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SOVIET MILITARY THEORETICAL JOURNAL
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Historical Exploits of the Soviet People and Their
Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War

by Mar SU R. MALINOVSKIY

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Twenty years ago, on 9 May 1945, our valiant Armed Forces, which had distinguished themselves in battles from the Volga to the Elbe, jointly with their Allies forced fascist Germany to a complete and unconditional surrender. This was an event of enormous historical significance. Our planet celebrated this victory with gun salutes and general rejoicing. And there was certainly cause for rejoicing, since the war had ended victoriously against the most frenzied and violent detachment of world imperialism, i.e., German fascism, the dominant force of worldwide reactionary politics, inhumanity, race hatred, and other kinds of savagery.

For the Soviet people, the period of the Great Patriotic War was the most difficult and at the same time the most heroic period in the history of the defense of our Motherland. The greatness of our victory lies in the fact that we defeated and forced to capitulate a treacherous and very powerful enemy, i.e., Hitler's Germany. Before its attack on the Soviet Union, the army of fascist Germany had advanced victoriously through Western Europe and the capitalist world had not found the strength to defeat, or at least to stop the fascist hordes. Only after reaching the English Channel did they cease to advance. However, the strength of this army was infinitely smaller compared to that which the fascists hurled against the USSR.

Filled with savage hatred toward the first socialist country in the world, the imperialist predators repeatedly carried out armed attacks against the USSR, but were always duly repulsed. Nevertheless, the imperialists would not leave us alone, but continued to prepare a new assault against the Soviet Union. They planned on a shattering defeat of the first socialist country in the world in the course of World War II with the use of blitzkrieg methods.

World War II began on 1 September 1939, when Hitler's Germany attacked Poland without a declaration of war. The governments of Great Britain and France were forced to declare war against Germany so as not to discredit their reputation in the eyes of the world; however, they were in no hurry to offer real aid to their ally. Thus, 20 years after World War I, the world was once more involved in an even more bloody slaughter.

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It began, against the will of its instigators, originally between the powerful imperialist coalitions, i.e., one side represented by Hitler's Germany which had suffered defeat in World War I, fascist Italy, and imperialist Japan, which countries considered themselves as being unfairly treated in the distribution of the spoils of war among the victors, and the other side represented by the old colonialist powers of Great Britain, France, and also the US.

This was a manifestation of the irreconcilable conflicts within the camp of imperialism. After the occupation of Poland, fascist Germany met little resistance in occupying Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, and Luxemburg; it defeated the French and British armies in Northern France in the period of three weeks, forced the remains of the defeated British troops to retreat to the sea at Dunkirk, and then forced the French government to capitulate. Such a rapid defeat can be explained not so much by the strength or military art of the invaders, as by the tolerance of fascist aggression, attempts to turn it against the Soviet Union, and direct betrayal of national interests on the part of ruling circles of France and Great Britain, which were sympathetic to fascism at heart.

This was the result, during World War II, of the policy of encouragement and indulgence toward the aggressor on the part of ruling circles of Great Britain, France, and the US. This policy may result in the same consequences in our time, if the peace-loving nations fail to prevent the German revanchists from gaining access to nuclear weapons. History has cruelly mocked the simple-minded British and French politicians. The Western powers would have been quite strong enough at least to seriously undermine the strength of the fascist army, if not to defeat it completely. As a matter of fact, the allies had 142 full-strength divisions against 135 German divisions. The allies had more than 3,000 tanks and over 2,700 aircraft. The peoples of Europe had to pay a high price for the treacherous politics of bourgeois governments. They were forced to pay for the anti-Soviet course of their governments with a painful defeat, with endless suffering under the 4-year fascist occupation, and with hundreds of thousands of human lives.

After completing military operations in the West and strengthening its rear area, fascist Germany began direct preparations for war against the USSR in the summer of 1940. Having taken possession of the huge economic resources of occupied European countries and mobilized the military economy of its allies, Germany reached a production level which was 1.5 to 2 times greater than that of the USSR. This permitted Germany to supply its multimillion army with arms and combat equipment and to achieve a high level of motorization.

Together with political and economic preparations for war against the Soviet Union, the fascist armed forces were being trained directly for an attack against our country.

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The numerical strength of armed forces of Hitler's Germany at the time of their attack against the USSR had almost doubled as compared with the beginning of World War II. The Ground Troops had 214 divisions and two brigades (including 21 tank divisions and 14 motorized divisions), 11,000 tanks and assault weapons, and about 78,000 guns and mortars. At the beginning of the war against the USSR, fascist Germany had over 10,000 combat aircraft.

On 18 December 1940, Hitler issued secret directive No 21, giving the initial data for immediate planning of the predatory attack against the Soviet Union. It stated that "the German armed forces must be prepared to defeat Soviet Russia in the course of a short-term campaign... The principal forces of Russian ground troops, located in Western Russia, must be destroyed in bold operations by means of a penetrating, rapid advance of tank wedges... The final aim of the operation is the creation of a barrier against Asiatic Russia along the line Volga-Arkhangel'sk. Thus, in the case of emergency, the last industrial region of the Russians in the Urals may be paralyzed with the help of aviation."

In planning the "blitzkrieg" defeat of the Soviet Union, Hitler's strategists were intoxicated by their easy victories in the West and their plan "Barbarossa" was based on many preconceived notions. They overestimated their own capabilities, underestimated the capabilities of our country, and counted on completing military operations against the Soviet Army within 6-8 weeks.

While working out their military plans, the fascist leaders also developed a monstrous program for the destruction and enslavement of Soviet people, as well as plans for economic plunder, according to which all the resources of our country were to pass into the hands of German imperialists.

The party and the Soviet government understood that sooner or later the aggressive forces of imperialism would attack us. Therefore, Soviet foreign policy directed its attention toward a further strengthening of international positions by a consistent and determined struggle for peace and collective security, while internal policies were concerned with a further strengthening of the Soviet social and state system, the development of economic power, and the strengthening of Soviet defense capabilities.

As a result of the fulfillment of prewar 5-year plans, the USSR had been transformed into a powerful industrial and collective farming country; it had gained complete economic independence from capitalist countries, and had considerably strengthened its defense capabilities. At the beginning of World War II, the Soviet Union carried out additional measures for increasing production capacities of the defense industry.

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However, even though we had a fairly powerful military industry at the beginning of the war, we did not have time to organize the mass production of arms, and especially modern combat equipment, in the necessary volume. This placed our country in an extremely difficult situation at the beginning of the war against fascist Germany.

Despite these shortcomings, the Soviet Armed Forces were sufficiently powerful on the eve of the attack by fascist Germany, so that they were able to stand up against such a strong enemy as the fascist army, and later succeeded in increasing their forces and defeating the enemy in the course of an intense struggle.

The Principal Stages in the Fighting of the Soviet Armed Forces During the Great Patriotic War

In the early dawn of 22 June 1941, fascist Germany made a surprise attack against the Soviet Union. A 5.5-million army of fascists and their allies, composed of 190 divisions, completely equipped, armed to the teeth, and well trained, treacherously invaded the territory of our Motherland without a declaration of war and contrary to the existing Soviet-German non-aggression treaty.

Against this powerful army of the enemy, concentrated at the border in three strong, compact groupings, the Soviet Union had troops of the five border districts with a total strength of 2.9 million. On a 4,500-kilometer front, these districts had 170 divisions and two brigades, dispersed up to 500 kilometers from the border into the interior of the USSR. Although we were not greatly inferior to the enemy in the number of divisions, the enemy actually had great superiority in manpower, in the degree of organization of sovedineniya, and in the full strength of personnel, combat equipment, rear service units, transport facilities, tractors, and communication facilities, and consequently, in the mobility and control of troops.

The troops of our military border districts, which were at their permanent locations, had been engaged in combat training and were not deployed and prepared to repulse a surprise enemy attack. Therefore, only 33 divisions, which were near the border, met the attacks of the powerful enemy grouping between the Baltic Sea and the Carpathians.

Why was it that our Armed Forces had not been made combat ready? This happened because I. V. Stalin, who concentrated in his hands the highest power of the state and party in its entirety, had made an error in evaluating the military and political situation on the eve of the war. This resulted in strategically incorrect decisions which became evident in the failure to take prompt measures for putting the Armed Forces in combat readiness. He hoped until the last day that he would be able to avert an attack by fascist Germany against the

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the attack and the greater readiness of their troops for combat operations, the assault groupings of the enemy penetrated into the interior of the country. The commitment of covering units at different times and the lack of strong reserves near the direction of the main enemy attacks placed the covering troops in a difficult situation. Despite heroic and extremely stiff resistance, the covering troops were unable to withstand the heavy onslaught by superior enemy forces.

By carrying out surprise attacks against our airfields, the enemy destroyed many aircraft and large numbers of personnel and acquired great superiority in the air; in the zone adjoining the border enemy aircraft flew unhindered and at will.

Troop control became extremely difficult as a result of damaged communications systems, caused by mass air attacks and actions of sabotage groups of the enemy. The lack of communications made it impossible to obtain news on the situation of troops, which led to the making of inappropriate decisions, i.e., the decisions were incredibly late.

Having seized the initiative, the enemy continued to develop the attack in the principal directions. Our troops met the attack with extremely stubborn resistance. Even the first battles on the Soviet-German front showed the fascist invaders that they were dealing with an entirely different type of soldier than in Western Europe. The official diary of F. Halder, former chief of the German General Staff, contained the following entry on 29 June: "The news from the front confirm that the Russians are fighting to the last man... The stubborn Russian resistance has forced us to conduct our battles according to all the rules of our combat regulations. In Poland and in the West we could take certain liberties and deviate from some of the regulations, but that is now out of the question."

And it was really so. Soviet soldiers, educated by the Communist Party in the spirit of boundless devotion to their motherland, did not waver in the terrible hour of danger; they did not lose courage or admit defeat, but skillfully met the attacks of the enemy forces which were superior in number. In doing so, they showed ardent patriotism, unprecedented courage, heroism, and a quick grasp of military affairs. They fought valiantly, defeating select fascist troops which had invaded the USSR.

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in which our fearless soldiers fought, superiority was on the side of the enemy who was armed to the teeth. Under the assault of his superior forces the Red Army was forced to retreat into the interior of the country in the course of heavy fighting.

In the first days of the war the party and government, realizing the complexity of the situation and the danger facing our motherland, mobilized all resources of the country to repulse the enemy, and first of all, to deploy and strengthen the Armed Forces. To increase party influence in the army, party and Komsomol members were mobilized; they have always, and especially in times of severe trials, represented the backbone of the army, being a model of courage and daring.

Under the most difficult conditions, the party and Soviet government carried out a large-scale reorganization of the whole USSR national economy to put it on a wartime footing. An enormous job was done in evacuating many hundreds of industrial enterprises from western regions to the east; these enterprises later played an important role in strengthening the defense capabilities of the country.

The leading and inspiring role of the party, and its close, indestructible unity with the people, were decisive factors in successfully overcoming the severe military hardships during the initial period of the war.

The fascist army, making the most of its surprise attack and the superiority of its combat equipment, advanced 600 to 850 kilometers along the principal axes by the end of September 1941. The stubborn defense of the Soviet troops in some sectors, the heroic defense of Leningrad, Kiev, and Odessa, and the intense fighting in the area of Smolensk-Yel'nya, -- these were the cliffs on which the plan for a "blitzkrieg" prepared by Hitler's strategists began to be shipwrecked.

However, regardless of everything, Hitler's command attempted with all possible means to seize Moscow and Leningrad before the onset of winter, to occupy the Donbass and Crimea, and to end the war victoriously. Having taken the strategic initiative, the German command continued the offensive against Leningrad, Moscow, and the Donbass in the fall of 1941, delivering the main blow in the Moscow direction. In this area Hitler's troops concentrated 38 percent of their infantry divisions and 64 percent of tank and motorized divisions operating on the Soviet-German front, and after establishing a three- to eightfold numerical superiority in the direction of the principal attacks, they began the offensive against Moscow.

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Approved For Release 2000/08/09 : CIA-RDP85T00875R000300090008-8 and ended with a complete defeat of the enemy and a loss of a large number of enemy personnel and combat equipment.

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The success of the defensive battles near Moscow was helped considerably by our counterattacks near Tikhvin and Rostov-on-Don and by the heroic defense of Sevastopol', which tied up large forces of the enemy. In this way, the enemy's plans for the occupation of Moscow, Leningrad, and the approaches to the Caucasus were defeated; and as a result, their estimates for a speedy, victorious termination of the war proved wrong.

Although the Red Army was successful in its difficult, defensive operations and in the counterattack near Rostov and Tikhvin, the situation for the Soviet Union in early December 1941 remained extremely tense because of the loss of important economic regions. Only owing to the extensive organizational work of the Communist Party and the selfless work of Soviet people, we were able in December to prevent the level of industrial production from dropping any further.

Despite the difficult situation, we were able to concentrate large strategic reserves in the Moscow direction and to launch a counter-offensive on 5-6 December. Unable to sustain the heavy attack of the Red Army, the German fascist troops began to retreat, abandoning their combat equipment, ammunition, and vehicles. This counterattack later i.e., in the winter of 1941-1942, became a general strategic offensive of the Red Army.

The attempts of falsifiers of history to explain the defeat of fascist troops near Moscow by the severe winter weather do not stand up to criticism, since climatic conditions had an equal effect on us and on the fascists.

The principal condition for our success near Moscow was the increased skill and the high fighting and moral qualities of the Red Army. After routing the best divisions of the enemy, our army achieved truly outstanding victories in the first year of the Great Patriotic War and the first large-scale defeat of the fascist army in the second year of the world war. With this victory, the Red Army discredited the myth of the invincibility of Hitler's Germany and put an end to the plan for a blitzkrieg. Germany was faced with the necessity of conducting a protracted war, and this was a serious strategic defeat.

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During the winter campaign of 1941-1942, the situation continued to be serious for the Soviet Union. The enemy was about 120 kilometers from Moscow, and strategically important regions were still in his hands. Leningrad was blockaded. Millions of Soviet people were languishing in fascist captivity. We were forced to use considerable forces for the protection of Far Eastern and Southern borders. At the same time, nothing prevented Hitler's command from increasing its strength on the Soviet-German front. Plundering the occupied and enslaved countries of Europe, the rulers of fascist Germany acquired an abundant supply of manpower and combat equipment for their army. The fascist army remained a strong and dangerous enemy, prepared to launch a new offensive. The US and Great Britain followed a policy of delaying the opening of a second front, even though they, together with Canada, had about 6 million men under arms by that time. The Soviet Union continued to bear the brunt of the war on its shoulders and was essentially alone in withstanding the powerful enemy.

Having concentrated 216 divisions and 21 brigades at the Soviet-German front by the summer of 1942 with the help of his allies, Hitler gave the order to rout the principal forces of the Red Army and to achieve a fast victory. However, at this time Hitler's command, despite the increase in number of its divisions, did not dare to advance in three strategic directions, as in the beginning of the war, but chose only one direction, i.e., the southwest. Having concentrated more than 37 percent of infantry and about 53 percent of tank and motorized sovedineniya in this direction, the enemy launched an offensive. Suffering enormous losses, the enemy was able to penetrate our defenses and to reach the Volga and the foothills of the principal Caucasian range in difficult, exhausting battles.

However, the enemy was unable to inflict a final defeat on us. "The German troops were unable to encircle any large Russian forces, as had been done in the preceding year. The Russian command learned to avoid encirclement in a skillful manner. There was an absence of weapons and prisoners as the true spoils and criterion of victory..." These were the words of Kurt Tappeiskirch, paraphrasing Clausewitz. (Results of World War II. Publishing House for Foreign Literature, 1957, p 80)

The enemy was involved in protracted and exhausting battles on the Volga. Here, on a 650-kilometer sector of the front, 49 divisions and two brigades were in action, in addition to a large number of special chastis. These battles clearly revealed that invincible strength which the fascist army did not have, and could not possibly have, i.e. the mass heroism of Soviet soldiers, their assurance in the just cause of the war, and their high political consciousness and superior moral stamina. This is what made it possible to upset the plans of Hitler's command.

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During the summer and fall campaigns we were able to hold back up several important industrial and agricultural regions of the country. This considerably undermined our forces. However, in the fall of 1942, a well organized military economy had already been established in the country through the efforts of the Communist Party and of all Soviet people. After the reorganization of industry to meet wartime needs, the Red Army received an uninterrupted and ever increasing supply of arms and combat equipment. There was also a change in the quality of military personnel, which became seasoned and hardened in heavy battles. The commanding officers gained the necessary experience in leading combat operations under difficult conditions. All this enabled the Red Army to prepare and carry out a powerful counterattack near the Volga stronghold.

At the beginning of the counteroffensive the Red Army was not inferior to the enemy in number of troops and, particularly, in their quality. On the whole, both sides had almost equal forces.

On 19 November 1942, troops of the Southwest and Don fronts, and one day later those of the Stalingrad front, began the offensive. During the first days of the offensive, the Red Army broke through the well fortified enemy defenses and destroyed 22 choice enemy divisions and 160 individual *chasti* with a total of 330,000 men. The history of military art knows of practically no other examples of this type for the encirclement and destruction of a major strategic grouping, when the forces of both sides were almost equal.

The German fascist army suffered a very heavy defeat, which seriously undermined its moral and physical strength and considerably lowered its offensive capabilities. The strategic initiative was snatched from the enemy and was taken over by the Red Army.

The battle on the Volga played a very important role in achieving victory over Hitler's Germany. This battle demonstrated to the whole world the power of the Red Army and of the Soviet Union as a whole, which was strong because of the high consciousness of the masses and the moral and political unity of the people, and because of the superiority of the Soviet social and state system over the capitalist systems and the superiority of socialist economy.

The battle on the Volga also contributed to a considerable intensification in the struggle of peoples of European countries, which were occupied by fascist Germany, for their liberation. It strengthened the anti-Hitler coalition. The military prestige of Hitler's Germany declined. Disorder and vacillation became more prevalent in the fascist bloc.

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Falsifiers of history and distortion created by the Red Army, have been making every effort since the war in trying to prove that the victory on the Volga was not the result of improved combat qualities of the Red Army and of advanced Soviet military art, but was caused by Hitler's ineptitude, the weakness of the troops of Germany's allies, and the climatic conditions. To this we may say: "You can't go very far with deceit!"

The persistent attempts of falsifiers of history to belittle the scale distort the meaning, and conceal the reasons for our great victory in the battle on the Volga, to ignore the mistakes and miscalculations of German generals and embellish the actions of the German general staff, are based on crude juggling of facts and lies. Soviet military historians must struggle actively and consistently against attempts of bourgeois falsifiers to deceive the masses. It is our duty to revere the truth about the great exploits of the Soviet people in the monumental battles of the past war and to bring this truth persistently to the attention of millions of people.

As a result of the 1942-1943 winter offensive, the Red Army advanced 600-700 kilometers to the west. By this time the general military-political situation had considerably improved for the USSR and had greatly deteriorated for fascist Germany. Our country became stronger with each day, while fascist Germany not only failed to approach, but even moved farther away from its cherished goal, i.e., the destruction of the Soviet Union.

Despite the fact that, in the battle of the Volga and during the following offensive, we taught Hitler's army a lesson which cost it enormous losses, and the fact that it never quite recovered from our shattering blows, Hitler's generals failed to draw the necessary conclusions.

In the spring of 1943, they began preparations for a new offensive on the Soviet-German front in the area of the Kursk salient. As a result of "total" mobilization, the Hitlerites were able to throw new hundreds of thousands of men into battle, as well as considerable material resources. They were able not only to replace the losses in combat equipment and arms, but also to increase the output of military products. By the summer of 1943, the fascist army numbered 10,300,000 men in its ranks, including 6,682,000 men in the field forces. From this number, the German troops on the Soviet-German front had 4,800,000 men, or 71 percent, and together with the allies the total amounted to 5,300,000.

The Red Army at this time had 6,440,000 men in its field forces. Thus, we exceeded the enemy in manpower 1.2 times, and even more than that in combat equipment.

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offensive. The mad Fuehrer assured his soldiers that this would be the last offensive, which--according to the plans of fascist strategists-- was to bring Germany the long awaited victory. Hitler turned out to be correct only insofar as this was actually the last offensive for Germany, and it was no longer able to recapture the strategic initiative until its capitulation.

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Even the large number of new and highly publicized heavy tanks, with ferocious-sounding names like "Panther" and "Tiger", failed to help the offensive of German fascist troops. In a defensive battle, the Red Army wore down and exhausted the elite fascist divisions and forced them to retreat, first to the initial assault positions, and then further to the West. In this manner, this offensive of the Germans on the eastern front was also a complete failure. The fascists were not saved by the summer which, they had hoped, might help them to make use of their still very great capabilities and achieve a victory. On the eve of the battle of Kursk the fascists had bragged: "In the winter you drive us with sleds, and in the summer we drive you with tanks." Here it might be appropriate to remember the military proverb: "Do not brag going into battle, but brag coming out of battle."

The victory of the Red Army near Kursk was one of the greatest victories in the Great Patriotic War and World War II. Our troops routed up to 30 select divisions of the enemy. Tank units of the Wehrmacht suffered a particularly heavy defeat by Soviet troops. In the battle of Kursk, the Red Army definitely broke the backbone of the German fascist army.

The German defeat in the battle of Kursk increased the conflicts within the fascist coalition. Italy was eliminated from the bloc. Hitler's demand to assign at least a few divisions from the "Center" army group to Italy was not carried out, because the increasing strikes of the Red Army had prevented it. This circumstance created favorable conditions for developing the amphibious landing operation of British and US troops which had begun in the Mediterranean.

Falsifiers of history try to belittle the enormous importance of the Red Army victory in the battle of Kursk with the intention of covering up the adventurous character of the German plan of offensive, whitewashing Hitler's generals, and at the same time placing the entire blame for the defeat, as before, on the inadequacy of Hitler. However, they will not succeed in doing this.

The historic victory of Kursk demonstrated the further growth in the power of the Soviet Union and its armed forces. While the defeats on the Volga and near Kursk had catastrophic consequences for the Hitlerites, they opened great vistas for a final victory of our troops. The battle of Kursk marked the beginning of the summer offensive of the Red Army. By the end of 1943, two thirds of the Soviet territory, which had been temporarily occupied by the enemy, was liberated.

The following year, 1944, was the year of decisive victories of the Red Army at Leningrad and Novgorod, in the western Ukraine and the Crimea, in Belorussia, Moldavia, and the Baltic States.

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major offensive operations which ended, as a rule, with the encirclement and destruction of strong enemy groupings. The liberation of Soviet territory from occupying forces was basically completed in 1944, and military operations were transferred to German territory. The Red Army honorably fulfilled its international duty. It gave powerful support to the peoples of Europe in their struggle for liberation. The fascist occupying forces were expelled from Rumania, Bulgaria, most of Yugoslavia, Finland, a considerable part of Poland, and most of Hungary. Our troops entered the territory of Czechoslovakia. The Red Army routed the German troops in northern Finland and liberated the northern part of Norway. Under the direct influence of the Red Army victories, the peoples of Albania and Greece drove out the occupying forces from their countries.

Fearing that the Red Army would complete the defeat of fascist Germany alone, without allies, the United States and Great Britain landed their troops on 6 June 1944 on the French coast in Normandy.

The principal forces of the German Wehrmacht were stationed, as before, on the Soviet-German front; therefore the US-British command was able to act with a certainty of success. And even though the establishment of a second front in Western Europe was very important, the main theater of operations remained on the Soviet-German front. The offensive of US-British troops in Europe, even though it was the largest one they had conducted so far, could not be compared in scope and results with the offensive operations of the Red Army. It is sufficient to say that from the moment of landing until the end of 1944 the US-British troops routed not more than 60 enemy divisions, while the Red Army during this period completely destroyed or captured 26 divisions and 24 brigades, and routed 219 divisions; during the entire year the Red Army completely destroyed or captured 126 divisions and 25 brigades, and routed 361 divisions and 27 brigades. These are the facts.

In 1945, the Red Army struck a blow at the enemy on a front extending from the Baltic to the Drava River, which was unprecedented in force. This attack ended with the great historic victory of the Soviet people and its Red Army in the Berlin operation. Fascist Germany was conquered, and this signified the victorious end of the Great Patriotic War and the end of World War II in Europe. During the final stage of the war, the armies of the restored countries of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Bulgaria joined the Red Army in combat operations against their common enemy.

The German people had to pay a high price for Hitler's military adventure. During World War II, Germany lost about 13 million people, of which number up to 10 million persons perished on the Soviet-German front.

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hordes, but the horrors of the bloody war have not been forgotten by the people. And how could they be forgotten, since the Soviet people and their army had lost 20 million human lives in this war and had suffered material losses estimated at the astronomical figure of 2 trillion 600 billion rubles. At a cost of supreme efforts and great sacrifices, the Soviet people routed the most ferocious and most predatory force of world imperialism, i.e., Hitler's Germany. The Great Patriotic War, which taught the aggressors a stern lesson, provided incontestable evidence that any attempt to use German militarism against the Soviet Union and the countries of the socialist camp would be doomed to failure.

Our victory in the Great Patriotic War became possible because the struggle of the Soviet people and their army was headed by the glorious Communist Party, which was the inspirer and organizer of all victories. The party inspired the Soviet people to valiant efforts and combat exploits by ardent appeals, tireless practical activities, and an inexhaustible faith in victory over the enemy.

The great hardships of the most destructive and devastating war provided convincing evidence of the great spiritual strength and the inflexible will of the people which defended the achievements of the socialist revolution with weapons in their hands. Socialism has given our people insuperable strength. This incontestable lesson of historical significance, which resulted from the Great Patriotic War, should be thoroughly learned by present military adventurers.

In the incredible hardships of the past war, the prophetic words of the great Lenin, the creator of our state, came true in every respect: "It will never be possible to defeat a nation, in which the majority of workers and peasants have learned, experienced, and seen that they are defending their own Soviet government -- the government of the working people, and that the victory of the cause which they are defending will enable them and their children to enjoy all the blessings of culture and all the products of human labor." (Complete Collection of Works, Vol. 38, page 315).

