

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable  
Melvin R. Laird  
The Secretary of Defense

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We have been successful over the past few years in obtaining a number of official Soviet and Warsaw Pact documents which give us some insight into Soviet concepts of a war in Europe. This Intelligence Memorandum draws on these sensitive sources to examine Soviet and Warsaw Pact thinking on this subject.

Richard Helms

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DIRECTORATE OF  
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# Intelligence Memorandum

MR. LAIRD HAS SEEN

*Soviet Concepts of War in Europe:  
Transition From Conventional to Nuclear Conflict*

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Directorate of Intelligence  
5 May 1971

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Soviet Concepts of War in Europe:  
Transition From Conventional to Nuclear Conflict

Introduction

Past Western assessments of Soviet doctrine for a war in Europe have relied largely on statements from the Soviet military press. Colored by propaganda, these statements have provided only limited insights into Soviet intentions, particularly with regard to the timing and scope of the initial use of nuclear weapons in the European theater. Sensitive Warsaw Pact documents acquired over the past year, however, have given a clearer picture of Soviet views on the probable development of a war between NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

Drawing heavily on the new data, this memorandum examines Soviet military theories on the evolution of a war with NATO. It reviews NATO and early Soviet doctrine, and analyzes the principal phases of such a conflict from the Pact point of view. Particular attention is given to the Pact's view of the transition from the conventional to the nuclear phase and to its evaluations regarding the intensity and scope of the initial nuclear strike. A summary begins on page 25.

The material used in this memorandum focuses throughout on Soviet concepts of how a large-scale

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conflict with a determined NATO antagonist is to be brought to a successful conclusion. Given the importance of the military doctrine for carrying out such an action, the highest political authorities almost certainly have reviewed and approved in principle the military leaders' concepts of how to fight a war in Europe. But in the final instance, authorization for the scale of fighting to be pursued, the use of nuclear weapons, and the scope of permitted nuclear operations would be a decision of the moment by the political leaders. There is no good basis for judging how the military leaders' concepts would be modified by a political decision to pursue some goal short of a defeat of NATO or by a decision to stop the fighting at some early stage.

The analysis in this study is based primarily on three sources: Warsaw Pact official documents, lecture notes, and the Soviet classified journal, *Military Thought*.

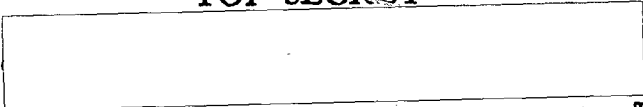
Some of the documents are [REDACTED] postmortem critiques of major Warsaw Pact exercises. The exercises critiqued are Narew-65, Lato-67, Lato-68, and Lato-70. Other official documents used in this study are Pact critiques of major NATO exercises. These include [REDACTED] critiques of the NATO exercise Fallex-68.

The lecture notes were taken by Soviet Bloc officers [REDACTED] at what probably was a Soviet course for senior Bloc officers. The notes describe Soviet concepts of a war in Europe. Their authenticity has not been established but they are sufficiently consistent--among themselves and with other evidence--to warrant the conclusion that they probably are a valid reflection of the way the Soviets outline a war in Europe for their Pact allies.

The Soviet publication *Military Thought* is the chief theoretical journal of the Defense Ministry and is available only to military officers. This classified journal almost certainly provides a valid reflection of Soviet military thinking.

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Definitions of Terms Used  
in This Study

General Nuclear War -- Intercontinental nuclear warfare between the US and USSR.

Nuclear War -- A conflict at any level of intensity in which nuclear weapons are used.

Conventional War -- A war that can be fought and resolved without resort to nuclear weapons.

Conventional Phase -- The beginning period of an escalating conflict. This phase would be terminated by the use of nuclear weapons.

Limited War -- A conflict in which conventional or nuclear weapons are employed, but which would not involve an intercontinental nuclear exchange.

Limited Nuclear War -- A nuclear war that would not involve an intercontinental nuclear exchange.

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Soviet Military Doctrine:  
Evolution of a Sort

Current Soviet military thinking about war in Europe evolved from the military doctrine of the late Fifties and early Sixties which held that war between NATO and the Warsaw Pact would immediately escalate to general nuclear warfare. This doctrine was largely responsive to the expectation that NATO would launch a nuclear attack against the Soviet Union at the outset of a European conflict.

