastern front...against possible Hitlerite aggression,"

\* Satellite leaders cautioned against being "caught unawares" in speeches after their return from the Moscow Conference on European security early in December, anticipating this Soviet warning by two weeks.

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seeming to suggest a historical parallel between the creation of a buffer before the German onslaught and the present establishment of an East European defense command against the danger of surprise attack.

Only one high-level military publicist has expressly stated that the Soviet Union would not repeat its error of 1941, when it suffered after being caught unprepared for the sudden attack by the Germans. Lieutenant General V. Vorobyov, a frequent writer in TRUD, declared in the 23 February 1955 issue that

the Soviet people, like all the peoples of the camp of democracy and socialism, is closely watching the intrigues of the incendiaries of a new war. Having learned to their cost in World War II, the peoples will not allow the enemies of peace to catch them unawares.

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Rotmistrov in March and Shatilov in May, while implicitly criticizing those responsible for the situation of the Soviet Army in the first months of the war, did not attribute that situation so bluntly to a costly mistake which must not be repeated.

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B. The Shift in Strategic Doctrine

The relationship among the three key concepts in Soviet military-political doctrine was stable in the period before Stalin's death:

1. Constantly operating factors are decisive in determining the course and outcome of war.
2. Strategic surprise is of subordinate importance and can only have a temporary effect on the course of a war.
3. Soviet political-military strategy consists in reliance on the constant factors in war: in peacetime it prepares for active defense by developing the economic base, strengthening the Soviet state, and maintaining readiness for a rapid mobilization of the armed forces. Active defense is favored during a war, particularly in its early stages, with subsequent resort to the counteroffensive.
4. Bourgeois military policy, practiced by the major Western Powers, relies on the incorrect and adventurist strategy of sudden attack in the hope of achieving quick victory or blitzkrieg.

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This position was maintained at the XIX Party Congress, in 1953 Army Day comment, and immediately after Stalin's death. A note of more imminent danger was occasionally voiced after Malenkov's August 1953 announcement that the USSR possessed the hydrogen bomb, and the three elements of Soviet military-strategic doctrine were less often discussed. They were absent from the V-E Day articles by Zhukov and Sokolovsky (May 1954), although Vasilevsky emphasized and even exaggerated them as though in controversy with their detractors.

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Subsequent to Bulganin's Warsaw warning in July of the danger of surprise nuclear attack from the United States, no member of the military elite restated the three elements in their traditional form, and the phrase "active defense" completely dropped out after Army Day 1955. Following the Moscow Conference, after an interval of several weeks, Soviet political leaders warned several times against the danger of a surprise attack. Top-level

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military reappraisal of the surprise factor was introduced by Chuikov in February; on the anniversary of the Stalin Red Victory (3 February 1955) he wrote in RED STAR:

It should not be forgotten for a moment that, with modern fighting facilities, the element of surprise (moment vnezapnosti) is acquiring still greater significance than in the last war.

This reappraisal was amplified by Sokolovsky on Army Day and reaffirmed in V-E Day articles by Sokolovsky and Vasilevsky; the latter no longer advocated the discredited Stalinist doctrine.

In the interval between Army Day and V-E Day, Rotmistrov undertook an explicit revision of the doctrine on the relative importance of constant and fortuitous factors, and Shatilov reaffirmed the revision more authoritatively at the end of May. Shatilov added a strong condemnation of the doctrine of active defense.

#### 1. Nuclear Weapons and Military Doctrine

The influence of changes in the Soviet estimate of nuclear weapons and of their bearing on the international situation can be traced in the weakened position of the Stalinist doctrine before it was finally subjected to radical revision in the first half of 1955. The authors of that revision explicitly asserted that it was made necessary by innovations in military technology.

While the Soviet military elite had not publicly displayed serious concern about nuclear weapons during Stalin's life or in the months that followed, such concern appears to have been expressed in military journals with a restricted circulation. In October 1953, shortly after the announcement of Soviet possession of the hydrogen bomb, an article in MILITARY THOUGHT adumbrated the revision of doctrine which became authoritative 18 months later:

In contemporary conditions the danger of surprise attack by the aggressors has not only not diminished but on the contrary has acquired even more sharpness. What has caused this? First of all, the appearance of new kinds of weapons of destructive and devastating action which are, in the hands of the aggressors, most dangerous instruments for attack and capable of causing untold suffering for the peace-loving peoples. This is further determined by the development of aviation and other kinds of military technology and means of movement. The sharpness of the danger of surprise attack is caused also by the contemporary political situation....