The exploits accomplished by the Soviet people on the battle fields of the Great Patriotic War, their selfless labor in rear areas, and the endless sacrifices made for the victory of the just cause, will always be remembered by future generations.

On the day of the 20th anniversary of the great victory we, the Soviet people, and all progressive mankind, turn our thoughts with a feeling of deep love and gratitude to those millions of valiant sons and daughters of our people, who gave their lives for the independence

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of our victory over fascism, the greatest enemy of mankind. The victory in the Great Patriotic War demonstrated the inexhaustible vitality and the enormous superiority of the socialist system, which is the most advanced and just system in existence, as well as the incalculable strength and inflexible will of the Soviet people, and the might of our Armed Forces. The Great Patriotic War has proved convincingly the ever increasing role of popular masses in achieving a victory.

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The struggle against fascist Germany was made a great deal more complex because the German economic potential was based on the resources of nearly all Europe and considerably exceeded the economic potential of the Soviet Union. However, our socialist country had very great advantages in the economic organization of society, and in the superior character of its social system. The selfless labor of the Soviet people and the gigantic organizational activity of the party ensured the victory of our military economy over the German fascist military economy. As a result of its victory, the Soviet Union defended its socialist achievements, considerably increased its international prestige, and regained the areas which had been previously torn away from it.

The victory of the Soviet Union over fascist Germany brought freedom and national independence to the peoples of Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Albania. Subsequently the peoples of these countries, who overthrew the reactionary regimes of capitalists and landowners, began to build socialism. The victory over fascist Germany liberated the peoples of Finland, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Austria, France, and other countries of Europe from the brown plague. Under the influence of this victory, the struggle of wide popular masses in all capitalist countries was activated, while the colonial and dependent countries experienced an unprecedented upsurge of the national liberation movement.

The Development of the Soviet Armed Forces and Their Military Art During the Great Patriotic War

The Great Patriotic War was a severe test of Soviet military art and of the organizational principles in the building of our Armed Forces.

The great art of conducting armed combat against the huge German fascist army, which was technically well equipped and prepared for a large war, was not mastered suddenly. There were many difficulties, trials, and errors on the way to this goal.

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First of all, it should be said that many of our achievements, made before the 1930's in the development of Soviet military art and of the organizational forms of troops, were not duly promoted and put into practice in the operational and combat training of troops on the eve of the war. The principal reason for this was the paralyzing atmosphere of the Stalin personality cult.

The unfounded repressions which struck the commanding cadres of the army and navy in 1937 resulted in the extermination of a large number of experienced commanders and political workers, especially those in leading positions. A whole number of military districts, fleets, armies, corps, divisions, and military educational institutions were actually deprived of their leaders. The repressions against military cadres caused enormous damage to the combat capability of the Armed Forces, and this was one of the main reasons for our setbacks during the first period of the Great Patriotic War.

The Stalin personality cult had an extremely negative effect on the development of Soviet military thought. Arbitrariness and dictatorship in matters of theory made it difficult to master Lenin's heritage of military theory and paralyzed the initiative of military scientists and practitioners. Even the positive and progressive aspects in the theory of military art were ignored in the practice of operational training and organizational development on the basis that such progressive aspects had been advocated by military leaders subject to repressions. Creative research on problems of military theory was replaced by a search for ready-made formulas and quotations. As a result, many problems of military theory and practice were solved in a subjective manner before the war, without giving due consideration to the changes which had occurred in the means and methods of conducting armed combat.

As a result, just before the war the theory of strategy, operational art, and tactics had considerable gaps. Our military theory did not fully take into account the peculiarities of a mobile war if the latter should suddenly develop. The commanders and staffs did not undergo the proper training in the leadership of troops, and the control of manpower and equipment in such a war.

Military theory failed to give proper attention to the development of offensive and particularly of defensive actions of troops. The inadequate treatment of problems of defense had a negative effect on the practical skill of conducting defensive operations on a strategic and operational scale. Defense, as a rule, was organized hastily, on a wide front, with an even distribution of forces and equipment along the front. Defense did not have the necessary depth and it had a linear character. Counterattacks with forces of mechanized corps failed to produce an effect because of their hasty organization and

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poor control. The poor organization of the troops had a particularly negative effect on the stability of defense. This was explained partly by the lack of effective antitank equipment, and partly by the inefficient use of standard field artillery against tanks.

At the beginning of the war, our troops were also engaged in some offensive operations. However, even they had serious shortcomings. First of all, one should point out the unjustified haste in the preparation of these operations. The failure of most of the offensive battles and operations was, to a considerable extent, the result of poor organization and inadequate supply of artillery and air support for the troops. The assault groupings which had been formed did not have the required superiority in manpower and equipment over the enemy. Therefore, as a rule, the operations did not achieve their purpose.

All this was explained largely by those gaps in our military theory and operational training of command personnel and staffs which existed in the prewar period.

During the first days of the war, our troops suffered great losses of manpower and combat equipment in fierce battles. The great losses in arms and combat equipment of the field forces, and the sharp decrease in the supply of combat equipment from industrial enterprises, forced us to make important changes in the organization of troops. It became necessary to break up tank divisions and to organize separate tank brigades and battalions in their place, as well as to reorganize motorized divisions into rifle divisions. It was also necessary to break up the commands of mechanized and rifle corps and to transfer their personnel as replacements of losses in front and army commands of the field forces, as well as to man the staffs of reserve formations. All this was done under the stress of circumstances, such as lack of arms and equipment, and not on the basis of theoretical reasoning.

During fierce, defensive battles in the summer and early fall of 1941 on the Leningrad, Smolensk, and Rostov fronts, commanders and staffs gradually acquired a great deal of experience; they began to improve the organization and conduct of combat operations and their control of sovedineniya and chasty became more effective and flexible. This was particularly evident in the counteroffensive near Rostov-on-Don, Tikhvin, and Moscow.

The success of the counteroffensive near Moscow was achieved despite enormous difficulties, and with a ratio of forces which was not in our favor; it was achieved by our soldiers' inflexible determination to win and by the perfected military art of the Soviet command. The close cooperation of fronts in launching attacks, the prompt commitment of reserves, the coordinated actions of infantry, artillery,

tanks, and aviation in capturing enemy strong points, and the daring raids of cavalry corps in the enemy rear area, -- all these factors contributed to the success of the counteroffensive near Moscow.

However, despite some successes, our higher military leaders did not yet have sufficient experience in the organization and conduct of offensive operations on a large scale, simultaneously along the entire strategic front. In solving these problems, the military leaders made serious mistakes and miscalculations in estimating the enemy capabilities, selecting the direction of principal attacks, utilizing forces and equipment, and in the control of troops.

These mistakes and miscalculations became evident during the winter and especially during the summer campaign of 1942. The Soviet command tried to conduct offensive operations, simultaneously in different directions, with strategic aims; during these operations it was planned to rout all the principal enemy groupings, operating on the Soviet-German front. However, the necessary forces and equipment were not provided for this purpose, even though the command personnel had gained considerably more experience.

As a result of the dispersal of forces on the entire front, the incorrect evaluation of enemy capabilities and plans, and the serious shortcomings in the organization of offensive operations, it was not possible to reach any of the goals of the summer campaign. The enemy, who was not tied down in western Europe, was able to assemble superior forces and to launch a determined attack which was successful. Our troops, having been defeated on the south wing of the front, were forced to retreat to the banks of the Don and Volga rivers and to the foothills of the principal Caucasian mountain range. In the following defensive battles in the Khar'kov and Voronezh directions, the Soviet command made use of the newly activated tank army and separate tank corps for carrying out counterattacks. However, the hasty organization of the counterattacks resulted in the fact that these powerful assault forces were used piecemeal, without the necessary artillery and air support, i.e., making the same mistakes which occurred in 1941.

However, the mistakes and miscalculations in the organization and conduct of operations during the 1941-1942 campaign had some effect. They were subjected to critical analysis and the Soviet command drew many useful conclusions from its experience. During the following years, our strategic command began to make objective evaluations of the enemy, to refrain from overestimating its own forces, and to be more precise in correlating the strategic aims of armed combat with the possibilities of achieving them. The strategic command became more skillful in concentrating superior forces and equipment for the purpose of achieving decisive results in campaigns and strategic operations.

CPYRGH organization and conduct of offensive operations and battles, and in the combat use of artillery, tanks, and aviation. The instructions issued by the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces concerning artillery support of offensives and concerning the principles of combat use of tank and mechanized corps played an important role in improving the operational and tactical skill of commanders and staffs.

Owing to the efforts of rear services workers we were able to replace the losses in the field forces; by the end of 1942, it was possible to organize the Third and Fifth tank armies, 20 tank corps and 7 mechanized corps, and 27 artillery divisions, and to create air armies on all fronts. As a result, the striking and fire power of the Soviet Army was sharply increased and favorable conditions developed for the further improvement of military art.

A total of 17 tank and mechanized corps, several artillery divisions and air armies took part in the operations carried out by our troops in the area between the Volga and Don rivers, and along the upper and central sections of the Don, in the winter of 1942-1943. For the first time since the beginning of the war, tank and mechanized corps were used in these operations for carrying out the maneuver of encircling large enemy groupings. These corps also played the principal role in routing the operational reserves of the enemy and in pursuing him to a great depth. In these operations, artillery and air support was fully provided for the breakthrough of enemy position defenses.

The encirclement and destruction of an important grouping of German fascist troops in the battle of the Volga were accomplished with equal forces on both sides. This outstanding victory has been duly considered as a superior achievement of military art in world history.

The combat use of mobile troops in operations of the 1942-1943 winter campaign provided many valuable data for improving the organizational structure of tank armies, tank and mechanized corps, and methods of their operational use and control. They also provided valuable experience in supplying artillery and air support for the breakthrough of enemy position defenses, in the combat and operational formation of troops, and the organization of coordinated action in combat or operations. All this was taken into consideration and put to use by the Soviet command in preparing for the summer-and-fall campaign of 1943.

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At the beginning of this campaign, the process of rearming the Soviet Army with new equipment and of improving its organizational form had been completed. By July 1943, three tank armies and nine separate tank and mechanized corps were newly organized. The operating fronts had a total of five newly organized tank armies, each consisting of two or three tank mechanized corps, as well as 24 separate tank and mechanized corps. The organization of tank ob'yedineniya and soyedineniya became more flexible and easily controlled.

The number of personnel in rifle divisions decreased and at the same time the amount of automatic weapons and antitank weapons increased. By this time the administrations of rifle corps had been reinstated. For the purpose of increasing the fire power of combined-arms and tank armies, army artillery in the form of gun artillery, tank destroyer, and mortar regiments was incorporated in the T/O personnel of the armies. Artillery breakthrough corps were also formed.

Both homogeneous and mixed air corps and divisions appeared in the air armies. The aircraft fleet was newly equipped with improved types of fighters, ground attack planes, and bombers.

In general, the necessary conditions had been created by the beginning of the summer-and-fall campaign of 1943 for conducting large-scale operations with decisive goals.

The battle of Kursk was the central, decisive event of this campaign. This battle became a real school of strategic and operational-tactical skill of the Soviet command cadres. The Soviet Supreme Command, which had all the necessary forces and means of offensive at its disposal, chose the most favorable type of military action for that particular situation, i.e., defense, in the course of which it was planned to wear out and drain the enemy assault groupings which were ready for offense, and then, passing to a counterattack and general offensive, to finish them off and thus reach the strategic aims of the campaign.

In the engagements at Kursk, the methods of organization and conduct of defensive and offensive operations and battles were further developed. The defense of fronts and armies had great depth. In addition to the tactical zone of defense which consisted, as a rule, of two strips with an extensive system of trenches, army and frontal strips were prepared; strong reserves were stationed there in advance, which were intended to strike counterattacks against penetrating enemy groupings. The antitank strongpoints and areas formed the backbone of defense. The defense of Kursk was too strong for the enemy. The enemy assault groupings were halted and defeated practically within the boundaries of tactical depth.

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CPYRGHT The offensive operations of fronts and armies were noted for their high skill of organization and conduct of the breakthrough of a strong enemy position defense. This was achieved by a large-scale concentration of artillery and mortars in the breakthrough sectors with a density of 150-200 guns and mortars per kilometer, deployment in depth of combat formations of rifle divisions and corps, and sustained, heavy fire against the defending enemy from the beginning to the end of the breakthrough. To develop a tactical breakthrough into an operational one, the fronts began to use newly organized tank armies for the first time. Their actions in the operational depth were in most cases noted for their high degree of aggressiveness and maneuverability.

All the achievements in the sphere of strategy, operational art, and tactics gained in the battle of Kursk were further developed in the operations of 1944 and 1945. Their characteristic features were an extreme clearness of purpose and high degree of success. This was achieved by a correct choice of the directions of main attacks, concentration of superior forces and equipment in these directions, and the selection of the most effective methods and forms of conducting combat operations.

The principal methods of combat operations of the Soviet Armed Forces during 1944 and 1945 were the encirclement of enemy groupings and the splitting up of the enemy front into isolated sections.

During the offensive operations, Soviet troops demonstrated high skill in forcing wide rivers. Such rivers as the Dnepr, Vistula, Danube, and Oder were forced on the move. The German fascist command was unable, at any of these rivers, to create a unsurmountable defense and to check the rapid advance of our troops.

The conduct of subsequent offensive operations in great depth and without lengthy preparations indicated the high operational maturity of our command cadres and the combat skill of the troops. Such operations were conducted by a number of fronts in the western and southwestern directions during the final stage of the Great Patriotic War.

After defeating Hitler's war machinery in the Great Patriotic War, the Soviet Armed Forces demonstrated to all the world the unquestionable superiority of Soviet military art over the military art of fascist Germany. This superiority was the result of historic advantages of the Soviet social and state system, the might of the Soviet Armed Forces, the perfection of their organization and technical supply and the high morale of Soviet soldiers, who were inspired and guided by the Communist Party to fight against a treacherous, strong enemy.

The extensive and comprehensive combat experience gained by our Armed Forces during the Great Patriotic War, unequalled by any other army in the world, belongs to us in the full sense of the word. A thorough

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Interpretation of those aspects of our experience which have retained their significance in present times is an important task of our theoretical work.

The Development of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Postwar Period

The results of the Soviet victory in the Great Patriotic War are hard to overestimate. As the result of important political events, mainly the formation of a world system of socialist countries and a powerful upsurge of the national liberation movement in different parts of the world, the distribution of forces in the world arena has changed radically in the postwar period in favor of peace and socialism. All the common people in the world have begun to act with greater determination in the struggle for peace. The peoples of the socialist camp, headed by the Soviet Union, are leading the fighters for peace.

The Communist Party and the Soviet government, consistently carrying out the policy of peaceful coexistence of countries with different social systems, have repeatedly made proposals concerning a sharp reduction of the armed forces of the great powers.

Immediately after the war, the Soviet government considerably reduced its armed forces by inactivating large numbers of sovedineniya and chastii of the Army and Navy. Soviet troops were withdrawn from Norway, Finland, Denmark, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Rumania, Iran, China, and Korea, where they had been during the war. Another great reduction in the Armed Forces in 1948 represented the final stage of their transition to peacetime conditions.

However, the ruling circles of the US, Great Britain, and West Germany did not heed the peaceful aspirations of the Soviet Union. Under the false banner of defending the so-called "free world" against the "threat of communism", the US imperialists began to form and strengthen aggressive blocs and to surround socialist countries with military bases. An intensive armament race developed in capitalist countries. Militarist circles of the US and Great Britain placed their trust in nuclear weapons.

Under these conditions our country and other socialist countries were forced to strengthen their military power, so that they would not be unarmed in the face of aggression. While reducing the Army and Navy, the party saw to it that their combat strength would be increased instead of being decreased.

Owing to the concern of the Party and Soviet government, which skillfully guided the efforts of scientists, engineers, and workers, the US monopoly of nuclear weapons was eliminated soon after the war, i.e., in 1947. Soon after that, we were able to create powerful rocket carriers, considerably outstripping the United States in this respect. New types of

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artillery equipment, tanks, motor vehicles, various rifle types, communications equipment, and other combat means, were developed. All branches of the Armed Forces were motorized and mechanized. Troops began to be supplied with rockets.

In addition to the technical re-equipment of troops and their improved organization, much attention was given to a scientific analysis and investigation of the extensive combat experience accumulated during the war years. Regulations, instructions, and guide lines were worked out, which regulated the combat training and daily living and service conditions of the Army and Navy under peacetime conditions. At the same time a number of measures for the training of military technical cadres were taken.

The principle of one-man command was widely developed in the Army and Navy. Combat and political training was subordinated to the requirement that troops must be trained to defeat a strong, technically well equipped enemy.

In this manner, from the end of the war and during a period of 7 to 8 years, our Armed Forces made great progress in the sphere of combat training as well as in their technical development, as compared with the period of the Great Patriotic War. However, at that time the basis of power of the Army and Navy was still represented by conventional weapons and combat equipment, which had been used by us in the past war.

It should be noted that the achievements in the building of the Armed Forces gained during this period could have been even greater, if it had not been for the difficulties resulting from the Stalin personality cult. Only the 20th Congress of the CPSU, which decisively exposed the per personality cult, opened wide vistas in all spheres of Soviet development, including the military sphere.

An analysis of events, presented at the 20th Party Congress, showed that the military threat coming from the imperialist camp has not been removed. Therefore, we must always maintain our Armed Forces on a level which would guarantee the defeat of any aggressor.

The next stage in the development of the Armed Forces began in 1953. At that time a hydrogen bomb test took place in our country, and the mass production of various types of rockets was organized, which were to serve as the principal carriers of nuclear weapons. There was a high-speed development of various types of rocket and nuclear weapons, atomic energy, electronics, automation, and many different technical means of armed combat. This made it possible, in a relatively short period, to supply the Soviet Armed Forces with the most modern combat equipment, including such formidable weapons as intercontinental ballistic rockets with powerful thermonuclear charges.

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in connection with the introduction of atomic and thermonuclear weapons, rocket equipment, and other modern means of combat into all branches of the Armed Forces, a new stage in their development began in 1960.

Strategic Rocket Troops were formed in our Armed Forces. On the strength of their qualities they became the main branch of the Armed Forces. However, while creating and developing the Strategic Rocket Troops, we were aware of the fact that in a modern situation it is impossible to solve all problems of war with only one type of troops. Therefore, we retained the other branches of the Armed Forces at a certain numerical strength and in a reasonable proportion; in particular, we consider it premature to "bury" the infantry, as some people do.

The deep social-economic, political, and cultural changes which took place in our country during the postwar period, resulted in qualitative changes in the personnel of the Armed Forces. The complex modern equipment and the new methods of warfare place higher demands on human beings, and our soldiers, who are educated in the communist spirit and have a wide cultural horizon and a high degree of general education, are prepared to fulfill their military duty honorably.

The technical re-equipment of our army required the solution of another complex problem, i.e. the training of necessary cadres, which would be able to operate the modern equipment. The number of officers with higher education, and particularly of engineers and technicians, was sharply increased in the Army and Navy. From 1953 to 1960, the proportion of officers with higher education was more than doubled; the number of engineering and technical cadres increased by 38 percent, or was more than doubled as compared with the number at the beginning of the war.

The Soviet people, in honoring the heroic team of the Voskhod-2 spaceship, Col BELYAYEV and Lt Col LEONOV, are honoring not only the conquerors of space, but also courageous officers of the Soviet Army. We greet in them the entire valiant corps of officers of our Armed Forces, who reliably defend the achievements of Socialism.

The revolution in military affairs has had a decisive influence on the methods and forms of armed struggle. In the postwar development of the Armed Forces, problems relating to Soviet military science and military doctrine have been of major importance. Our close attention should continue to be given to these problems in the future.

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The Soviet Armed Forces in Their Present Stage of Development

In preparing for the start of a general thermonuclear war, the US and its partners in aggressive blocs continue an unrestrained arms race, create huge reserves of rocket and nuclear weapons, furiously fan the flames of war hysteria, engage in direct military aggression in Indochina, and aggravate the international atmosphere.

As in previous years, the US has again made huge allocations in the present fiscal year for a further increase in the number of rocket units armed with Minuteman rockets and atomic submarines with Polaris missiles. Great Britain occupies the second place in the imperialist camp, following the US, in the scale of its nuclear armament. France is speeding up the building of its own nuclear strike forces. The revanchists of West Germany are becoming more and more insistent in demanding rockets and nuclear weapons. During a number of years, the US has been supplying the Bundeswehr with means of delivering nuclear charges to targets and training West German troops to conduct combat operations under conditions of a rocket-nuclear war.

The Pentagon strategists, who are trying to prevent the disintegration of the principal military grouping of imperialists and a weakening of their own positions in Western Europe, and to achieve a general intensification of NATO's aggressive actions against the Soviet Union and the whole socialist camp, have persistently tried to force the creation of NATO's notorious multilateral nuclear forces.

Under these conditions the Soviet Union has been forced not only to preserve, but to improve its army in every possible way and to maintain it in constant combat readiness. At present the Soviet Armed Forces are successfully performing the tasks prescribed by the 22nd Party Congress and the CPSU Program. Equipped with powerful rocket and nuclear weapons and other modern military equipment, they have grown into a mighty military organization; in cooperation with the fraternal armies of Warsaw Treaty countries, our Armed Forces are capable of reliably defending the honor, freedom, and independence of peoples of all socialist countries against any encroachments by imperialist aggressors.

Owing to the concern of the party and government, our Strategic Rocket Forces have been equipped with the most modern intercontinental and global rockets, which can be kept for a long, practically unlimited time in the highest degree of combat readiness for inflicting shattering thermonuclear strikes against an aggressor; which can be launched from occupies positions in any direction, to an unlimited range, and with a speed many times greater than the speed of sound; which are invulnerable in flight, and highly accurate in hitting the target.

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The PVO Troops are also in constant combat readiness. They are able at any minute to fulfill their main task, i.e., to protect the territory of socialist countries against nuclear attacks and against weapons of enemy air-space attacks. The basis of their combat power is now made up of qualitatively new arms, i.e., air defense rocket troops and fighter aviation, equipped with rocket-carrying fighter-interceptors.

The air defense rocket troops are equipped with the latest types of surface-to-air rocket complexes for various purposes, including long-range pilotless interceptors, which are unequalled in their combat capabilities, particularly their operational capability at low and high altitudes and their accuracy in hitting targets.

Modern supersonic rocket-carrying fighter-interceptors, including those for long-range operation, are capable of destroying cruise missiles and carrier aircraft at any altitude and with any speed of flight.

The combat capabilities of our Ground Troops have also increased greatly. Their fire power and striking power have increased immeasurably. The operational-tactical rocket troops, equipped with nuclear charges, represent the main fire power of the Ground Troops. They can hit any enemy targets at great distances and thereby quickly achieve a turning point in a combat situation.

Our tank troops are now organized into powerful, mobile tank ob"yedineniya, soyedineniya, and chasty, equipped with first-class tanks. They have a high ability to withstand enemy nuclear attacks, high combat readiness, mobility, and striking power, and are capable of quickly penetrating into areas of nuclear blasts and completing the defeat of the enemy.

Our glorious infantry, which distinguished itself on the battlefields during the past war, has become completely motorized. Our motorized rifle troops are now equipped with armored vehicles with high cross-country ability, tanks, and other modern types of weapons, including first-class automatic small arms and powerful antitank weapons.

The PVO Troops of Ground Troops are also equipped with their own surface-to-air guided missile complexes, anti-aircraft artillery, and various types of radiotechnical equipment.

Qualitative changes have taken place in the airborne troops, and their soyedineniya and chasty are now equipped with the most perfected means of combat. The airborne troops have modern, self-propelled, powerful weapons, both long-range and close-range, and highly mobile motor and tractor equipment. Our military transport planes are capable of transporting not only personnel, but also rockets, tanks, guns, motor vehicles, as well as various types of parachute landing equipment, which makes it possible to drop troops together with weapons and combat equipment into the enemy rear area.

to fraternal socialist countries in supplying their armed forces with modern weapons and combat equipment. The socialist countries coordinate their defensive measures, exchange experiences in combat and political training of troops, organize joint exercises of staffs and troops, conduct troop maneuvers, and arrange mutual visits of ships. Many officers of fraternal armed forces are being trained in Soviet military academies and become thoroughly familiar with progressive Soviet military science.

The Soviet Union is a peace-loving country. It tries to live in peace and cooperation with all peoples. The Communist Party and the Soviet government have consistently fought for a relaxation of international tension, for the prevention of a new thermonuclear world war, and for peaceful coexistence and regulation of acute international problems.

However, there are still reactionary forces in the world which are plotting a new world war, hoping to halt the advance of history with the help of arms. These forces, headed by the frantic US imperialists, have recently increased their dangerous provocations. The US imperialists are continuing to plot against heroic Cuba, they are practising open military intervention in the Congo, expanding the undeclared war against the people of South Vietnam, organizing attacks against Laos and Cambodia, and performing acts of direct aggression against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

As indicated in the decree of the March Plenum of the Central Committee CPSU: "At present, particular importance has been acquired by the joint actions of communist parties of all countries, and of all peace-loving and democratic forces, in repulsing the aggression of US imperialists against South Vietnam, in defense of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and in defense of [all] peoples subject to imperialist aggression."

The Soviet Armed Forces are vigilantly watching the intrigues of US reactionaries. The ruling circles of imperialist countries cannot help realizing that if they take the risk of involving mankind in a new thermonuclear war, they will only hasten the complete and final destruction of the capitalist world which has outlived itself.

The Soviet Armed Forces, which are equipped with everything necessary to restrain any aggressor, are a reliable shield of the Soviet Union and of the whole socialist camp. Together with the armed forces of fraternal socialist countries, the Soviet Armed Forces are confidently guarding peace and vigilantly protecting the creative labor of their peoples, who are actively building communism.

