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RADIO PROPAGANDA REPORT

THE IMPACT OF KHRUSHCHEV'S TROOP-CUT SPEECH

ON SOVIET MILITARY DOCTRINE

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8 APRIL 1960

THE IMPACT OF KHRUSHCHEV'S TROOP-CUT SPEECH
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THE IMPACT OF KHRUSHCHEV'S TROOP-CUT SPEECH
ON SOVIET MILITARY DOCTRINE

Summary

For the first time, in comment on Khrushchev's 14 January Supreme Soviet speech announcing the troop-cut decision, Soviet military spokesmen have publicly credited Khrushchev as a military theorist and his views on war and strategy as genuine contributions to doctrine. Articles in the military press have endorsed statements in the speech which, although consistent with the trend of Khrushchev's own earlier remarks, run counter to long-held doctrinal tenets and add up to the first revisions of a general strategic nature to be openly acknowledged in Soviet military propaganda media since 1955.

1. Thus the military commentary has faithfully echoed Khrushchev on points affecting general strategy: his estimate of the significance of the ICBM and his presentation of the defense posture appropriate for the USSR under present conditions. Specifically, the military have:
 - a. acknowledged "rocket troops" as the "main type" of armed service;
 - b. accepted the view that firepower, not the size of the army, is the main indicator of a country's defense potential;
 - c. upgraded the importance of rear-area strategic attack, on the grounds that nuclear missiles could be used on a "mass" scale; and
 - d. implied increased confidence in Soviet missile capability as a deterrent to general war.

2. Military commentary has diverged somewhat from Khrushchev on questions relating to the conduct of war, as distinct from questions of general strategy and defense posture, although these divergences may reflect no more than differences of focus. While endorsing Khrushchev's emphasis on nuclear-rocket weapons, military commentators have at the same time:
 - a. reaffirmed the continued applicability of the "combined forces" doctrine--the long-established tenet that victory

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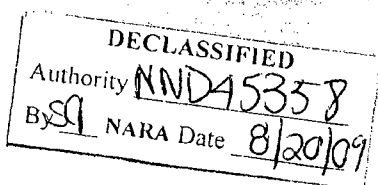
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- in war requires the coordinated action of a complex of arms and cannot be achieved by reliance on one strategic weapon;
- b. asserted, in line with the classical military view, that the destruction of the enemy's armed forces (as distinct from rear-area targets) is also a primary objective of war; and
 - c. implied that a new general war would be long and attritional.
3. The estimate that seems implicit in the doctrinal position now adopted by the military is that the USSR has now acquired, or will soon have, a sufficient quantity of nuclear weapons and a sufficiently versatile system of launch vehicles to permit greater overall reliance on these weapons than in the past. The military comment suggests that the principles expressed in Khrushchev's speech--particularly that of reliance on the ICBM as the primary instrument of military strategy--are being incorporated in the strategic and operational doctrine of the Soviet armed forces and reflected in its organizational structure and war planning. At the same time, the reservations conveyed in the military comment suggest that the practical military changes resulting from the new line may well be less dramatic than the tone of Khrushchev's speech might indicate--and that, in any event, the USSR is not committing itself to a one-weapon system of defense.

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THE IMPACT OF KHRUSHCHEV'S TROOP-CUT SPEECH
ON SOVIET MILITARY DOCTRINE

A succession of statements by Soviet military spokesmen over the past three months has registered the impact of Khrushchev's 14 January Supreme Soviet speech on the public presentation of Soviet military doctrine. For the first time, Khrushchev's views on war and strategy--substantially consistent since 1957, though never so fully developed as in this speech--have been publicly acknowledged by military leaders as genuine contributions to military theory. Major General A. Lagovskiy (in SOVIET FLEET, 6 February) said of the Supreme Soviet speech: "It is a further development of a number of important points of Marxist-Leninist doctrine on war and the army." Marshal Grechko (in RED STAR, 23 February) described it as of "particular importance" from the doctrinal standpoint.

In addition to general acclaim of Khrushchev as a theorist, Soviet military leaders have explicitly endorsed statements in Khrushchev's speech which counter long-held tenets of Soviet military doctrine. They have, for example, now publicly adopted the view that the contemporary stage of nuclear-weapons development calls for smaller standing armies rather than larger ones as they had previously held. This, and other departures from prior positions, point up the significance of the Supreme Soviet speech as a turning point in the public presentation of Soviet military doctrine.

