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Marshal Ogarkov on Nuclear Weapons and Future War

Authoritative Soviet writings define military doctrine as the state's official views on the nature of potential future warfare, plans for employing the armed forces in the event of war, and the tasks of preparing the nation and its military establishment for such eventualities. Military doctrine has two sides or aspects--the sociopolitical and the military-technical.

- ° The sociopolitical side of doctrine, which is derived from the state's sociopolitical and economic system (communism, capitalism, etc.), sets the basic framework of national security policy, and is formulated by the state's political leadership.
- ° Within this framework, the military-technical side of doctrine focuses on the structuring of the armed forces, their provisioning and training, and planning for the conduct of war. It takes into account the conclusions of military theory and practice, and is largely the preserve of the professional military leadership.

Marshal Nikolay Ogarkov's writings have stipulated that the sociopolitical side of doctrine is its main component and determines the "defensive orientation" of Soviet military doctrine in accordance with the "peace-loving" nature of Soviet foreign policy. His own primary focus, however, has been on the military-technical side of doctrine. In his 1982 Victory Day (9 May) article in Izvestiya, for example, he wrote:

The military-technical side of Soviet military doctrine defines the specific ways of achieving the goals and tasks set by the sociopolitical side It lays down that, in the event of aggression, our armed forces will not simply defend themselves passively and wage purely defensive operations, but will resolutely smash the aggressor if he dares to attack our country, going so far as to completely destroy him, as was the case in the Great Patriotic War.

Because Soviet writings are not normally labeled as statements of doctrine, it is not always clear when they are intended as authoritative expressions of officially sanctioned positions. In Ogarkov's case, this difficulty is compounded by the ring of advocacy in much of his writings. This paper will examine the evolution of Ogarkov's public statements over the past decade on four interrelated issues:

- ° the probable consequences of nuclear war;

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- ° the prospects for keeping nuclear war limited;
- ° the stability of nuclear deterrence;
- ° the possible nature of a future world war.

Is Victory in Nuclear War Possible?

Ogarkov's article on "Military Strategy" published in the Soviet Military Encyclopedia, volume 7 (September 1979), was his first extended public discussion of the possible nature of a future world war. In keeping with long-established tenets of Soviet military doctrine, he depicted such a war as a "decisive clash between two opposing world socioeconomic systems" that would be global in scope and would involve multimillion-strong coalition armies. Ogarkov asserted that this war would be conducted "without compromise" and would be prosecuted with "all the military, economic, and spiritual strength" of the belligerent states.

Ogarkov expressed belief that a world nuclear war would be "relatively short," but he allowed that it might become prolonged due to the enormous military and economic resources at the disposal of the combatant coalitions. The Soviet Union and its allies, he continued, would possess "definite advantages" in such a war, deriving from the "just goals" they would be pursuing and the allegedly "advanced" nature of the socialist system. These advantages, he asserted, create "objective possibilities for achieving victory," but they require "timely and comprehensive preparation of the country and its armed forces" to be realized. This conditional statement is the closest Ogarkov is known to have come to claiming that "victory"--however defined--is possible in a nuclear war. His more recent writings express greater skepticism in this regard.

In the 1979 encyclopedia article, Ogarkov also first indicated, albeit indirectly, his belief that a major East-West conflict might not necessarily involve the use of nuclear weapons. Soviet military strategy, he stated, "acknowledges that a world war may be started and conducted for a certain period of time with conventional weapons alone." The expansion of these conventional military operations, he continued, "may result in its escalation into general nuclear war." [emphasis added] Ogarkov asserted that Soviet strategy is "based on the proposition" that the USSR will not use nuclear weapons first. While portraying this as opposition "in principle" to the use of "weapons of mass destruction," Ogarkov in effect signaled Soviet preference for avoiding nuclear escalation in the event of conventional conflict with the West. At the same time he warned that "a nuclear missile attack" on the Soviet Union or its allies

would trigger "a crushing retaliatory strike," a warning clearly directed at deterring the United States and NATO from their publicly declared policy of limited use of nuclear weapons should conventional war in Europe go against the West.