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The Communist Party as the Inspirer and Organizer

of Victory in the Great Patriotic War

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by Army Gen A. YEPISHEV

The 20th anniversary of the victory of the Soviet Union in the Great Patriotic War is a festive occasion for the peoples of our country and for all progressive mankind. Millions of Soviet people, for whom the grim and heroic period of the post war is a part of their own lives, celebrate this glorious anniversary with deep emotion. This important date also stirs the emotions of those who were not personal witnesses of or participants in the events of the terrible war years, but whose fates were also decided in the fierce battles against the fascist invaders.

The victory of the Soviet Union in the Great Patriotic War had an enormous effect on the whole course of social development. Few events in history, even those which are remembered from generation to generation, can compare with the past war in its consequences.

The echoes of the great victory are now heard in the mighty advance in the building of communism in our country; its fiery reflection is seen on all the banners of socialism which were raised in postwar years over a number of countries of Europe and Asia, and over revolutionary Cuba -- a country of the American continent.

The battles on the Soviet-German front, which were unprecedented in their scale and fierceness, continued for almost four years. They demanded the greatest concentration of spiritual and material forces of the Soviet people. Our country had to endure particular hardships during the early period of the war, when the Soviet Army was forced to retreat under the pressure of German fascist hordes, leaving behind native cities and villages.

The most severe trials, which would have broken any bourgeois state, did not cause the Soviet people to waver and did not weaken their determination to fight and win. The war, which had from its very first day become a mortal combat between a socialist state and a fascist state -- the product of extreme imperialist reactionaries --, demonstrated the incontestable superiority of the economic, political, and military organization of socialist society and its dominating Marxist-Leninist ideology. The greatest advantages of socialism over capitalism were brilliantly put into effect owing to the daily and wise leadership of the Communist Party, which guided the country, the people, and the Armed Forces.

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Forty-five years ago, in March 1920, V. I. Lenin stressed the decisive importance of party leadership during the years of the Civil War. He stated: "And only owing to the fact that the party was standing guard, that it was strictly disciplined, and that its authority united all departments and government offices; because hundreds, thousands, and finally, millions of people acted in unity in accordance with the slogan given by the Central Committee, and because countless sacrifices were made, -- for these reasons the miracle, which occurred, could take place. Only for these reasons, and despite the repeated campaigns of imperialists of the Entente and imperialists of the whole world, we were in a position to win." (Complete Collection of Works, Vol. 40, page 240).

This conclusion drawn by Lenin may be fully applied to the Great Patriotic War, the most difficult of all wars which our country has ever experienced. Party leadership and the great political, ideological, and organizational work of the party in front and rear areas made it possible to overcome the serious setbacks of the initial period of war, to halt the enemy who had not experienced defeat in the war against bourgeois armies, and then to rout completely the imperialist army of fascist Germany -- one of the strongest armies in the world -- and the armies of its satellites.

During the war years, the party added brilliant, unforgettable pages to its history. Each one of them arouses in all Communists and all Soviet people a feeling of pride in the great achievements of the party and a desire to do everything possible for a successful performance of the grandiose tasks of communist building, included in the CPSU Program. In turning to these pages of party history, we find high standards of determination and ability to orientate correctly in a complex situation, to choose suitable forms and methods of work which meet specific conditions, and to strive for the best possible, effective results. These standards have not lost their validity up to the present time. The experience in mass organization, gained by the party during the war, is a most valuable asset and is helpful even today in solving the most complex and vital problems concerning the further strengthening of the Armed Forces and the defense capability of the Soviet Union as a whole.

At the beginning of the war, the party and the Soviet people were faced with the most difficult tasks of transforming the country into a single fighting camp and of converting all the work to wartime needs. The transition from peace to war is always very complex in the life of every country. It was extremely complicated for the Soviet Union because of a large number of unfavorable conditions of an objective and subjective nature.

CPYRGHT The easy victories of the Hitlerites in Europe gave them an advantageous military-strategic position, and enabled them to deploy almost their whole active, highly mechanized Ground Forces, large forces of the Air Force and the Navy, against our country. Hitler's military command had previously concentrated the troops directed against our country in large groupings, and had thereby gained an important superiority in forces and equipment on the principal strategic directions in the early part of the war. At the beginning of the war against the USSR, the German fascist troops had already gained considerable combat experience and were ready to inflict powerful blows.

Fascist Germany had placed at its service an industrial base which included the production capacities of eleven occupied European countries and considerably exceeded the industrial base of the Soviet Union. This explains, to a large extent, the fact that despite the huge increase in economic capabilities of the USSR, achieved during the prewar Five-Year Plans, the armament of our Army and Navy at the beginning of the war was still lagging behind that of Hitler's troops.

All this could not fail to influence the course of the armed struggle and the situation in which our country found itself, after engaging in single combat with German fascism; the party was required to exert enormous efforts to change the course of events at the Soviet-German front which was extremely unfavorable during the first stage of the war.

Among the reasons for the difficult and extremely dangerous situation facing the Soviet Armed Forces and the country as a whole at the beginning of the war, by far not the least important were the great losses suffered by party, government, and military cadres as a result of unjustified repressions during the time of the personality cult. The serious mistakes and miscalculations permitted by Stalin in evaluating the military and political situation on the eve of the German fascist attack also had a negative effect. However, the personality cult, despite all of its harmful consequences, could certainly not change the nature of the socialist system, or shake the theoretical, political, and organizational foundations of the Communist Party. The party remained the collective, leading, and guiding force of Soviet society. In the war against fascism, during the most difficult period in the life of our country, the greatness of our Leninist party, the powerful, effective strength of its ideas, and the wisdom and insight of its policy became even more evident, and its authority as a leader and organizer of the people increased even more.

In all of its activities, the Communist Party was guided by V. I. Lenin's instruction to the effect that "once it comes to war, everything has to be subordinated to the interests of war, the whole internal

life of the country must be subordinated to war, and not the slightest hesitation in this respect is permissible." (Complete Collection of Works, Volume 41, page 117.)

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As the first condition of mobilizing all forces of the country and the people for repulsing the enemy, it was necessary to achieve a complete break in the consciousness of workers of industry, transport, and agriculture, and of army and navy personnel; it was necessary to reach a point where they would completely renounce their peacetime attitudes and would have a clear idea of the character and scale of military problems facing the country and of the requirements made by war to all Soviet people. With Leninist directness, the party told the people the truth about the terrible danger threatening the country and about the difficulties which had to be faced on the way to victory. An editorial in Pravda, 24 June 1941, stated: "We are not counting on an easy victory. We know that victory over fascism and over the foreign hordes which have invaded our country will be difficult and will demand many sacrifices... The decisive hour has come... Victory depends on us -- our selflessness, our discipline...and our readiness to sacrifice everything for the sake of victory."

In a directive to party and soviet organizations dated 29 June 1941, the Central Committee of the party and the Council of People's Commissars presented an extensive program for the struggle against the German fascist invaders.

Workers and peasants, scientists and cultural workers, and personnel of the Army and Navy of our country responded eagerly to the party's appeal to engage in a selfless struggle against German fascism. Our people will never forget the highly patriotic atmosphere of the meetings which were held in the first days of the war throughout the country. The Soviet people assured the party of their readiness to give all of their strength to the cause of victory.

From its very first day, the great Patriotic War became a war of all the people. The Party must be given credit for this, as it was able to explain to the Soviet people the just character of the war, to define its aims clearly and precisely, to maintain and strengthen the Soviet people's confidence in victory even under the most difficult conditions, and to inspire them to great heroic feats in the name of freedom and independence of their country and the bright future of all mankind.

In carrying out its wartime program and striving to transform the country into a single fighting camp, the Communist Party did an enormous amount of work for the purpose of adapting the structure of party and state organs, and the level of their political and organizational activities, to the new, military conditions and tasks.

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in the country, i.e. the state, military, and economic leadership, in the organ which would be able to unite the efforts of the front and rear areas, and the activities of all government institutions and organizations. The State Committee of Defense, established on 30 June 1941, became such an extraordinary organ.

Somewhat later, city committees for defense were formed in a number of cities near the front, i.e., in Leningrad, Odessa, Sevastopol', Murmansk, Rostov, Kursk, Voronezh, Tula, and several others. These committees included the first secretaries of oblast, city, and rayon party committees, the chairmen of executive committees of soviets of workers' deputies, and other responsible party, soviet, and military workers.

Wartime conditions required the creation of a number of new people's commissariats and administrations. Thus, for the purpose of more efficient supervision of the military economy, the all-union people's commissariats of tank and mortar industry, and the main administrations of military industrial construction and material reserves were formed, and the rights of military commissars were expanded. For the sake of strengthening party influence on the solution of important economic problems, substantial changes were made in the structure of central and local party organs. For the same purpose, the number of Central Committee party organizations at large industrial enterprises, construction sites, and transport enterprises, was increased. In November 1941 the Central Committee of the Party issued a decree concerning the formation of political sections in MIS's and sovkhoses. A number of other equally important measures were carried out in the reorganization of party and state organs. The purpose of this reorganization was to permit the party to include in its range of influence all fields of activity and all spheres of public life connected with the conduct of war.

The Central Committee gave particular attention to the fact that the party apparatus should show a maximum degree of efficiency, initiative, and operational ability, and that it should serve as a model in this respect for the whole state apparatus.

Party organizations served as an example everywhere for the efficient implementation of directives of the Central Committee. They worked with particular intensity in areas near the front in the Ukraine, Belorussia, Moldavia, the Baltic republics, and the western part of the RSFSR, rendering direct assistance to the Soviet Army, and aiding the formation and equipment of new chast and soyedineniya and their rapid advance to the front. Party organizations made it possible for plants and factories to convert to wartime production at high speeds; and they supervised the construction of defense installations, the formation

of assault and partisan detachments, and the evacuation of civilians and material valuables to the rear area. Oblast', city, and rayon committees of the party worked around the clock.

The war gave priority to problems of strengthening the Armed Forces, and educating military personnel in the spirit of courage, daring, heroism and the constant desire to perfect their combat skill and their ability to fight against a strong, experienced enemy. These problems were given major importance in the activities of the party. From the first to the last day of the war, the party gave unremitting attention to increasing its guiding influence on the Armed Forces and to the organization of effective party-political work among the troops, which would both in its form and its content fully meet the requirements for a successful solution of complex military tasks. The party carried out a redistribution of its forces, which was unprecedented in scale, and sent its very best party members to the front. At the same time it effected a number of other measures to further the continuing growth of the party nucleus in the Army and Navy.

The Central Committee sent a large number of the most experienced party cadres into military work, and they took an active part in the leadership of troops. Almost one third of the members of the Central Committee served at the fronts during the Great Patriotic War. In addition to members of the Central Committee, 120 secretaries of central committees of the communist parties of union republics, and of oblast and kray party committees, as well as thousands of other leading party workers, joined the Armed Forces. Many of them were members of military councils, chiefs of political administrations of fronts and fleets, and of political sections of armies and flotillas.

In addition to the transfer of party members to responsible party-political work in the Army and Navy, the party mobilized large masses of communists to serve at the front as political fighters. i.e., rank-and-file Red Army men. They gave reliable support to commanders and political workers, acted as leaders for non-party members, showed a good example of order and discipline, and served as models of endurance, equanimity, daring, and initiative in combat. During the first 6 months of the war, in addition to party members who were drafted into the Armed Forces in the regular call-up, over 100,000 party members and candidates joined as a result of party mobilizations. By the end of 1941, party organizations of the Armed Forces included more than a million communists, i.e., twice as many than before the beginning of the war.

During the years of the war, a total of over 1,600,000 party members and candidates from local and regional party organizations went to the front; this number included about one million men who joined the Army and Navy during the first 6 months of the war.

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The redistribution of party forces played an extremely important role in the early part of the war. Naturally, it could not be carried out with the same intensity, or remain the principal means of strengthening army and navy party organizations, during all the following stages in the struggle against the German fascist invaders. Therefore, during the entire period of the war, the party regarded as its most important task the increase of party membership in the troops by recruiting the best soldiers who had distinguished themselves in the fight against German fascism. Questions concerning admission to party membership were handled in a new manner in the Army and Navy. It became evident at the beginning of the war that the requirement contained in the regulations, according to which recommendations for admission to the party could be given only by party members who had been in the party at least 3 years and had known the applicant for at least one year, was impracticable in wartime situations and represented an artificial obstacle to the growth of party ranks. With this in mind, the Central Committee issued the following decision on 19 August 1941: "Red Army soldiers and commanding personnel of the Red Army, who have distinguished themselves in battle and have served as models of heroism, and who have expressed the wish to join the party, may submit recommendations from three party members of one year's standing who have known the applicants for even less than one year by having worked together. In this case, the applicant must present a combat efficiency report from the political leader of a podrazdeleniye or the commissar of a chast'."

On 9 December 1941, the Central Committee issued a new decree, which made it possible to admit soldiers who had distinguished themselves in combat to party membership after a 3-month period as a party candidate.

This relaxation of the rules concerning admission to party membership was completely justified at a time when the fate of the Soviet state was being decided and when each communist was required to be constantly prepared for self-sacrifice. In passing these decisions, the Central Committee was guided by V. I. Lenin's statement that the party trusts "a party member who comes to us at a difficult time." (Complete Collection of Works, Vol. 39, page 361)

By the end of 1942 party organizations of the Army and Navy had more than 2 million members. Therefore, during the period of only one year the number of party members in the Armed Forces had almost doubled. This made it possible to increase party influence on the masses of military personnel and it was one of the major factors determining the great turning point in the war against fascist Germany.

During the 4 years of the Great Patriotic War, party organizations of the Soviet Army and Navy admitted to their ranks about 4 million party candidates and over 2.5 million party members. The number

of communists with the troops increased more than fivefold, and by July 1945 it had reached almost 3 million. Party and Komsomol members represented about one half of the entire personnel of the Armed Forces by the end of the war.

All communists, no matter whether they were commanders of fronts, members of military councils, or rank-and-file soldiers, showed an equal degree of high responsibility for the fate of their socialist Motherland, and for the victory of the great cause of the Leninist party. They were faithful to their duty and fought the enemy selflessly and with unflinching steadfastness. Together with the communists, Komsomol members fought in the first ranks of defenders of the Motherland. It is characteristic that party members and candidates constituted almost two thirds of all servicemen who were awarded the title Hero of Soviet Union during the war, while almost 50 percent of those who received orders and medals were communists and Komsomol members.

The party demanded that all commanders seek the support of party organizations and make full use of the leading role of communists in solving all combat, training, and educational tasks. At the same time the party required political organs, and party and Komsomol organizations, to increase the scope of their activities, improve their ideological content, and fully subordinate party work and all efforts of communists to the further strengthening of combat capabilities of the troops.

Military councils of fronts and fleets, and of armies and flotillas, played an important role in the life and combat activities of troops. During the entire period of the war, military councils were, and have remained up to the present time, the most authoritative organs through which the party implements its policy in the Armed Forces. Without military councils it would have been impossible to carry out successfully the comprehensive and complex tasks, which faced the Soviet Army and Navy in the Great Patriotic War.

The growth of party influence on the troops, the improvement of party-political work, and the elimination of the break between the activity of political organs and the specific tasks of *chasti* and *podrazdeleniya*, which was beginning to show at one time, was considerably aided by the reorganization, on the initiative of the Central Committee, of sections and administrations for political propaganda, with their limited functions, into political sections and administrations. Political organs received more extensive rights. This increased their authority, revitalized organizational party work, and made it possible to exert direct party influence on all aspects of military life.

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In carrying out these measures which were intended to intensify the activities of political organs, party, and Komsomol organizations in the Armed Forces, and in showing constant concern for the enrichment of party-political work by new and more effective forms and methods, the party gave the utmost attention to the content of such work, insisting that its ideological trend should meet the conditions during each stage of the Great Patriotic War and should correspond to the solution of specific tasks in battles, operations, and engagements.

During the early period of war, when heavy defensive battles were waged at the front, the whole content of party-political work was determined by the party appeals: "Fight to the end!" and "Not one step backward!" During the second and third periods of the war, when our Armed Forces were engaged in driving the enemy from the Soviet land and rendering aid to the peoples of Europe in their struggle against the fascist yoke, party-political work was aimed at strengthening the spirit of offensive among Soviet soldiers and at achieving a speedy defeat of the enemy. Each day of the Great Patriotic War confirmed the words of V. I. Lenin, who said that "wherever political work among the troops is conducted with the greatest care, there will be no lack of discipline, there will be better order and morale, and more victories." (Complete Collection of Works, Vol. 39, page 56.)

Party-political work in the Armed Forces, which rallied the ranks of military personnel around the Communist Party and the Soviet government, developing in the soldiers a sense of selfless devotion to their socialist Motherland and strengthening their readiness to fulfill their patriotic and international duty, became during the war one of the most important sources of the moral and political superiority of the Soviet Army and Navy over the troops of Hitler's Germany and its allies.

Many books have been written and will continue to be written about the exceptional determination and inflexible courage of Soviet soldiers, educated by the Communist Party. It is quite impossible in a journal article even to list the names of well-known heroes in the struggle for freedom and independence of our country. We want to point out only the fact that the heroism of Soviet soldiers was truly on a mass scale and many glorious names still remain unknown. The title Hero of Soviet Union was awarded to 11,525 servicemen for outstanding combat feats. More than 7 million soldiers, sailors, sergeants, officers, generals, and admirals were decorated with orders and medals of the USSR for distinguished combat services.

In giving particular attention to the increase of spiritual [moral] strength in the Army and Navy, and the achievement of moral and political superiority of Soviet troops over the troops of fascist Germany,

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the Communist Party was guided by the statements of V. I. Lenin to the effect that even people who are most loyal to the cause of the revolution will be quickly destroyed by the enemy if they are not adequately armed and supplied with food, and not trained.

Our party consistently implemented the Leninist principles of building the Army and Navy, which are the foundation of the vital activity of the Soviet military organization; the party furthered the development of military theory in every way possible and persistently introduced the latest achievements of military art into combat practice.

Under the most difficult wartime conditions, the party trained remarkable Soviet command cadres, thereby replacing the losses inflicted on the Armed Forces by the unjust repressions of 1937 and the following prewar years. Reared and promoted by the party, the military leaders had all the necessary qualities to lead the troops successfully in the war which was being waged with the most definite political goals, and which was noted for its unprecedented scope of armed combat. Commanders at all levels demonstrated high party qualities and excellent organizational abilities in the course of the war.

The victory of the Soviet Army and Navy in the Great Patriotic War was achieved by the selfless efforts of all Soviet people. The Armed Forces received great help from the partisan movement in routing the German fascist invaders. As a result of the organizing and guiding activity of the Communist Party, the partisan movement developed on a wide scale in all of the areas under temporary occupation. The leadership of the partisan movement was in the hands of a special commission attached to the Central Committee of the party.

The armed struggle conducted in the rear of the enemy by tens and hundreds of thousands of partisans, in the Ukraine, Belorussia, Moldavia, the Baltic republics, and the western regions of the RSFSR, was a logical result of the moral and political unity of Soviet society. Its traditions are rooted in the history of our people, who were never reconciled to the presence of foreign conquerors in their country. The Communist Party gave the partisan movement its organizational forms and ensured its high effectiveness.

The victorious outcome of the war was decisively influenced by the fact that the Soviet people, led by the Communist Party, created a well organized and speedily growing military economy despite all wartime difficulties, and steadily supplied the Armed Forces with everything necessary for combating the enemy, while at the same time providing an adequate supply of goods and food for the civilian population.

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The Communist Party contributed in every way possible to the increase of activity and initiative of the workers; a socialist competition for assistance to the front became widespread throughout the country; and various patriotic projects of workers were undertaken. Leading workers increased their established output norms fivefold, tenfold, or twentyfold. The flow of arms and ammunition to the front increased with every day, with every week, and with every month. As early as 1942, the Soviet Union had surpassed fascist Germany in the output of basic types of arms and combat equipment.

Owing to the titanic efforts of the Communist Party, the Soviet military economy reached an extremely high level of development in the course of the war and successfully endured the "single combat" against the military economy of German fascism. Public ownership of means of production, and a planned use of material resources for the most complete satisfaction of urgent wartime needs, were the sources of inexhaustible economic capabilities of the Soviet Union in its war against Hitler's fascism.

The war years were a period of constant growth of the Communist Party's guiding activities. It was party leadership that indicated the shortest way during the war to an effective use of the advantages of a socialist economy, of the Soviet political system, and of our military organization -- which was a new type of organization. In this connection one should not fail to stress the great importance of the foreign policy of our Leninist party in the victorious conclusion of the war.

The foreign policy of the Soviet Union, which was skillfully guided by the Communist Party, foiled the attempts of the imperialists to create a single anti-Soviet front and to solve their conflicts at the expense of the USSR. The party's outstanding achievement was the formation of an anti-Hitler coalition, consisting of the Soviet Union, England, the US, and other countries fighting against fascist aggression.

The establishment of allied relations between the USSR and capitalist countries in the West represented a most important turning point in international relations during the period of World War II. This turning point occurred not only as a result of objective circumstances, but was prepared by the foreign policy activities of the Soviet Union. It became possible because the Communist Party constantly followed V. I. Lenin's precepts to the effect that a strong enemy may be defeated "only with the greatest concentration of effort and with the mandatory, painstaking, careful, and skillful use of...any, even the slightest, opportunity to acquire a powerful ally, even though he may be temporary, unsteady, unstable, unreliable, and conditional." (Complete Collection of Works, Vol. 41, page 55.)

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In studying history, one may find many facts which prove that in a number of cases the Western powers, pursuing their imperialistic aims, did not hesitate to commit direct violations of their allied duty during the war years. However, it remains an indisputable fact that even under such conditions the anti-Hitler coalition was sufficiently strong and, in the final analysis, brought the war against the fascist bloc to a victorious end, while at the same time the Soviet Union was making the decisive contribution to the defeat of the fascist aggressors.

The wartime experience once again provided convincing evidence that cooperation between countries belonging to opposite social systems is possible and expedient. The Communist Party showed the utmost flexibility and insight in its foreign policy and provided the Soviet people and their Armed Forces with increasing international support in their heroic struggle against fascism.

The Leninist internal and foreign policy of the Communist Party, its correct leadership in the military, economic, and other spheres of life of the Soviet Union, and its inspired ideological education work, which aroused the Soviet people to legendary exploits in rear areas and at the front, had a decisive effect on the victory of the Soviet Union over Hitler's Germany and its allies. This conclusion has been confirmed by all the experience and the whole history of the Great Patriotic War.

The war clearly demonstrated the invincible strength of the Marxist-Leninism and the revolutionary energy of the party became the powerful force in the struggle against German fascism which led the Soviet people to the great military victory. These ideas, which were dear to the heart and easily understandable to the people and the soldiers of the Armed Forces, inspired them with a strong faith in the invincibility of the Soviet socialist system, and resulted in high political consciousness and convictions of our people and our army and navy personnel.

The turbulent war years strengthened the Communist Party and it became more closely linked with the people and the great masses of soldiers. It is significant that about 9 million leading Soviet people joined the party as candidates or members during the war. This was more than twice the number of party members and candidates in June 1941. Despite great losses among communists at the front, the party membership had considerably increased by the end of the war and the party had grown stronger in every respect. The Soviet people and their Armed Forces have always recognized and continue to recognize in the Communist Party their wise, experienced leader and guide.

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At present the great party of Communists, the leading force of Soviet society, directs the tireless energy of our heroic and victorious people toward peaceful constructive labor and toward the solution of universal, historical tasks in the large-scale building of communism. The workers of our country and the personnel of the Soviet Army and Navy warmly support the general Leninist policy of the CPSU, which was worked out at the 20th, 21st, and 22d party congresses and included in the CPSU Program. This was clearly shown by the nationwide approval of decisions of Central Committee plenums, which took place in October and November 1964 and in March 1965.

The principal aim of foreign policy activities of the Communist Party is to assure peaceful conditions for the building of a communist society in the USSR and the development of a worldwide system of socialism, and together with all peace-loving peoples to save mankind from a new destructive war. While consistently defending the Leninist principle of peaceful coexistence, the Communist Party persistently calls for a termination of the cold war which has been poisoning the international atmosphere for the past two decades. The party has declared the unflinching readiness of the Soviet Union to return, in its relations with the US, England, and France, to the situation existing during the war against the fascist bloc, i.e., to resume an effective cooperation, which is to be subordinated to the interests of worldwide peace. The party believes that since fruitful cooperation between countries belonging to different social systems was possible and feasible during the war, it can and should be accomplished under peacetime conditions, particularly now, when the question of war and peace has acquired acute importance and has become a matter of life or death for hundreds of millions of people.

In showing sincere concern for the strengthening of peace, the Communist Party and the Soviet government have worked out a large number of specific, effective measures aimed at a relaxation of the present international tensions. The Soviet proposals, submitted for consideration to the United Nations, provide for a reduction of military budgets of great powers, a withdrawal of all foreign troops to their own national territories and the abolishment of foreign military bases on foreign territories, prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, prevention of its further spreading, creation of nuclear-free zones in various parts of the world, and cessation of all types of nuclear testing.

However, the peaceful policy of the Communist Party and the Soviet government has met with stubborn resistance on the part of the more reactionary circles of imperialist powers. They have not ceased the armament race, which was begun almost the next day after the end of World War II. According to official data published by NATO, military expenditures of NATO countries during 1964 increased sharply

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and have reached almost 76 billion dollars. Over 54 billion dollars of this amount is spent by the US. During a one-month period, countries of the NATO bloc now spend an amount on armament which would be sufficient to cover all expenses for irrigating the Sahara desert.

US imperialists and their partners in aggressive, military-political blocs have deliberately aggravated tensions in regard to matters of mutual interest of the two systems, and have engaged in constant provocations which may at any moment thrust mankind into a new and even more destructive, nuclear, world war.

