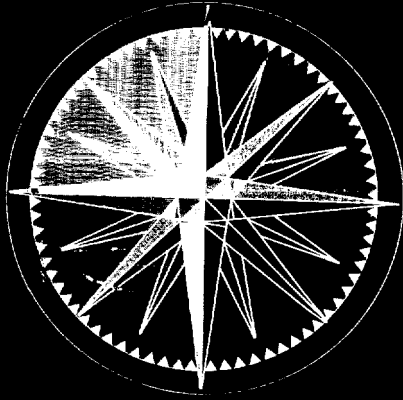


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SPECIAL REPORT

NEW SOVIET DOCTRINE RECOGNIZES POSSIBILITY OF NONNUCLEAR WAR

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
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NEW SOVIET DOCTRINE RECOGNIZES POSSIBILITY OF NONNUCLEAR WAR

There are increasing indications that the Soviet leaders, believing that they are faced with a continuing nuclear stalemate and a growing US capability for "flexible response," have modified the doctrine that a future war involving great powers can only be nuclear and have upgraded the role of general-purpose--i.e., non-strategic--forces. The most recent sign came from the USSR's leading authority on military strategy, Marshal Sokolovskiy. In a conversation with the US Army attaché at a 6 October Moscow reception, Sokolovskiy stated that the USSR has refined the military doctrine put forth in the 1962 and 1963 editions of his treatise, Military Strategy, to include the possibility of a nonnuclear war. He went on to say that the nuclear stalemate between the US and the USSR necessitates a constant updating of views on the relative roles of missile and ground forces.

Process of Transition

Soviet policy for the development and employment of general-purpose forces has clearly been in the process of transition recently. A year ago the general-purpose forces appeared to be the stepchild of Soviet military policy. A policy of troop reduction was in force, the ground forces command structure had been revamped--eliminating the influence of Marshal Chuykov, a powerful advocate of a policy of maintaining strong theater forces--and the prospects were good that a further curtailment of defense allocations for general-purpose forces was in store.

Opposition to these measures was strong in the military, but Khrushchev seemed determined to override this opposition and to

force acceptance of his defense policy prescriptions--including the view that the general-purpose forces should be tailored to the limited role of exploiting strategic nuclear attacks. With Khrushchev gone, these prescriptions and this view have lost their sponsor while the influence of military leaders who had long contested Khrushchev's policies has increased perceptibly.

High-Level Military Statements

An illustration of this trend is afforded by a series of public and private statements by Soviet military officers on the ground force issue since the beginning of this year.

In January an article in Red Star indicated that the

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SOME SOVIET STATEMENTS ON MILITARY DOCTRINE

UP TO SPRING 1965

"War now would at once become total, worldwide; and its outcome would depend not on the actions of troops stationed along the line dividing the combatants, but on the use of nuclear-missile weapons...."

--Khrushchev, February 1962

"Essentially, the argument is over the basic ways in which a future war will be conducted, whether this is to be a ground war with the employment of nuclear weapons as a means of supporting the operations of the ground forces, or a fundamentally new war in which the main means of deciding strategic tasks will be nuclear-missile weapons."

--Marshal Sokolovskiy, Second Edition, Military Strategy, August 1963

"Concerning means of warfare, a war will be a nuclear-missile war."

--Colonel General Shtemenko, Deputy Chief of General Staff, February 1965

SINCE SPRING 1965

"We are convinced that the superiority in manpower and material will be on our side, irrespective of whether war is to be waged with the use of nuclear weapons or without them."

--Marshal Malinovskiy, Minister of Defense, May 1965

"...The appearance of nuclear means of armed struggle...does not mean, of course, that any possibility of a war employing conventional means of armed struggle is now quite out of the question...."

--General of the Army Yepishev, top political officer, Ministry of Defense, May 1965

"...We consider it premature to 'bury' the infantry, as some do."

--Marshal Malinovskiy, May 1965

"Some people thought they could do away with ground forces, but they found out they couldn't do this."

--Marshal Chuykov, Commander of Ground Forces, August 1965



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regime was still temporizing on the issue of whether to reaffirm or disavow Khrushchev's troop-reduction policy. The effect of this vacillation was to stimulate agitation within military circles over the issue.