At the same time, military commentary makes clear that Khrushchev's speech is not an exact or complete statement of the doctrinal views presently held by Soviet military theorists. The military acceptance of Khrushchev's theories has been affirmative as to generalities, but qualified as to certain particulars. Spokesmen have interpreted certain of Khrushchev's statements in a more conservative sense than the text of the speech would appear to justify. Doctrinal views which had seemed to be discredited by Khrushchev's statements have been smuggled back under the guise of new formulas.

The strong military endorsement of the general lines of Khrushchev's speech, and the ambiguity of military views regarding certain issues raised by it, pose questions as to the present state of military doctrine in the Soviet Union. This report deals with these questions. It assembles materials from the daily military press, particularly statements by leading military officers, which bear on the principal doctrinal issues raised by Khrushchev's speech. It seeks to identify the points which military spokesmen have accepted as doctrinal formulations, and the points which they have qualified either with

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tacit reservations or with reaffirmations of traditional doctrinal positions. In sum, it seeks to sketch out, in a preliminary way, the general direction and degree of change which may be expected to appear when new general Soviet treatises on military doctrine are made available.

Rocket Forces Now "Main" Arm of Military Establishment

Breaking with the long-standing tenet of military doctrine that the ground forces are the main branch of service, military spokesmen have followed the lead of Khrushchev's Supreme Soviet speech in elevating rocket troops to new primacy in the military establishment. They now state repeatedly that "rocket troops are the main type of armed forces." The rationale advanced by military spokesmen for the new view of the role and significance of rocket forces is that the USSR is acquiring sufficient quantities of nuclear weapons and means for their delivery (missiles) to permit a shift to greater reliance on these forces. Marshal Bagramyan conveyed this argument graphically:

Our country has obtained not only superiority in the production of nuclear weapons in sufficient quantities and of rockets with the greatest range and power; it has started the assembly-line output of rockets. The scale of this emerges graphically from the volume of production of a single factory noted as an example in one of N.S. Khrushchev's addresses: 250 rockets a year capable of carrying a nuclear warhead of tremendous power is an impressive figure!* (KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA, 23 February)

There are indications that this shift in doctrinal emphasis has gone hand in hand with actual organizational changes. The current military press statements that "rocket troops" are the main "type of service" convey the idea that rocket forces are distinct entities in the military chain of command. Khrushchev's statement, made in connection with his troop-cut proposal, that "some artillerymen and airmen will be used in the newly formed rocket units" conveys the same notion.

Size of Army No Longer Indicator of Defense Potential

The high estimate of the defense significance of rocket weapons expressed in Bagramyan's argument ties in closely with the military attitude toward the projected troop cut. Military commentators have reiterated Khrushchev's explanation that the reduction in the size of the armed forces would not weaken Soviet defensive capability

* Khrushchev made this reference to a factory producing 250 rockets a year at a Kremlin reception for Soviet journalists on 14 November 1959.

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because of the greatly increased firepower the USSR now allegedly possesses. One writer, Captain Third Rank V. Talalay, described as a "new postulate in Marxist-Leninist teachings on war and the army" Khrushchev's statement that

General political and economic factors aside ..., the defense potential of a country depends to a decisive degree on what firepower and means of delivery are at that country's disposal /rather than on the number of soldiers under arms/. (RED STAR, 19 March)

While military spokesmen have been unanimous in supporting the troop cut as a step consistent with current weapons developments, they have displayed some differences in relating the measure to Soviet strategy in a possible future war.

One prominent writer, Major General G. Pokrovskiy (in SOVIET FLEET, 9 March), hailing the troop cut as consistent with the general trend of the history of warfare, appears to accept the view that a war of the future will be waged with smaller land armies than in the past. Discussing the strategic implications of the troop cut, Pokrovskiy countered the old doctrinal tenet that "mass armies are needed for victory in atomic war." He explained that, on the contrary, modern combat conditions require smaller forces than in the past:

Currently, due to the leap in the firepower of the armed forces which took place as a result of the appearance of rocket-nuclear weapons, the density of battle formations in contemporary armies and navies became even smaller. All this makes it possible to approach in a new manner the question of determining the numerical strength of the armed forces necessary for the reliable defense of the country.