The 20th anniversary of the defeat of fascist Germany is an extremely appropriate occasion to remind people of the threat to world-wide peace caused by the reckless policy of Western powers, mainly the US, aimed at restoring German militarism and encouraging revanchist aspirations of West Germany. Ignoring the lessons of history and neglecting the interests of their own security, the Western powers are now once more placing arms in the hands of those who, during the lifetime of one generation, kindled the devastating fires of two world wars. With the support of the US, England, and France, West Germany has created one of the strongest armed forces in Western Europe. The aims of West German revanchists correspond entirely with the plan of creating NATO multilateral nuclear forces, both the US and the British versions of the plan giving the Bonn militarists access to nuclear weapons.

The military preparations of imperialists, who still hope to establish with the force of arms the complete domination of the capitalist system on our planet, and to hinder the further development of the workers' liberation struggle, present the greatest threat to the security of nations and the future of all mankind.

In view of the present correlation of forces in the world, the imperialists have no chance whatsoever to carry out their wild schemes. Moreover, as compared with the recent past, there is now a real possibility to prevent a new world war. However, while indicating this possibility, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union warns all peace-loving peoples against any, even the slightest signs of complacency and unconcern in the face of the military danger created by the aggressors. The party cautions that aside from the current real possibility of preventing a war, there is a no less real military danger, which is more threatening than in the past because of the appearance of nuclear weapons. This does not signify, of course, that any possibility of a war with the use of conventional weapons has already been eliminated; however, the main factor which the imperialists are counting on is a surprise nuclear attack.

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In view of a real threat of a nuclear attack, counteraction to the aggressive plans of imperialists is a matter of supreme importance, and the role of the Soviet Armed Forces, which are prepared to rout any aggressor, no matter what weapons he may use or what forms of using such weapons may be available to him, is truly invaluable.

The Party Program, and the documents of the 20th, 21st, and 22d party congresses, contain basic directions concerning the ways of further strengthening the Armed Forces and the defense capability of our country, and fully take into consideration the experience of the Great Patriotic War and the entire history of Soviet military development, the characteristics of the existing international situation and of the present period in the development of the Soviet state, and the latest achievements of military theory and practice. The Communist Party, the inspirational force and organizer of our victory in the Great Patriotic War, is directing all work in the field of Soviet military development, considering it a most important element in the overall party and state activity in the present stage of the struggle for communism.

The carrying out of the tasks set forth by the Party Program for the creation of the material and technical base of communism is of primary importance for raising the defense capability of our country. The plans for the building of communism are peaceful and creative plans. Along with the development of science, each new step in technical progress and further rise in industrial production strengthens the material and technical base of the defensive power of our state. The Communist Party and the Soviet government are greatly concerned that every possibility opened up by the development of science be utilized for the improvement of the supply of technical equipment to all branches of the armed forces.

With the aim of assuring constant military superiority of the Soviet Union over a potential enemy, there will be in the future, naturally, ever new tasks set forth for the development and introduction into the armed forces of the most effective means of armed conflict which the revolution in military affairs gives rise to.

The creation of all the necessary conditions for the most complete utilization of the capabilities of the socialist economy and for the constant technical improvement of the Armed Forces is one aspect of the party leadership of the vitally important strengthening of the defense of the country. Another aspect of the Party's directing activity in the field of military development is constant concern for the development and strengthening of the Soviet Armed Forces as a military organization of the new type, with its characteristic traits caused by the social-political nature of the Soviet state and our country's entry into the stage of advanced building of communism.

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The unity of the army and the people, constituting the most valuable possession and the most important characteristic of the Soviet military organization, was manifested with special force during the Great Patriotic War. In the process of further development of socialist statehood and the total combination of socialist social relations, this unity has been made still more firm. The party is bringing up communists and the whole Soviet people in the spirit of constant readiness for the defense of the fatherland, of love for our army of the whole people. It demands of all social and state organizations persistent work in the military-patriotic indoctrination of the workers.

The party is developing the Soviet people's love for their army, respect for its glorious combat traditions, faith in the power of its armament, and desire to fulfill in an exemplary way the military duty to the Fatherland. Only in this way is it possible successfully to carry out the tasks of preparing the Armed Forces and the country as a whole for the victorious conduct of modern war.

The Great Patriotic War completely revealed the characteristic trait of our Armed Forces of devotion to the ideals of socialist internationalism. The Communist Party, in all its activity in guiding military development, takes into account the necessity of fulfilling the international obligations of the USSR. In the Program of the CPSU it is stated that the Soviet Union considers it its duty to be concerned not only with its own security, but also, along with the other countries of socialism, with dependable defense of the whole socialist camp. The efforts of the party are directed to war strengthening in every way the military cooperation of the socialist countries and the operational collaboration of their armies. The recent meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the states of the Warsaw Pact once more convincingly showed that the countries of socialism are firmly united and ready to meet any aggression with shattering resistance. The Consultative Meeting of Representatives of Communist and Workers' Parties, which took place in March, 1965, was of great importance for the further strengthening of the unity and solidarity of the forces of socialism.

Our Armed Forces, as the bulwark of the security of their Fatherland and of the socialist countries, is a mighty factor for the preservation of peace in the whole world.

One of the principal sources of strength of the Soviet Army and Navy lies in the fact that their development is carried out by the party on a strictly scientific basis, on the basis of Marxist-Leninist theory.

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and of the extensive qualitative changes in developments in military affairs is the foundation of Soviet military doctrine, which in its present form makes it possible successfully to solve many problems of the further improvement of the Armed Forces.

The Communist Party constantly reminds us that failure to attach sufficient importance to the prompt and thorough working out of urgent theoretical problems cannot be allowed in any field of state activity, especially not in military affairs, where even what may seem at first glance a slight mistake may do irreparable damage. In organizing the training of military cadres, the party considers it essential that the command personnel have a firm mastery of Marxist-Leninist theory and military science, have deep military-technical knowledge, and meet all the demands of modern military theory and practice. The party program emphasizes this as one of the main conditions for the further strengthening of the Army and Navy.

At the present time all of us are guided in our daily activity by the resolutions of the 22nd Congress, of October, 1964, and the following Plenums of the Central Committee of the CPSU. The Central Committee, as is known, has decisively condemned manifestations of subjectivism and laissez faire in the building of communism, and has pointed out the inadmissibility of premature conclusions and hasty decisions and actions, divorced from reality; of boasting and idle talk; of devotion to administrative procedures, and ignoring what has already been worked out by science and practical experience. All this is especially important, too, for our military development. Successful accomplishment of the difficult and responsible tasks which face the Armed Forces is possible only on the basis of a genuinely scientific approach to each of the problems, raised by actual experience in the practice of troop leadership.

The scientific and technical revolution has brought about a comprehensive change in military science, depending on the data of many sciences and using the methods of Marxist dialectics, is called upon to make scientifically based recommendations and to bring to a clear focus the basic problems of modern war and the development of the armed forces. In this connection, the free exchange of opinions on actual problems of military science is very important; in this, not only should the various points of view be expressed, but there should be drawn definite, concrete conclusions, leaving no possibility of disorientating our military cadres in the fundamental problems of Soviet military development. In other words, the creative working out of modern military theory should actively promote the practical solution of the problems we face.

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The systematic growth of the directing and organizing influence of the party on all aspects of the life of Soviet society is fully demonstrated in the development of the Armed Forces. One of the most characteristic traits of the present stage of Soviet military development is the steady rise in the importance of party-political work, the growth of the party element in the troops, and the strengthening of the vanguard role of Communists and Komsomols in the military units.

Mobilizing the personnel for exemplary fulfillment of the soldier's duty, the military councils, commanders, political organs, and party and Komsomol organizations are arming the soldiers with a Marxist-Leninist world outlook and are bringing them up in the spirit of Soviet patriotism and socialist internationalism, in the glorious traditions of the Communist party and of the working class, and are cultivating in the Armed Forces of the Soviet state a spirit of irreconcilability to all manifestations of bourgeois ideology and to all deviations from the standards of communist morality and ethics. All the powers and resources of party-political work are directed toward developing in each Soviet soldier the qualities of an active builder of communist society, a steadfast defender of the Fatherland, capable of successfully carrying out his military duty in the most difficult conditions and of withstanding all the trials of modern war, however severe they may be.

An important indication of the growth of the influence of the party is the strengthening of the party nucleus in the Armed Forces. Communists are members of the organization of revolutionary activity. It is they who set an example of communist attitude toward their military duties, who step forward as the pioneers of the new, who support and spread advanced experience in the training and indoctrination of troops, who serve a model of meeting the demands of discipline, of serious attitude to mastering combat equipment, and who bring the spirit of party loyalty, creativity, innovation, and revolutionary zeal into all our work.

During the past seven years, i.e., since the October (1957) Plenum of the Central Committee CPSU, the party element among the privates has increased by 10%, and among the non-commissioned officers, by two and a half times. Now almost 90% of the officers, generals and admirals are Communists or Komsomols. Ninety-eight percent of the companies, batteries and comparable units now have party organizations and party groups.

These figures speak for themselves. We are justly proud of the successes achieved in equipping the troops with modern combat equipment, and of the fact that our armament, in its decisive forms, is superior to that of the probable enemy. But also important is the fact that this armament, created by the labor and genius of the Soviet

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people, is in the hands of communists, whose distinguishing trait has always been and still remains self-sacrificing service of the Fatherland, fearlessness in battle, devotion to the great cause of communism, and ability to lead the whole mass of people in the military service, to rally them around the Party, the Leninist Central Committee, and the Soviet government.

The leadership of the Armed Forces by the Communist Party and the strengthening of the role and influence of the party organizations among the troops is the main foundation of Soviet military development, the chief source of the might of the Soviet Army and Navy, and a decisive factor in the invincible defense capability of our country.

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SOVIET GROUND TROOPS IN THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

CPYRGHT

by Army Gen P. KUROCHKIN

World War II lasted six years. During that time four years of unabated attention of all mankind was riveted to the main and deciding event -- the heroic struggle of the Soviet Army. The fate of fascist Germany, whose defeat greatly accelerated the end of the entire World War II, was really decided on the field of the Great Patriotic War. There are indisputable facts attesting to this.

The greatest number of armed forces was deployed on the Soviet-German front by the contending powers. Interesting in this regard may be a comparison with World War I. Whereas at the beginning of 1917 the countries of the Entente and the German-Austrian Bloc had 756 divisions in their armed forces, at the beginning of 1944 in active armies of both sides on the Soviet-German front alone there were 774 divisions (estimated) - more than 1.1 million personnel. Throughout the entire war this was the most active front and the greatest in length. Combat operations were carried out uninterruptedly on a front extending 4000 to 6000 km and to a depth of 2000-3000 km.

During the first three years of the Great Patriotic War the Soviet nation, in essence, fought face to face with fascist Germany. During this time on the Soviet-German front were located from 63 to 87 percent of the most combat capable personnel of Hitler's troops, from 63 to 76 percent mortars, 54-67 percent of tanks and assault guns, and 41-60 percent of combat aviation. Active on other fronts were 0.8 to 6 percent of the divisions of the fascist army, and the remainder of its forces located in occupied countries and in Germany itself, were, in reality, reserves for use primarily in the struggle against the Soviet Army. Even after the opening of the second front in Europe a large part of the armed forces and combat material of fascist Germany continued to be used on the Soviet-German front. Additionally, a considerable number of the forces of fascist Germany's allies carried out combat operations on this front. It is known that before World War II many leading military ideologists of imperialistic circles, reflecting the fear of the bourgeoisie before the people, disclaimed the role of the national masses in modern warfare, promoted a diverse kind of theory of destruction of the enemy by a small professional army, attempted to oppose technology to man, proclaimed the decisive role in warfare of technical means of fighting, giving preference to its various forms.

The war convincingly showed the groundlessness of all these theories. It not only required the creation of multi-million-men armies, in which the decisive role would be played by men skillfully managing combatant technology, but confirmed the fundamental position of Soviet military science,

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 which found striking confirmation in the Great Patriotic War, that victory in contemporary warfare is achieved by the united forces of all branches and arms of the armed forces.

At the same time in this war, since the decisive combat operations were unfolded in the land theater, the leading role belonged to the ground troops. The ground troops were the main force, with the help of which the contending sides attempted to attain the main objectives of the war.

Continental strategy was the basis of the German-Fascist military doctrine. In April 1940, the former chief of the general staff of the German land forces General Beck wrote: "For Germany the outcome of the armed struggle is being decided on land. To win in a land war or to hold out in such a war depends in the first place on the land army." (L. Beck. Studies. Stuttgart, 1955, p 137) The composition of the German Armed Forces during the period of preparation and conduct of the war against the Soviet Union corresponded to just such a point of view. The main position in the German Armed Forces was occupied by the ground troops and by aviation intended for combat in continental theaters. The Navy was given considerably less attention. Of all the capitalist countries German had the most powerful ground troops and aviation.

Ratio of Various Branches in Armed Forces of Fascist Germany in World War II (in percent)

Branch of Armed Forces	Time Period							
	Up to June 1941	To the End of 1941	On 1 May 1942	On 1 Nov 1942	On 1 Jul 1943	On 1 Jan 1944	On 1 Jun 1944	On 1 Jan 1945
Ground Troops	6,552 71.2	6,556 69.1	7,247 71.0	7,459 70.8	7,357 71.4	7,090 69.7	6,900 67.6	5,513 73.7
Air Force and Air Defense	1,735 18.8	1,914 20.2	1,924 18.9	2,011 19.1	2,011 19.6	1,919 18.9	2,000 19.6	1,453 19.5
Navy	574 6.2	622 6.5	629 6.1	650 6.1	650 6.3	726 7.1	800 7.9	510 6.8
SS Troops	352 3.8	398 4.2	404 4.0	420 4.0	282 2.7	436 4.3	500 4.9	
Totals	9,213 100	9,500 100	10,204 100	10,540 100	10,300 100	10,169 100	10,200 100	7,476 100

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It can be seen from the table, that during the course of the entire war the basic mass of Germany's armed forces consisted of ground troops. They contained more than 70 percent of the personnel. A significant position was occupied by the Air Forces, also operating primarily in the interest of the ground troops and containing approximately 20 percent of all personnel. The Navy had approximately seven percent of the personnel. It is characteristic, that the German-fascist military leadership attempted to maintain the ratio of the various armed forces at one level throughout the entire war.

The German-fascist army was quite well provided with technical equipment. Although the infantry continued to remain the main arm of the ground troops, a considerable portion of the ground troops consisted of artillery, and armored troops. Thus, on 1 June 1944, the composition of the ground troops of Fascist Germany was as follows: infantry - 39.6 percent, artillery - 23.7 percent, tank troops - 13.4 percent, engineer troops - 5 percent, signal troops - 2.1 percent, miscellaneous and rear area troops - 16.2 percent.

The tremendous armed forces of the enemy, and primarily their principal component -- the ground troops, were pulverized in the battles on the eastern front. In just the summer campaign of 1941, in ground troops alone, the German-Fascist army lost 742,000 men, whereas in the war against Poland, France, England, Norway, Belgium, Denmark, Holland and in the Balkans the Hitlerites lost 418,805 men. In all, on the Soviet-German front there were completely destroyed, captured, forced to surrender and disbanded as the result of losses 507 out of the 587 German-Fascist divisions against which the Soviet ground troops fought at different times and which were repeatedly re-established by Hitler's command in the course of the war. Out of the total amount of personnel losses of the German-Fascist army, equal to approximately 13.6 million men, more than 10 million men, or 73 percent occurred on the Soviet-German front.

The problem of the strategic utilization of types of armed forces was successfully solved in the Great Patriotic War. Proceeding from the basic position that victory in war can be achieved only by the combined efforts of all branches of the armed forces, Soviet military strategy provided for the harmonic development and the logical utilization of the strongest side of each of them. At the same time the experience of war showed, that the roles and importance of the various branches of armed forces and their proportionate influence were unequal.

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Ratio of Branches in Soviet Armed Forces in World War II (in percent)

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Branch of Armed Forces	Time Period							
	On 22 Jun 1941	On 1 Dec 1941	On 1 May 1942	On 1 Nov 1942	On 1 Jul 1943	On 1 Jan 1944	On 1 Jun 1944	On 1 Jan 1945
Ground Troops	80.7	81.4	87.2	86.6	87.0	86.0	84.5	83.4
Air Force	8.7	8.1	3.8	6.2	5.7	5.5	6.2	7.1
Navy	7.3	6.2	5.1	4.2	3.8	4.4	4.5	4.8
PVO Strany Troops	3.3	4.3	3.9	3.0	3.5	4.1	4.8	4.7
Totals	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

From the table it can be seen, that during the course of the war the Soviet Armed Forces consisted primarily of ground troops, which contained, on the average, up to 85 percent of all personnel. The supporting Air Force and Navy contained approximately 6 percent and 5 percent of the personnel respectively.

The outcome of the Great Patriotic War was decided on the land fronts by the ground troops. Their combat operations were actively supported by front lines, and sometimes also by long-range bombardment aviation and the navy. That the ground troops bore the greatest burden of the war compared with the other armed forces is borne out by the fact that they suffered the largest loss of officer personnel.

In the years of the Great Patriotic War the ground troops developed according to the economic capabilities of the country, and also according to the demands and conditions of armed combat. In their ranks were rifle troops, armored and mechanized troops, airborne troops, artillery, cavalry, and also special troops: signal, engineer, anti-chemical defense, road building and others. The main trend in the development of ground troops was the increase in their striking and fire power, in their maneuverability and mobility. Not all combat arms developed equally and uniformly.

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The basic mass of ground troops consisted of rifle troops. Others with a large proportionate ratio were the artillery, the armored and the engineer troops all operating primarily in support of rifle troops both on the attack and the defense. At the beginning of the war more than 50 percent of ground troops were rifle troops. The significant losses in the Soviet Army at the beginning of the war, especially in tanks and artillery, the necessity for creating strategic reserves, the increase in the length of the front required the formation of more rifle sovedineniya. In connection with this their numbers continuously increased. As early as 1 November 1942, they contained about 65 percent, and by the end of the war - approximately 70 percent of the entire quantity of combat troops in the ground forces. During the war the numerical strength of rifle troops increased three times.

During the war the rifle troops demonstrated high combat qualities and the capability to operate in any terrain, during any season of the year or any time of the day; also, the capability to accomplish the most complex combat missions in cooperation with tanks, artillery and aviation. The main burden of combat during a break through, an attack in difficult terrain, the seizure of important occupied objectives, fell to the infantry, and it suffered the greatest losses in combat. Sufficient to say, that more than half of the losses in command personnel in the ground troops occurred in the rifle troops. In its morale and its ability to wage combat operations under the most complex conditions, the Soviet rifle troops far surpassed the German-fascist infantry. Together with this, during the course of the war the inadequacy of the striking force and mobility of rifle sovedineniya, lacking tanks and the necessary quantity of transport equipment, became increasingly evident. The infantry gradually gave way to the more powerful and maneuverable motorized and tank troops.

Armored and mechanized troops, having greater fire power, high maneuverability, good armored defense, were the main striking force of the ground troops. In the pre-war years Soviet strategy, in the main, correctly evaluated the role of tanks in a future war and directed great attention to them. At the beginning of the war approximately 25 percent of the personnel of all ground troops were armored troops and they were numerically second to the rifle troops.

However, the armored troops were not at once able to accomplish those missions, which were supposed to be assigned to them. As a result of unfavorable conditions arising at the beginning period of the war, they suffered great losses. Large sovedineniya of armored troops, formed on the eve of the war, as a result of significant losses suffered in border engagements, were disbanded. Separate tank brigades and regiments were formed and for a long time carried out primarily missions of supporting and escorting infantry.

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It was only from the spring of 1942, when industry increased the output of tanks, that the capability again presented itself for the formation of large tank soyedineniya -- tank and mechanized corps, and subsequently of "yedineniya -- at first of mixed composition, and afterwards of homogeneous tank armies, which were used as mobile groups of armies and fronts. The presence of tank armies and corps made it possible, in cooperation with combined-arms armies and aviation, to carry out large operational missions. Simultaneously there was an increase in the quantity of tank soyedineniya designated for the support of rifle troops on the battlefield. From that time on there was a continuous increase in the proportion of armored troops. On 1 November 1942, seven percent of the ground force personnel were in the armored troops. Later on in the armored troops there was an increase in the number of tanks, and afterwards in self-propelled artillery gun carriages. There was also an improvement in their quality, in their organizational structure and in the art of their utilization.

Thanks to the mass application of armored troops it became possible to break through the enemy's defense on the main axis of advance in shorter periods of time, to develop a swift offensive, to crush or encircle and annihilate large groups. On the whole the application of armored troops exerted a decisive influence on the change in the methods and forms of carrying out combat operations by ground troops. Operations assumed a maneuverable character, were conducted to great depth and at high tempos. In face to face combat with enemy tank groupings the Soviet armored troops were ultimately victorious.

A large proportion of ground troops consisted of artillery. On the battlefields of the Great Patriotic War the artillery provided the main assault fire power of the ground troops. Of all the ground arms it had the greatest power and range of fire. The artillery also had the capability of maneuvering on the field of battle. These characteristics in many respects defined its role and significance during the course of the war. In the ground troops the artillery provided the principal means of fire neutralization on the offense and defense. The assumption, that in connection with the increased significance of tanks and aviation the role of artillery would be decreased, was not confirmed throughout the war. The necessity of neutralization of a strong defense, of fighting against tanks and aviation led naturally to a growth in the quantity and to an improvement in the quality of artillery.

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The basic trend of the development of the ground troops was an overall increase of troop artillery; was the creation of a large number of powerful soyedineniya of the Reserve of the Supreme Headquarters (RGK), designed for swift maneuver with the objective of reinforcing troops along the most important and responsible axes. Although at the beginning of the war the RGK artillery was small and included only five percent of the guns and mortars of the total quantity in the armed forces, at the end of the war it had approximately 50 percent. In November 1942 the proportion of RGK artillery in the ground troops reached 10 percent.

Rocket-launching artillery, a very promising type of weapon, developed very rapidly in the years of the war. From separate batteries, used at the beginning of the war, it increased to entire guards divisions, with a single-volley capability of up to 3,500 shells. With the application of rocket-artillery the fire power of ground troops sharply increased.

One other important mission carried out by artillery should be mentioned, -- that was the fight against tanks. The use by the enemy of large masses of tanks required the creation of a large quantity of artillery anti-tank brigades and regiments. In connection with this during the years of the war the quantity of anti-tank artillery increased almost five times. It also maintained its importance as the main methods of fighting against tanks throughout the entire war.

Characteristic in the use of artillery during the war was its decisive massing along the main axis, the development of high densities totaling by the end of the war 250-300 guns and mortars on each kilometer of front of breakthrough, a sharp increase in the density of fire, the simultaneous fire neutralization of the enemy's defense to a comparatively great depth, wide maneuver on the battlefield, and successful combat against enemy tanks.

In numerous operations of the Great Patriotic War, Soviet artillery showed its complete superiority over the artillery of Fascist Germany both in the quality of its guns, mortars and combat vehicles, and in the art of massing and controlling artillery fire. By the completion of the war it had a smooth organization and tremendous combat experience, which has not lost its significance even up to the present time.

During the war the cavalry was also used. Before the war in connection with the extensive motorization and mechanization of the army, Soviet theory, on the whole, correctly determined that cavalry would not be able to play the same role as it had played in previous wars. Therefore, a large part of the cavalry soyedineniya was disbanded, and their personnel were used to fill the ranks of the mechanized corps. At the beginning of the war in the ground troops there remained only 13 cavalry divisions. However, in connection with the great loss of tanks in the early period of the war the question of the creation of maneuverable mobile soyedineniya of the basis of the horse cavalry was again raised. At the beginning of

1942. 94 light cavalry divisions were destroyed. In the process showed, their use did not achieve the desired results. The cavalry suffered great losses from the heavy artillery fire and air attacks; it could not fight against tanks; and its striking power was insignificant. Therefore, by November 1942 there remained only 28 divisions. They were reorganized into cavalry corps, which independently or together with mounted-mechanized groups, were used for the development of the success of frontal operations. Attacking in close cooperation with tanks and under air cover, usually over very difficult terrain (in wooded-marshy, mountain-forest or desert), the cavalry successfully accomplished its mission. Nevertheless, the war confirmed that the horse cavalry as a combat force was a thing of the past.

Engineer troops and signal troops developed greatly during the war. The continuous growth in the sweep of combat operations, the use on the fields of battle of large quantities of ob'yedineniya and soyedineniya equipped with a considerable quantity of technical materiel, required an increase in engineer facilities and management. Engineer troops were used not only on a tactical, but on an ever-increasing operational scale. They were used directly for breaking through strongly fortified defense zones, for assuring the success of river crossings, and also as mobile defense detachments, which substantially increased their role and importance. The requirement for communications equipment also continuously increased and the number of signal troops increased more than four times during the years of the war.

One should not omit the airborne troops. The Red Army was the originator in the creation of large airborne soyedineniya, and their development was given significant attention. By December, 1941, there were 38 airborne brigades. However, the complexity of the situation, the unavailability of the necessary quantity of troop transport aviation, the weak armament of airborne troops made it impossible to use them directly on a large scale. Nevertheless the experience gained in their use near Moscow, on the Dniepr, and especially during the route of the Kwantung Army, once again confirmed that these were promising troops, which could be used extensively in the conduct of operations in great depth and with specific targets.

In such a manner, in the years of the Great Patriotic War each arm of the ground troops was developed in conformity with the over-all improvement of the Soviet Army and the character of the accomplished missions. More and more attention in this development was given to the artillery, armored, engineer and signal troops.

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The airborne troops showed great potential capabilities. On the whole the organizational structure and composition of the ground troops met the demands of the war being waged. At the same time, combat experience showed that Soviet ground troops needed further improvement -- an increase in their fire and assault power and their maneuverability was required.