In 1964 NATO interest in developing flexible response concepts resulted in the introduction of a conventional phase in a major NATO exercise. Soon after, Soviet military exercises also began to open with a conventional phase, signaling that the Warsaw Pact was beginning to consider a new option--meeting a NATO offensive without immediate recourse to nuclear weapons.

Soviet doctrine did not change radically, however. The Soviets were evidently confident that they could contain a conventional NATO thrust, quickly regain the initiative, and go over to the offensive using only their conventional capabilities. Accordingly, they reasoned that NATO, confronted with the probability of defeat by conventional Pact forces, would quickly resort to nuclear weapons. Thus, Soviet doctrine has continued to hold that conflict in Europe, even if begun conventionally, would inevitably escalate to nuclear war.

NATO Doctrine

The Soviets have almost certainly been encouraged in these views by the continued stress in NATO doctrine on being able to resort to nuclear weapons, despite the increased attention given to conventional operations.

The NATO strategy of flexible response, officially adopted in December 1967 and published in NATO document MC 14/3, does not rule out large scale use of tactical nuclear weapons, either as might be deemed necessary

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to meet the aggression or, in response to Soviet use of such weapons, under the concept of direct defense, which seeks to defeat the aggression at the level at which the enemy chooses to fight.

Its chief contribution to doctrine was the concept of deliberate escalation, which seeks to defeat aggression by deliberately raising, but where possible controlling, the scope and intensity of conflict. This could involve limited use of nuclear weapons in such ways as the following:

- Use of nuclear defense (such as Nike Hercules air defense missiles with nuclear warheads) and denial weapons (such as atomic demolition munitions).
- Demonstrative use of nuclear weapons.
- Selective nuclear strikes on interdiction targets (for example, against a bridge to forestall enemy troop movement).
- Selective nuclear strikes against other suitable military targets.

The NATO Guidelines, agreed to by NATO's Defense Planning Committee in late 1969, emphasize that NATO should not be committed to early use of nuclear weapons unless the circumstances warrant. In general, conventional forces should be used initially to meet a conventional attack, but the Guidelines also emphasize that use of nuclear weapons should not be delayed until conventional forces are exhausted.

The Impact of NATO Doctrine on Soviet Thinking

At least one Soviet military figure publicly has interpreted the NATO Guidelines to mean a high risk of nuclear war. Soviet Warsaw Pact Commander in Chief Marshal Yakubovskiy commented in *Soviet Russia*, 22 February 1970, that the NATO Guidelines recognize the possibility of "utilizing nuclear

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weapons immediately" in the event of a European conflict.

More recently in *Red Star*, 30 October 1970, Lt. Gen. I. Zavyalov, a member of the *Military Thought* editorial board, wrote that NATO envisages "maximum lowering of the 'nuclear threshold'"--that is, a changeover to nuclear weapons "at the earliest stage of a military conflict, even at the start of it."

The continued inclusion of a nuclear phase in NATO military exercises probably has reinforced this tendency to interpret NATO doctrine as remaining basically nuclear despite the attention given in such exercises to the conventional phase. This interpretation in turn appears to have had a major impact on Warsaw Pact planning, which must necessarily take account of likely NATO intentions and courses of action in the event there is a war in Europe.

It is clear from Pact commentaries on NATO exercises that the Pact military planners consider the exercises to be NATO rehearsals of "the type of war envisaged" by current doctrine. [redacted] critique of the NATO exercise Fallex-68 declares that Pact analysts believe one objective of such exercises is "to test current military doctrine and the workability of military strategy in peacetime." A Soviet critique of the same exercise asserts that "the time and method" of the delivery of nuclear weapons "always varied" in accordance with "existing strategic theories."

Because Pact military planners regard these scenarios as valid reflections of NATO doctrine, the critiques of Fallex-68 provide an important insight into Warsaw Pact thinking about the significance of the initial nuclear strike. According to [redacted] analysis, the Fallex-68 exercise envisioned the outbreak of general nuclear war as a result of a limited war which had been escalating in Europe. More important, according to the critique, the West preempted the East not only in the use of tactical nuclear weapons following the conventional

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phase, but in the "strategic" nuclear attack as well.