Early in 1954, primarily in connection with Army Day, articles in several military publications reiterated this reappraisal of the surprise factor, but simultaneously reasserted the paramount importance of the constantly operating factors--Major General Pukhovsky in MILITARY HERALD (January); Colonels Mazhorov and Tikhonov in RED STAR (28 February); and Colonel Piatkin in MILITARY THOUGHT (February). More open public discussion by military leaders of the problems raised by the development of nuclear weapons seems to have begun simultaneously when a "General in Retirement" addressed himself to the question in IZVESTIA (19 January). His major purpose, apparently, was to point up U.S. vulnerability to nuclear

weapons, but in doing so he acknowledged frankly the great destructiveness of nuclear weapons.\*

The first clear expression of high-level concern about Soviet vulnerability came not from the military but from Malenkov in his election speech of 12 March 1954, which warned that world civilization would be destroyed in the event of war. His reversion six weeks later to the orthodox position that only capitalism would be destroyed and his threat of nuclear retaliation were welcomed by at least some elements in the military: within ten days the passage in which Malenkov recanted his heterodoxy was repeated by Marshals Vasilevsky, Malinovsky and Timoshenko and by Lieutenant General Gritchin, head of DOSAAF and presumably of civil defense.\*\*

If the military were concerned that a new situation was being created by nuclear weapons, they apparently had not been satisfied with the implications for Soviet policy contained in Malenkov's earlier conclusion. They had evident grounds for anxiety over the effect his statement might have on troop morale. They may well have been concerned also about possible cuts in defense spending. Malenkov accompanied his retraction with a virtually unprecedented commitment that the Party and Government would strengthen the armed forces "in the future as well," a commitment possibly extracted from him under pressure from the military. Bulganin's July warning against a surprise nuclear attack by the United States may have been made in sympathetic response to representations from the military.

The top professional military leaders did not directly express concern about nuclear weapons until late 1954, when a PRAVDA article by Vasilevsky (4 December) included the frankest acknowledgment of the destructiveness of nuclear weapons yet made by a Soviet military leader: "We military men are responsible for hundreds of millions of lives which can perish during a future war."\*\*\* Speaking throughout as one professional military man to another, and with apparent emotion, Vasilevsky appealed for the banning of nuclear weapons.

\* "One must fully agree with the estimate of the danger contained in modern atomic weapons, as expressed by Eisenhower on 8 December. Comparatively recently many American military theoreticians, commentators, observers, journalists, and, at times, even high officials savored the picture of atomic war against the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies. They pictured a future war as an easy war with the aid of atomic weapons of which they believed themselves to have a monopoly. These were stupid attempts to disregard the danger which a modern war carries for the people of the United States as well."

\*\* Similarly, Molotov's 8 February 1955 statement that a world war would destroy capitalism, not civilization, was repeated by several military leaders, including Marshal Chuikov (2 May) and General Malinin (23 February).

\*\*\* Stalin in 1951 had said "tens of hundreds of thousands" might be killed.

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A month later, however, Lieutenant General Gritchik appeared to minimize the seriousness of nuclear weapons, or at least their military effectiveness. He wrote in the 7 January 1955 PRAVDA that

everybody in the West whose sense has not been killed by atomic fever cannot fail to understand that their hopes for some exceptional role for strategic aviation and the theory of the blitzkrieg are entirely unfounded.

Moreover, referring to a "recently raised clamor" about U.S. capability to launch a blitzkrieg, he seemed to dismiss it as a psychological device to reassure the American people after the United States had lost its presumed monopoly in hydrogen weapons. The U.S. atomaniacs, he said, "are trying to persuade their countrymen that the U.S. Air Force is allegedly capable of dealing a lightning blow" at targets in the Soviet Union without fear of retaliation.

That an agreed position on the threat of nuclear weapons to the USSR had not yet been achieved is suggested by the article by Major General Talensky, chief editor of MILITARY THOUGHT, in LITERARY GAZETTE on 1 February. Like Gritchik, he depreciated the military effectiveness of nuclear weapons, but he takes more seriously than Gritchik the danger of a surprise attack by the West:

At any moment mankind may be confronted with an accomplished fact: the outbreak of a devastating atomic war as a result of a criminal venture by a small group of political and military leaders of the bloc, or to be more exact, of the United States.

After the December NATO Council decision on use of nuclear weapons, Soviet propagandists intensified their threats of atomic retaliation and claims of Soviet capability to deliver nuclear weapons over long distances. While Gritchik and Talensky hinted at Soviet retaliatory capability against the United States, no Soviet military spokesmen explicitly claimed such capability until Moskovsky, chief editor of RED STAR, did so in an issue of the journal ZNAMYA released to the publisher on 10 February during the meeting of the Supreme Soviet: "The Soviet Union has at its disposal atomic and hydrogen weapons as well as the facilities to deliver them where necessary." He repeated the statement in a Moscow newspaper, MEDICAL WORKER, on 22 February.