Ogarkov, in the same essay, described US/NATO military strategy as oriented primarily toward general nuclear war, but also as acknowledging the possibility of prolonged operations employing only conventional weapons. He further noted the provision in Western strategy for limited use of nuclear weapons at the theater level. Ogarkov's failure here or elsewhere in this article to reject the notion of limited nuclear war, or even to warn of the risks of escalation, suggests that in 1979 the Soviets saw at least some possibility of such limited use. Ogarkov's subsequent writings portray a shift in his, and presumably Soviet, views on this topic as well.

Sounding the Tocsin

Ogarkov's discussion of military strategy in the Soviet Military Encyclopedia was intended primarily to educate professional Soviet officers, but it was written with an awareness that it would be closely read in the West. His next major public statement, an article published in the Communist Party's theoretical journal Kommunist in July 1981, was aimed principally at a Soviet audience, warning of the increased military threat posed by a new administration in Washington that was openly dedicated to "rearming" America. This article contains fewer insights into Ogarkov's views on developments in military affairs, and its depiction of a possible future war may be distorted by its goal of sounding the tocsin.

Ogarkov's description of a world war carefully skirted the issue of whether it would be nuclear or exclusively conventional in nature but inescapably implied a general nuclear conflict. A new world war, he wrote:

. . . would be a decisive clash between two opposing social systems [that] would cover all continents of the world and would be waged by coalition groupings of armed forces with the most resolute objectives, using the entire arsenal of means of armed struggle. Many hundreds of millions of people would be caught up in its maelstrom. In terms of ferocity and scale of potential destruction, it could be compared with no wars in the past. The very nature of modern weapons is such that, if they are put into use, the future of all mankind would be at stake.

Despite this apocalyptic vision, Ogarkov urged a series of measures to prepare the Soviet Union for protracted conflict,

including readiness to "shift the entire national economy onto a war footing" and to mobilize trained and equipped reserves for the armed forces. In this context Ogarkov made no direct reference to the specific problems of overcoming the enormous destructive consequences of thermonuclear strikes against urban and industrial targets, nor to the threat of nuclear radiation and fallout, and made only passing mention of civil defense. Soviet planning has encompassed efforts to mobilize forces and continue weapons production even in the midst of nuclear war. Nonetheless, Ogarkov's advocacy of these measures in the Kommunist article appears more plausibly linked to a prolonged conventional war scenario. Once again, concepts of limited nuclear war were ignored.

Limited Nuclear War Rejected

Ogarkov amplified his warning on the external threat facing the USSR, and reiterated his call for preparedness in a booklet issued by the Defense Ministry's publishing house in early 1982, Always Ready to Defend the Homeland. While more complete in its presentation of Ogarkov's philosophy of unceasing technical change in military affairs, the booklet offered little advance from the previous year's Kommunist article in its description of the nature of a possible future world war. Once again such a war was defined as a "decisive" conflict between two antagonistic social systems, global in scale and unprecedented in destructiveness. Ogarkov placed still greater emphasis on Western reliance on nuclear weapons, presumably reflecting what had become the general Soviet perception of United States strategy.

In keeping with this emphasis, Ogarkov for the first time in print disparaged what he described as Pentagon conceptions of limiting the use of nuclear weapons to the European theater, asserting that "any sober-minded person" can see that "in practice it is impossible to hold nuclear war within a certain restricted framework." Citing party chief Brezhnev's November 1981 statement that once a nuclear war starts, "it would inevitably and inescapably assume a worldwide character," Ogarkov claimed that Western military and political leaders "are well aware of this fact," and that their "true aim" is to use the concept of limited nuclear war to "lower the vigilance of the world's people" to the dangers of the arms race. As Ogarkov depicted the notion of limited nuclear war in his 1982 booklet, it was more a political ploy than a serious military option. He did not discuss purely conventional war, or even the possibility of a conventional phase at the beginning of a future world war.

Ogarkov's criticism of the concept of limited nuclear war followed more than a decade of ambiguity in professional military

writings on the likelihood of escalation should the nuclear threshold be breached. Soviet military writings in the late 1960s had dropped earlier insistence that escalation to general nuclear war would be inevitable and immediate, in favor of less categorical statements that such escalation was "probable" or "might" occur. The Soviets recognized, however, that NATO's doctrine of "flexible response" to keep conflict limited would benefit the United States more than the USSR if it were successful in keeping a "limited" nuclear war confined to the European conflict, and this contributed to their rejection of this concept in the early 1980s.