[REDACTED] critique observes that in Fallex-68 "selective and gradual employment of nuclear weapons and the first massive nuclear strike were all initiated by NATO" and that "for the first time" general nuclear war was unleashed in Fallex-type exercises by NATO. The critique concludes that NATO intends to conduct operations with conventional weapons, but at the same time is preparing to use nuclear weapons where favorable conditions exist for destroying Pact forces or when NATO's advance is frustrated.

In Prague, in September 1970, [REDACTED] presentation to a meeting of the chiefs of Warsaw Pact military intelligence directorates dealt extensively with NATO planning for the major exercise Wintex-1 and stressed NATO's readiness to use nuclear weapons "at any time." The [REDACTED] briefing distinguished five basic stages of escalation for NATO's exercise:

- Escalation by initiating combat operations along the entire front; after a short time, all major opposing units are engaged.
- Escalation in the rear area using the air force against the anti-aircraft defense system, airfields, and similar targets.
- Selective use of nuclear land mines, tactical nuclear weapons, and surface-to-air missiles with rather small warheads.
- Escalation by the use of nuclear weapons against enemy means of nuclear operational-tactical attack and against operational-strategic targets.
- First mass nuclear strike; this begins the period of unlimited use of nuclear weapons.

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Current Warsaw Pact Concepts  
of a War in Europe

The Soviets evidently have made several assumptions about how a conflict in Europe will begin. The first is that NATO will start the war. The Soviets also assume that the conflict probably will begin without the use of nuclear weapons and that the Pact will be able to halt the NATO offensive and launch a successful counteroffensive. No apparent consideration is given to the possibility that such a NATO offensive would be successful.

The Soviets evidently see themselves superior in conventional warfare and almost certainly would prefer to see a European conflict remain nonnuclear. Nevertheless, their view of NATO intentions has led them to conclude that a European war is not likely to remain conventional. Warsaw Pact planning for a war in Europe recognizes, therefore, three possible main phases: the conventional phase, the nuclear strike phase, and concluding actions.

The Conventional Phase

Although they have introduced the conventional opening into exercises, Pact planners have not yet treated this period as anything more than a phase of an escalating conflict. Its duration, while termed "variable," is normally two days, although one of the lecture notes stated that it can last up to 8 or 10 days.

Nor is the function of the conventional phase thoroughly discussed. The assertion is simply made that this is one way NATO might begin a war to achieve "limited political goals" while threatening nuclear war.

Soviet military planners believe, however, that the conventional phase could play an important role. One document representative of Soviet discussions asserts that Pact operations in this phase will be marked

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by attempts to improve political and strategic positions and weaken NATO nuclear forces. In addition, "mobilization will be carried out, reserves moved up, and troops reinforced."

Nevertheless, the Soviets still view the conventional phase largely as a transitional step to nuclear war. There has been no official acceptance of a doctrine holding that the conventional phase could or would be decisive in a European conflict.

The Transition From Conventional to Nuclear Warfare

The Soviets apparently do not plan to follow a series of controlled transitional steps from conventional warfare through nuclear weapons of increasingly greater numbers or yield to general nuclear war. They believe that NATO does not intend to restrict a European conflict to the use of tactical nuclear weapons only and that a limited nuclear response by them would only offer the West the opportunity to deliver first a massive and decisive strategic nuclear strike.

Exercise scenarios and the lecture notes tend to confirm a Warsaw Pact belief that a European war will involve nuclear weapons. Characteristically, in the scenarios NATO's offensive bogs down, NATO is forced to retreat, and NATO resorts to the use of tactical nuclear weapons. [REDACTED] notes assert that the shift to nuclear weapons is most likely if:

- NATO has lost the initiative and lost important areas.
- NATO's main groupings have been destroyed.
- NATO counteroperations are weak.
- NATO perceives that conditions are favorable for rapid attack by the troops of the Warsaw Pact front deep in the enemy rear area.

Guided by the belief that NATO will eventually feel compelled to resort to nuclear weapons, Pact

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exercise scenarios and statements of military strategy emphasize the critical importance of the timing of the changeover to nuclear warfare.

The great stress on the transition to nuclear weapons is manifest in Warsaw Pact emphasis on preemption. One of the main goals in Pact exercises since at least 1967 has been to preempt NATO in the use of nuclear weapons. In a 1967 [redacted] exercise nuclear weapons were to be used "in case of a clear, direct threat of their use by the West or in a preemptive attack." The 1970 [redacted] notes observe that it is "very important to preempt or suffer heavy losses." Another set of notes asserts that the "enemy is not to be allowed to preempt us in the delivery of nuclear strikes."