This claim seems designed to supplement Molotov's 8 February Supreme Soviet statement of Soviet thermonuclear supremacy, a statement reported by Shatilov two weeks later as something "well known." Marshal Bagramyan, in his V-E Day article in OKTYABR, also said that the USSR led in hydrogen weapon production and stated that under modern conditions the significance of the surprise factor has been further enhanced inasmuch as "an unexpected blow can be inflicted not only on the troops deployed along the front but also on strategic objects and most important political and industrial centers located far from the front line." Thus the reappraisal of the significance of strategic surprise--promulgated by Chuikov and Sokolovsky in February--was undertaken simultaneously with the Soviet Union's announcement of its capability to launch long-range attacks with highly developed thermonuclear weapons.\*

\* These claims provide the necessary material basis for Shatilov's subsequent warning to the West (28 May) that "suddenness of attack," like nuclear weapons, is "double-edged."

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III. The Doctrinal Change and the Top Soviet Marshals

Although the Stalinist military doctrine that dominance of constant over fortuitous elements in war determines the correct strategy to be one of active defense has been subjected to extended public reexamination only twice, by Rotmistrov and Shatilov, the top marshals have recently approached in varying degrees the problem of the decisiveness of surprise. These recent allusions, along with their earlier pronouncements, shed some light on their respective views on this question and contain subtle indications of differences among them. The evidence, however, is less definitive than for the substantial differences with respect to citations for wartime distinction developed in Part I, and it need not be assumed that the doctrinal cleavages among the marshals will prove congruent with the divergent lines of personal allegiance therein suggested.

## A. Sokolovsky and Vasilevsky

Of the four top marshals, Sokolovsky and Vasilevsky have publicly supported an upward reappraisal of the significance of the surprise factor in war; Konev has expressly referred to the danger of a surprise attack from the West; Zhukov has alluded to this danger only indirectly.

Sokolovsky was the first top marshal to reappraise publicly the importance of the surprise factor in war after General (now Marshal) Chuikov had written of its "greater significance" in RED STAR on 3 February 1955. Sokolovsky wrote in the 23 February IZVESTIA:

Under modern conditions--as a result of the emergence of weapons of enormous destructive power, the unprecedented development of speedy aviation and jet-propulsion techniques--the significance of the surprise factor (faktor vnezapnosti) has increased by far (namnogo vozroslo).

In a V-E Day article in RED STAR (8 May), Sokolovsky repeated this statement, substituting the stronger term intensified (usilili) for vozroslo. Rotmistrov's article, published in the interval between the two Sokolovsky wrote, used a similar formula; so did later articles by Bagramyan and Shatilov.

On the same occasion as Sokolovsky's second use of the formula, Vasilevsky used a close variant of it (IZVESTIA, 8 May). However, he explicitly assigned the weapon of surprise to the USSR's opponent: "It is known that a particularly favorite weapon in the arsenal of the imperialist aggressors is treachery and suddenness of attack." He thus seemed to reject for the Soviet Union a mode of warfare which Sokolovsky discussed as general theory.\* This

\* Going beyond Sokolovsky, Shatilov (28 May) seemed intentionally to avoid placing any limitation on the possible authorship of surprise attack. He not only avoided attributing its use to the imperialists, but went out of his way to justify his contention that surprise attack is a double-edged weapon by invoking a rarely used quotation from Lenin to legitimize the use of "all means and practices of fighting which the enemy may have." Rotmistrov's article, although defining sudden attacks as "a weapon of aggressor countries" and the problem confronting Soviet military science as that of "surprise attack on the part of imperialist aggressors," invoked the same quotation from Lenin, thus also apparently envisaging the possibility of a surprise attack by the USSR.

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apparent difference is reinforced by variations in the formulas used by the two marshals on the closely related question of the implications for Soviet policy of the enhanced significance of strategic surprise:

Sokolovsky (23 February)

Vasilevsky (8 May)

Under such conditions the mere preparedness and ability on the part of states subjected to the threat of attack to answer blow with blow is not enough. One must deprive lishit the aggressor of the element of suddenness and not allow oneself to be caught unawares.

Bearing in mind this dangerous and insidious habit of the imperialists sudden attack, the Soviet Union has drawn the appropriate conclusions. It now has at its disposal everything necessary to deprive lishit the aggressor of the advantages which he might derive, in the unleashing of a new world war, both from preparation in good time for the attack and from the suddenness and perfidy of that attack.