On the other hand, Colonel Grudinin (in RED STAR, 16 February) treated the troop cut as a peacetime measure only, and foresaw the expansion of the armed forces in case of war: "The same yardstick cannot be applied to numerical strength of armies in time of peace and in time of war..., /for a new war/ will undoubtedly require a certain increase in the numerical strength of armies."

Grudinin's view appears to be more in line with the intent of Khrushchev's statements. In his speech on the troop cut Khrushchev proposed an over-all reorganization of the armed forces--along the lines of the territorial system obtaining in the USSR in the period between the two world wars--that would be better suited to a smaller standing army. Under the territorial system, he made it clear, the

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forces-in-being could serve both as training cadres for a universal military service program and as a skeletal force capable of being rapidly built up to wartime strength through the mobilization of trained reserves.*

The Deterrent Role of Missiles

Khrushchev's Supreme Soviet speech expressed more explicitly than his previous statements his confidence in the deterrent effect of the Soviet nuclear-missile capability. While he has previously implied that the West was effectively deterred from initiating general war--by virtue of the "inevitable retaliation" such a step would evoke--he has never before presented this estimate as a factor in determining Soviet defense policy.

Khrushchev's confidence in the deterrent function of nuclear missiles was implicit in his proposal for a troop cut and explicit in a number of the arguments he offered in support of this proposal. He said, for example: "The state maintains its army for the very purpose of having the firepower necessary to withstand the likely enemy and prevent him from attacking or give him a proper rebuff should he attempt to attack our country." Again, in dealing with the putative argument that the Soviet Union might be weakened by the troop cut, he said: "Would not the 'deterrent'--to use an expression current in the West--of the Soviet Union thus be undermined or lost? ...As before, we shall have all the essential means for the defense of the country, and the enemy will know this well, and if he does not know this then we warn him and state openly that in reducing the numbers of the armed forces we are not diminishing its fire power."**

* Khrushchev, and later Malinovskiy, indicated that reorganization of the military establishment along the lines of the territorial system is now under consideration. No indication has been given, however, as to the expected date of implementation of the system. Since Khrushchev's Supreme Soviet speech the military press has carried several articles discussing in detail the history of the territorial system in the USSR between 1921 and 1939--without, however, spelling out the extent to which the projected reorganization might resemble the old system.

** In arguing that the Soviet Union's firepower "guarantees the impregnability of the country," Khrushchev--like the military--makes allowance for the failure of deterrence in the event that irresponsible "madmen" come to power in the West, or the "revanchist" Germans gain the upper hand.

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Heretofore, Soviet military doctrine has been extremely vague regarding the concept of deterrence. This stems in part from the fact that the term itself is avoided, since it is associated in Soviet propaganda with American policy. It stems also from the military habit of describing Soviet defensive capability either in general terms-- as an ability to "guarantee the defense" of the Soviet Union--or in terms of full-scale retaliation. While the concept of deterrence is implicit in these expressions, it is not defined.

Since Khrushchev's speech, military commentary has reflected new confidence in missiles as instruments of the Soviet Union's defensive capability, but has remained vague regarding the deterrent function of this capability. Some acknowledgment of the deterrent role of nuclear missiles is at least suggested, however, by the military's justification of the troop-cut plan, and also in the direct allusions-- which have appeared for the first time in military propaganda--to these weapons as guaranteeing the USSR's defense. Thus the military press, which had previously maintained that the "USSR armed forces" guaranteed the country's defense, now echoes Khrushchev in saying that it is "the most powerful Soviet atomic and hydrogen weapons, as well as rockets capable of reaching any point on earth," which constitute the "guarantee of the defense of the country" (RED STAR editorial, 28 January). The switch from the generalized "armed forces" to the specific "nuclear-missile weapons" in propaganda expressions of the Soviet Union's defense capability is also apparent in the public statements of top military officers. Marshal Malinovskiy used the new formula in his 23 February PRAVDA article marking Armed Forces Day:

Powerful rocket and nuclear weapons in the possession of the Soviet army make it possible to insure in a stable and reliable manner, and as never before, the invincible defense of the Soviet homeland and other socialist countries.