The theme of preemption dominates other exercises and documents as well. Exercises and recent documents are in common accord that the first nuclear strike of the war should be a Soviet one. The documents do not discuss, however, the precise criteria for determining when preemption should occur or the political ramifications of the first use of nuclear weapons in a European conflict.

#### The Nuclear Strike

In light of the importance that Soviet planners attach to the first nuclear strike, it is not surprising that almost no attention has been given to the concept of gradual escalation through the limited use of nuclear weapons. In mid-1968, before Fallex-68,

[redacted] termed "unacceptable for us" the NATO concept of escalation which assumes the possibility of successive activation of tactical and strategic nuclear weapons. A brief description of a 1970 Warsaw Pact exercise observed that after the West uses tactical nuclear weapons, "the forces of the 'East' retaliate with mass strikes of tactical and strategic means."

This scenario is typical of Warsaw Pact exercises through 1970 and is consistent with the lecture notes

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on military doctrine and strategy. There is common agreement that the first nuclear strike must be of "maximum strength" and launched in a brief period of time. One set of lecture notes asserts that Soviet doctrine called for "60 to 80 percent of all forces" (not further defined) to deliver the first nuclear strike. Another set of notes comments that the nuclear strike phase would be of short duration and would be terminated "with the expenditure of nuclear weapons accumulated during peacetime," with the destruction of targets, or with the capitulation of the nations subjected to the strike.

The lecture notes further agree that the first nuclear strike must be massive and must be delivered throughout the entire depth of the theater of war-- that is, of Europe. All of the sources, including the exercise critiques, avoid completely the question of whether the first strategic strike is to be confined to the European continent or is to include full-scale intercontinental attack as well.

Information on the precise sequence of a Soviet nuclear strike in Europe is limited. One set of notes provides a list which is reasonably consistent with NATO knowledge of Soviet planning. According to this document:

- The Strategic Rocket Forces will strike on signal by the High Command; their first salvo will be the signal for nuclear strikes by all other forces and weapons, and presumably will be launched before other forces.
- Concurrently or immediately following, the missile submarines will strike.
- Simultaneously with the missile strike, or immediately thereafter, the long-range aircraft will take off.
- If possible, operational-tactical rocket troops strike simultaneously with strategic rocket troops.

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-- Air forces of the front will be deployed away from enemy attack and will subsequently fulfill their tasks.

A similar set of notes reports that the European theater of war holds "about 500 targets," whose destruction would require "about two thousand strikes." Priority would be given to strikes against "weapons of nuclear attack and ammunition dumps" and then "anti-aircraft defense weapons in order to support friendly aviation." The notes include a table (see next page) showing 621 NATO installations planned for neutralization in the first strike in the theater of war.

The Soviets probably have sufficient nuclear weapons deployed to execute such a strike. The available land-based ballistic missiles alone are enough to strike each of the 558 designated strategic targets at least once (see Table 2, page 15). The USSR also has about 30 submarine ballistic missile tubes on diesel-powered submarines in the Northern Fleet and 600 medium bombers based in the western USSR that probably would be used against NATO targets.

In addition to strategic delivery systems, the Soviets have large numbers of tactical delivery systems available. For example, up to 500 FROG and Scud launchers and some 600 nuclear-capable tactical aircraft probably would be available for use against the NATO Central Region.

Analysis of several documents suggests that Soviet nuclear doctrine would allow for the allocation of 900 to 1,200 tactical nuclear warheads and bombs to the ground and tactical air forces arrayed against NATO's Central Region. Of these, according to the [redacted] lecture notes, the Soviets might plan to expend 30 percent, or 300 to 400 warheads, as part of their initial nuclear strike. Another of the lecture notes observes that the composition of the Warsaw Pact fronts makes it possible to deliver "about 300 to 400 nuclear warheads in one salvo and in one aerial sortie."