On 17 February, Marshal Sokolovskiy gave a press interview in which he stated--according to both the original TASS report and the reports of Westerners who were present--that the size of the Soviet armed forces had been reduced to 2,432,000 men, the level that Khrushchev had set as the goal of his major troop reduction policy in 1960. What Sokolovskiy meant to achieve by this statement is obscure, but it is clear that his statement was unauthorized and that it ruffled military opinion.

In June, Marshal Rotmistrov, a leading ground forces spokesman, in a private discussion with the US military attaché, took pains to convey the impression that the Soviet ground forces were not being reduced but were being strengthened. He implied that the figure for the size of the ground forces given by Sokolovskiy in February was too low.

A similar dispute arose concerning an article by Colonel-General Shtemenko, a deputy chief of the General Staff, which was published in the Sunday supplement of Izvestia on 9 February. Although the content of the article was conspicuously innocuous, its title--"The Queen of the Battlefield has Yielded Her Crown"--was

provocative. It was apparently regarded as a hint of some policy in the making and a direct challenge to prevailing professional views of the role and importance of the ground forces. In any event, a rejoinder came from Pravda two months later. Reporting on a speech by Marshal Rotmistrov in its issue of 15 April, Pravda observed that the marshal had "convincingly criticized views which have slipped into the press that allegedly 'the queen of the battlefield--the land forces--is relinquishing her crown to the rocket weapons.'"

It seems clear in retrospect that the vacillations mirrored in these two disputes marked a turning point in an internal Soviet debate over ground forces policy. Marshal Chuykov virtually confirmed this interpretation in a conversation with the US military attaché in August. Commenting on his own reinstatement as commander in chief of the ground forces, Chuykov stated: "Some people thought they could do away with the ground forces but found out they couldn't do this." Chuykov's reinstatement is, in itself, one of the strongest indications that a major policy reversal has occurred. Not only has Chuykov's advocacy of a strong ground force been unequivocal but also his bold defense of his views published at the time of his departure from the post in 1964 made his return highly unlikely, except in the context of a change of policy.

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There is some indication that the current trend in ground forces policy rests on a new appreciation of the possible uses of theater forces for conventional warfare in a situation of nuclear stalemate. In his conversation with the US military attaché in June, Marshal Rotmistrov noted that the growth of nuclear capabilities in both the US and the USSR was creating a situation in which deterrence would be as binding on one side as on the other. In these circumstances, he implied, the role of the Soviet ground forces might become a decisive factor in the strategic equation. Retaining the capability to overrun Europe in 60 to 90 days, in either a nuclear or nonnuclear situation, they would serve to keep Europe hostage. Rotmistrov's reference to a period of 60 to 90 days appears to imply a conventional rather than a nuclear war scenario because it is far out of line with the 100-kilometers-per-day rate of advance called for by recent nuclear war doctrine.

Changes in TO&E

Some changes in organization and equipment of the general-purpose forces which have been effected over the past year or two can be explained for the most part in terms of the existing nuclear war doctrine. Nevertheless, some of these changes also serve to improve the capabilities of the general-purpose forces

for conventional operations. There are some indications, for example, that the complements of conventional artillery assigned to Soviet units may be increasing. There are also indications that some Soviet tank armies in East Germany have been reorganized to add motorized rifle divisions to their table of organization. These are the kinds of changes that might be anticipated if the USSR were to readjust its forces to take more account of the requirements for conventional war.

The new Soviet emphasis on airborne and amphibious forces can be explained both by the requirements posed by nuclear war and by the possibility that the Soviet authorities wish to enhance their conventional war capabilities. However, the development of these forces adds significantly to the latter capabilities. The re-establishment of the marine forces in 1964 may represent a first step toward meeting a Soviet requirement for a capability to intervene directly in distant, limited military actions.

Competition for Available Resources

A vigorous controversy over the issue of defense allocations has been discernible in statements by various leaders over the past several months. With the new emphasis on the

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importance of conventional forces, prospects would appear good that the general-purpose forces will be well provided for in current planning.

At the same time, the USSR is facing very heavy demands for increased resources on all fronts, not all of which can be satisfied simultaneously. There are growing pressures on the strategic and defensive forces, as

well as on the space program, at a time when the USSR has undertaken extensive commitments in both industrial reform and agriculture improvements.

Thus the trend toward the enlargement and improvement of the general-purpose forces which now is discernible in Soviet military policy will clash with other priority claimants for national resources.

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