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RADIO PROPAGANDA REPORT

SOVIET MILITARY DEMONSTRATES RESISTANCE
TO THREATENED FORCE CUTS

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SOVIET MILITARY DEMONSTRATES RESISTANCE
TO THREATENED FORCE CUTS

Indications that the Soviet military has been engaging in a demonstration of resistance to the threat of military manpower reductions raised by Khrushchev last month, in his concluding speech to the CPSU Central Committee plenum, have accumulated in the Soviet press over the past several weeks. Military spokesmen have conspicuously avoided Khrushchev's reference to the subject in all central press articles authored by them in the month since the plenum. Some--notably Marshal Chuykov in an IZVESTIYA article on 21 December--have seemed to argue against it, principally by warning of a continuing buildup of Western manpower strength. The Soviet military newspaper, RED STAR, has confined its editorial treatment of the subject to a single reference to Khrushchev's plenum statement on the proposal; at the same time, it has published materials calculated to draw a threatening picture of Western military power and hence to reinforce the warning given by Chuykov. RED STAR has also published a comprehensive new statement of Soviet military doctrine proclaiming a view of Soviet military requirements--including the manpower needs--which seems contrived to emphasize the undiminished scope and priority of the defense establishment's claims on national resources.

The Troop-Cut Proposal

The news that a troop cut was being contemplated by the Soviet Government was first revealed by Khrushchev in his concluding speech to the CPSU Central Committee plenum on 13 December. He said:

We are now considering the possibility of a certain further reduction of the numbers of our armed forces.

He repeated this statement, in exactly the same words, in his interview with the American correspondent Shapiro published in Soviet central newspapers, including RED STAR, on 31 December.

In both cases, Khrushchev linked the proposed troop cut with the announcement that the Soviet military budget would be reduced for the following year, speaking of both measures in virtually the same breath and seeming to treat them as related parts of a single "peace and economy" package.

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A linkage between the two measures was drawn even more explicitly by Ponomarev in his 4 January speech to the Swedish Communist Party congress in Stockholm which was reported in PRAVDA on 8 January. According to Ponomarev:

The Soviet Union has taken a decision to carry out a further reduction of the numbers of its armed forces and, correspondingly [sootvetstvenno], to reduce allocations to the military sections of the state budget for 1964.

Thus far--that is, five weeks after the announcement of the contemplated measures by Khrushchev--the Soviet Government has announced the implementation of only one, the budget cut. The other, the troop cut, remains from all indications an unresolved issue. That the military may have played a role in delaying this measure--a measure which would be regarded by them as symbolizing a trend inimical to the defense establishment's interests generally--is suggested by the evidence of military opposition described in the paragraphs below.

Marshals Ignore Troop-Cut Proposal

No Soviet marshal has mentioned the troop-cut proposal since it was first broached by Khrushchev. Their avoidance of the subject seems the more conspicuous in that two of the marshals (Grechko and Biryuzov) who have written during this period have mentioned the companion measure, the budget cut. In these cases, the logic of the articles, as well as the political proprieties of the moment, would seem to have called for some acknowledgment of the proposal.

The evasion seemed particularly contrived in the Grechko article, which appeared in RED STAR on 22 December, since Grechko dealt directly with the question of mutual East-West troop reduction measures as steps proposed by the Soviet Union for ameliorating world tensions. Yet instead of mentioning the Soviet Union's contemplated initiative in this regard--which every propaganda consideration would seem to have dictated--he chose another, more innocuous, quotation from the same speech. Biryuzov, in RED STAR on 9 January, likewise came to the brink of mentioning the subject in a passage dealing with the Soviet Union's struggle for peace, but side-stepped the issue with a reference to the budget cut alone. In his case, the evasion seems the more striking in view of the prior public references to the troop cut in similar contexts, both by Khrushchev in his interview with Shapiro and by Ponomarev at the Swedish party congress.