The ground troops, as the main arm of the armed forces, successfully accomplished the important missions which strategy, operational art and tactics assigned to them.

Soviet military strategy accomplished the missions ensuing from the politics of the Communist Party and the Soviet government. All the important missions which strategy assigned to the Armed Forces were accomplished primarily by the ground troops. In conformity with the situation as it developed in the course of the war, ground troops had to carry out two types of military operations: the strategic defense and the offensive with its variation -- the counter offensive.

As a result of fascist Germany's sudden treacherous attack, and of the unsuccessful outcome of combat operations at the beginning of the war and the difficulties arising in connection with this. Soviet troops were called on three times to wage important strategic defensive operations: of necessity in the spring and fall of 1941 and the summer of 1942, and by design in the summer of 1943. The difficulty of conducting the defense consisted of the fact that even before the war questions concerning the preparation and conduct of strategic defense had not been sufficiently worked out since it was considered that the defense would find application only an army scale.

In actuality the ground troops had to conduct the defense along the entire Soviet-German front, to a great depth, employing on each strategic axis several front-line ob'yedineniya, which prepared and conducted the defense with the participation of aviation, and on the coastal flanks in close cooperation with the navy. Characteristic features of the defense were the increase in its stability and activity, the correct determination of the probable direction of the main assault, formation in depth of defensive groupings, the preparation of terrain from an engineering viewpoint to a great depth, and the perfecting of means and methods of its conduct.

In the course of the defense Soviet ground troops successfully accomplished all missions assigned to them. They harassed and bled white the ground troops of the enemy, conducted offensives, stabilized

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the strategic front on the main axis. The Soviet Armed Forces frustrated the enemy plan of "blitzkrieg" warfare and in the battle of Moscow, Kursk, and on the Volga they created the conditions for shifting to the counter-offensive, which was completed with the destruction of the enemy's assault groups and the initiation and consolidation of the strategic initiative by the Soviet troops.

The strategic offensive was the principal method of operations of the ground troops of the Soviet Armed Forces. The destruction of the major groupings of the German-fascist troops on the principal strategic axis was their main objective.

Strategic offensive operations were distinguished by their decisive character, the large sweep along the width of the front and the depth of movement, by the scale of the participating forces and by the results. The offensive was conducted in a zone from 500-1,400 kilometers and to a maximum depth of 600-800 kilometers. A large quantity of technical combat materiel was used to attain the objectives of the operations. Thus, in the Belorussian operation more than 4,000 tanks and self-propelled artillery, 5,327 airplanes, and 31,000 guns and mortars were used, and in the Vistula-Oder operation even more combat materiel was used: 37,033 guns and mortars, 7,042 tanks and self-propelled artillery, and 5,047 airplanes.

During the strategic offensive there was skillful organization of coordination between fronts and groups of fronts, between "yedineniya" of armed forces and "soyedineniya" of arms both along one axis as well as along various strategic axes.

The objective of strategic operations were attained by various means. In the years of the war the ground troops completely mastered the art of preparation and conduct of operations in encirclement and destruction of major groupings of enemy troops, and of operating on important strategic axes. Such operations were a major contribution to the theory and practice of Soviet military art. Besides, each of the operations was distinguished from former ones by its distinctiveness and originality. Of special interest from the point of view of the development of the Soviet military art was the encirclement of major groupings of the enemies to a great depth as a result of swift pursuit (the 100,000 man grouping in the region of Minsk in June 1944 to a depth of 200 kilometers, and the 60,000 man grouping in the region of Pozan in January 1945 to a depth of 300 kilometers). Characteristic of the majority of encirclement operations was the destruction of the encircled groupings in short time periods, which was achieved by the creation of internal and external fronts of encirclement and the rapid dispersal and piecemeal destruction of the enemy.

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Soviet troops achieved major military-political results by the application of deep frontal assaults, which resulted in the splintering of the strategic front of the enemy, the piecemeal destruction of his major groupings, and the liberation of a large territory. It also made it possible to operate at a high tempo. A prime example of such an operation was in the Vistula-Oder operation.

The Soviet Armed Forces advanced consistently toward the final objective of the war, accomplishing in turn a series of strategic missions and attaining intermediate objectives. Moreover, each mission was accomplished in the land warfare theaters and required a considerably long period of time. An important achievement of the Soviet ground troops was the conduct of a system of united, indivisibly successive and simultaneous interrelated strategic operations of a group of fronts with the cooperation of ob'yedineniya and soyedineniya of other branches of the armed forces.

Most frequently operations of groups of fronts were carried out sequentially both along the front and in depth. The conduct of consecutive strategic operations on various and distantly separated sectors of the strategic front forced the enemy to transfer his forces from one axis to another, which facilitated their piecemeal destruction.

Simultaneous strategic offensive operations were most characteristic of the second half of the war, and mainly in the closing period, when the capabilities of our economy in supporting the strategic operations of the ground troops were considerably expanded. The effect of these operations was most impressive.

In the years of the war the Soviet strategy was led by the Leninist principle, that without powerful reserves and their skillful exploitation it was not possible to successfully wage an armed struggle. The Soviet command, correctly understanding the role and significance of reserves gave special attention to the creation of reserves of ground troops. At its disposal the Stavka had combined-arms armies, tank armies, rifle, tank and artillery corps and divisions, various and special chasty and soyedineniya, and, at the beginning of the war, also combat engineer armies. At times entire front lines ob'yedineniya were in reserve (in the battle of Moscow in 1941 and in the battle of Kursk in 1943).

The strategic reserves were the principal source of replacements for the ground troops operating on the front, and guaranteed the maintenance of the required superiority over the enemy in manpower and facilities. These reserves contributed to the intensification of efforts on those axes where their utilization would be most effective and most influential in the development of offensive or defensive operations.

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CPYRGHT The Soviet army required from the Soviet command the organization and execution of efficient and uninterrupted strategic coordination. Since the ground troops formed the main branch of the armed forces, coordination with other branches of the armed forces was organized primarily in the interest of the ground troops conducting strategic offensive or strategic defensive operations. This amounted to coordinating the efforts of all branches of the armed forces and of the partisans in reference to target, time, and location, in the definition of the role and mission of each front and branch of service, and also in the determination of the form of the conduct of a strategic offensive, of the sequence of accomplishing missions and the means of their fulfillment.

In distinction from the German-fascist army, in which the ground troops had their own command and general staff, the strategic leadership of the Soviet ground troops was carried out directly by the Stavka of the Supreme Command through the General Staff, staffs of axes, and representatives of the Stavka. The Stavka assigned missions to the fronts, concerned itself about their detailed security and controlled the accomplishment of assigned missions. Most frequently the Stavka secured coordination of activities of fronts or groups of fronts through its representatives. These representatives traveled to the fronts where they checked troops, familiarized themselves with the situation and executed overall leadership of the operations. The Stavka summoned the commanders, listened willingly to their plans, considerations, calculations, introduced amendments, and, where necessary, also changed them. On the whole the Stavka GHQ-front system of leadership proved its value.

The experience of the war showed that Soviet operational art, already worked out in the pre-war years, correctly reflected the objective regularity of contemporary operations. In the course of the war front and army ob'yedineniya set remarkable standards for the conduct of defensive and decisive offensive operations as well as in the methods of their preparations and execution, all of which were perfected throughout the war with the increased deployment of forces and the accumulation of combat experience.

One of the characteristic features of the defense of fronts and armies was the high degree of activity. The defensive troops persistently carried out all forms of reconnaissance, skillfully organized systems of fire, carried out counter-preparations, inflicted massive blows maneuvers by forces and materiel from unattacked sectors and rear positions.

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The constantly developing operational defense of the ground troops proved itself capable of withstanding the blows of powerful enemy forces. The trend of its developments was toward the proper determination of regions and boundaries upon whose retention depended the stability of the defense; toward the creation of the most expedient formation of troops, engineer equipment for the terrain, and organization for anti-tank and anti-air defense; toward conduct of counterthrusts and extensive maneuvers by forces and facilities toward perfecting of coordination between arms and with other branches of the armed forces; and toward the efficient command of troops. The high degree of mastery in the accomplishment of front and army defensive operations was borne out by the defense of Moscow, Leningrad and Sevastopol; by defensive operations in the battles of Kursk, on the Volga, near Lake Balaton, and others.

A considerable advance was made in the art of ground troops' preparation and conduct of front and army offensive operations. For their preparation great attention was directed to the accurate assessment of enemy forces and defensive positions. The breaking open of the ever intensifying defense required a skillful concentration of powerful groups at areas of breakthrough, and also the creation of second echelons, mobile groups and reserves for the development of the offensive.

In the strategic offensive frontline ob'yedineniya operated in the first strategic echelon along the axis of the main or secondary assault. Their composition was determined by their utilization. The combined-arms army carried out combat operations on one operational axis in close cooperation with other armies of the front. It was located in the first or second operational echelon of the front, on the main or secondary axis. A mixed-composition tank army usually operated in the first echelon of the front on the axis of the main assault. A homogeneous tank army composed the mobile group of the front. For piercing a week enemy defense tank armies were successfully used in the first operational echelon of the front.

The normal mission of an operation included crushing enemy resistance, liberation of territory, and seizure of important operational objectives.

A most common form of offensive operation of a front and an army was the frontal assault in the center or on one or both flanks with further development of the offensive with the objective of encirclement and destruction of large enemy dispositions.

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The most decisive form of an operation. In those cases when, because of the conditions of the situation, it was impossible or inexpedient to encircle the enemy, fronts, making use of the results of heavy neutralization of the enemy's defenses by artillery and aviation, inflicted a one-two frontal assault to a great depth, split enemy groups into separate units and destroyed them piecemeal. Such a frontal assault proved to be no less decisive a form of operation than encirclement.

An important problem which had to be solved by Soviet operational art during the war was the problem of piercing a strongly fortified tactical zone of defense where the enemy, in order to hold the position, utilized the maximum of available forces and material. The success of the entire operation was very much dependent upon the successful solution of this problem.

The piercing of a deeply echeloned defense was accomplished, as a rule, along several axes, which created the conditions for dispersing the enemy front. The successful application of large masses of artillery, tanks, aviation, engineer equipment, and operational deployment of troops in depth along selected axes assured a powerful blow during the breakthrough of the enemy's defense as well as the development of an offensive to a great depth, and also the repelling of counterattacks by large groups of forces.

The piercing of the enemy's defense and the destruction of his operational reserves created the conditions for the development of an offensive along his flank and in depth, for encirclement and destruction of enemy troop dispositions on one or several fronts. After the breakthrough troops switched to pursuit, a leading role in which was played by armored and mechanized soyedineniya and ob'yedineniya. An achievement of Soviet operational art lies in the development of the theory and practice of the forcing of large water obstacles from the march by ground troops followed by the seizure and retention of operational bases.

In such manner, characteristic of offensive operations of ob'yedineniya of ground troops were: specific objectives and forms of achieving them; high tempo; creation of the proper grouping of forces and material for the conduct of an operation; the perfecting of means of pursuit and the forcing of large water obstacles; the increase in the sweep of offensive operations; extensive maneuver by forces and during the course of an operation; skillful deception of the enemy and the achievement of surprise; improvement in the organization of coordination and control of troops.

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Soviet strategy and tactics such a degree of development and success if tactics had not advanced along with them. During the course of the war both the overall tactics of ground troops, and the tactics of arms was constantly being perfected and was distinguished by flexibility, skillful combination of various forms of fighting, persistence in the achievement of the assigned objectives, comprehensive use of technology, outstanding art of maneuver, well-organized control of soydineniya and chastí.

The tactics used by the ground troops during the Great Patriotic War included all forms of fighting in conformity with the developing situation. The basic forms of combat operations were offensive and defensive battles, with the predominant role played by the offensive.

Offensive battle was a combined-arms battle and was characterized by the mass application of troops with various armament and combat material. Success in battle was achieved by the combined efforts of all arms and aviation. However, the leading role in the breakthrough of the enemy's tactical zones of defense was assigned to reinforced combine-arms rifle soydineniya, coordinated with artillery, tanks, and aviation.

Defensive battle of ground troops in the years of the Great Patriotic War was also developed as a combine-arms battle. Rifle troops, extensively using favorable conditions of terrain, fire and communication trenches, various types of obstacles and powerful fire, skillfully maneuvering, demonstrated that they were capable, in coordination with other arms, of withstanding the attacks of large enemy forces over extended periods of time and could firmly hold occupied positions. Only the coordinated action of all arms and aviation guaranteed the success of defense of chastí and soydineniya of ground troops.

The Great Patriotic War multiplied, enriched and raised to a high level the theory and practice of Soviet military art. In the years of the war Soviet military strategy, operational art and tactics successfully solve the problem of the preparation and conduct of offensive and defensive operations and battles in the most varied geographic conditions and at any time of the day or year.

Bourgeois falsifiers of history try to explain many of the failures of the Hitlerite army on the Soviet-German front to the unfavorable weather conditions, the great distances, and Hitler's clumsy leadership.

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The facts attest otherwise. To actually do this, the Communist military machine was achieved as a result of the heroic efforts of the entire Soviet nation and its army, the advanced character of Soviet military art, and its superiority over bourgeois military art.

The basic principles of Soviet military art were conclusively formulated and perfected in the Great Patriotic War and during this time the most important problems of the conduct of armed combat were solved. Foremost among such problems should be regarded the utilization of branches of the armed forces and of the arms.

The leading role in the conduct of war belonged to the ground troops. In distinction from other branches of the armed forces the ground troops, as a result of their varied composition and armament had great capabilities for the conduct of independent operations on the land theaters of the war, on which were unfolded the principal events and on which occurred the decisive battles and engagements. Throughout the entire course of the war they formed the basis of the Soviet strategic groupings. All the important missions assigned in the past war to the armed forces were decided primarily by the ground troops. On the defense they were the force which broke up the assault of the enemy; they re-established the strategic front and themselves inflicted powerful counterblows and conducted counterattacks. On the offensive they were also the decisive force, accomplishing the breakup of the enemy's strategic front, the destruction of his troop dispositions and the seizure of his territory.

After the end of the Great Patriotic War, the Communist Party and the Soviet government, guided by the Marxist-Leninist principle that the composition and form of organization of the army usually adapts itself to the forms and methods of war and that the saturation of the army with new combat materiel requires organizational changes of troops, accomplished a great deal of work in the reorganization of the Soviet Armed Forces. In connection with the development of nuclear and rocket weapons, in the post-war years a new main branch of the armed forces appeared -- the accomplishment of basic strategic missions. There has also been a distinct growth in the role of the PVO Strany Troops.

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Concurrently other branches of the armed forces, including ground troops, are constantly being developed and perfected organizationally. In the post-war years they have been radically reorganized. Despite the fact that the ground troops are not now the main arm of the armed forces, they have been assigned, as in the past, a significant role in armed combat. At the same time the most important principle of Soviet military art -- the attainment of victory in war by the combined efforts of all branches and arms of the armed forces -- has not lost its significance. In the organization of the armed forces, as in the past special attention is being given to the harmonic development of the branches of the armed forces and the arms, and being taken into account is the fact that in the course of a war roles may change depending on the conditions of the situation and the character of the missions. The combat experience acquired by the Soviet troops during the Great Patriotic War helps in the solution of this complex problem.

by Chief Mar Avn K. Vershinin

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The Soviet Union's Great Patriotic War occupied the leading place in the mighty struggle of the nations of the world against the German fascists and their allies. From the beginning until the end it exerted the decisive influence on the victorious outcome of World War II and left a deep impression on world history.

A significant role in achieving the historic victory belongs to our glorious air forces, which in close cooperation with the ground forces and the navy took a most active part in all of the most important operations of the last war and conducted intense combat operations throughout its duration.

In the course of the Great Patriotic War the Soviet Air Forces had to fight against a strong and skillful enemy -- fascist Germany's air forces, which had a wealth of combat experience at the time of the attack on the Soviet Union. Much depended on the outcome of this fighting.

Hitler's command massed nearly 5,000 combat aircraft for the strike on the Soviet Union. In accordance with the blitzkrieg doctrine, a decisive role in achieving victory was assigned to the air force as well as to tanks and mechanized troops. It was stated in the "Barbarosa Plan" that the mission of the air force was to consist of "paralyzing and liquidating the Russian air force as much as possible and to support the operations of the army in its decisive axes."

By the beginning of World War II the air forces of the economically developed and militarily strong states had developed into an independent branch of the armed forces and by its capabilities became a factor of operational and strategic significance. Their role was continuously enlarged during the war and the air forces became the second most significant branch of the armed forces. They largely determined the nature of the ensuing struggle.

In the last war aircraft were already highly maneuverable and carried very powerful means of destruction. They alone were able to operate against targets deep in the enemy rear and were the most active means of air defense. In the deep offensive operations characteristic of the last war, aircraft strikes on the enemy's tactical and operational rear and his communications, support by aircraft of armored troops, strikes on the enemy directly in the field of battle, cover of friendly troops from the air, and reconnaissance were exceptionally important. It was not possible to count on success of offensive operations under the conditions of the last war without air supremacy.

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Throughout the entire war Soviet aircraft appreciably supported ground troops and the navy, fought intensely against enemy air forces, continuously provided the command with necessary reconnaissance data, and inflicted strikes on communications lines, delivery routes, and military industrial targets deep in the enemy rear.

Routing the fascist German air forces was one of the most important tasks of the armed conflict. Our air forces were the chief means of destroying fascist German aircraft. Of the 66,000 aircraft lost by the Germans on the Eastern Front, 13,000 were shot down by anti-aircraft artillery and 53,000 were destroyed by Soviet pilots (76 percent were shot down in aerial combat and 24 percent were destroyed on enemy airfields).

Victory over fascist Germany and its allies was achieved by the combined efforts of all branches of the Soviet Armed Forces with participation of allied troops of the anti-Hitler coalition. But the decisive role in the victory was played by the Soviet Armed Forces, including our Air Forces. The following data testify to this: Whereas the air forces of the US and England made more than 4,100,000 combat sorties during the nearly six years of World War II (1939-1945), the Soviet Air Forces made nearly 4,000,000 combat sorties in less than four years of the Great Patriotic War, inflicted heavy losses on enemy troops and combat equipment, and in fact destroyed the basic resources of the fascist German air force. The German air force lost two thirds of its aircraft on the Soviet-German Front.

The main efforts of our air forces in the war were directed to troop support, fighting for air supremacy, and aerial reconnaissance. It took 45, 35, and approximately 11 percent of combat sorties to accomplish the main missions respectively.

The most important principles for the combat employment of aircraft in armed conflict were based on the general positions of Soviet military art, which in prewar years had envisaged the coming war as a maneuvering war in which victory would be possible only by the combined efforts of all branches of the armed forces.

The air forces were assigned an important role in joint operations with ground troops and the navy. Independent operations in destroying targets deep in the enemy rear were also envisaged for the air forces.

In connection with the rapid development of aviation and all its growing capabilities, military theory was confronted during the prewar years with the problem of fighting for air supremacy. Soviet military science viewed air supremacy not as an end in itself, but as a prerequisite for the successful conduct of operations by ground troops and the navy. These views on the role and purpose of the air forces basically proved to be correct and found practical confirmation in the course of the Great Patriotic War.

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It was no accident therefore, that fighting for air supremacy erupted the first day of the war. It was fought with great intensity and temporary success. Owing to its perfidious and surprise attack, the fascist air force managed to seize it in the beginning of the war. But by the middle of the summer of 1943 the German air force, suffering enormous losses, lost air supremacy, which finally belonged to the Soviet Air Forces.

The German command had placed tremendous hopes on the air force in its attack on the USSR. It counted on destroying the main strengths of Soviet aviation in the first days of the war by sudden, powerful air strikes on airfields situated in the Western military border districts and thereby provide freedom of operation for tanks, mechanized troops, and bombers.

The surprise strikes of the German air force on airfields closest to the border did inflict serious losses in our country's aircraft. However, the Soviet people manfully withstood the enemy's perfidious attacks and, carrying out the will of the Communist Party, succeeded in restoring the resources of our air forces. Our pilots opposed the numerical superiority of the enemy air force with high combat mastery, heroism, and courage, continuing the best traditions of the veteran Soviet pilots who courageously fought in the years of foreign intervention and the civil war.

Due to the ever increasing opposition of Soviet fighter pilots, the German bombers, though they had a numerical superiority, were almost totally repulsed from striking airfields, and their fighters were forced to engage in active aerial combat in the interests of self-defense by the end of the first month of the war.

In the fall of 1941, when fascist hordes were at the gates of Moscow and a fatal threat hung over the capital of our country, Soviet pilots each made 5-6 combat sorties per day under exceptionally difficult conditions and with great effort selflessly operated day and night in any weather conditions. At that time the Soviet air force inflicted heavy losses on the German air force for the first time in World War II, shattered the legend of its invincibility, and won air supremacy in the area of decisive battles, which had a significant effect on the success of the counterattack of our ground troops. This was the first tangible victory of Soviet aviation over the German air force.

It is significant that in the beginning of the war the main striking power of the German air force was 52 percent bombers and 32 percent fighters, but in the course of the war, particularly after the summer of 1943, the German command had to radically change the proportion of the arms of its air forces. The forced transfer of the German army from the offense to strategic defense, particularly in the air, along the entire Soviet-German front; enormous losses of bombers; the continued growth of active Soviet aircraft -- all this led to the fact that the proportion of enemy bombers at the end of 1944 was significantly decreased and the proportion of fighters increased.

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A different picture was observed in the Soviet Air Forces. In the beginning of the war the proportion of our fighters was 56 percent, but by the middle of 1944 it had decreased to 47 percent. (Archives of the Ministry of Defense, f. 35. op. 107559 d. b. d. 116). In connection with the capability of operating aircraft from the ground; that is, the capability of concealing bases, aircraft losses on airfields were relatively few and fighters continued to be the decisive force in the struggle to maintain air supremacy. They continued to inflict heavy losses on the German air force and to destroy its aircraft in aerial combat. Soviet fighters disrupted enemy bomber strikes on our troops, repulsed their raids on cities and the most important rear targets in the country, and escorted bombers and ground attack aircraft to their targets and back.

The second stage of the fight for air supremacy was the battle on the Volga. Significant numbers of our aircraft participated in it. Gen A. A. NOVIKOV, who was still commander of the Air Forces then, came to coordinate the operations. Enemy aircraft suffered heavy losses in the bitter and prolonged air battles near the Volga. Hitler's generals were forced to recognize the air force's defeat. In a book written by a group of generals and officers of the former fascist German Wehrmacht it is noted that: "The German air force suffered great losses. From 19 November to 31 December 1942, the Germans lost nearly 3,000 aircraft. As a result, the resources of the German air force were even more weakened. The Russian Air Force, on the other hand, day by day became more and more strong with respect to both quality and quantity, and their losses were decreasing each year." (Mirovaya vojna 1939-1945 gg (World War 1939-1945), Foreign Literature Publishing House, 1957, page 481).

There is no need to comment on this evaluation. We can only add that LA-5's, the newest type of fighters, began to arrive at the front at this time and control of our fighters by radio from the ground and in the air became organized. The first experience of this type of control was acquired in the 13th Air Army of the Leningrad Front. Then in August of 1942 it was gradually introduced into the 16th and 8th Air Armies, which were in the fighting on the Volga, where command posts for controlling fighters were deployed over the battlefield.

The acquisition of new types of aircraft with better characteristics, especially in vertical and horizontal speeds, proved to have an important effect on improving the tactics of fighter operations. This was apparent in the transition from defensive aerial combat in banked turns to offensive combat employing maneuvers in the vertical plane. Fighter combat formations were dispersed according to altitude, front, and direction. The aircraft pair, which made it possible for our pilots to improve searching for enemy aircraft in the air and to increase fighter maneuverability in groups became the basic combat formation. All this taken together gave favorable results. Air supremacy was finally transferred to our pilots and at the outset of the counterattack of Soviet troops near the Volga it became more appreciable.

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The final stage of the fight for air supremacy was the aerial fighting over Kuban' in the spring of 1943, where the German air force lost 1,100 aircraft and their best pilots. (Archives of the Ministry of Defense, f. 319, op. 4798, l. 47, l. 81)

In intensity and number of participating aircraft on both sides this air battle was one of the largest of the entire war. According to calculations from the command post of the 4th Air Army, which the author commanded during the war, during the most intense days of the engagement a defeated enemy aircraft was seen falling every 10 minutes. Our aircraft succeeded not only in seizing the initiative in the air, but also significantly shook the confidence of the German pilots in their forces. The outcome of this battle changed the subsequent course of the conflict to the advantage of the Soviet Air Force. As was noted at the time in a critique by Mar Avn A. A. NOVIKOV, commander of the Air Forces, the vertical stack combat formation developed by pilot A. A. POKRYSHKIN was once and for all put into operation in this battle.

While the air battle at Kuban' was being waged, two air operations were conducted to destroy German aircraft on airfields by the forces of several air armies and long range aviation on instructions from the Stavka of the High Command. The first was accomplished from 6-8 May 1943. 17 airfields on a 1,200 kilometer front sustained strikes. Up to 500 enemy aircraft were destroyed as a result. The second air operation was conducted from 8-10 June. Strikes were inflicted on 28 airfields. During the second air operation on airfields the German air force lost up to 580 aircraft in June, which also favorably affected the air situation by the beginning of the decisive battles at the Kursk Bulge.

The final stage of the fight for air supremacy was the battle near Kursk, in which the chief burden of fighting the German air force was carried by our valiant fighter pilots. In the first days of the fighting our aircraft gained supremacy in the air and held it firmly on all fronts until the end of the war.

By this time the proportion of aircraft resources had sharply changed to our advantage. In two years the German air force had suffered heavy losses on the Soviet-German front, particularly in personnel. By the end of 1943 it had already lost approximately 50,000 men. The German command could not replenish the losses and their numbers by 1944 had decreased to less than one half the former level. Throughout the entire war the Soviet air force did not experience a shortage of flying cadres. After the considerable losses of aircraft on airfields in the beginning of the war, some pilots were left without aircraft and they were called "baseless ones." From May 1942 to December 1944 the number of pilots increased 50 percent in accordance with the growth of aircraft production.