In at least one case, a prominent military officer came close to Khrushchev's explicitness in suggesting the deterrent function of the Soviet Union's present defense capability. Marshal Malinovskiy, in his Supreme Soviet speech, spoke of the "fear" of inevitable retaliation which now allegedly motivates Western policies. This fear, he implied, was effectively deterring the West from launching general war, although it was, he said, also stimulating Western efforts to find less dangerous avenues of aggressive policy:

All these theories, and, if you will permit the use of the word, 'strategies,' bear witness to the fear of the imperialists of the inevitable retaliation which they would receive if they should attack the countries of the socialist camp.

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No Change in Doctrine on Strategic Surprise

There appears to be no change in the military doctrinal position on strategic surprise attack. In his Supreme Soviet speech Khrushchev merely provided a new argument for the old line--long maintained by the military--on the futility of surprise attack against the USSR. His denial that "any country" would derive decisive advantage by launching a surprise attack against a nuclear power is quite similar to the established military tenet that no surprise assault against a "well-prepared and strong" nuclear power can be decisive.* In developing his argument Khrushchev characterized the USSR as a "sufficiently big" power to be able to retaliate against the attacking country:

The state subjected to a sudden attack, if, of course, the state in question is a sufficiently big one, will always be able to give a powerful rebuff to the aggressor. We take into account the fact that foreign military bases are located around our country. That is why we site our rocket facilities in such a way as to insure duplication and triplication. The territory of our country is immense. We have the possibility of dispersing our rocket facilities, of camouflaging them well. We are creating such a system that if some means earmarked for a retaliatory blow were put out of commission one could always send into action the means duplicating them and hit the targets from reserve positions.

Since Khrushchev's Supreme Soviet speech, military writers have continued to support this view. Somewhat inconsistently, but also in line with Khrushchev's speech, they have reiterated the belief that if there is another war it will begin with a surprise nuclear assault on the USSR. Malinovskiy told the Supreme Soviet, "It is to be expected

* A singular departure from this formulation appeared in an article in the 11 December 1958 SOVIET FLEET. The author, a Colonel Sidorov, argued for the elevation of strategic surprise to the status of a "permanently operating factor" that can decide the outcome of war. Sidorov's position omitted the qualifier (surprise attack cannot be decisive if the opponent is "well prepared and strong") that in effect rules out the possibility of a decisive blitzkrieg against the USSR or the United States. Sidorov acknowledged that strategic surprise was not "accepted" as a permanently operating factor, but argued that it "must" now be so recognized. For a discussion of Sidorov's article see Radio Propaganda Report RS.27 of 11 May 1959, "Strategic Surprise: Indications of a More Important Role in Soviet Military Doctrine."

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that the most likely method of unleashing a war by the imperialists against the Soviet Union, should they risk beginning it, will be a sudden attack with the large-scale use of nuclear arms."

Reaffirmation of "Combined Forces" Doctrine

In elevating the importance of nuclear weapons in war, the military spokesmen have not implied as strongly as Khrushchev did that the Soviet Union is shifting to ultimate reliance on strategic weapons for its defense. Khrushchev told the Supreme Soviet that the USSR could completely annihilate any enemy with existing strategic firepower; he made no mention anywhere in the speech of a need to continue to develop other branches of the military establishment, and in fact called for the replacement of the surface fleet and most of the military air force by rocket forces.* The military, on the other hand, have implicitly placed limitations on the function of strategic rocket forces in modern war by reaffirming the traditional "combined forces" doctrine--the tenet that war cannot be waged successfully without the well-organized operation of all arms and services.

Thus the military have, on this point, tacitly qualified Khrushchev's portrayal of how a modern war would be conducted. Marshal Malinovskiy, speaking after Khrushchev at the Supreme Soviet, set forth the military's views as follows:

The rocket troops of our armed forces are undoubtedly the main type of armed forces. However, we understand that it is not possible to solve all tasks of war by one type of troops. Therefore, proceeding from the premise that the successful carrying out of military actions in a modern war is only possible on the basis of a unified use of all types of armed forces, we are retaining at a definite strength and in relevant sound proportions all types of our armed forces, whose military operations, as far as their organization and their means of action are concerned, will little resemble what took place in the past war.