Marshal Malinovskiy has apparently remained silent during this period--a fact of some note in that the regime would presumably have an interest in getting a public declaration of military support for its contemplated measure. According to a Belgrade TANYUG transmission on 23 December,

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Malinovskiy was reported to have written an article in honor of the forthcoming 46th anniversary of the armed forces. The report quoted him as having professed Soviet willingness to accept disarmament, but as also pointing to alleged Western, and particularly U.S., efforts to continue the arms race. There is no record that the reported article has in fact been published in the Soviet Union.

Defense of Ground Forces, Stress on Western Troop Strength

In addition to avoiding Khrushchev's troop cut proposal, military spokesmen have seemed recently to go out of their way to defend the concept of large ground forces under contemporary military conditions. The most outspoken advocate of this position has been Marshal Chuykov, who published an article on the role of ground forces in modern war in the 21 December issue of IZVESTIYA.

Marshal Chuykov's article is divided essentially into two parts, the first laying out evidence of a Western buildup of conventional forces, the second professing the Soviet Union's undiminished faith in ground forces and its commitment to the continued strengthening of this arm.

In marshalling evidence of Western developments in this sphere, Chuykov resorts to a familiar tactic used by the military's special advocate in the past. The moral of the exercise was made explicit during a previous phase of military agitation in the spring of 1961, when Lenin's injunction-- "Foolish and even criminal is the leadership of any army which is not prepared to employ all the weapons, all the means and methods of war, which are or could be employed by the enemy"--was recalled to punctuate the point. Chuykov achieves the same effect by the explicitness with which he dwells on Western ground force strength. The Western military leaders, he says, realize that in a future war they will not be able to dispense with mass armies and considerable ground forces. Therefore, despite the fact that they have nuclear weapons, they are maintaining over 5 million men in the NATO armies, of which 3.2 million are ground forces. Moreover--and here Chuykov obviously comes to a key point in his argument--they are doing this "now, in peacetime, in the decisive area of Europe."

In the second part of the article, Chuykov reiterates the doctrinal thesis regarding the role of ground forces in a future war with a forcefulness that has not been seen in the Soviet press in some time. "Soviet military science," he declares, "considers that victory in a future nuclear war...can be achieved only by means of the joint action of all types of armed forces." "Therefore," he goes on, "in modern conditions the ground forces continue to be not only a mandatory but also a most important integral part of the armed forces." In between these two propositions in Chuykov's text is a sentence which appears to have been

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inserted arbitrarily, since it destroys the logical and grammatical sequence of the paragraph. The sentence reads: "There is no doubt that a decisive part in achieving the main aims of war will be played by the strategic rocket troops." The suggestion of tampering afforded by this sentence adds to the impression that Chuykov's article represents a move in intraregime politics.

Marshal Grechko's article, in RED STAR on 22 December, supports Chuykov's argument to the extent that it also stresses a continuing buildup of Western military strength. Although Grechko professes satisfaction with the results of the December plenum, interpreting this event as contributing to world peace, he also points to continuing war preparations of the West as a portent of the likely outcome of this gesture. The speeches of some Western military personages at the recent NATO Council session, he says, show that they are more concerned about war preparations than the fate of peace and that they are making "every effort to achieve military superiority over the Soviet Union." He singles out Secretary McNamara for special opprobrium, accusing him of attempting to "frighten" the Soviet Union and in this way of forestalling "a crushing rebuff of imperialist aggression by the Soviet state." And he deprecates the good faith of the West in disarmament negotiations, saying that "they are in fact in favor of increasing troops, bases, and nuclear materials."

Commentaries in RED STAR during this same period have given added support to the argument that trends in the West counselled the continued maintenance of large ground forces by the Soviet Union. An article by Major Kozlov on 28 December, for example, asserted that military theorists in the West have abandoned the concept of a mechanical "pushbutton" war and have all come to endorse the idea of mass armies. And military commentator Aleksandrov, on 29 December, discussed at length the large-scale and numerous maneuvers conducted by U.S. forces at home and abroad with "million-strong armies."