Here Sokolovsky, speaking in the imperative, required that the enemy be deprived of the possibility of surprise; Vasilevsky, describing the present situation rather than enjoining future action, said that an attacking enemy would be deprived of any advantages he might have by virtue of his advance preparations and the unexpectedness of his attack. Thus Vasilevsky seemed to accept the strategic pattern of World War II rather than the concept of preventive measures, however ill-defined, advocated by Sokolovsky. Sokolovsky seemed to direct his statement precisely against such views--although Vasilevsky's public expression of them was three months afterwards--when he said the capability for reprisal was "not enough."

Marshal Bagramyan, in a V-E Day article in the issue of OKTYABR signed for the press five days after Vasilevsky's (13 May), seemed to align himself with Sokolovsky's position. After noting the enhanced significance of surprise under modern conditions, Bagramyan declared that the Soviet armed forces must "nip in the bud (sorvat v zarodyshe) any striving on the part of aggressors to effect a sudden attack on our Soviet motherland." A similar statement had been made in April by Lieutenant General of Aviation Braiko in the HERALD OF THE AIR FORCE. Air Force involvement in the discussion of this issue entailing increased reliance on strategic air power is also suggested by the editorial appearing in the same issue of the HERALD. It repeated without attribution Sokolovsky's 23 February formulation of the growing importance of surprise and his warning that the mere ability to retaliate is not sufficient.

That Vasilevsky, despite his belated acknowledgment of the enhanced significance of surprise in modern war, may still be resisting some of the implications of the reappraisal is suggested not only by his recent formulations on this question but also by some of his earlier remarks. Vasilevsky is the only top marshal who persisted after Stalin's death in propagating the most distinctive of the Stalinist views on Soviet military doctrine and World War II. In his 1954 Army Day article he spoke of the "period of active defense" at the beginning of the war and described the operations of the Soviet Army in this period as "the implementation" of active defense. In the same article he depreciated the factor of surprise by contrasting the views of Soviet and bourgeois military science on its importance: "Soviet military science, unlike bourgeois military science, does not exaggerate the significance of such fortuitous elements as the element of surprise."

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Three months later, in his 1954 V-E Day article, Vasilevsky intensified his efforts to depreciate the surprise factor. After declaring that "the factor of suddenness of attack had a limited significance, but it did not decide the outcome of the second world war," he generalized this into a theoretical proposition which he attributed to Stalin, using the phrasing of Stalin's 1942 Order of the Day cited in Part II above.

Vasilevsky

Stalin

J. V. Stalin pointed out that the outcome of war is decided not by fortuitous elements but by permanently operating factors which include the stability of the rear, the morale of the army, the quantity and quality of the divisions, the equipment of the army and the organizational ability of the commanding personnel.

Now the issue of the war will not be decided by such a fortuitous factor as suddenness but by such constantly operating factors as the strength of the rear, the morale of the army, the quantity and quality of the divisions, the armament of the army, the organizational ability of the army commanders.

While Stalin's statement, which left open the possibility that World War II could have been decided by the German use of strategic surprise, had frequently been generalized in glosses on his text, it had never been restated by any member of the military elite so as to exclude the possibility that the fortuitous factor of surprise could determine the outcome of war.\* Vasilevsky, writing on an occasion on which Sokolovsky and Zhukov avoided the question, seems to have been opposing the reappraisal which was in progress in literature with a restricted circulation, as evidenced by the MILITARY THOUGHT articles of October 1953 and February 1954.

In view of his prolonged opposition to the change in doctrine, it may be guessed that Vasilevsky's belated acknowledgment of the enhanced significance of the surprise element was occasioned by considerations of expedience. His continued insistence that surprise is a weapon of the imperialists and that the USSR is prepared to absorb a surprise blow and go on to victory suggests that his views still do not fully accord with those of Sokolovsky and Shatilov. He may have wished to indicate his belief that even taking into account the increased importance of the surprise factor basic Soviet strategy still ought not be modified.

Disagreement or even a difference in emphasis on this question between Sokolovsky and Vasilevsky could have substantial implications for the basic direction of the Soviet military effort. Behind the variations in formulas on military doctrine may stand the question of priority allocations for the various sectors of the military establishment. Since Vasilevsky has persisted in favoring Stalinist views on correct military-political strategy, he may favor allocating to the ground forces, artillery and tactical air forces resources which Sokolovsky might wish assigned to the strategic air force.