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Success in resolving this problem was assured in the previous years when the network of military aviation educational institutions was broadened as a result of measures taken by the Communist Party and the Soviet government. During the war enrollment in them was increased, the length of training was shortened, and re-training and refresher courses for flying, command, technical, and political cadres were created. All this made it possible to carry out the plans for training air force cadres.

By the summer campaign of 1944 our air force was almost five times superior to the enemy air force. This created advantageous conditions for maintaining supremacy in the air and for inflicting severe strikes on enemy troops and rear targets.

The number of combat sorties testify to the strengthening of the Soviet Air Forces and the weakening of the German air forces during the war. In 1942 our air forces made nearly 611,000 sorties; in 1944 nearly 882,000; and in the four months of 1945 nearly 607,000. According to our observations, the German air force made 493,000 passes over the front line; in 1944 approximately 258,000; and in the four months of 1945 only 70,000 in all.

From the first days of the war our bombers delivered blows on targets deep in the rear of fascist Germany and its allies. Although the flights of our long range bombers to enemy rear targets did not cause particularly great destruction, they had an important military-political significance. They disorganized the rhythmical operation of military industrial enterprises; forced the German command to impose blackouts in all large cities and withdraw from the front considerable air defense resources to protect cities and numerous rear targets in Germany and its allied countries; exposed Goering's boastful statements and Hitler's propaganda lies about the destruction of the Soviet air force; and raised the morale of the Soviet people and their soldiers.

The main blows of Soviet bombers were delivered on enemy troops and combat equipment on the battlefield in the tactical and operational depth, which directly aided Soviet Army troops in resolving the main mission of the war -- destruction of fascist Germany's powerful ground forces.

In the offensive operations of Soviet troops, which were unprecedented in scale and intensity, the air forces concentrated on destroying enemy personnel and equipment and on covering friendly troops. Beginning in the fall of 1942, continuous air strikes were developed and later were employed widely in the form of the air offensive. The air offensive invariably led to appreciable operational results since the enemy was continuously subjected to powerful massive air strikes one after the other by our ground attack aircraft and bombers.

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This type of air combat was made possible by the large quantity of aircraft in the air armies, correct use of reserve air corps, and their skillful deployment.

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The power of Soviet air strikes on enemy troops grew continuously during the war. Here is how data on several of the most important operations characterize this process: over 1,000 aircraft participated in the counteroffensive near Moscow, approximately 5,000 took part in the battle at Kurst, nearly 5,000 in the Belorussian Operation, and approximately 8,500 in the Berlin Operation. The number of combat sorties of our aircraft increased accordingly. In the Moscow counteroffensive, Soviet aircraft made 16,000 combat sorties in the interests of the attacking forces, in the Volga counteroffensive nearly 36,000 in the Kursk counteroffensive nearly 90,00, and in the Belorussian operation more than 153,000 combat sorties.

The air forces played an important role in supporting the combat operations of armored tank and mechanized ob"yedineniya and soyedineniya. When tank armies and tank and mechanized corps entered into battle, the main efforts of ground attack and fighter aircraft were concentrated for their support and cover. As a rule, from one to two ground attack and fighter divisions were assigned for support and cover of the operations of a tank or mechanized corps in the operational depth. Ground attack aircraft and bombers supported the operations of advanced detachments and the main efforts of tank and mechanized corps, contained and destroyed withdrawing enemy chasti, destroyed bridges and crossings in his route of retreat, and engaged approaching enemy reserves. This severely slowed down the tempo of his retreat, halted the advance of his reserves, and made it possible for our mobile troops to forestall the enemy in taking up important operational lines. In addition, aircraft reconnoitered enemy withdrawal routes and guided tankmen to important objectives.

It should be particularly noted that in the last war aerial reconnaissance was one of the most important means of providing the command with timely intelligence information.

Long range aerial reconnaissance regiments reconnoitered at depths up to 500 kilometers and more. The scale of this type of reconnaissance was comparatively small due to the limited number of these aircraft. Periodic visual observation and aerial photography of the enemy's basic communications made it possible to disclose in good time the most important directions of railroad and motor vehicle transportation and the areas of concentration of enemy troop groupings, which were subsequently subjected to strikes by our long range aircraft.

Considerably more attention was given to systematic operational and, especially, tactical reconnaissance by reconnaissance aircraft as well as ground attack and fighter aircraft, which were the principle

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means of tactical reconnaissance at depths up to 100 kilometers. Non-T/O reconnaissance squadrons and regiments of fighter-reconnaissance aircraft attached to the air armies were created in the fall of 1942 for this purpose, which provided increased intensity and quality of aerial reconnaissance.

The Soviet Air Forces were also widely used for detailed aid to the partisan movement. In the interests of partisans, aircraft made more than 109,500 sorties, including more than 13,000 landings at partisan sites. Regiments of long range aviation and the Civil Air Fleet delivered to partisans about 13,000 tons of ammunition, armament, medicines, supplies, and other cargo. More than 83,000 partisans were delivered into the enemy rear and from partisan areas to the main land. The seriously wounded and sick were systematically evacuated from partisan detachments, which made it possible to save thousands of lives of Soviet patriots. Our air force was of considerable help to the partisans of Poland, Yugoslavia, Albania, and other countries.

The great victory of our people was a very law-governed thing. It was not military luck nor accident that brought the brilliant victory to the Red Army and complete defeat to Hitler's army. Naturally, luck effected combat operations during the war to a certain degree. But in the final count the outcome of the gigantic confrontation was decided by a number of objective laws. The most important of these was the superiority of the economic and political organization of the socialist state, its advanced Marxist-Leninist ideology, and the inspiring, wise leadership of the Communist Party. The basis of the military might of our state was comprised of the unswerving will of the Soviet people for victory, heroic labor, and the socialist economy, which had a definite effect on the course of the entire war.

On instructions from the party and the government, collectives of aircraft designers and engineers headed by such outstanding figures of aviation science and technology as A. N. TUPOLEV, N. N. POLIKAROV, S. V. IL'YUSHIN, V. M. PETLYAKOV, P. O. SUKHOY, A. A. MIKULIN, A. D. SHVETSOV, V. Ya. KLIMOV, and the young designers A. I. MIKOYAN, A. S. YAKOVLEV, and S. A. LAVOCHKIN created new types of fighters, bombers, ground attack aircraft, and aircraft engines which our industry put into production in the second half of 1940. Our homeland, particularly in the first months of the war, was confronted with an extremely difficult situation. However, the Soviet economy was so strong and viable that it withstood the most difficult tests. An historically unprecedented rebuilding of all branches of the national economy of a huge state into a military economy occurred in an exceptionally short period of time and an extremely unfavorable situation. The Soviet military economy not only recovered from an unexpected, dangerous blow, but created the necessary material prerequisites for conducting a great war, for winning victory over the fascist aggressor.

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entire war was the production of combat equipment, armament, and ammunition. It was absolutely necessary to surpass the enemy with regard to the military economy. The military and political leaders of fascist Germany faced the very same problem. But the Soviet military economy won out over the Germany military economy. The following statistics clearly demonstrate this. From June 1941 to June 1945 our industry produced an average of 27,000 aircraft annually. During the 1941-1944 period the German industry delivered to the front 78,900 combat aircraft, an average of 19,700 a year. Our victory was achieved despite the fact that Germany at that time far surpassed the Soviet Union in the production of such basic strategic materials as coal and steel.

It should also be emphasized that throughout the war the number of planes produced by the aircraft industry grew continuously. In 1943 1.5 times more planes were produced than in 1942, making it possible to surpass the enemy considerably in numbers of aircraft by the summer of 1943. As for the foreign aircraft turned over to us on lend-lease, the proportion of them in relation to those delivered by Soviet industry was insignificant. Moreover, the number of foreign aircraft turned over to us in most difficult years, 1941-1942, were generally very few and only in 1943 and especially in 1944 were more aircraft delivered from the US and England on lend lease; however, this was already belated help.

Our industry surpassed the German industry not only in numbers, but also in quality of many types of weapons, including combat aircraft. During the war almost all equipment and armament in the air force underwent fundamental changes.

The competition between the fascist German industry and ours for qualitative superiority in aircraft equipment went on throughout the entire war. The German air force entered the war armed with the latest aircraft. The Soviet air force was basically armed with obsolete aircraft. Just before the war new types of combat aircraft were produced in the USSR, but they were not serially produced in mass. In the first half of 1941, industry produced only about 2,600 new type aircraft (Yak-1, MiG-3, LaGG-3, Il-2). This could not essentially effect the qualitative relationship of the air strengths of the sides. In addition, the majority of the aircraft positioned on airfields close to the state boundaries were lost in the first hours of the war. Several new types of aircraft did not satisfy the changed conditions of armed conflict since the Germans had already succeeded in modernizing their fighters, having armed them with aircraft cannons.

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The question of re-equipment became especially important. During the war the tactics of the air force arms and the operational art of the air forces constantly presented to the design bureaus and the aircraft industry ever higher demands, the basic ones of which were: increasing the maximum speed, rate of climb, ceiling, and range of aircraft; improving cannon armament and increasing the bomb loads; increasing aircraft maneuverability and engine power; and improving the quality of equipment. In resolving these complex problems the heroic labor of the Soviet people yielded remarkable results. By the beginning of the second period of the war, our air force basically had been re-equipped with new combat equipment.

Improvements in combat aircraft were chiefly made by way of increasing their maximum speeds and perfecting their weapons. During the war our air force was armed with the latest aircraft: fighters La-5, Yak-9, Yak-3, La-7; and bombers Pe-2 and Tu-2, which were not inferior to German aircraft of the same type. The Il-2, the only ground attack plane in the world armed with cannons, rocket shells, and bombs of various purposes and calibers, including antitank bombs, and protected by armor from infantry fire, was an exceptionally successful aircraft for supporting ground troops directly on the battlefield both on the defense and in the offense. Its role in the past war cannot be over estimated. In a future war a similar aircraft might also be widely employed.

German aircraft construction could not stand up to the competition. It could replenish the enormous losses which the German air force suffered for the first time on the Soviet-German front only by producing current types of aircraft. During the war the Germans introduced only one new fighter, the FV-190, and made two modifications of the Me-109.

Fighter aviation underwent the greatest development. This was quite natural since it was the chief weapon of the struggle for air supremacy. Our new types of fighters surpassed corresponding enemy aircraft in almost all basic performance indicators. In the process of serial production and modification of aircraft, the flight speed of fighters was increased 70-120 kilometers per hour. The fire power of aircraft was increased considerably at the same time. Instead of 7.62mm caliber machine guns, cannons and rocket shells were installed.

One of the main sources of victory for our air force came from mobilization of the workers of the rear of the country for the mass production of aircraft, engines, weapons and ammunition, material and technical means, and the successful training of air cadres and reserves. The Soviet people gave every kind of help to strengthen the air force. By its labor savings of 2,360 million rubles, which were put into the country's defense fund, 2,565 combat aircraft were

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acquired. Anna Selivanova, a Saratov collective farm worker, acquired
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band was fighting. Our descendants will remember with inspiration and
gratitude the feat of the Soviet workers in the war, who, living by a
single thought -- everything for the front, everything for victory --
succeeded in providing our troops and air forces with everything neces-
sary in conditions of unbelievable difficulty and deprivation.

The training of air force reserves was one of the difficult and
important problems which had to be resolved during the war. Reserve
air regiments and then air brigades, which on the whole coped with
their tasks, were formed at the beginning of the war. In the first
months of the war, reserve air ob"yedineniya were created in the form
of strike and reserve air groups, which were sent to reinforce the front
air forces. Beginning with the summer of 1942 the foundation was laid
for the formation of 10 reserve air corps. By the end of the war a-
bout 55 percent of the aircraft in our air forces were in air soyedineniya
of the reserve of the Supreme Command. The presence of this reserve
permitted the command to accomplish a broad operational maneuver along
the front by air forces and to create the largest air groupings for
ground troop support by the beginning of the offensive operations.

Fundamental changes in the organizational structure of our air
forces were made during the war. The experience of the first months
of the war showed that the existing organizational structure was con-
trary to the principle of massing aircraft on decisive axes. Aircraft
were dispersed equally in many combined-arms armies. Although this
created advantageous conditions for coordinating the air force with
ground troops directly on the battlefield, it at the same time deprived
the command of the possibility of concentrating the efforts of all
aircraft on decisive directions and disallowed centralized control
of it.

In the fall of 1941, during the counteroffensive of Soviet troops
at Rostov and the battle of Moscow, massive employment of our aircraft
in the axes of the main strikes of ground troops was accomplished for
the first time. This experiment fully justified itself and in this
connection the Soviet command decided to combine the aircraft of fronts
and combined-arms armies into front air armies, which were created in
the May-October 1942 period.

The creation of air armies and their continual strengthening
made it possible to quickly concentrate large forces of aircraft on
decisive directions and to employ them massively both for support
and cover of the troops of front strike groupings and for ensuring su-
premacy in the air.

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The organizational structure of the Air Force was continuously improved during the war, acquiring more clearly defined forms. The greatest share of bomber, fighter, ground attack, and reconnaissance aircraft were included in the air armies. In addition to the air armies, independent combat missions were carried out by long range aviation, reserve air corps, fighter aviation of PVO strany, and naval aviation, which was used to strengthen front aviation when necessary. Correspondingly, front and long range aviation often supported the operations of the fleet and its aircraft in littoral axes.

The organizational forms of the aviation rear also underwent development. By the fall of 1941 aviation bases had been abolished. There were replaced by regions of aviation basing, to which airfield servicing battalions (BAO) were subordinated. Each BAO was intended to service one air regiment. The aviation rear was reorganized for the purpose of improving the maneuverability and uninterrupted support of the combat operations of aviation chastí and soyedineniya.

The high moral and political qualities, conscientiousness and creative activity of all air force personnel were one of the decisive aspects of the successful fulfillment of the combat missions confronting aviation. Air force political organs and party and Komsomol organizations did a great deal of work in instilling in aviators a high moral-political consciousness, patriotism, military duty, hatred of the fascist German invaders, selflessness and heroism.

Soviet air force personnel wrote many brilliant pages in the combat chronicles of the motherland in the years of the past war. Our aerial warriors bravely defended the cities of the homeland and the industrial centers of the country. Day and night, in any weather, they pounded the German fascists on many fronts, from Murmansk to the Caucasus Mountains. Their comrades-in-arms on the ground -- the aircraft technicians, mechanics, vehicle drivers, soldiers of the airfield servicing battalions, and repairmen -- provided high combat readiness for aircraft.

In the conflict with the enemy thousands of aviators displayed self-control, heroism, bravery, and courage. Many of them, whose feats glorified the grandeur of the spirit of Soviet man, the power of our weapons, and the superiority of the socialist social and state structure, are not among us today, but they will live eternally in the memory of our grateful nation as an inspiring example for the living.

The past war showed that heroism is normal behavior for the Soviet man. It was not a natural impulse but a high awareness of duty to the fatherland that led our airmen to heroic feats. It was not just individual pilots and aircraft crews who displayed heroism, but whole air force podrazdeleniya, chastí, and soyedineniya.

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Hundreds of airmen of many nationalities performed heroic feats. Among the Russians, Capt. GASTILLO, the same feat was performed by Russian pilots IVANOV, SKVORODIN, CHERKASHIN, MIKHAYLOV, SLUZHANKIN, TARASOV; by Ukrainians SHEVCHUK, VDOVENKO, GOMONENKO; by the Cossack, ABDIROV, and the Jew, IRZHAK; in all more than 100 Soviet pilots.

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Our pilots demonstrated courage and bravery combined with strict conscientious discipline and high combat mastery which amazed the world. Even in the most difficult days they were constantly striving for perfection of combat mastery. Fighter-pilots I. IVANOV, D. KOKAREV, L. BUTELIN, P. RYABTSEV, N. IGNAT'YEV, A. DANILOV, and A. MOKLYAK in the first hours of the war made ramming attacks which required enormous effort of will and extraordinary flying and military skill. In all our pilots made more than 200 ramming attacks during the war. 17 pilots did it twice and A. KHLOBYSTOV did it three times and B. KOBZAN four times. Communist Sr Lt A. GOROVETS is the only pilot in the world who succeeded in destroying 9 enemy aircraft in one aerial fight.

The combat efforts and feats of pilots received general public recognition and high evaluation from the Soviet government. More than 200,000 airmen were awarded orders and medals, 2,120 were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, 65 were awarded two Gold Stars, and the world renowned pilots A. POKRYSHKIN and I. KOZHEDUB, who are today Soviet generals, are Thrice Heroes of the Soviet Union. USSR orders were awarded to 65 percent of air force soyedineniya and chasty. The majority of chasty and soyedineniya received the honorary names of Moscow, Orlov, Kiev, etc. They were cited 319 times in orders of the Supreme Command for successful combat actions in operations. Hundreds of generals and officers were awarded the orders of Suvorov, Kutuzov, Bogdan Khmel'nitskiy, and Aleksandr Nevskiy for courageous and skillful leadership of the combat operations of air chasty and soyedineniya.

The birth of the air guards was connected with the increased combat mastery. Beginning in December 1941, air chasty and soyedineniya began to be awarded the honorary titles of "guards" in recognition of special combat services. This honorary title was awarded to one third of all air force chasty and soyedineniya. The members of guards units were the bearers of advanced combat experience and were the most capable and disciplined airmen. The strength of the guards units consisted of the fact that they fought bravely, artfully, with initiative, and tried to get the maximum effect from combat equipment and weapons.

Beginning in the fall of 1943 French patriot pilots of the Normandy-Nieman squadron, later a regiment, began to participate shoulder to shoulder with Soviet airmen in battles against the fascist Germans.

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In the form of the Czechoslovak Republic, Poland and Czechoslovakia were involved in aerial combat against the fascist air force. After the liberation of Rumania and Bulgaria, Rumanian and Bulgarian air units entered into the war against the Germans. The Soviet government highly appreciated the combat services of the pilots of our fraternal states and awarded them USSR orders and medals.

After the victorious ending of the war many air force heroes steadfastly began to generalize their combat experience. Acquiring deep and thorough theoretical and military-technical knowledge, they improved their flying skill. Former front-line pilots were the first to master flights on jet aircraft. Many of them became prominent air force commanders, political workers, and engineers; and several became scientists. They pass on their experience to young airmen and educate them in the spirit of devotion to the fatherland.

A famous galaxy of air force commanders was born during the war: Mars Avn P. F. ZHIGAREV and A. A. NOVIKOV, commanders of Air Forces of the Red Army; Chief Mar Avn A. Ye. GOLOVANOV, commander of Long Range Aviation; Mar Avn F. A. FALALEYEV, commander of aviation of South-West Line; Mars Avn F. A. VOROZHEYKIN and S. A. KHUDYAKOV, chiefs of staff of the Air Forces; Mars Avn S. A. KRASOVSKIY, S. I. RUDENKO, V. A. SUDETS, N. S. SKRIPKO, Ye. Ya. SAVITSKIY, F. A. ASTAKHOV, F. A. AGAL'TSOV, S. F. ZHAVORONKOV; Gens P. F. POLYNIN, I. P. ZHURAVLEV, N. F. PAPIVIN, S. D. RYBAL'CHENKO, I. M. SOKOLOV, N. F. NAUMENKO, S. K. GORYUNOV, M. M. GROMOV, T. T. KHRYUKIN; Gens A. K. REPIN, I. V. MARKOV, and V. N. KOBLIKOV, leaders of Aviation Engineering Services of the Air Forces; and Gen N. S. SHIMANOV, A. G. RYTOV, and N. S. ROMOZANOV, political workers. 12 commanders of air armies were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, and Gens KHRYUKIN, SAVITSKIY, POLBIN, and Chief Mar Avn NOVIKOV were awarded the title of Twice Hero of the Soviet Union.

Many airmen, having begun the war as line pilots, ended it as commanders of outstanding squadrons and regiments. These were remarkable air soldiers, the sons of our nation, educated by the party and the Komsomol, infinitely devoted to the socialist fatherland.

In the years of the Great Patriotic War, Soviet aviation traversed a glorious path of difficult struggle and victory. Together with all of our armed forces it grew in numbers and was reorganized qualitatively. Its cadres, having gained a wealth of combat experience, grew and became stronger. The moral-political unity of our nation, its lofty patriotism, the wise leadership of the Communist Party, the vitality and power of the Socialist economy which provided the front with first-class combat equipment, the advanced nature of Soviet military art, the heroism of Soviet soldiers and their high combat skill -- all of this made it possible for the Red Army and its air force to achieve

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completely victorious over the enemies of our fatherland. Our country emerged strong and powerful from the difficult and protracted war. The hopes of world imperialism that the war would weaken and exhaust the Soviet Union completely collapsed.

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The wealth of combat experience acquired by our air force during the war and the creative use of it promoted the rapid development of the operational art of the air forces and the tactics of arms of the air forces. The experience of armed conflict put a number of pre-war theoretical principles on the employment of aviation to a severe test and repudiated those which did not satisfy actual conditions. In addition, it permitted our military science to more fully disclose the laws of armed conflict with the massive employment of aircraft and, with regard to them, to find more rational methods for the operational and tactical employment of aircraft.

It is difficult to overestimate the significance of the enormous combat experience gained by our air force in the last war. No other army in the world has so much comprehensive experience in the employment of aircraft in widely varied conditions of a combat situation. This experience is of great significance for the further building of Soviet aviation and it can be used successfully by the air forces of fraternal socialist countries. It is an inexhaustible source for the development of Soviet military art in the field of aircraft employment. And although the rapid development of nuclear-rocket weapons required the development of new methods of combat operations, this in no way depreciates the value of the experience of the past war in those areas which retains their significance in the changed conditions.

Soon after the end of World War II the reactionary imperialist circles of the US, England, and France, by a number of aggressive actions and provocations, intensified the international situation, started an increased arms race, and built military bases around the socialist camp, confronting nations with the danger of a new world nuclear-rocket war.

In accordance with the demands of the Central Committee of CPSU and the Soviet government to reliably ensure the defense capability of our country and to frustrate the aggressive plans of the imperialists, we are harmoniously developing all branches of the armed forces, including the air forces. The role of aviation in a war, should the imperialists unleash it, will be great.

Our scientists, designers, engineers, and workers of the aircraft industry are creating first-class jet combat aircraft in which pilots will be able to resolve successfully the combat missions assigned to aviation in a nuclear-rocket war. Our jet combat aircraft can achieve speeds exceeding the speed of sound almost three times, reach maximum and Approved For Release 2000/08/09 : CIA-RDP85T00875R000300090008-8
and cover long flight ranges.

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In addition to the qualitative improvement of combat planes, aircraft rocket equipment has undergone enormous development. A number of modern types of guided aircraft rockets, missiles, and cruise missiles have been created. Bombers have been made into long range supersonic rocket-carrying aircraft, armed with rockets with powerful nuclear charges and able to deliver nuclear-rocket strikes on the aggressor from great distances without entering the air defense zone of the target. This has greatly increased the combat capabilities of aviation. Air-to-air rockets have replaced cannon and machine gun weapons on fighters. Into the armament have come radar systems for controlling rockets and intercept stations and radiotechnical systems making it possible to launch rockets and drop bombs from maximum and minimum altitudes at maximum speeds, day and night, in simple and complex weather conditions.

Simultaneously with the increased flight speeds and altitudes, the operation of jet aircraft from air airfields limited in size has become a reality.

An exceptionally important role is being acquired by our Military Transport Aviation, which is equipped with the latest transport aircraft and helicopters and is able to transport over long distances and at fast speeds not only troops, but also heavy types of combat equipment, such as guns, ballistic surface-to-surface rockets, armored personnel carriers, tanks, and other military equipment.

Modern aircraft, being complex units of the latest equipment, present increased demands on the military-technical and special training of airmen. The conditions of a nuclear-rocket war will require high moral-combat qualities and strong physical development. That is why we cannot forget about the training of aviation cadres even though we have new, powerful combat equipment. It will not be the equipment itself that will fight but the soldiers who skillfully wield this complex combat equipment. In a modern war, which will be distinguished by exceptional violence and resoluteness of purpose as never before, the role of the man-soldier and the significance of military discipline and organization increases.

If the imperialists unleash a new war its outcome will be decided by soldiers who wield modern combat equipment to perfection and who are utterly devoted to their nation and to communism.

Our country holds first place in the world in the manned exploration of space. We are proud that our military aviation was the cradle of cosmonautics, that from its ranks emerged the first cosmonauts -- Yu. A. GAGARIN, G. S. TITOV, A. G. NIKOLAYEV, P. R. POPOVICH, V. F. BYKOVSKIY, V. M. KOMAROV, P. I. BELYAYEV, and A. A. LEONOV. The flights of the cosmonauts are a further step forward in the development of fatherland aviation.

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The Soviet people are triumphantly observing the 20th anniversary of victory over fascist Germany and are working on the building of communism with enormous enthusiasm, every military aviator, from the soldier to the marshall, is even more deeply imbued with a feeling of personal responsibility for fulfillment of the patriotic and international duty of an armed defender of the country which won socialism, which has paved the way for all progressive mankind to a beautiful future. Further increasing the combat readiness of the Soviet Armed Forces, which are standing on guard of the great achievements of socialism, peace, and the security of nations, is a thing of honor for every soldier of our air forces.

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by Flt Adm S. GORSHKOV

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Two decades separate us from that May day when the last salvos of the war in Europe resounded and the triumphant multi-colored fires of salutes signaled the long awaited Victory holiday. The complete and unconditional surrender of Hitler Germany inflicted colossal ruin and brought countless suffering to the peoples of many countries, - the result of a war unleashed by German militarists with the instigation of international reaction. The decisive role in the crushing of Fascism, in the destruction of its war machine, created according to the latest word in bourgeois science, was played by the Soviet nation and its valorous Armed Forces, raised on the call of the Communist Party for the sacred Great Patriotic War.