Ambiguity on the Nature of Future World War

Ogarkov reintroduced a significant note of ambiguity on the likely nature of a future world war in his 1983 Victory Day article in Izvestiya. Without specifically citing the concept of limited nuclear war, he warned of the dangers of escalation in a manner suggesting that is what he had in mind. "It will not be possible to confine military operations within some limited framework, as Washington strategists advertise," he asserted, because a major war "would inevitably embrace the entire territories of the belligerents, making it hard to distinguish front from rear." His extended discussion of the increased importance and problems of the initial period of war was also reminiscent of longstanding Soviet depictions of the impact of nuclear weapons on strategy. Ogarkov pointed to the "unprecedentedly intense, destructive nature" of operations at the outbreak of war, and he noted that efforts to retaliate "in the very first hours" could prove decisive.

Yet throughout his discussion of how such a war might be fought, Ogarkov avoided direct references to the use of nuclear weapons. In fact he implied elsewhere in this article that nuclear weapons might no longer be the primary means of waging war. These weapons "have been the decisive means of armed struggle" since the 1950s, he acknowledged. But as nuclear arsenals have grown and diversified, he wrote, quantitative changes have led to a qualitative transformation: "what could be achieved by nuclear weapons 20 to 30 years ago is now impossible" because devastating retaliation is inevitable. The unstated implication was that nuclear deterrence had become more stable, to the point that it might even be effective within the context of conventional war.

Ogarkov did not exclude the possibility of a major East-West armed conflict. Pointing to the introduction of "highly effective" new conventional weapons and research on "weapons based on new physical principles," particularly those related to space warfare, he argued that such developments "cannot fail to

influence the nature of a probable war" as well as the forms and methods of waging it. Ogarkov followed up with a stern warning on the danger in military thought of inertia and the stubborn, mechanical repetition of old ideas. This warning appeared to be aimed not at traditionalist attachments to conventional warfare, but rather was intended as an attack on perceptions that possession of nuclear weapons precludes the need to develop capabilities to wage a high-technology conventional war.

Disarming Strikes Impossible

Ogarkov's public depiction of the impact of the growth of nuclear stockpiles on military affairs--and of its policy implications--became more explicit four months later in a 23 September 1983 article published simultaneously in the official government and military newspapers, a first for the Chief of the General Staff. Conceding that two decades earlier the United States "could still count to some extent" on the possibility of executing a "disarming nuclear strike" against the USSR, he now dismissed such notions as "pure illusion":

Given the contemporary development and spread of nuclear arms in the world, the defender will always retain a quantity of nuclear means capable of inflicting "unacceptable damage," as former US Defense Secretary McNamara used to characterize it, on the aggressor in a retaliatory strike Hence under modern conditions, only the suicidal can gamble on the initial nuclear strike.

While this remark referred explicitly to the strategic capabilities of the United States, implicitly the factors that made a disarming nuclear strike impossible applied as well to the Soviet Union.

Ogarkov accused the United States of spending "fabulous sums" on strategic nuclear forces in an attempt to reacquire a capability for a disarming nuclear strike. He further pointed to Western efforts to create "qualitatively new conventional means of warfare" and "weapons based on new physical principles." But Ogarkov's comments elsewhere in the article suggest that he may have seen no reason to duplicate all these programs, or recognized that the Soviet Union could not afford to do so. Given his invocation of something akin to the principle of "mutual assured destruction," the implication was that the existing Soviet strategic nuclear arsenal was now deemed sufficient to deter any rational opponent.