B. Konev

Konev has not addressed himself to the question of the decisiveness of strategic surprise, although he has warned of the need for joint measures by the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies "in order to escape every fortuitous

\* Such an interpretation was placed on it by lower level military publicists on Army Day, 1954.

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eventuality and provocation from any quarter" (1955 V-E speech). Konev's formulation is very close to one used by Molotov at the same Soviet meeting to justify the establishment of the unified defense command. This formulation, while expressed in terms of the danger of a surprise attack, does not commit Konev on the question at issue between Vasilevsky and Sokolovsky regarding the decisiveness of surprise and the effectiveness of reprisals.

Nevertheless, by calling for measures to prevent the possibility of a surprise attack--rather than to deprive the enemy of the advantages he might gain after launching it, as Vasilevsky did--and by speaking here, as in his Supreme Soviet speech (10 February 1955) of the possibility that the imperialists might "impose" war on--rather than "attack"--the USSR, Konev kept his formulation applicable to more fundamental measures than the establishment of the joint defense command and not inconsistent with the preventive measures advocated by Sokolovsky's obscure phrases. While Konev has not stressed the advantages gained by the Germans in their surprise attack, and has even minimized the Soviet losses in the early stages of the war, these failures to buttress the dangers of being subjected to strategic surprise may be the result of his concern to protect the Party, and Stalin, from criticism by the military.

#### C. Zhukov

Zhukov, unlike the other three marshals, has not even warned against the danger of a surprise attack from the West, although he intimated this danger in arguing that U.S. bases could not be designed for defensive purposes since they could be quickly destroyed in the event of war. Certain of his statements can be interpreted as minimizing the advantages gained through strategic surprise. In his interview with Hearst Zhukov said atomic war would be as dangerous for the attacker as for the attacked, and throughout the past year he has given unusual emphasis to the destruction both sides would suffer in the event of war. He has avoided extreme claims of Soviet atomic retaliatory capability and the general boasting of Soviet strength which has characterized the other top marshals, particularly Konev.

#### D. Conclusions

From this examination of the statements of the top marshals relative to the revision of doctrine which has emerged during the first months of 1955, the following tentative conclusions seem warranted:

1. Beginning in late 1953 and early 1954 a reappraisal of Soviet military-political strategy was initiated. Only three of the four top marshals made public statements in this period (Konev was silent) and of these only Vasilevsky seemed to direct himself to this problem. It may be assumed, therefore, that Zhukov and Sokolovsky were uncommitted at this time, and that Vasilevsky was publicly opposing the views of a faction among the military leadership (probably including members of the air force and certain leaders of the ground forces, like Chuikov and Rotmistrov).
2. The need for preparations against being taken "unawares" (expressed even by Vasilevsky during this period) was probably not a subject of disagreement among the military but a device used to oppose Malenkov's moderate

defense policy. Bulganin's July 1954 reference to the danger of surprise atomic attack from the United States was probably related to this contest between the military and Malenkov, although it may have involved some acceptance by Bulganin of the views of those who later succeeded in revising Soviet military doctrine.

3. It seems likely that the public release of the revised doctrine on the decisiveness of strategic surprise, together with the intimation by Sokolovsky and Shatilov that its use by the USSR is not precluded, was deliberate used as a warning to the West that certain Western actions might require the USSR to attack. There must have been other reasons, however, for the recent public statements on surprise; broadcasts to Soviet troops have begun to incorporate the revised doctrine on increased danger from surprise attack. Vasilevsky's prolonged resistance to the reappraisal and, after accepting it, his apparent debate with Sokolovsky on its implications for Soviet policy suggest that the doctrinal revision has important domestic implications--for the allocation of resources among sectors of the military effort, for the training of Soviet troops, and perhaps for the personal fortunes of the top Soviet military elite.
4. While the position taken by individual leaders on the decisiveness of surprise may affect their personal careers, there is inconclusive evidence yet of its having done so. The Rudny article included as proper subjects of biography two newly appointed marshals of the USSR, Chuikov and Bagramyan, who have emphasized the increased importance of the surprise factor; and it omitted Vasilevsky, who has tended to depreciate surprise. But it also omitted the strongest advocate of the importance of surprise among the top military leadership, Chief of Staff Sokolovsky.
5. The involvement of the top political leadership in the doctrinal change is obscure. Chuikov, the first marshal of the Soviet Union to accept publicly the enhanced significance of surprise, did so immediately following the January session of the Central Committee which confirmed Khrushchev's victory over Malenkov. Khrushchev, however, unlike Bulganin, Voroshilov and Molotov among the Presidium members, has not referred to the danger of surprise attack from the West.

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