A more cruel, merciless, destructive and bloody war than World War II has not been recorded in history. In this most painful of human tragedies our government of workers and peasants, the first in the world, passed the difficult examination with honor and emerged the victor in the mortal battle with the forces of international reaction.

Especially difficult for our Homeland was the initial period of the Great Patriotic War. The temporary advantages of the enemy, his attack reinforced by treachery, a certain degree of superiority in the quality of armament and in the combat experience of the ground troops, aviation and navy made themselves felt.

The lack of preparedness of the Soviet Armed Forces for repulsing the enemy's sudden attack, the shortages in equipping the arms with the latest combat material and shortcomings in its development had a negative influence on the course of the armed conflict.

In each of the branches of the armed forces the defects were felt differently. In the ground troops, for example, they made themselves felt in full measure. In the Navy their influence was less, but also had an effect on the fighting at sea, and more so since the situation in regard to naval activities could not help but reflect on the situation as it developed on the land fronts where, in the final analysis, the outcome of the war was decided.

The Soviet Navy began to be rehabilitated by the will of the Party immediately after the end of the civil war. Its combat might grew in proportion to the strengthening of the economic power of the government. By the end of the 1930's our industry mastered the construction of ships of all classes as a result of which the Northern, Red Banner Baltic, Black and Pacific Fleets were supplied with the newest type "Kirov" cruisers, high speed destroyers, escort, antisubmarine and other type ships. In

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The fact that our Navy had even the best models of foreign navies. However, in certain aspects of armament ours, just as well as many of the foreign ships of prewar construction, did not fully meet all the necessary requirements for modern naval combat. Their anti-aircraft armament was weak, and this factor considerably complicated the carrying out of missions in open seas under active opposition of bomber and mine-torpedo aviation, which was, at the beginning of the war, one of the basic striking forces of navies. This had a serious effect on our Navy as well, one third of its losses in ships and transport vessels being caused by enemy aviation.

The fact cannot be disregarded that our Navy had a small number of ships with powerful artillery armament, as a result of which, at the beginning of the war, they operated under extremely great pressure, and in subsequent periods their utilization was purposely limited by the Supreme Command, which, naturally, could not fail to have an effect on their operations.

Another vexing fact was that our Navy - a recognized pioneer in the development and use of mining and mine sweeping weapons - did not have at the beginning of the war an effective means of fighting against ground type and other non-contact type mines. And it was precisely due to the use of such weapons in great quantity that the German Navy could inflict serious losses in ships and vessels of the English and French Navies. The development of such weapons was under way in our Navy, but at the beginning of the war had not yet been completed.

The equipment which the Navy had for searching submarines was ineffective. It made possible the detection of submarine propeller noises, but it did not provide the possibility for obtaining the necessary data for use of the ships' principal antisubmarine weapon - the depth bomb, which in any case was not distinguished for its high destructive qualities.

The Soviet Navy had a rich heritage of combat experience from the Russian Navy in amphibious landings. In the 1930's for the first time in the history of naval art our Navy developed the theory of naval landing operations. Several of its recommendations were put to the test in practical combat training. At that time serious attention was not given to the creation of amphibious transport or amphibious landing equipment. All our fleets entered the war without a single ship of special construction and only one brigade of naval infantry was deployed in the Baltic. This significantly complicated operations of our fleets and flotillas in making amphibious landings, which was an important part of their combat activity in that period of the war.

Our fleets did not have any special surface ships capable of supporting an amphibious landing. It was then considered that this mission, as well as, by the way, the overall fire support of ground troops from the sea,

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destroyers, and ships with large caliber armament - cruisers. The gunboats of that period were re-equipped transport vessels, predominantly of old construction, with low speed and armed with several medium caliber guns. Besides this there were not very many of them available in the Navy. The Navy also had only a limited quantity of cruisers. The destroyers were mainly earmarked for combat engagements with "their own kind" that is, with surface forces of the enemy. And this is the mission for which they prepared. The development of means for them to fire at shore targets was a secondary mission.

The submarines in our fleets were assigned an important role in the battle on the communications lines and in the protection of our shores from attacks of enemy surface ships. Most of the operational submarines were new, perfected combat ships, constructed with due regard for the latest achievements in submarine design and the development of the anti-submarine forces of our probable enemies. However, as soon as they were earmarked primarily for operations in the Baltic and Black Seas, then their range and their capability to operate independently was calculated on this basis.

Our naval aviation was inferior in quality to that of the enemy. The naval air forces of fleets were equipped with the very same planes, basically antiquated types, as the other branches of the armed forces. These planes could more or less still successfully operate against slow moving targets on land, but they were of little use for carrying out combat missions at sea. Because of the limited speed, range and carrying capacity of the planes, naval aviation could not effectively use torpedoes against ships at sea at great distance from their airports.

The naval fighter aviation was also not distinguished for its good qualities. The small tactical radius and the short flying time capability of the fighter planes actually limited the use of naval surface forces in zones within reach of enemy aircraft since they were without cover even at comparatively short distances from our shores.

Planes of the newest types and models were just making their appearance in the fleets in limited numbers and the flying personnel had not yet been trained.

The combat training of our fleets in peace time was directed to the development of the tactics of the naval battle. The main attention was given to the organization of a combined attack of surfact ships, torpedo boats, aviation and submarines against groupings of enemy surface ships in the open sea and against mine-artillery positions in narrow waters and on the approaches to the main naval bases. Also developed were so-called raiding operations which, according to contemporary concepts, consisted of carrying out attacks against ports, naval bases or groups of ships in the enemy's coastal waters by our surface ships and torpedo

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by ~~_____~~ support. In their scope these operations were limited primarily to carrying out tactical missions.

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All regulations and instructions of our Navy, both in the period of its reconstruction and in the pre-war period were permeated with an offensive spirit. However, the combat preparation of fleets was in known contradiction to the demands of the orders and instructions. The working out of the basic missions of combat preparedness was carried out in limited regions of sea theaters located not far from our shores. And in this was demonstrated that very same defensive tendency in the use of naval forces in war which was the rule for the period of its rehabilitation, which, of course, was reflected in the trend of preparation of the leading cadres of the fleets. Even in the conditions when the course for the creation of a large ocean navy was already established and the naval forces contained submarines with a sufficiently large cruising range, there was never any real consideration given to the possibility of conducting combat operations in the ocean with even one of them.

These elements of a defensive tendency in the use of naval forces manifested themselves also in the distribution of submarines by theaters. Out of 249 submarines available at that time in the Navy, there were 90 in the Baltic Sea and 51 in the Black Sea, but in the Barents Sea, where the conditions for getting out into the ocean were most favorable, at the beginning of the war there were only 15 submarines.

The result was that the combat capabilities of such a powerful long-range weapon which our Navy already had at its disposal, - its submarines, primarily cruising submarines, were artificially limited, and wittingly so, by the narrow limits of their predominantly tactical use, mainly in nearby regions.

Long before the war our probable enemy was conclusively determined, which provided the possibility for purposeful preparation of all branches of the armed forces and, in adequate time, to coordinate their efforts for battle against a continental country. Nevertheless, combined operations of all branches of the armed forces were given little attention. The necessary unity of views of command personnel of the branches of the armed forces on the principal questions of combined operations of fleets with ground troops on the coastal axes was not attained. Tactical coordination of ships with chasti of ground troops was worked out only in broad outline, and pre parations for making landings were placed in the background.

All this, in the final analysis, had a negative effect on the course of the armed conflict; in a series of instances it was the reason for the non-coordination in operations of ground troops and forces of the fleets at the very time when the direct support of operations on coastal fronts made up the greatest part of the Navy's efforts in all our naval theaters.

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To a great extent the liquidation of central
administrations and fleets, as well as within soyedineniya of ships and
naval shore chast'i, hindered the full scale preparation of the fleets for
the war.

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Great harm was done in the strengthening of the combat might of the Navy in the most important period of its development by the unfounded repression in the period of the Stalin cult of personality, as a consequence of which guiltlessly suffered and perished talented leaders of the Navy such as V. M. ORLOV, M. V. VIKTOROV, I. K. KOZHANOV, K. I. DUSHENOV, R. A. MKLEVICH, G. P. KIREYEV, A. K. SIVKOV, G. S. OKUNEV, many commanders and political workers of soyedineniya and chast'i. New cadres were promoted to their positions without wartime naval combat experience against interventionists. Many of them had not yet been able to acquire the necessary skills in leadership of Navy soyedineniya and ob'yedineniya, which they had to accumulate during the course of the war and not during peacetime. And nevertheless, despite all this, on the whole the combat preparedness of the fleets on the eve of the war was high, which was one of the most important results of the titanic work of the Communist Party in uniting and directing all personnel of the Navy in maintaining each ship and chast' in constant combat readiness.

The maintenance of constant combat readiness in the Navy promoted the introduction from the start of World War II of a new system of combat training which made it possible for ships, chast'i and soyedineniya to work out their training assignments throughout the entire year.

A rather significant factor was the fact that in all our fleets during peacetime conditions a system had been efficiently worked out for putting the forces of the fleets in an unusually high state of combat readiness, and also the fact that all changes in the theaters of operations were being studied and taken into consideration. For this reason various measures of deception used by the German command, in order to hide preparations at the beginning of the war, were unsuccessful. Our fleets noted many of these preparations in sufficient time. In particular it was determined that the number of German transports located in Soviet ports was systematically being reduced. The last German transport departed from Tallin on the night of 21 June, which was only one day from the start of the war. And since fleets noted other changes in the situation on the seas as well, it enabled them to take timely measures of a defensive character. When the Navy received the warning from the National Commissariat about the threat of an immediate enemy attack, all our fleets were quickly able to carry out measures for immediate preparedness for repelling the attack.

The Navy did not lose a single combat ship from the first enemy attack despite the fact that many naval bases were subjected to enemy air attacks during the very first hours of the war. The enemy was not able to attain his most immediate objective - the laying of magnetic mines in regions of

bases to deny egress of our ships to the sea so that he could subsequently destroy our Navy by seizure of the bases from land.

Our fleets in the very first days of the war carried out offensive operations, combining them with the accomplishment of planned defensive measures. Surface ships and aviation of the Black Sea Fleet carried out retaliatory blows on enemy naval forces in the Constantza Naval Base and on the oil industry regions of monarchical Rumania. Submarines of our fleets put to sea to search out and destroy enemy combat ships and transports. Aviation of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet carried out attacks on planes in neighboring air bases which were preparing for mass attacks on Leningrad, and planes of the Northern Fleet attacked enemy communication centers in the region of Petsamo-Kirkenes. The Danube River Flotilla made a number of landings as early as the fourth day of the war and controlled the southern bank of the Danube from Izmail to Pereprava, a distance of 76 kilometers. Ships of the Pinsk Military Flotilla inflicted great damage on the enemy forces in the West Bug River.

There was a day to day increase in the combat activity of our fleets in face to face battles with a strong naval enemy which had at its disposal powerful surface forces and a submarine fleet and was supported by three air fleets and in addition had important strategic advantages. Whereas each of our fleets under the pressure of the developing situation had to operate only in its own theater without any help from other fleets, the enemy had the capability of quickly shifting his forces between theaters, reinforcing the most important axes of advance. Although the main missions of the Fascist-German Navy were directed against the English, French, and subsequently the U.S. Navies, the German command constantly maintained strong forces of ships and aviation in our naval theaters, often reinforcing them at the expense of their ocean forces and the forces in the North Sea.

Thus, in the days of the most intense battles for Leningrad the German command concentrated large forces of surface ships in the Baltic Sea for destruction of our fleet. Such groupings of ships, along with battleships, were also made in the north when the enemy was striving at all costs to break through our outer sea lines of communication. An assault force which included a corps of dive bombers was transferred from the Mediterranean Sea to the Black Sea during the period of the defense of Sevastopol'.

In addition to the German surface ships, submarines and aviation, also constantly operating in our naval theaters were the naval forces of Germany's allies: Norway, Finland, Rumania and Italy.

Despite the fact that our Navy entered the war without combat experience and that the conditions for its employment continued to become more complicated as the result of the loss of a number of naval bases, it

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over a powerful enemy. On the Barents, Baltic and Black Seas, under varied conditions of time and weather our aviation, submarines, surface ships and especially torpedo boats persistently searched out and destroyed the enemy at sea, in coastal waters, in ports and bases.

Along with the unceasing operations against strong enemy naval forces there was an unending battle being waged on the sea lines of communication. During the war our surface ships, aviation, torpedo boats, destroyers, and, in a number of cases, coast artillery destroyed enemy troop transports and freighters. There was hardly a day during the war without some success for our Navy in this mission. Even when it was necessary for the Baltic Fleet submarines to travel along the entire Gulf of Finland, which was literally strewn with mines, in order to attack the enemy's lines of communication, the enemy constantly felt the strong attacks of our Navy. Submarines, aviation and torpedo boats of the Northern Fleet kept the sole route used for reinforcing German troops in Norway and transporting mickel from Pet-samo under constant attack. The Black Sea Fleet also inflicted great losses on enemy shipping.

The effects of the destruction of enemy naval transports on supply, and consequently on the combat capabilities of his troops, can be judged by the fact that one transport of average tonnage (5,000 - 6,000 tons) carried as much freight as could be hauled by no less than 250 railroad cars during the same period of time. If the freight consisted of bombs, then such a ship could carry enough for loading k,750 - 2,000 planes. If the ship was loaded with fuel, then on one trip of an average sized tanker there was enough fuel carried for refueling 1,300 - 1,500 twin-engined or 4,000 - 5,000 single-engined planes, or 8,000 - 10,000 tanks.

As a result of intensified attacks on the enemy's lines of communication during the war our Navy destroyed more than 1,300 transport ships and other transport equipment of the enemy with a total capacity of more than three million tons and sank more than 1,200 enemy combat and auxiliary ships.

During the course of the war the transporting of troops and their protection occupied an important place in the combat operations of our Navy. This was of special importance in the north after the enemy cut off the Murmansk railway and our country established sea transport communications with the Allies. On the Black Sea the Navy forces were vitally important during the period of the defense of Odessa, Sevastopol', the North Caucasus and in the course of the Kerch-Feodosiya landing operation; in the Baltic Sea - during the defense and evacuation of Tallin Khanko and the Moonzundskiye Islands, for the maintenance of communications with the island base in the Gulf of Finland, for the subsequent extension of the front to the west and in the liberation of the Baltic Republics.

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An extremely important mission accomplished by the fleets and flotillas was that of securing the transport of troops and supplies over the frontline waterways, especially over Lake Ladoga during the difficult conditions of the battle of Leningrad, and on the Volga.

IPYRGHT In all our theaters of operation during the war over the interior waterways there were transported more than 100 million tons of various kinds of freight, a considerable portion of which consisted of petroleum and petroleum products. Over the outer sea lanes the Navy transported 17 million tons of freight.

Behind these figures are concealed thousands of combat runs of ships and flights of planes, many hundreds of combat clashes with surface ships and submarines, the repulsion of attacks by many thousands of enemy planes, the negotiating of dense mine belts, the selfless and heroic acts of our sailors who glorified the Soviet Homeland by their feats.

Our Navy did not limit itself by the force of the developing circumstances on the Soviet-German front only to fighting the enemy's naval forces at sea and to operations aimed at the destruction of sea lines of communication. In the difficult conditions of the initial period of the war, when it was a question of the life or death of the Soviet government, our fleets represented powerful striking forces capable of sharply changing the situation along the coastal axes. For this reason they had the responsibility for a significant share in the battle for maintaining the firmness of the coastal flanks of a 2,000 kilometer front extending from the Arctic Ocean to the Black Sea.

And the more complex the situation became on land, the more decisive and active became the operations of our fleets in the fulfillment of strategic missions - the defense of the coastal flanks of ground troops, large naval bases, administrative and political centers and ports.

The Northern Fleet, by the attacks of its ships and planes against enemy dispositions striving to get to Murmansk, by its amphibious landings, by the operations of naval infantry on the shore and by the destruction of naval transports, played a decisive role in breaking the offensive of the enemy on the northern wing of the Soviet-German front. Everything that the Northern Fleet then had available was directed at the land front and only because of this were our troops, consisting of slightly more than one rifle division, able to stop the penetration of an enemy mountain-chaussure corps on the distant approaches to Murmansk. This had an exceptionally important operational-strategic and military-political significance: the retention of the ice-free port of Murmansk and the naval base of Polyarnoye made possible the use of the shortest sea route for connecting the Soviet Union with the outside world. This also provided the Northern Fleet with capability of successfully defending its lines of communication, of attacking the sea lines of communication of the enemy

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and operating with the ground troops first in the defense and afterwards on the offensive. Rear Adm. G. GEROVKO, commander of the fleet, had a considerable role in these operations.

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The Red Banner Baltic Fleet, which was under the command of V. R. TRIBUTS during the war, in the most critical period of the battle on the near approaches to Leningrad provided exceptionally great help to the heroic city, defending, along with the troops, Tallin, the Moonzundskiye Islands and the Khanko Naval Base, pinning down in these regions 100,000 of the enemy forces.

The firmness of the defense of the City of Lenin, especially at the beginning of its siege, to a very great extent can be attributed to the operations of the Baltic Fleet in assuring the retention of the Oraniyenbaum base of operations.

The powerful long-range naval guns of the Fleet served as a reliable fire shield and were the basis of the defense of the near approaches to the heroic city. Its striking power was supplemented by the stubbornness of the Baltic chasti of naval infantry in the defense, the irresistible counterattacks of the sailors and by the daring operations of the naval landing personnel.

The decisive operations of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet, its operations together with the ground troops and aviation in the heroic defense of Leningrad frustrated the enemy's plans to use the Baltic Sea as an important line of communications for supplying his "North" and "Center" Groups of Armies operating on the Soviet front.

The successful and prolonged resistance in the deep rear of the enemy in the Odessa defensive region, the garrison of which consisted to a considerable extent of Black Sea sailors commanded by Rear Adm G. V. ZHUKOV, was only possible due to its support by the aviation of the Fleet, by the ships' guns, and by the continuous supply to the besieged city of troops, ammunition and other necessities for the defense by ships and craft of the Black Sea Fleet.

The heroic defense of Odessa, which pinned down almost the entire Rumanian Army for almost two months and cost them heavy losses, stemmed the movement of the southern wing of the "South" Group of Armies and disrupted the strategic plans of Hitler's command at the beginning of the war.

Later on, when the defense of Odessa lost its strategic significance, the Black Sea Fleet evacuated the Primorskaya Army to Crimea where it played a significant part in the defense of Sevastopol'.

In the defense of Sevastopol', unexampled in heroism and duration, with the decisive role played by the Black Sea Fleet, a 300,000-man enemy

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force was halted by the stubborn battle. It excluded from the striking forces of the Wehrmacht which was developing an attack to the south under conditions most unfavorable for us. The retention of Sevastopol' in our hands also prevented the enemy from using the sea route in the Sea of Azov for supplying his South Group of Armies and prevented a breakthrough of the Fascist troops to the ports of the Northern Caucasus.

The heroic defense of Sevastopol' will remain in history as an example of the courage of the Black Sea sailors, of their combat coordination with troops of other branches of the armed forces, of their wholehearted loyalty to their Homeland. And in this considerable role were played by the Commander of the Black Sea Fleet, Vice Adm F. S. OKTYABR'SKIY, and the Commander of the Primorskaya Army, Maj Gen I. E. PETROV.

In the developing battle for the Caucasus the threat of its capture by the enemy became very real and in connection with this there was an abrupt change in the political situation on the Black Sea - the possibility of the entry into the war of Turkey, which was displaying a wait-and-see attitude. The fate of the Black Sea Fleet depended on the retention by the Army of the Caucasian coast. However, the stability of the ground troops defending the coastal regions in the Caucasus, in their turn, could only be secured by the operations of the Fleet. The Black Sea Fleet was thus faced with a new strategic mission - to secure the stability of coastal forces of the Black Sea forces of the Transcaucasus front. And this mission was successfully accomplished.

An exceptionally important role in the support of the ground troops on the coastal axes was played by the daring and decisive operations of the Fleets' air forces, which, in numbers, not infrequently exceeded the combat strength of air armies of fronts, and whose personnel were highly skilled in combat flying. Chasti of naval aviation successfully destroyed the enemy's planes on the ground, routed his reserves, and provided direct support to the shore-based troops.

Pilots of the Baltic Fleet under the command of Col Ye. N. PREOBRAZHENSKIY (subsequently Hero of the Soviet Union and Col Gen of Aviation) carried out air strikes against Berlin for the first time in August 1941.

Participating with its basic forces in the defense of large coastal administrative-political and military-economic centers, in the first months of the war the Navy sent about 40,000 officers, petty officers and seamen, well prepared graduates of naval service schools, to the land fronts. The 25 brigades of naval infantry which they formed distinguished themselves by their exceptionally fine combat qualities.

In the most critical period of the battle of Moscow, seven naval rifle brigades were included in the troops of the Western Front. Fearless in

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missions, inspired the personnel of other branches of the armed forces to heroic feats. The commanders of sovedineniya of ground troops were exceptionally high in their praise of the combat qualities of the combat seamen. Thus, speaking of the Guards chast' of Captain First Rank SUKHIASHVILI, Maj Gen A. I. LIZYUKOV remarked with pride that, "compared with its endurance and tenacity the glory of many famous exploits of earlier Guards' units is eclipsed."

The chief of the pilot section of the First Assault Army, Brigade Commissar LISITSYN, more than once emphasized that "the sailors are our best component. They are brave, resourceful and disciplined fighters. The Fascists fear the sailors." "Once," he related, "I had occasion to interrogate a German officer. He was very defiant, repeating endlessly: 'Our army is invincible, our army is the best in the world.' When I told him: 'What the devil kind of fighters are you when one platoon of sailors routed a battalion and occupied a village,' he jumped up from the chair and shouted, 'Oh, those rabble of yours, damn them. I have fought through many European countries and was victorious everywhere. Those men are a different breed. They have stigmatized me and my men forever.'"

In all, the Navy provided 390,000 men to the Red Army, not counting the approximately 100,000 naval infantrymen in chast' of the fleets and flotillas who participated in the defense of naval bases and islands and in naval landings.

With the winning of the strategic initiative by the Soviet Armed Forces the cooperation with coastal troops continued to remain one of the most important missions of the Navy. The scale of operations carried on by the Fleets increased, but the conditions under which they were conducted became complicated because of the sharp deterioration of the strategic position of our Fleets back in 1941. And, despite this, they proceeded with the accomplishment of new responsible missions to the full measure of their strength and capabilities. For the Red Banner Baltic Fleet this amounted to participation of its aviation, naval rail and long-range ships' armament as well as brigades of naval infantry in the breakthrough of the Leningrad blockade, transporting of large contingents of troops to the Oraniyenbaun assembly area, carrying out amphibious landings, air strikes and artillery fire against shore-based enemy units, and increasing the scope of operations against sea lines of communication aimed at the destruction of troop transports participating in the evacuation of Libya, Memel, Swinemunde (Swinoujscie) and other ports.

The Black Sea Fleet's landing operation at Novorossiysk laid the foundation for the liquidation of the enemy's Taman' beachhead. This also made possible the forces crossing of the Kerch Strait and the seizure of a beachhead on the Crimea for the assembly of the Separate Primorskiy Army. This was followed by naval operations which cut off the escape route of

German troops from the Crimea, and by a large number of amphibious landings which accelerated the liberation of the southern regions of our country and the territories of Bulgaria and Rumania.

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The Northern Fleet made a great contribution to the overall effort of the route of the enemy in Karelia and in the liberation of northern Norway. As a result of its amphibious landings and the combined action of ground troops the Pechenga region was liberated and Pechenga and Kirkenes captured. During defensive battles and offensive operations of the ground troops on the coastal axes, our Fleets, using various combat ships and craft poorly adapted for the landing of troops made more than 110 amphibious landings involving a total of 250,000 men.

It is appropriate to mention here that the fascist German Navy, having at its disposal specially designed landing ships and having acquired combat experience in conducting large amphibious and airborne landings in Norway and on the island of Crete, limited itself to weak-hearted and, moreover, unsuccessful attempts at making small amphibious landings on Lake Ladoga and in the Gulf of Finland. And this was, assuredly, the result of the active operations of our Fleets in all theaters of operations.

The securing of the inland water lines of communication and the support of ground troops was greatly aided by the Military Flotillas: Azov, Ladoga, Onega, White Sea, Volga, Danube, Dnieper, and others, formed during wartime. The operations of the White Sea Military Flotilla were especially notable, guaranteeing the functioning throughout the war of the lines of communication connecting our northern ports with Novaya Zemlya and protecting the ships and convoys sailing the Northern Route. The Ladoga Military Flotilla protected the "lifetime" - the sole route connecting besieged Leningrad with the rest of the country. The Caspian Flotilla reliably defended our primary "petroleum" line of communication on the Caspian Sea.

The sailors of the Danube Military Flotilla fought their way in pitched battles 2,000 kilometers up the Danube. Its combat colors are decorated with the Orders of the Red Banner, Kutuzov and Nakhimov for participation in the liberation of six European countries from the Fascist yoke.

The Dnieper Flotilla fought its way along the Pripet, Berezina, West Bug and Vistula Rivers, along the canals of Poland and Germany and ended up on the Spree River in the Berlin operation.

During the entire war the forces of the River Flotillas alone ferried more than 2.5 million men during the forcing of large water obstacles.

The brief but offensive-operation-filled combat activity of the Pacific Fleet, (commanded by Admiral I. S. YUMASHEV), the North-Pacific and Amur Military Flotillas played an important role in the quick capture by our

ports of the southern part of Sakhalin, the Kurile Islands and a number of Korean ports and in the movement of our troops into the deep interior of Manchuria.