These indications of RED STAR's support for the military's special pleading seem the more significant when viewed against the evidence of the newspaper's effort to downplay the subject of the troop cut. On 16 December, the day after Khrushchev's second speech to the plenum was released, PRAVDA printed TASS dispatches from Prague, New York, and Rome which specifically mentioned both the proposed reduction of the defense budget and the proposed reduction of armed forces. RED STAR did not publish an issue that day, the 16th being a Monday, normally a day off for most newspapers. But on the day before and on the days following, it published similar TASS items from Warsaw, Belgrade, Paris, Cyprus, Rangoon, Prague, and Sofia. In each of these items, as reported in RED STAR, the defense budget reduction was mentioned but the troop cut was ignored. In its

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own editorial commentary, RED STAR maintained silence on the troop cut until 25 December, when it referred to the proposal, using Khrushchev's words almost verbatim, but refraining from any independent elaboration. PRAVDA, on the other hand, published an editorial mentioning the troop cut as early as 18 December.

New Doctrinal Statement Reiterates Need for Large Ground Forces

RED STAR on 7 and 10 January published an important two-part article by military theorist Colonel General N. Lomov laying out a comprehensive restatement of the latest tenets of Soviet military doctrine. Viewed in terms of the continuing battle between conservative and modernist thinking in the defense department, the new statement, with its great emphasis on the importance of nuclear-rocket weapons in modern war, represents an adjustment toward the modernist positions. But viewed in terms of the rival political and military interests brought into conflict by the troop cut proposal, the new statement adds up to a forceful reiteration of the undiminished scope and priority of the military's claims on national resources.

On the issue of ground forces, the article restates the traditional postulate that has been present, in one form or another, in all previous expositions of the doctrine. The formulation includes the key phrase "multimillion man" army which has become the cachet of the conservative position in previous debates on force structure and doctrine. The article states:

Winning the victory in a clash with a strong adversary requires the efforts of a multimillion strong modern army. This determines the contents of one of the most important principled theses of Soviet military doctrine, which consists in the fact that to win a final victory over the aggressor the combined efforts of all types of armed forces, which rely on the decisive role of rocket nuclear weapons, will be needed.

It should be noted that the reference to the "decisive role of rocket nuclear weapons" in this formulation adds a qualifying note to the rigor of the position and reflects some adjustment toward modernist views. Yet the fact that this conservative thesis is present in any form suggests that this article was not intended to pave the way for a regime announcement of force reductions.

The statements in the article on the economic requirements of a future war also seem calculated to argue against the advisability of any diminution of national attention to the buildup of military strength. As compared with his previous pamphlet on military doctrine, published in May 1963, Lomov places greater emphasis in this article on the possibility

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that a future war may be protracted. In his previous pamphlet, Lomov quoted Khrushchev's 1960 statement that any state, "providing that it is sufficiently large," would be able to withstand a surprise attack and retaliate effectively. He leaves this reassuring estimate out of the present article. He declares that the national economy must be in a position to sustain either a short or a long war--in the former case, to supply a "maximum" of combat equipment to the armed forces; in the latter, to sustain "colossal pressures," maintain its viability, and insure the military needs of the state for the necessary length of time.

Other reassuring themes present in Lomov's previous pamphlet are also left out of the present article. For example, the political premises of the doctrine are treated in the two presentations in closely comparable sentences. The present article leaves out the following phrases which were contained in the previous treatment: that "peaceful coexistence" is the "general line" of the Soviet Union and the other socialist states; that the socialist camp will inevitably win in any war against the imperialist bloc; and that complete and general disarmament is an important objective in the struggle for peace.

Finally, the article is liberally seeded with declarations, drawn from the party program and elsewhere, recalling the party's commitment to the continued "strengthening" of the armed forces.

In sum, the new doctrinal statement contains many propositions which seem out of harmony with the regime's apparent intention to seek some economies in military expenditures, including, particularly, manpower reductions. By the same token, the statement omits currently acceptable propositions--such as Khrushchev's 1960 statement on "firepower" as the criterion of military strength--which might have been employed if the intention had been to rationalize the regime's present course.

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