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Table 1  
Illustrative Target List for a  
Warsaw Pact Nuclear Strike

<u>Target designation</u>	<u>Total targets</u>	<u>First strike targets</u>		<u>Front weapons</u>	
		<u>Strategic weapons</u>		<u>Front weapons</u>	
		<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Operational-tactical nuclear weapons (missiles, aircraft)	17	6	35	11	65
Airfields and air bases	165	159	96	6	4
Nuclear ammunition dumps	27	23	85	4	15
Antiaircraft missile battalions	32	28	88	4	12
Divisions and separate brigades	40	16	40	24	60
Antiaircraft defense control and detection centers	62	48	77	11	18
Industrial and admin- istrative centers	207	207	100	0	0
Harbors and naval bases	<u>71</u>	<u>71</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	621	558		60	

*Note: Figures are presented as they were in the original lecture notes.*

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Table 2  
Soviet Strategic Peripheral Missile Threat to NATO  
April 1971

	<u>Total Operational*</u>	<u>Targeted against NATO</u>
<u>Hard</u>		
SS-5	48	33
SS-4	84	76
SS-11	120	120
Total hard	<u>252</u>	<u>229</u>
<u>Soft</u>		
SS-5	42	38
SS-4	420	404
Total soft	<u>462</u>	<u>442</u>
Total	<u>714</u>	<u>671</u>

\* All operational MRBMs and IRBMs are within range of NATO targets; 43 of the launchers, however, appear to be aimed at targets in the Middle East and Asia.

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[REDACTED] tends to confirm that a relatively low number of tactical nuclear warheads will be used in the initial nuclear strike. [REDACTED] 30 nuclear weapons of the 150 to 180 allocated to the Southwestern (Czechoslovak) Front are earmarked for the first mass strike.

The Concluding Phase

Warsaw Pact military exercises, writings, and other sources pay little attention to the concluding stages of a conflict in Europe. Just as these military exercises do not continue to the point of escalation into a strategic exchange with the US, neither do they reach the point of NATO defeat or capitulation. The scenarios and critiques contained in available Pact documents imply that actions following the theater-wide strike have not been well thought out, but perhaps this phase simply is considered to contain too many incalculable variables. One of the lecture notes does discuss the concluding stage briefly:

This [stage] will be characterized by the fronts and fleets having to destroy the remaining groupings of the enemy on land and sea, primarily using conventional weapons and possibly with the employment of a small quantity of nuclear weapons against the most important targets and troops which refuse to capitulate. This period can be relatively lengthy, since there will have to be time to liquidate the consequences of the nuclear strikes, bypass destroyed areas, clean up the territory, destroy and capture the enemy, and establish a military administration.

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Variations on a Theme

Controlling the Transition to Nuclear Warfare

Warsaw Pact exercises have been remarkably consistent in their emphasis on rapid escalation to nuclear war. Nevertheless, it would be an oversimplification to state that the Pact has failed to examine in recent years the possibility of achieving a degree of control in such a war.

One variation of the basic theme involved the problem of controlling the transition to nuclear weapons in an escalating conflict. The Pact exercise Narew in 1965 was one of the earliest attempts to test this possibility. A postulated Western attempt to detach East Germany from the Communist camp marked the beginning of the exercise. The West opened the conflict with a conventional attack. In the event its attack were unsuccessful the West planned to hold the enemy along the line of its "forward positions" by the gradual use of nuclear weapons at the tactical level--at first by detonating atomic demolitions near the West German border, and then by employing tactical nuclear rocket weapons against any Eastern forces which succeeded in crossing that border into West Germany.

The East planned to repulse aggression without resort to the use of nuclear weapons as long as the attacker did not use them. The East did this (a) to "avoid or limit a general nuclear missile conflict" as long as possible and (b) because it was believed that the power of the East's conventional forces would, in the face of limited aggression by the West, allow not only decisive defensive responses but also the attainment of far-reaching goals--crushing the attacking units of the aggressor and eventually transferring the operations to West Germany.

Using this background, the limiting option tested in Narew was carried out by one of the front commanders and required, according to a critique, "a correct combination of atomic and conventional

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warfare thinking in combat operations and continual thinking in political terms." In this scenario:

- The West took the first step in using nuclear weapons by setting off an atomic mine belt in the path of an Eastern army.
- The East's front commander obtained the approval of the Supreme Command to refrain from immediate retaliation as well as instructions for use of nuclear weapons in the event the enemy proceeded with the next stage in the nuclear war.
- At the same time, the West was warned that its next step would be met with decisive retaliation.
- The West decided to carry out the second nuclear weapons stage by employing purely tactical weapons, and did so in the belief that the East would not dare to carry out its warning just as it failed to employ nuclear weapons after the mine belt was set off.
- The East's front commander, authorized by the Supreme Command to respond immediately with all his resources to the next enemy attack, reacted "in conformity with this order."

