

USSR

Andrey Antonovich GRECHKO

USSR Minister of Defense
Marshal of the Soviet Union

A career soldier with almost half a century of service in the Soviet Armed Forces, Marshal of the Soviet Union Grechko has served as Defense Minister since April 1967, following the death of his predecessor, R. Ya. Malinovskiy. Grechko had been a First Deputy Minister of Defense since 1957 and Commander-in-Chief of the Warsaw Pact Forces since 1960. From 1957 until his appointment to the Warsaw Pact post, he commanded the Soviet Ground Forces. A Party member since 1928, he was elected a candidate member of the CPSU Central Committee in 1952 and promoted to full membership in 1961.

Grechko was born on 4 October 1903 at Kuybyshevo (formerly Golodayevka) in Rostov Oblast', RSFSR. He volunteered for the Red Army in 1919 and joined the Komsomol a year later. Concurrent with service in cavalry units after the Civil War, Grechko continued his education, graduating as a junior officer from the Taganrog Cavalry School in 1926 and from the important Frunze Military Academy in 1935. Grechko's subsequent service as commander of an infantry regiment and later as chief of staff of a cavalry division during the Soviet-Finnish War of 1939-1940 was apparently satisfactory for he was posted thereafter to the Military Academy of the General Staff, the top Soviet military school. He graduated from the academy in 1941 and, the same year, was promoted to major general. Grechko received his first major command in April 1942 when he was put in charge of the 12th Army, which was defending the Donets Basin and the North Caucasus. Badly defeated in a German offensive, the 12th Army was withdrawn and, in September of 1942, Grechko was appointed commander of the 47th Army of the Transcaucasus Front. Later that month he was again transferred, this time to the 18th Army which he commanded until December when he was transferred to the 56th Army, still on the Transcaucasian Front. While commander of the 18th Army he came into contact with L. I. Brezhnev, now Party General Secretary and then the chief political officer of the 18th Army. From January to October 1943 (participating in the general Soviet offensive begun at Stalingrad), Grechko's 56th Army was involved in heavy fighting during a successful campaign to expel the Germans from the North Caucasus. Soon after the Caucasus victory, Lieutenant General Grechko was transferred to the First Ukrainian Front, promoted to colonel general, and given command of the First Guards Army, which he commanded for the remainder of the war. In August 1944, when Grechko's army was transferred to the 4th Ukrainian Front, he again came into contact with Brezhnev, who then headed the Front's Political Directorate. Grechko's association with N. S. Khrushchev probably began during Grechko's service in the First Ukrainian Front, of which Khrushchev was chief political advisor.

For the next eight years after the end of the war, Grechko commanded the Kiev Military District, Khrushchev's political stronghold, and also served as a member of the Ukrainian Party Central Committee. Grechko was

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elected a candidate member of that party's Politburo in 1949 and served as a full member from 1952 to 1953.

After the death of Stalin and subsequent increase in Khrushchev's authority, Grechko's career took a sudden upturn with his appointment in 1953 as commander-in-chief of the elite Group of Soviet Forces in Germany (GSFG). As GSFG commander, Grechko directed the suppression of the 1953 Berlin uprising. He was identified as an army general in November and, two years later, was among a group of World War II associates of Khrushchev who were promoted to Marshal of the Soviet Union. In November 1957, soon after the removal of Defense Minister G. K. Zhukov, Grechko was recalled to Moscow to take up his duties as First Deputy Minister of Defense and as Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Forces. These new positions made him the second most powerful man in the armed forces. In 1960 Grechko was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Warsaw Pact Forces, replacing war hero I. S. Konev. During Defense Minister Malinovskiy's frequent illnesses, Grechko served as acting defense minister.

Grechko's year and a half in office has coincided with significant changes and improvements in the defense posture of the Soviet Armed Forces. The once neglected Ground Forces have been re-established as a separate command; military exercises, exceeding in size all previous ones, are held regularly and are consistent with Grechko's repeated insistence on the importance of combat readiness.

A strong proponent of military professionalism, Grechko is probably more independent than was his predecessor, Malinovskiy. The enlarged military budget for 1968 may indicate increased ability by the military to sell their programs to the Party leadership. Grechko has stated that ideology does not have answers for specific, practical military questions and has publicly blamed Stalin for reverses suffered by the Soviet Armed Forces at the beginning of the Second World War, thereby questioning the propriety of Party control over military decision making.

Grechko has received many awards, including several foreign ones. In 1958--13 years after the end of the war--Grechko received the title "Hero of the Soviet Union" for his heroism during the Second World War. He has received five Orders of Lenin, three Orders of the Red Banner, two Orders of Suvorov, first class, and Order of Suvorov, second class, the Order of Kutuzov, first class, the Order of Bogdan Khmel'nitskiy, an Order of the Red Star, and other medals and awards. He was named to the Presidium of the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet in 1947 and 1951. Since 1946 Grechko has been deputy to the Council of the Union, Supreme Soviet USSR. He has been a member of the Council's Foreign Affairs Commission since 1954, and in 1966 was elected a member of its Credentials and Constitutional Commissions.

22 January 1969

Marshal Andrey A. Grechko, Soviet Defense Minister

GRECHKO items

23 Feb 71 PRAVDA

12 Mar 71 KOMMUNIST #4

27 Mar 71 RED STAR

2 Apr 71 24th CPSU Congress

9 May 71 PRAVDA

Moscow MORSKOY SBORNIK #7, July 1971

15 Oct 71 Mtg of armed forces ideological workers

Reference Aid

Appearances of Soviet Leaders

January 1970-December 1971

A 71-3
February 1971

<u>NAME</u>	<u>SPEECH/ARTICLE</u>
<u>BREZHNEV, L.</u>	Central Committee Report to 24th CPSU Congress, 30 Mar 71 Preelection speech, 11 Jun 71
<u>KOSYGIN, A.</u>	24th CPSU Congress, 6 Apr 71 Preelection speech, 9 Jun 71 Report to USSR Supreme Soviet, 24 Nov 71
<u>SUSLOV, M.</u>	Kremlin, October Revolution anniversary, 6 Nov 70
<u>PODGORNYY, N.</u>	Hanoi, 4 Oct 71
<u>YAKUBOVSKIY, I.</u>	Marshal MILITARY HISTORY JOURNAL #3, 17 Feb 71 PRAVDA, 14 May 71
<u>GRISHIN, V.</u>	Kremlin, October Revolution anniversary, 6 Nov 71
<u>GROMYKO, A.</u>	24th CPSU Congress, 3 Apr 71 United Nations General Assembly, 28 Sept 71