Ogarkov uncharacteristically complained in this article about the cost of weapons programs, stating that "it is beyond

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question" that the arms race "inhibits countries' social and economic development," an accurate depiction of the problems facing the USSR in resource allocations. More significantly, he rejected the notion of matching the West system for system and weapon for weapon, an even greater departure from his usual approach. While warning that "we must make an appropriate response to the growth of the nuclear threat" confronting the Soviet Union--an allusion to impending NATO INF deployments--he cautioned that this did not mean "the USSR intends to compete with the United States in the military sphere or blindly imitate it in a senseless arms race." The Soviet Union would not allow the United States to achieve military superiority, he vowed. But "guided by Soviet military doctrine" and the levels achieved in science and technology, he continued, "we will follow OUR OWN PATH on questions of strengthening the country's defense capability." [Ogarkov's emphasis]

The Red Star Victory Day Interview

Ogarkov's views on nuclear weapons and future war were advanced still more explicitly in a Victory Day interview published in the Soviet Defense Ministry newspaper Red Star in May 1984. The placement of this interview in the paper's center-spread (podval) normally reserved for major statements on doctrine and theory, and the frontpage photo in the same issue singling out Ogarkov for special honor, seemed intended to emphasize the authority and significance of his views. In this interview Ogarkov identified three fundamental trends in the development of military affairs since World War II: the expansion and diversification of nuclear arsenals; improvements in conventional weaponry; and the impending emergence of weapons based on entirely new technologies.

He began by asserting that the expansion of nuclear arsenals over several decades had led to a qualitative change in the conditions and possibilities of their use. Both the Soviet and American stockpiles of nuclear weapons and delivery vehicles were now sufficient to destroy all the important targets on the opponent's territory many times over. Further buildup of these arsenals had already become "senseless," Ogarkov claimed, but through the fault of the United States, the arms race was continuing.

Ogarkov termed the result a paradox: while the destructive capacity of the weapons held by the nuclear powers continues to rise, the potential for an aggressor to carry out a "disarming strike" is declining at an even sharper rate:

With the number and variety of nuclear missile weapons available, it has already become impossible to destroy those

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of the enemy with a single blow. A crushing retaliatory strike against the aggressor--a strike in which even the limited number of warheads left to the defender would inflict unacceptable damage--is inevitable under present conditions.

Ogarkov went on to reject the concept of limited nuclear war as a purely Western construct:

Calculations of strategists across the ocean that are based on the possibility of waging a so-called "limited" nuclear war now have no foundation whatever. They are utopian: any so-called limited use of nuclear weapons will inevitably lead to the immediate employment of the entire nuclear arsenals. Such is the terrible logic of war. Even more groundless are their discussions about the possibility of an "unanswered limited nuclear strike" against the primary centers and control points of the enemy. Such discussions are pure fantasy.

Ogarkov's statement indicated that the Soviets no longer regarded, if they ever truly did, limited nuclear war as a viable option. Geostrategic considerations, noted earlier in this paper, doubtless played an important part in Soviet rejection of the notion of a nuclear war limited to the European theater. But Ogarkov's writings as well as contemporaneous statements by, for example, Defense Minister Ustinov suggest that Soviet strategists see command and control problems, as well as the lack of any obvious firebreak once nuclear weapons are used, as insurmountable obstacles.

Ogarkov also drew attention in this interview to two additional developments in military affairs that constituted fundamental changes since the war.

- ° Rapid developments in the power and accuracy of conventional means of warfare are bringing such weapons closer to the destructive potential of nuclear weapons, while increasing their range to encompass almost all of an opponent's territory.
- ° The emergence of "weapons based on new physical principles" should be expected "in the very near future," causing radical changes in established notions about warfare and even the nature of a state's military strength.

The views Ogarkov advanced in his Red Star Victory Day article accorded closely with positions he set forth in a classified forum while serving as Chief of the General Staff. In

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that classified statement, Ogarkov:

- reiterated that the growth and diversification of nuclear arsenals now precluded either side from carrying out a disarming first strike;
- asserted that the victim's inevitable retaliatory strike not only would cause "unacceptable damage," but also would deprive the aggressor of the ability to wage military operations, thus foreclosing the possibility of achieving victory in nuclear war;
- acknowledged that the concept of limited nuclear war until recently had had a place in Soviet military thought, but asserted that it was now seen as an illusion, since any use of nuclear weapons inevitably will escalate to all-out nuclear war;
- emphasized the stability of nuclear deterrence, even to the point of claiming that such deterrence could continue to operate within the context of a major East-West conventional conflict;
- concluded therefore that a prolonged world conventional war is now possible, one that would be waged with high technology conventional weapons which, through their range, speed, accuracy and destructive power, approach the capabilities of nuclear weapons.