Although in this exercise the conflict did escalate, the possibility that political pressures could be employed to inhibit the use of tactical nuclear weapons was recognized and provided for. Just as important, the use of nuclear weapons by NATO did not automatically justify a large-scale Pact response. This scenario has not been repeated in subsequent exercises, however, and was probably only experimental in nature.

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Delimitation: Controlling the Scope of the Initial Nuclear Strike

Another control problem pertains to the scope of the initial nuclear strike. There is no evidence whether this strike is to be intercontinental or whether Warsaw Pact planners consider it possible to confine the conflict to Europe. One reason for the lack of evidence is that an intercontinental strike may not be considered within the purview of Warsaw Pact doctrinal writings and exercises.

It is problematical, in fact, whether the Soviets would attempt to limit hostilities to the European continent--launching only tactical and peripheral nuclear weapons, for example. Presumably, the Soviets would prefer to avoid a level of combat which would involve massive strikes on their own country. Hence, the Soviets' willingness to escalate directly to general nuclear war would largely depend on their expectations concerning the US response to events in Europe.

West Germany and the Rhine River

Although exercises and other sources call for a massive nuclear strike throughout Western Europe, there is some evidence that the Soviets have established controls that could give them the option of confining the nuclear attack to West Germany--usually the principal "aggressor" in Warsaw Pact exercises. One of the sets of lecture notes states that the High Command has determined that strategic nuclear weapons are not to strike enemy targets short of a line "usually 200 to 300 kilometers from the front in the western theater of war--the Rhine." Another of the notes puts this distance at 400 kilometers. This could have the effect of designating the Rhine River as a boundary line separating targets of the fronts and the strategic forces, inasmuch as the major West German targets are located east of that line. Soviet peripheral strategic missiles might then be held back to serve as a deterrent against a NATO missile strike against targets located on Soviet territory.

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The Rhine does, in fact, seem to play an important role in Soviet planning. [REDACTED] in 1968 the Soviet front from the Carpatho-Ukrainian area would follow the Czech front by about three days and eventually assume the leading position. The concept of the operation called for the Soviets to take over the advance from the Czechs near the Rhine. The Soviet front would then push past the Rhine and, depending upon the political situation at the time, continue the advance through France. Soviet writings on the conduct of a conventional campaign against Western Europe indicate that the first phase of such a campaign would end at the east bank of the Rhine and that substantial reinforcement and regrouping would be necessary before pressing on across the Rhine.

In an unusual aspect of one exercise, France was excluded from the NATO countries to be seized. France also held a special place in another Pact exercise. This exercise began with a West German attempt "to capture East Germany." The East planned to commit immediately three fronts to strategic offensive operations, to destroy NATO forces in Western Europe, and "to maintain combat readiness for further development of operations in the event France and other Western countries enter the war on the side of NATO." Although the ambiguous nature of France's commitment to NATO may have prompted this omission, it is also possible that France's independent nuclear deterrent was a primary factor. Certainly, the French nuclear capability does not threaten the USSR's survival, but Soviet military planners may regard France as capable of inflicting an unacceptable level of damage on Soviet cities. Similar considerations could also deter a Soviet nuclear strike against Great Britain.

Thus, the possibility cannot be excluded that the Soviets consider the Rhine to be a strategic nuclear "no-fire line." Such a strategy might thus serve to separate a conflict that is essentially with West Germany and the US from the rest of Western Europe.

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Trends in Warsaw Pact Planning

Of the documents recently acquired, one stands out not only as a reflection of current Soviet doctrine and strategy but possibly as a bellwether of trends in Soviet military thinking. This is an article by Colonel General I. Glebov, a senior professor at the USSR General Staff Academy, reportedly published in an early 1970 edition of *Military Thought*.

The Glebov article is consistent with other sources pertaining to Warsaw Pact doctrine to the extent that it asserts that

- A war in Europe can begin conventionally.
- Nuclear weapons must be used at the first sign of enemy preparations to use them.
- The first nuclear strike must be massive and delivered throughout the entire theater of war.
- There must be a demarcation line between the nuclear strikes of strategic and front nuclear weapons.

Glebov does stress two points, however, which appear to be absent in military exercise critiques and the lecture notes. He advances the "opinion" that there is a "real possibility of conducting a conventional war in Europe" and other areas, including the Near East and Far East.