An article by Colonel F. Sverdlov in the 21 January RED STAR contained a similar assertion of the continued applicability of the combined-forces doctrine. Sverdlov said it was necessary to develop other branches of service, in addition to rocket forces, in order to provide the "greatest harmony and unity in the armed forces as a whole."

* Khrushchev did, however, foresee a more important role for submarines, which he appears to regard primarily as mobile rocket-launching bases.

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Colonel I Grudinin, in an article in the 16 February RED STAR, stated in a similar vein that

our military science assumes that the ballistic missile troops alone, as the main category of our armed forces, cannot fulfill all the tasks of a war. The successful conduct of military operations in a rocket-nuclear war is possible only on the basis of the coordinated use of all means of armed struggle and of the unity of effort of all types of armed forces. That implies that all types of armed forces are and will be preserved in given proportions.

Not unexpectedly, the chiefs of the branches of service which Khrushchev seems intent on curtailing have spoken in behalf of the continued importance of the forces under their command. Thus the commander-in-chief of the Soviet navy, Admiral Gorshkov, in an Armed Forces Day article in SOVIET FLEET, singled out the example of the navy in reaffirming the combined-forces doctrine:

Rocket troops which possess the greatest firepower are the main type of armed forces. But it does not follow at all that the need for other types of armed forces has passed. Victory in modern war can be attained only by using all means of armed combat. The geographic conditions of our country, which borders on many seas and oceans, makes it particularly necessary that the navy continue to occupy an important place in the Soviet armed forces.

At the same time, Admiral Gorshkov qualified his defense of the navy in deference to Khrushchev's remarks on the obsolescence of the surface fleet:

Here, of course, it must be taken into consideration that surface ships can no longer play the great role in modern naval war which they played in the past. On the other hand, the significance of submarines, as an extraordinarily efficient combat means, increases sharply.

He also gave credit to Khrushchev personally for "instructions and advice" in bringing about the "radical reconstruction and creation of a modern, qualitatively new Soviet navy."

The chief of the Soviet air force, Marshal Vershinin, also reassured military men that manned aviation has not lost its usefulness. While acknowledging Khrushchev's statement that aviation armament "is not

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being reduced but replaced," Vershinin told an officers' aktiv meeting on 19 January that the USSR is still phasing in new conventional military aircraft:

The air force personnel are now faced with the even more urgent task of increasing their combat mastery, first of all because the air force becomes smaller and, consequently, it is necessary to master it immeasurably better, and second, because it will be necessary to master new, more perfect, and hence more complicated airplanes which are becoming standard equipment.

Strategic Bombardment and the Role of Field Battle

Khrushchev's statement to the Supreme Soviet that a new general war would begin "in the heart of the warring countries" has prompted an upgrading of the importance of rear-area strategic attack in Soviet military writings. It has also, however, evoked a qualification: a muted reaffirmation of the classical military view that the armed struggle, the defeat of the enemy's armed forces, is a primary objective of war.

Khrushchev said:

War would begin in the heart of the warring countries; moreover, there would not be a single capital, not a single major industrial or administrative center, not a single strategic area which would not be subjected to attack, not only during the first days but during the first minutes of the war. Thus war would begin differently, if it were started, and it would develop differently than in the past.

Although the threat of rear-area bombing of Western countries has for some years featured prominently--in political contexts--in Soviet propaganda's war of nerves against members of the U.S. military alliance, the above Khrushchev statement was interpreted by a Soviet military theorist, Major General Lagovskiy (in his 6 February SOVIET FLEET article), as a "new" postulate on the character of war: "The armed impact on economic targets of the enemy and whole industrial areas represents a new and effective method of warfare."

Soviet military doctrine has heretofore held that although strategic bombing of the enemy's rear is important in undermining the economic might of the enemy and weakening his will to resist, it has only an indirect effect on the outcome of war. The primary objective of war, according to the established doctrine, was to defeat the opponent's forces-in-being.