A New Tone in Ogarkov's Writings

On 6 September 1984, four months after the publication of his interview in Red Star, Ogarkov was removed from the post of Chief of the General Staff. The circumstances of his removal--he was given no honors and his new position was not announced--indicated that he had been forced out rather than routinely transferred. The reasons for this move against him have never been given publicly, and the incident remains controversial. Some two months after his demotion, however, issue 21 (November 1984) of the military-political journal Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil (Communist of the Armed Forces) published an article attributed to him that differed significantly in tone from his previous writings. Much of it consisted of a boilerplate history of the Soviet-German war; another substantial section contained a standard diatribe against "imperialism." The final third was an extended discussion of "sociopolitical and military-technical" factors said to contribute to the preservation of peace and to constitute "real objective preconditions for the elimination of war from the life of society."

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This discussion of social and political forces was a radical departure in tone and substance from Ogarkov's public statements over the previous decade. In keeping with his past writings, it began by asserting that Soviet economic and military strength, together with the armed forces' high combat readiness, constitute "the main restraining factor and insurmountable barrier" deterring aggression. He now went on, however, to invoke a melange of nonmilitary international political forces--Communist parties abroad, the nonaligned countries, the "national liberation" and "antiwar" movements--as contributing to peace by "considerably restricting the freedom of action" of those who might unleash war. While civilian Soviet commentators have often cited these political forces, they are largely ignored by Defense Ministry spokesmen. The assessment that sociopolitical factors are helping to neutralize the threat of war also departed markedly from Ogarkov's typical alarmism, and even contrasted with the general tendency of Soviet media since 1980-81 to emphasize an increasing danger of war.

Only in its discussion of what were termed "purely military preconditions restricting imperialism's opportunity to unleash new wars," did the November article strike a distinctly Ogarkovian tone. Here he reiterated the argument advanced in the May interview that the increased number and variety of nuclear weapons had paradoxically increased the sides' destructive potentials, while decreasing the possibility of carrying out a disarming first strike:

An immediate crushing response using even the limited quantity of nuclear weapons remaining to the defending side--a response making it impossible for the aggressor thereafter not only to wage war but even to conduct any serious operations--becomes inevitable under present conditions.

As in his Victory Day interview, Ogarkov dismissed the concept of limited nuclear war, once more terming it "the terrible logic of war" that any limited use of nuclear weapons would inevitably lead to the immediate employment of the entire nuclear arsenals of the belligerents. Once again he denounced the levels reached in stockpiling nuclear weapons, asserting that "from the military viewpoint these are already truly absurd," and that, given the existing state of approximate parity, "further stockpiling becomes simply pointless" and even dangerous:

Excessively large stockpiles of nuclear weapons not only do not guarantee security and impunity for any aggressive state but rather the reverse--they increase the danger that it will be subjected to crushing retribution from the victim of aggression.

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Ogarkov's discussion of the impact technical change has on contemporary military affairs meanwhile omitted two key points that he had featured in his May 1984 Red Star interview: advanced conventional weapons and weapons based on new technologies. Instead there was an atypical questioning of the continued expediency of war as a means of achieving political goals:

The grim reality of our day is that, in contrast to the past, the very relationship between such highly important concepts as "war" and "policy" has changed. Only when you definitely have lost your sense of reason can you try to find arguments or to define goals that would justify unleashing a world nuclear war.

Quoting from a 1981 speech by party leader Chernenko, Ogarkov concluded that "it is criminal to view thermonuclear war as a rational, almost 'legitimate' continuation of policy."

While Chernenko's statement had been consistent with official public portrayals of Soviet policy, a central tenet of Soviet military-political orthodoxy--derived from both Clausewitz and Lenin--is that any war, even nuclear war, is a continuation of policy in the sense that it is the product of the policies pursued by the combatant sides. That proposition had been debated in the Soviet press several times in the past two decades, and its continued validity was reaffirmed in the 1984 edition of the authoritative text Marxist-Leninist Teachings on War and the Army. Ogarkov is the only senior Soviet military leader known to have repeated Chernenko's caricature of this dogma.