Glebov also recognizes that Soviet military planners may not have come to grips with the possibility

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that Soviet political leaders may consider it necessary to limit the scope of a European conflict. He concludes his article with the request that "all generals and officers" conduct additional studies on the organization and conduct of offensive operations, "especially in the new aspect of nuclear-missile and conventional warfare and also warfare with the limited use of nuclear weapons."

If the Glebov article does indeed reflect current trends in Soviet military thinking these statements have important implications. They support the apparently still controversial thesis that conventional warfare can replace nuclear warfare, given the current strategic balance. His call for new studies of limited nuclear war implies a recognition that a massive theater-wide nuclear strike may not offer an appropriate response to many possible contingencies requiring the use of nuclear weapons in Europe.

Despite Glebov's call for serious study of the problems of conducting limited nuclear war, there is no evidence that his recommendations have been accepted. Soviet planners evidently have not yet worked out concepts and tactics for that form of nuclear combat. Without such prior planning, Soviet military commanders probably would encounter difficulty in conducting limited nuclear war and the Soviet high command probably would be reluctant to risk an extemporaneous unplanned tactic.

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Impact of Doctrine on Soviet  
Theater Force Organization

Soviet theater forces have undergone changes more or less concurrently with Soviet acceptance of a possible nonnuclear phase of hostilities. Division artillery--both guns and multi-round rocket launchers--has been increased by about 50 percent since 1967. More recently, the Soviets have begun introducing into their tactical air forces fighter bombers with increased performance and load carrying capacity.

These changes generally have improved the Warsaw Pact's conventional war capability. In particular, the increase in firepower has enhanced the Pact's capability to overcome organized NATO defenses in the absence of the nuclear strikes which formerly were relied upon to blast holes for the passage of armored striking forces in the opening phase of a European war. Further, the added firepower increases the Pact's capability to destroy NATO's nuclear delivery systems and warhead stockpiles during the conventional phase, an operation stressed in Soviet tactical doctrine. These reasons for increases in conventional fire support are borne out by the lecture notes which, in detailed discussions of tactical principles for conventional operations, stress the peculiar importance of artillery and conventional air attacks in the breakthrough phase when the nuclear strike is not employed initially.

At the same time, the Soviets have continued the development of their tactical nuclear capabilities. While strengthening their artillery, they also increased their surface-to-surface tactical nuclear delivery systems by about one-third. These changes could be viewed as indications of a Soviet expectation of conducting limited nuclear war, but they can more reasonably be interpreted in the light of established Soviet nuclear doctrine which calls for the use of tactical weapons in conjunction with strategic ones. They probably are intended to ensure breakthroughs to be exploited

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by their armored forces and to aid in destruction of NATO's nuclear capability. It is pertinent in this regard that the current level of availability of tactical nuclear delivery systems is approximately that which was being advocated in classified *Military Thought* articles in the early Sixties--a period when the writers assumed that hostilities would quickly escalate to general nuclear war.

Aside from the changes in combat support noted above, Soviet theater force organization has not diverged significantly from the pattern established in the early Sixties. This organization emphasizes the shock power, mobility, and protection against nuclear effects of the tank, and is intended for a relatively short, but violent and fast-moving, offensive campaign. Current Soviet writings, and the lecture notes, confirm that--after initial breakthroughs--the Soviets hope to conduct a conventional offensive using essentially the same tactics as for nuclear war. Thus, they may see no requirement for further extensive modifications of their force structure for the purpose of enhancing its conventional war-fighting capability.

If the Soviets were to accept a more flexible nuclear doctrine which envisaged limiting nuclear war to use of tactical weapons, the change would probably be reflected in training exercise scenarios and, perhaps, in the military press. Some changes might also be made in the forces. The Soviets might introduce nuclear tube artillery in order to take advantage of its superior accuracy and compatibility with very low yield nuclear weapons. Such weapons would give the Warsaw Pact a substantially better capability to engage in nuclear war at low levels of violence and destructiveness.

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Summary

Current Soviet military concepts for a war in Europe are basically unchanged from those of the early Sixties. Soviet strategists still plan and structure their forces for conducting theater-wide warfare in a nuclear environment.