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A 1957 Soviet military textbook spelled out this tenet:

Wars are only won when the enemy's will to resist is broken, and that can only be broken, as the experience of history shows, when the armed forces of the enemy are destroyed. Therefore, the objective of combat operations must be the destruction of the armed forces, and not strategic bombing of targets in the rear. (Major General M.A. Milshtein and Colonel A.K. Slobodenko, "Military Ideology of the Capitalist Countries on the Character and Methods of Waging Contemporary War," signed to the press 22 April 1957)

A new situation with regard to strategic bombardment has been created, wrote General Lagovskiy, due not simply to the acquisition of nuclear-missile weapons, but to the ability to apply them on a "mass" scale. (Long before the Soviets laid claim to long-range missiles, their recognition of the possibility of mass employment of airplane-delivered nuclear bombs against targets in the rear featured in the 1955 doctrinal shift toward a higher estimate of the importance of surprise attack.) At the same time, like other military writers, Lagovskiy emphasized the importance of a complex of various services: He assigned a role not only to rocket weapons but to aviation, the navy (he did not specify submarines), and "in some cases" the land forces in attacks against strategic areas.

Marshal Malinovskiy at the Supreme Soviet also acknowledged a revision upward in the estimate of the importance of strategic strikes. But unlike Khrushchev, he placed equal emphasis on the smashing of the enemy's armed forces in the field:

In a modern war...massed nuclear blows upon objects in the far rear, as well as upon groupings of armed forces in theaters of military operations, will be of primary significance.

Colonel General A. Stuchenko assured military readers, in the 27 February RED STAR, that the importance of armed conflict in the field has not been diminished as a result of the changed character of war:

In a modern war, if it ever is unleashed by the imperialists, concentrated nuclear attacks both on objects in the far rear and on troop concentrations on the scene of military operations will be of foremost importance. But this absolutely does not exclude tactical forms of warfare, which provide that a company and even platoons not only act within the framework of the battalion but

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even independently. One can state without exaggeration that the use of weapons of mass destruction does not reduce the role played by small details in winning victory over the enemy.

Concept of Protracted War of Attrition

Although Khrushchev made no direct reference in his Supreme Soviet speech to the duration of a general war, he conveyed the impression that such a war would not last very long. There is, in any case, nothing in that speech--or in any of his earlier public statements--to suggest a belief that another war would be long and drawn out.

Articles by military spokesmen, on the other hand, both before and since Khrushchev's Supreme Soviet speech, have generally adhered to the notion that despite the employment of mass-destruction weapons, a new war would be long and attritional. For example, an article by a Colonel Strigachev in a 1959 Defense Ministry textbook on military science envisioned a third world war lasting longer than World War II even with the use of mass-destruction weapons ("In Aid to Officers Studying Marxist-Leninist Theory").

Although there is little explicit discussion of the duration of a new world war in the military comment postdating Khrushchev's 14 January speech, the references in some of that comment to undiminished importance of field battle suggest a belief that a new war would be a protracted one. One recent article, General Lagovskiy's in the 6 February SOVIET FLEET, addressed itself specifically to the question of duration in rejecting the "bourgeois" view that a whole bloc of countries covering a wide area could be knocked out quickly by nuclear blows:

It would, of course, be wrong to assume, as is done by some bourgeois politicians and military experts, that a whole coalition consisting of many countries, with a large territory and hundreds of thousands of economic targets at its disposal, could be knocked out by nuclear blows in a short time.

Lagovskiy did go on to point out, however, that some individual countries in the coalition--those having a small territory, a dense urban population, and a heavily concentrated industry--"can be reduced relatively quickly by blows with weapons of mass destruction to a state from which it will be hard for them to recover."

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Malinovskiy at the Supreme Soviet said nothing directly about the expected duration of another war, but he too pointed up the high vulnerability to rapid destruction of small countries with dense populations:

If, by way of reference and analysis, one refers to the estimates of both our and foreign specialists, it will be found that about 100 such nuclear weapons, exploded within a short time over a state with developed industries, whose territory comprises about 300,000-500,000 square kilometers, are sufficient to reduce all its industrial areas and administrative-political centers to a heap of rubble, and the territory infected by lethal radioactive substance to barren desert. Moreover, nations with small territories and a high density of population are extremely vulnerable and more viable.