The major discontinuities between Ogarkov's writings as Chief of the Soviet General Staff and his first published statement after having left that post in the fall of 1984 have the unmistakable ring of positions imposed upon him by higher authorities. These changes did not involve any significant repudiation of views on the nature of war that he had expressed earlier. They did, however, entail substantial moderation in his heretofore alarmist tone; an entirely new emphasis on the strength of the international political as well as economic and military forces contributing to the preservation of peace; and an almost total neglect of those areas of future Soviet force structuring to which Ogarkov had previously accorded priority. The net effect was to undercut nearly all the arguments Ogarkov had been making in support of devoting an increasing share of Soviet resources to defense.

History Teaches Vigilance

Ogarkov subsequently was allowed another opportunity to set forth his views on technical change and developments in military affairs in a 95-page booklet entitled History Teaches Vigilance, issued by the Defense Ministry's publishing house in the spring of 1985. The new monograph had much in common with his 1982 pamphlet, but it was no mere update. The laws of dialectical materialism were given still more prominence, while the indictment of imperialism was as harsh as ever.

Nonetheless, the compromises that had been imposed on Ogarkov's public expressions were readily apparent. Advances in conventional weapons that brought them closer in their effects to nuclear weapons and "weapons of mass destruction based on new physical principles" were mentioned, but only in the context of several dangerous measures the West was taking in pursuing the arms race. There was no clarion call for the USSR to follow suit or stay abreast in what Ogarkov heretofore had treated as essentially an autonomous evolution in which scientific and technical advances were naturally applied to military hardware. Concurrently, although Ogarkov's 1982 booklet had devoted nearly a chapter to measures to mobilize Soviet society, harden the economy, and improve the preinduction preparation of Soviet youth, his 1985 booklet had only a single sentence noting that these issues are "closely linked" to the military-technical aspect of doctrine.

The 1985 booklet also appeared to mark a return to ambiguity in defining the nature of a possible future world war. While stating that "determining the nature of potential armed conflict" is "one of the fundamental provisions" of the military-technical aspect of doctrine, Ogarkov avoided direct discussion of the issue of the use of nuclear versus conventional weapons. He employed phraseology traditionally associated with Soviet depictions of nuclear war:

A modern world war . . . will acquire unprecedented spatial scope, encompass entire continents and ocean expanses and unavoidably drag into its orbit the majority of the countries of the world. It will have an unprecedentedly destructive nature. Military operations will be carried out simultaneously in vast zones, will be distinguished by unprecedented ferocity, will be highly maneuverable and dynamic, and will continue until total victory over the enemy.

But Ogarkov in fact had expressly denied that military operations could be conducted in the wake of a major nuclear exchange.

Logically, then, the only "wageable" and "winnable" world war should be a conventional world war.

Meanwhile the booklet repeated with very few changes the discussion of the "sociopolitical and military-technical" factors now deemed capable of preventing war that had been introduced to Ogarkov's writings for the first time in the November 1984 article in Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil. The only potentially significant change in the handling of the "purely military" aspects of nuclear deterrence was an expansion of the warning against large nuclear arsenals to specify that their existence "increases the possibility of even an accidental, unsanctioned, or provocative nuclear launch or strike from imperialist 'hawks,'" thereby bringing down a crushing retaliatory strike on the initiator. At the same time, the possibility that sociopolitical and military factors could preclude world war was extended to encompass potential elimination of local wars as well.

Where Ogarkov Stands

Despite the substantial moderation in his public posture since leaving the post of chief of the General Staff, Ogarkov's depiction of the impact of the growth of nuclear weapon stockpiles on military affairs, and of the potential nature of a future world war appears to have remained unchanged from what he had set forth while occupying that position:

- ° Nuclear arsenals have grown and diversified to the point that a disarming first strike is now impossible, and a retaliatory strike causing "unacceptable damage" is therefore inevitable. Initiation of nuclear war can serve no conceivable political goal, and as a result has become irrational.
- ° Limited nuclear war, once thought possible, is now an illusion. No major nuclear power would allow a nuclear strike against itself or its primary allies to go unanswered in kind, while any theater use of nuclear weapons would escalate--perhaps immediately--to the full employment of the combatants' entire nuclear arsenals.
- ° Given the irrationality of all-out nuclear war, and the impossibility of keeping it limited, there is a substantial possibility that an East-West conflict initiated with conventional weapons would remain at the conventional level. The nuclear arsenals possessed by each side could continue to deter one another's use, even to the point of one side accepting a measure of

defeat rather than resorting to a suicidal nuclear exchange.