One exception has been the introduction in 1965 of a conventional phase for the beginning of a European conflict. This innovation appears to have been largely a reaction to NATO exercises of 1964 and has not changed the Pact view that a war in Europe, even if begun conventionally, is likely to escalate to nuclear warfare.

NATO doctrine, expressed in NATO documents acquired by the Soviets and in NATO exercises, has had a major impact on Soviet thinking. In the Soviet view, the NATO doctrine reflects NATO's determination to escalate to general nuclear war.

The Soviets almost certainly would prefer to see any European conflict remain nonnuclear; indeed they probably would expect to have the advantage in such a conflict. But, they believe that an unsuccessful NATO conventional offensive will compel NATO to resort to tactical nuclear weapons. The Soviets see the conventional phase, therefore, as a preliminary step to nuclear war. The Soviets believe, moreover, that NATO does not intend to restrict a European conflict to the use of tactical nuclear weapons only and that a limited nuclear response on the part of the Pact would only offer the West the opportunity to deliver first a massive and decisive strategic nuclear strike.

For these reasons, Soviet military planners would expect to respond to a NATO initiation of tactical nuclear weapons by launching a massive nuclear strike, including both tactical and strategic systems, on targets throughout the depth of the European theater. Moreover, they hope to obtain sufficient advance warning of a NATO intention to use nuclear weapons to

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enable the Pact to launch a preemptive nuclear strike. The Soviets apparently do not plan to participate in a series of controlled transitional steps from conventional warfare through nuclear weapons of increasingly greater yield or numbers to general war.

Current Soviet plans for the initial nuclear strike appear to call for approximately 2,000 nuclear strikes against some 500 to 600 NATO targets. The Soviets probably have sufficient nuclear delivery systems available to execute such a strike. These include up to 714 land-based missile launchers, 30 submarine ballistic missile tubes, and 600 medium bombers in the peripheral strategic forces. In addition, up to 500 tactical missiles and some 600 nuclear-capable tactical aircraft would be available for use against the NATO Central Region. It is not clear whether the Soviet plans call for a simultaneous strategic nuclear strike against targets in the US.

Warsaw Pact military exercises, writings, and other sources pay little attention to the concluding stages of a conflict in Europe. Just as these military exercises do not continue to the point of escalation into a strategic exchange with the US, neither do they reach the point of NATO defeat or capitulation.

Warsaw Pact exercises have been consistent in their emphasis on rapid escalation to nuclear war. In 1965, however, one Pact exercise introduced a situation whereby NATO use of atomic mines was followed by a Pact warning that NATO use of offensive tactical nuclear weapons would be met with "decisive retaliation." This type of scenario has not been repeated in subsequent exercises and was probably experimental in nature.

There is little evidence to indicate whether the Soviets plan to limit the scope of the initial nuclear strike--to the European continent, for example, launching only tactical and peripheral nuclear weapons.

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Some evidence suggests the Soviets might consider confining a nuclear strike to targets in West Germany, using the Rhine River as a boundary line separating targets of the front and strategic forces. This concept, however, does not appear to be reflected in Soviet plans.

A 1970 article in the classified Soviet military press suggests that the problem of a more flexible Soviet doctrine for a war in Europe is not a dead issue. The author expresses views consistent with other sources pertaining to Soviet doctrine, but calls for additional studies on limited war. Despite the author's plea, there is no evidence that his recommendations have been accepted.

Soviet theater forces have undergone some changes more or less concurrently with the acceptance of a possible nonnuclear phase of hostilities. Increased division artillery and introduction into its tactical forces of new fighter-bombers have improved the Warsaw Pact's conventional war capability. At the same time the Soviets have continued the development of their tactical nuclear capabilities, increasing their surface-to-surface tactical nuclear delivery systems by about one-third.

These changes could be viewed as indications of a growing Soviet expectation of conducting limited nuclear war. In the first instance, however, the addition of artillery increases the capability for a breakthrough during a conventional phase, and the addition of tactical nuclear delivery systems makes the current level of these systems approximately that which was being advocated in classified *Military Thought* articles in the early Sixties--a period when the writers assumed that hostilities would quickly escalate to general nuclear war.

If the Soviets were to accept a more flexible nuclear doctrine which envisages limiting nuclear war

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to the use of tactical weapons, the change would probably be reflected in training exercise scenarios and in the military press. Further changes in the forces--such as the introduction of nuclear tube artillery--might also become evident.

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