Neither Khrushchev, nor the military reacting to his speech, mentioned the old doctrinal tenet that the occupation of an enemy's territory by ground troops is essential for victory in war. This omission is consistent with Malinovskiy's implication that West European countries would be reduced in a war to "barren deserts," making occupation by ground troops superfluous, and could also be regarded as consistent with the troop-cut decision itself. Yet it seems unlikely--particularly in the light of the avowed military expectations of a long war--that a proposition so deeply engrained in Soviet practice and in communist expectations about the future would disappear entirely from military doctrine.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE DOCTRINAL REVISION

The changes in the public presentation of military doctrine discussed above are the first revisions of a strategic order to be openly acknowledged in Soviet propaganda since 1955, when the military broke with the rigid Stalinist formulas on war and refashioned certain basic concepts to accommodate the possibility of nuclear war.

The current changes carry forward the basic trends of the 1955 revisions. They express a heightened awareness of the capabilities of the new strategic weapons, and imply a further shift in military planning toward primary reliance on these weapons. In addition, they provide a theoretical justification for the announced plan to reduce the Soviet armed forces by one-third.

There is no discernible divergence between Khrushchev and military spokesmen regarding the basic strategic assumptions underlying the

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current doctrinal revisions. Both have stressed the crucial importance of the ICBM and the view that the ICBM has opened new dimensions of strategy.

Shadings of divergence have appeared on questions relating to the conduct of war, as distinct from questions affecting general strategy and the defense posture of the USSR. Khrushchev, in justifying his proposal for a troop cut, focused on the deterrent capability of the ICBM, and conveyed the impression that war was unlikely for the future. The military, while endorsing Khrushchev's major premises, have evinced a professional interest in the conduct of war and have attempted to relate the doctrinal changes to the eventuality of war. The divergence of treatment may therefore reflect not real differences of view, but only differences of focus.

The timing of the current doctrinal revisions, however, raises another question regarding the military attitude toward Khrushchev's strategic views. Why have military spokesmen now publicly adopted doctrinal positions which they had heretofore seemed reluctant to accept?

Most of Khrushchev's latest pronouncements on military theory can be found in one or another of his previous speeches. He had begun to unfold elements of his "new strategy" as early as the fall of 1957-- shortly after the announcement of the first successful ICBM test in the Soviet Union. In a series of statements in the intervening period he spoke of the ICBM as marking a "turning point" in the character of war; as the "absolute" weapon; as capable of "devastating" enemy countries in a matter of hours; as rendering bombers and surface ships obsolete, and so forth. Despite this vigorously enunciated and consistent line, military literature contained little echo of Khrushchev's ideas. Military spokesmen consistently repudiated the notion (which they ascribed to the West) that the ICBM was the "absolute" or "ultimate" weapon; they emphasized the need for the continued development of other weapons systems and branches of service; they never before accepted a policy of predominant reliance on nuclear-missile weapons as an adequate doctrine for the defense of the USSR.

Whatever political and economic factors may have affected the military's change of line, the doctrinal revisions appear to reflect a military estimate that the USSR has now acquired, or will soon acquire, sufficient quantities of nuclear weapons and a sufficiently versatile system of launch vehicles to permit greater reliance on these weapons than in the past. If this is the case, the doctrinal changes can be interpreted as reflecting a changed estimate of the USSR's real military capability, rather than a change in military attitudes only. By the same token, the earlier apparent divergence between Khrushchev's

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statements and military doctrine can be interpreted as merely a difference in pace; Khrushchev, for political (and perhaps temperamental) reasons may have tended to represent merely imminent weapons developments as accomplished facts, whereas the conservative military establishment lagged behind these developments.*

The major implication of the current doctrinal revisions is that the Soviet military establishment has now been publicly committed to the premises of Khrushchev's missile-age strategy. This implies, in turn, that the principles expressed in Khrushchev's Supreme Soviet speech--particularly the principle of reliance on the ICBM as the primary instrument of military strategy--are being incorporated in the strategic and operational doctrine of the Soviet armed forces and reflected in its organizational structure and war planning. At the same time, the reservations expressed in the military commentary on the revisions suggest that the practical military changes resulting from the new line may well be less dramatic than the tone of Khrushchev's speech might indicate--and that, in any case, the Soviet Union is not committing itself to a one-weapon system of defense.

* Evidence of Khrushchev's impatience with--or even disdain for--the military elite as regards questions of strategy was provided in a New York TIMES report on 9 November 1959 of a statement by Khrushchev (never carried in Soviet media) at a Kremlin press conference the preceding day: "Strategy is enunciated by generals, but I do not trust the appraisal of the generals on questions of strategic importance."

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