- ° While there remains a significant risk that a future world war would involve the massive exchange of nuclear strikes, there is a growing possibility that a future East-West conflict would be waged with conventional weapons alone. Taking into account the increased destructiveness, accuracy, and range of advanced conventional weapons, however, a future world war, whether nuclear or conventional, would be global in scope, would involve multimillion-man coalition armies, and would lead to destruction unprecedented in scale.

Ogarkov's treatment of the possibility of a conventional world war in a sense marks the culmination of a trend in Soviet professional military writings dating back almost two decades. In the early 1960s, Soviet writings on the nature of future war had postulated that it would inevitably involve an intercontinental nuclear exchange that would probably occur at the very outbreak of the war. By the late 1960s, however, the Soviets perceived that the shift in the correlation of forces embodied in achieving strategic parity promised some hope of averting nuclear strikes on the USSR in the event of war. The third (1968) edition of Sokolovskiy's Military Strategy, for example, dropped the references to the inevitability of intercontinental nuclear strikes contained in the first two editions (1962, 1963), and included reasoned discussions rather than dismissive attacks on such Western concepts as flexible response and limited nuclear war. The notion of a substantial conventional phase was added, and subsequent Soviet writings noted that the armed forces had to be prepared to wage both nuclear and conventional war.

This shift in Soviet thinking is acknowledged in the book M. V. Frunze--Military Theoretician written by Colonel General M. A. Gareyev, a deputy chief of the General Staff, and issued by the Defense Ministry publishing house in 1985. Gareyev asserts, that in the two decades since the publication of Military Strategy, "not all of the provisions of this book have been confirmed." Gareyev casts doubt, in particular, on the 1960s beliefs that world war would inevitably be nuclear and that conventional warfare would be limited to a "brief episode at the start of a war."

Much like Ogarkov, Gareyev notes the catastrophic consequences of massive employment of nuclear weapons and points to the emphasis in NATO on modernizing conventional weapons. Gareyev indicates agreement with what he terms Western assumptions that "there will be a greater opportunity for a

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comparatively long war employing conventional weapons," especially new types of advanced technology systems. He reduces the likelihood of nuclear war to merely "not excluded."

In his 1984 Red Star interview, Ogarkov had drawn the conclusion that the Soviets needed to devote considerably more effort to modernizing their conventional warfighting capabilities. Additional resources would have to be devoted especially to developing and producing advanced conventional weapons and "weapons based on new physical principles." In view of his removal as Chief of the General Staff and the moderation in the tone of his later public writings, it is not certain to what extent current Soviet defense programs reflect the weapons acquisition priorities he had championed prior to his demotion. The Gareyev book and other military writings suggest, however, that Soviet planners are continuing to devote substantial attention to the military requirements posed by the possibility of prolonged conventional conflict.

One implication of Ogarkov's subsequent writings is that the Soviet leadership, while continuing to give priority to averting nuclear war, would prefer to generalize the principles of nuclear deterrence Ogarkov described to cover conventional East-West conflict as well. Another is that the political leadership believes in addition that there are political forces in the international community able to reinforce and perhaps extend the impact of purely military factors in preventing war, whether nuclear or conventional. In any case, Soviet leaders probably would prefer to evade the economic consequences of Ogarkov's corollary argument for an expensive buildup of conventional military capabilities. Although clearly sharing the leadership's desire to avert nuclear war, Ogarkov's writings over the past decade cast doubt on his belief in these extensions of his views. Nonetheless, he has been willing to pay public fealty to these notions as the price for continuing to air his opinions on the role of technological change in the evolution of military affairs.

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