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In the postwar period much work has been done abroad on the history of the Second World War. Their authors often strive to diminish the role of the Soviet Union, its Armed Forces, and particularly the Navy in winning the victory over fascism. They viciously criticize the so-called "Russian viewpoint" on the conduct of naval warfare attempting to prove that in the past war our Navy allegedly did not conduct any naval operations, but limited itself to the accomplishment of frequent tactical missions in support of ground troops. Such an approach to the appraisal of the combat activities of our Navy is, to say the least, superficial. Behind it is hidden a reluctance to acknowledge that the Soviet Navy throughout the entire war fulfilled, under complicated conditions, exceptionally important strategic and operational missions which were dictated by the requirements of the armed struggle in the main theater of the Second World War, that is, on the Soviet-German front.

The Soviet Navy assured the Firmness of the strategic flanks of the ground troops and their comprehensive support in defensive and offensive operations, and it successfully accomplished its combat missions at sea defeating the naval might of the enemy on the Barents, Baltic, Black and Japan Seas. It fully justified the faith of the Soviet people and fulfilled its obligation to the Homeland.

The experience of the Great Patriotic War once again confirmed the correctness of the basic position of our military doctrine, that victory in battle with a powerful enemy can be won only by the combined efforts of all branches of the armed forces and by their close coordination, that even in a battle with a continental enemy, the Navy plays an important part. Only by the combined efforts of full-blooded, well prepared, prudently deployed and thoroughly supplied forces can the military might of an aggressor be broken and complete victory achieved.

From the very beginning of the war our Navy was faced with many great problems of the technical and operational-tactical plan. It was necessary in the shortest possible time under conditions of strenuous armed conflict not only to eliminate peacetime deficiencies, but also to accomplish the most urgent missions connected with the conduct of combat operations.

And it should be stated that the admirals and officers of our Navy were equal to the demands made upon them by the war. Perfected methods were found for employing naval forces in offensive and defensive operations in combination with ground troops. Practically speaking, the organization and methods of carrying out landing operations with poorly adapted equipment

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were developed, new tactics were created for submarines and many problems regarding the defense of bases from the land were solved, in addition to problems dealing with the organization of coordination, the control of forces, and the safeguarding of their activities.

During the war new artillery systems, mines and minesweeping weapons, radar and sonar equipment were developed and installed on ships. Soviet industry produced a sufficient quantity of shells, torpedoes, mines, anti-submarine depth bombs and other combat and technical equipment to supply the Navy. However, whereas the production of planes, tanks, guns and other combat materiel was fast and increased consistently to fill the basic requirements of the frontline, the replacement of losses in ships, as a result of the loss of several of our shipbuilding plants and for a number of other reasons, was a considerably more complicated matter.

During the war, for the most part, small combat ships and boats were built. Even during the conditions of the Leningrad blockade small gunboats, minesweepers, submarine chasers and tenders were built. Despite the fact that the ships which made up the basic complement of the Fleets were not renovated during the war and were becoming obsolete, all our Fleets ended the war with a sufficiently great combat capability and did not lose their priority position in their theaters of operation.

Drawing on the experience of the past war's operations made possible the accomplishment of a serious step forward in the perfecting of naval armament and aviation. And although this experience was taken into account in the development of a new material-technical base for the Navy, or fundamental changes in the trend of future development of the Navy took place. Just as before, preference was given to the construction of surface ships with large caliber guns, and in the views regarding the use of naval aviation there were still the predominantly defensive tendencies.

Such a situation is explained by the fact that our Navy acquired its combat experience in a continental war, the decisive battle of which took place on land. And our military thought of that time, correlating the experience of that war, continued to be guided by former concepts that the basic purpose of the Navy consisted of cooperating with ground troops on the coastal axes and of defending the shoreline from attacks from the sea. Not the least position in the development of these views were the erroneous opinions of several combat commanders who considered that a battle with modern naval forces of an enemy could be fought without relying on the strength of naval forces. They considered that even amphibious landings in modern conditions could be made by use of the amphibious equipment of ground troops alone. The dissemination of these incorrect views formed part of the basis for the slow evolution in this area of our military thought after the end of the war, which, of course, could not help but have an effect on the trend of naval development and the operational and combat preparedness right up to the middle of the 1950's

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Meanwhile, by this time certain changes in the disposition of forces in the international arena and in the armed forces of different countries as well. Whereas before World War II the imperialist camp was opposed by the only socialist government in the world - the Soviet Union, at the end of the war there emerged, grew and rapidly developed the collaboration of the socialist governments - the great camp of socialism.

In the Great Patriotic War the Soviet Army and Navy opposed a continental enemy, the military might of which was determined primarily by the strength of its ground troops. Now, however, against the socialist bloc are deployed armed forces of aggressive military blocs in which the dominating position is occupied by the so-called naval powers. In their armed forces the navies are allotted the primary role. The navies of this coalition of governments, primarily the U.S., England, and sometimes France, have a large concentration of nuclear power and they are earmarked for carrying out strategic missions in a new war being prepared by the imperialists against the Soviet Union and countries of the socialist camp friendly to it. At the present time, for example, the surface ships and submarines of the U. S. Navy carry about one-third of the strategic nuclear weapons, and by 1970 it is proposed to increase this amount to one-half of all the strategic nuclear-rocket potential of the American Armed Forces. The advantages of mobile carriers of nuclear weapons over stationary launching sites are generally well known.

The imperialists of the U.S. thrust plans for the creation of versatile nuclear forces upon their NATO partners by means of which they intend to grant primarily seaborne nuclear weapons to the Bonn revanchists.

Never before in the sphere of naval operations has such a striking force been concentrated, and never before were the aggressive forces so favorably situated or had such great hopes of the possibility of attaining with the help of the Navy important strategic results in a short time as at present. For this reason operations in the naval theaters of a war, if the imperialists unleash it, will have paramount strategic significance, as a result of which they will begin to show ever-increasing influence on the overall course and outcome of the armed struggle. They will compose an important part of the efforts of the armed forces in the destruction of the aggressor and they will be conducted in strict coordination with the operations in other spheres of the armed struggle, for only by the common efforts of all branches of the armed forces can the might of the enemy be shattered and victory won.

On the other hand, the military and economic might of the coalition of aggressive imperialistic governments to a great extent depends on sea and ocean lines of communication, which also increases the role of the naval theaters. And in this also may be demonstrated a basic change in

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the conditions of the armed struggle in comparison with those which prevailed at the beginning of the Great Patriotic War and had a manifestly continental character.

In contemporary conditions the role of the navy is considerably increased even in peacetime. In the economics of countries of the socialist camp the importance of the peaceful use of the seas and oceans acquires ever greater significance. The fishing fleets are increasing. Peaceful trade is being developed which calls for rapid development of the Soviet merchant fleet. This also dictates the necessity for further reinforcing the naval power of our country for the reliable protection of the governmental interests of the Soviet Union on the seas and oceans.

In spite of the erroneous views on the significance and course of development of the Navy existing in the post war years, the Central Committee of the Party on the basis of scientifically determined trends of development of science and technology worked out in the middle of the 1950's new courses for the construction of the Armed Forces, including also the Navy. Its role and place in the defense of the country were reconsidered.

Nuclear-rocket weapons introduced into the armament caused a revolution in the conduct of war. And by the will of the Party one of the first branches of the armed forces in which deep-rooted, fundamental, in fact revolutionary reorganizations were begun was our Navy.

Soviet shipbuilders created atomic submarines and these rightfully occupy the role as the main striking force of our Navy. Naval aviation was reorganized. Equipping it with rocket-carrying jet planes with great flight range increased its striking power many times. The fleets have been resupplied with new multi-purpose surface ships capable of operating successfully in a nuclear war. Our Navy has landing ships. Naval infantry has been created. Shore units have been equipped with rockets.

In conformity with the modern technological base of the Navy, the nuclear-rocket weapons and the conditions of armed combat on the sea, new methods of utilizing its power in a nuclear war have been developed. The organization, combat preparedness and the training of command cadres have been carried out in conformity with modern military doctrine.

As a result of this a well-balanced Navy has been created. In a short period of time, the leading role in which is played by the submarine forces and naval aviation, both equipped with nuclear-rocket weapons. In the last 10-15 years it has become a fully modern navy capable of accomplishing strategic missions of an offensive character in a nuclear war.

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At the present time our Navy is a powerful force capable of reliably protecting the governmental interests of the Soviet Union on the seas and oceans and in coordination with other branches of the armed forces, of inflicting a decisive defeat on an aggressor if he should dare unleash a war against the Soviet Union and socialist countries friendly to it.

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One of the characteristic features of the Great Patriotic War was that the Soviet Armed Forces were opposed throughout its duration not only by the main mass of Hitlerite Germany's ground troops, but also by a large share of her air forces. Operating as the main forces in the interest of ground troops support, the fascist German air force at the same time tried to conduct massive raids on our administrative and political centers, important industrial and economic objectives, and railroad lines. The enemy tried with air strikes to disrupt mobilization measures, isolate the active army from the rear of the country, and undermine the economic potential of the Soviet state and the morale of the population. It has been definitely established that during the war there were nearly 304,000 enemy aircraft flights in the country's target areas, conducted primarily for the purpose of bombing or reconnaissance. This was approximately 21 percent of the total number of enemy aircraft flights on the Soviet-German front.

Naturally, the combat activities of PVO Strany Troops, which defended Soviet cities, important enterprises, and communications networks and installations from air attacks, were strategically important and were an integral part of the efforts of the armed forces in routing the fascist German invaders.

In executing their combat missions, PVO Strany Troops destroyed more than 7,300 enemy aircraft during the war, more than 10 percent of all German air force losses on the eastern front. It should also be noted that their antiaircraft artillery participated in repulsing enemy tank attacks on the approaches to Kiev and Dnepetrovsk, Leningrad and Moscow, Tula and Voronezh, Volgograd, and a number of other cities. PVO Strany soyedineniya and chasty were often used to support front and army operations and to isolate encircled enemy groupings.

However, the contribution of PVO Strany Troops to the common victory over the enemy was not at all limited to those losses which they inflicted on enemy air and ground forces. PVO Strany Troops must also be credited with successfully repelling the majority of air raids; preserving such important centers of the country as Moscow, Leningrad, and many others; and keeping the railroads, by which the fronts were supplied, in operation. These results, which cannot be expressed quantitatively, are apparently more important in their military and political significance than the direct losses inflicted on the enemy by PVO troops.

Among the measures for increasing the defensive might of the Soviet state which were conducted by resolution of the Communist Party on the eve of the Great Patriotic War, work on the creation of a reliable air

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defense for the country occupied an important place. The necessity of developing and improving it was connected with the growing significance of the economic and moral potential in the war and the real danger that the numerically strong air forces at the disposal of the aggressive states would have an effect on that potential. A strong and thoroughly prepared air defense was regarded as one of the most important conditions for preserving the stability, productiveness, and high activity of the rear of the country and its ability to ensure the conduct of intense and prolonged military operations against a strong enemy under conditions where aircraft would be massively used. Moreover, air defense was also assigned the role of a shield which would have to provide air cover for the mobilizational deployment of the armed forces at the beginning of the war. All these fundamental positions were reflected in Soviet military doctrine of the pre-war period and, correspondingly, in the practice of military construction.

PVO Strany Troops were rather rapidly developed in the years preceding the Great Patriotic War. New chastis and soyedineniya were created and obsolete armament was gradually replaced by more improved equipment.

Immediately before the war, in 1940-1941, fighter aviation began to receive Yak-1, Mig-3, and Lagg-3 fighters, which were not inferior in performance characteristics to the best models of foreign fighters of the day. The armament of antiaircraft artillery chastis was renovated. They received 85 and 37 millimeter antiaircraft guns, which were accurate, rapid-firing, and highly maneuverable; and the new PUAZO-3 antiaircraft director. Aircraft warning service troops (VNOS) received new models of radar detection stations -- the RUS-1 and RUS-2.

However, the quantity of new armament and combat equipment in the troops at the beginning of the war was not great. Up to 90 percent of the aircraft fleet of fighter aviation was composed of obsolete I-16, I-153, and I-15 fighters. Two-thirds of the medium caliber antiaircraft guns were due for replacement. The air observation system was almost wholly based on visual observation. In June 1941, PVO troops had only 34 radar detection stations, and 28 of them were of the very imperfect RUS-1 type. They could determine only the fact that a target had intersected a definite line. Only 20-25 percent of air warning service chastis were provided with radio communications equipment. The number of fighters in the troops was 40 percent below full-strength, antiaircraft guns -- 15-30 percent, antiaircraft machine guns -- 30 percent, and searchlights and barrage balloons were nearly 50 percent below full strength.

The allotment and disposition of PVO manpower and equipment was subordinated to the task of providing cover for objectives in the country's territory within the range of enemy aircraft. PVO Troops covered almost all the most important industrial and economic centers and railroad

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junctions along the western border to 200-500 kilometers. In
along the Transcaucasus sector of the border to 200-500 kilometers. In
PYRGHT the center of the country, Moscow had a strong air defense.

At the beginning of 1941 all territory that was under threat of air attack was divided into air defense zones which coincided territorially with corresponding military districts. The air defense zones were divided into air defense regions which usually included several air defense points. Overall direction of air defense on a nation-wide scale was exerted by the Main Administration of PVO (Glavnoye upravleniye PVO), which was subordinated to the Peoples Commissar of Defense, and which was in charge of the problems of planning, operational employment, accounting, armament, and combat training of PVO troops. As for the air defense zones, they were to be controlled by the commanders of military districts through subordinate zone commanders.

The creation of PVO zones brought about a definite order in the organization of air defense and increased the responsibility of military district commands for covering objectives in the country and for the combat training and supplying of PVO soyedineniya and chasty. But it had no effect at all on the forms of operational and combat employment of PVO troops. The zone commander and his apparatus did not have the technical facilities for controlling troops in the course of a battle. Moreover, in the PVO zones only PVO ground forces -- anti-aircraft artillery, anti-aircraft machine guns, searchlights, and barrage balloons -- were united in an organized manner. Fighter aviation was subordinate to the zone commander only operationally, and in all other aspects was subordinate to the commander of air forces.

The main efforts of PVO troops were concentrated for covering the most important targets. Thus, more than 40 percent of all medium caliber anti-aircraft batteries and significant forces of fighter aviation were involved in the defense of the three most important centers of the country -- Moscow, Leningrad, and Baku. A perimeter defense using various PVO forces and means, which were echeloned in depth, was organized for covering the major objectives.

All problems of combating the air enemy, including detection by reconnaissance means, interception by fighters, and firing by anti-aircraft means, were resolved independently within the framework of PVO objectives and points. The possibility of receiving help from soyedineniya and chasty which were covering other objectives in the course of repulsing an air raid was almost totally excluded, owing to the absence of effective means of reconnaissance and control and the rather limited range of fighters. Therefore, the air defense system of the pre-war period basically had a strongly pronounced center or point nature.

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command and engineer-technical cadres. The oldest academies -- the Academy imeni Frunze, the Artillery Academy imeni Dzerzhinskiy, and the Electrotechnical Academy -- were drawn into the training of highly qualified commanders and engineers for air defense. However, the leading nucleus of PVO troops on the eve of the war was considerably weakened by the massive repressions associated with the cult of Stalin. Leaders of the PVO administration of the Workers and Peasants Red Army -- Army Commander 2d Rank A. I. Sedyakin and Col Gen G. M. Shtern; many PVO division and corps commanders; and also prominent scientists, among whom was the outstanding designer of the first radar stations -- P. Oshepkov, were victims of the purge.

At the beginning of the Great Patriotic War our country had on the whole fairly well developed air defense that basically corresponded to the level of development of the means of air attack. It possessed a considerable quantity of manpower and equipment which were ready to combat the air enemy in daylight. However, the capability of PVO Troops to repulse surprise air attacks and to conduct combat operations at night or in poor weather were severely limited due to the almost total absence of radar equipment. Their level of combat training in no way corresponded to the seriousness of the situation. Re-armament of PVO chastis was in full swing in June 1941. Many chastis which had received new equipment did not have enough ammunition for it and, naturally, had not sufficiently mastered it in practice.

Hitlerite Germany's treacherous attack on the Soviet Union put the troops of border military districts, including border PVO zones, in an extremely difficult position. The delay in reaching the decision to put the armed forces into combat readiness and the inefficient transmission of the appropriate orders led to the fact that the massive intrusion into our air space by enemy aircraft at the dawn of 22 June 1941 was for many chastis and soyedineniya situated along the border completely unexpected. They frequently engaged the air enemy only after bombs were already exploding in the vicinity of the objectives being covered. Many antiaircraft artillery chastis were in camps or at firing ranges at the beginning of the war. The complexity of the situation was particularly aggravated by the fact that the fascist German air force strikes on airfields put out of commission a considerable share of the Soviet fighters which were based along the border. The main burden in repulsing the air raids under these conditions was carried by antiaircraft artillery, which in addition had to engage enemy infantry and tanks.

Deployment of air defense was accomplished in different periods of time after the war began. In the strip directly adjacent to the western border (to a depth of 200-250 kilometers), antiaircraft artillery chastis took up their positions on the morning of 22 June. In the depth of the country deployment of antiaircraft artillery was completed somewhat later.

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15, however, available in the defense of Moscow, 102 had taken up firing positions by 1900 hours on 22 June. By 1800 hours on 23 June, that is 37 hours after receiving the order, the entire air defense system of the capital had been put into readiness for repelling the enemy raids. Leningrad PVO chastis were completely deployed by mid-day on 22 June. However, the formation of new chastis occurred 2-3 days later than called for in the mobilization plans. On the whole the deployment of air defense in border zones and in the vicinity of Moscow and Baku was accomplished in 2-3 days and in the area east of Moscow in a longer period of time.

The combat actions of PVO Troops in repelling enemy aircraft raids in the first hours of the war were unprecedented in scope and ferocity. They were deployed along a front from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea to a depth of 250-300 kilometers. The Germany command used three-fourths of its combat aircraft (3,900 planes) for the attack on the Soviet Union. In addition, Germany's satellites -- Rumania and Finland -- had nearly 1,000 aircraft. PVO troops withstood the powerful enemy air force strikes and basically succeeded in preserving the objectives being covered and in maintaining their combat efficiency. In repelling enemy aircraft raids, which were chiefly directed against airfields, groupings of ground troops and railroad centers in the front sector, PVO troops inflicted heavy losses on the enemy. For example, pilots and antiaircraft gunners of PVO chastis covering the city of Kiev destroyed 93 German aircraft in the first five days of the war. Chastis of the 4th PVO division, which was defending L'vov, shot down 25 enemy bombers in the same period of time, and chastis of the 11th PVO brigade (located in the defense of the oil region of Dragobych -- Borislav) downed 15 aircraft. PVO Troops selflessly combated enemy air and, frequently, ground forces on other axes and objectives also, weakening enemy forces with their blows.

As the Soviet troops withdrew, the zone of fascist German air force operations was extended more and more to the east. In this connection, the air defense of Moscow and Leningrad and objectives in the Donbass and Zaporozh'ya regions, and coverage for important bridges on the Volga was organized as early as June - July 1941 by resolution of the State Defense Committee.

PVO soyedineniya and chastis located in the depth of the country, right up to the Volga River and in places farther east, were gradually included in the struggle against Hitler's air forces.

Subsequently, air defense for the large industrial centers along the Volga and for the Volga waterways was created. The organization of air defense for Ural objectives was begun in 1942-1943. However, because of the sharp turn in the course of the war, this work was suspended.

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PVO Strany Troops carried out widely varied missions in various stages of the war. They covered cities and railroad stations, sea and river ports, airfields, power stations, bridges, dams, and locks. They escorted trains and ships. They participated in covering attacking and defending forces. They provided landing operations and conducted other operations. However, throughout the war they had two main missions: defense of the important industrial and economic centers and objectives, and cover for railroad lines of communication near the front lines.

The first of these played the dominant role. From 60 to 90 percent of fighter aviation and medium caliber antiaircraft artillery, from one-third to two-thirds of small caliber antiaircraft artillery, and the overwhelming majority of antiaircraft searchlights and barrage balloons participated at various periods of the war in the defense of the country's large cities and important industrial objectives.

The combat activities of PVO Strany Troops in repulsing fascist German air force raids on Moscow, Leningrad, and Volgograd were particularly sharp and intense. It was in attacking these objectives that Hitler's air force acted in the greatest numbers, with great persistence and tenacity, employing the most varied tactics and methods. In these battles against the attacking air force, PVO Strany Troops revealed most distinctly the strong and weak aspects of our air defense and the errors and shortcomings in its organization, supply, and training. The most appreciable enemy air force losses were inflicted here, which to a certain degree enabled our air force to gain strategic supremacy in the air.

The air defense of Moscow was a classic example of a strongly developed, powerful system for covering a huge center, where the idea of massive employment of forces and means was conducted with the greatest continuity and realized with the greatest effect. By the time of the first raid (22 July 1941), 602 fighters, 1,050 medium and small caliber antiaircraft cannons, and 336 antiaircraft machine guns were counted in the defense of the capital. (Archives of the Ministry of Defense, f 741, op 708648, d 1, L 19) Subsequently, the number of antiaircraft weapons in the Moscow PVO system nearly doubled. The general depth of the defense with regard to the basing of fighter aircraft reached 200 kilometers, which ensured cover for the main objectives of the entire Moscow industrial region. No other large city, either at home or abroad, had such a powerful cover during the whole of World War II.

For more than four months in a row (from 22 July to the end of November 1941), the fascist German air force tried to make systematic air raids on Moscow, alternating massive attacks with operations by small groups. However, they met very strong resistance from fighter aircraft and antiaircraft artillery each time on the way to the target, which was an insurmountable barrier for the majority of the attacking aircraft.

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Of the 3,800 enemy aircraft which entered the zone of the capital's antiaircraft fire during the war, approximately 250, that is 7 percent, made it to the city. To all intents and purposes this signified the downfall of the widely publicized air attack by Hitler's Luftwaffe. The enemy air force, despite enormous efforts, did not succeed in causing substantial damage, nor did it disorganize the life of the capital as the political and military center of the country, even when it was in the position of a front-line city. In this connection it is to the point to note that the English air defense could not handle a comparable mission in the fall of 1940. The massive raids by the German air force on London in September and October of 1940 (the so-called big blitz) completely disrupted life in the capital of England. Because of the bombings, 1.5 million Londoners were evacuated to the countryside. As a result of the raids, nearly 50,000 people were killed in two months, and many times more were wounded. More than a million homes were destroyed or seriously damaged (New Times, No 7, 14 February 1964, p 27).

The best air squadrons, which had participated in bombing cities in Poland, England, France, and Belgium, were rendered ineffective on the approaches to Moscow. In all, 738 enemy aircraft were shot down by the PVO troops defending Moscow. In addition, PVO fighter planes covering troops in the battlefield on the Western Front and striking airfields destroyed 567 enemy aircraft. 1,300 destroyed enemy aircraft -- such was the result of the bitter fighting by PVO troops against the enemy air forces in the historic battle for Moscow. In battles on the closest approaches to Moscow, PVO sovedineniya and chasty by their operations were a great help to the ground troops in foiling enemy attempts to conquer the city.

The air defense of Leningrad was accomplished in an exceptionally complex and unusual situation. Having failed in its attempts to storm the city, the fascist German command in the fall of 1941 drew on its air forces for barbaric bombing of blockaded Leningrad. The directive issued for this purpose read as follows: 'The Fuehrer has decided to wipe the city of Petersburg off the face of the earth. It is planned to blockade the city tightly and by shelling it with artillery of all calibers and by continuous bombing from the air to level it to the ground.' (Nyurinbergskiy protsess, Sbornik materialoy v dvukh tomakh (The Nuremberg Trials, A Collection of Materials in Two Volumes), vol I, 3d edition, State Publishing House of Juridical Literature, 1955, p 783) Especially difficult were the first months of the blockade, when enemy aircraft methodically tried to bomb the city day after day, operating at times in large numbers, sometimes in small groups, and sometimes by single aircraft. PVO Strany Troops, together with antiaircraft chasty and the Air Forces of the Baltic Fleet and the Leningrad Front, used every possibility to repulse the raids. During September, when enemy aircraft were operating in daylight hours, PVO forces successfully parried the massive blows. However, they could not effectively combat the air enemy

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there were very few night fighters at that time. In October and November 1941, when the enemy began to operate at night, 720 aircraft out of the 840 participating in the raids penetrated to the city. The greatest amount of fires and destruction occurred in these months as a result of the enemy bombings. In succeeding months the effectiveness of the air defense of Leningrad considerably increased as a result of improved combat and logistics support for the troops, increased numbers of fighters capable of night combat, and improved methods for vectoring them.

In covering the city from the air, PVO Strany Troops, in cooperation with PVO chasty and Air Forces of the Leningrad Front and the Baltic Fleet, repulsed during the war 272 fascist German air force raids and destroyed 1,561 enemy planes on the ground and in the air. In addition, in defending the lines of communication by which Leningrad was supplied with provisions, weapons, and ammunition during the blockade, PVO soyedineniya together with fighters of the front and the fleet shot down 591 aircraft. Having successfully warded off the greatest share of enemy strikes, PVO saved the most important objectives of Leningrad, ships of the Baltic Fleet, and kept in uninterrupted operation the "road of life" which connected blockaded Leningrad with the country.

At the forefront of the struggle against the German fascist invaders in the period of decisive events were the PVO troops covering Volgograd. At the end of August 1942 they were the first to engage the German tanks which had broken through to the approaches to the city and simultaneously to repulse the massive strikes by Hitler's air forces, which were unprecedented in numbers.

In the first days of the battle on the Volga, German bombers literally hung over the city. They made 800, 1,000, and 2,000 sorties per day for bombing the city. The Stalingrad air defense region, defending an objective more than 60 kilometers long, had approximately 80 fighters and 500 antiaircraft guns in all to counter these forces.

In the unequal fighting, PVO troops did not succeed in protecting the city from the destructive bombings, despite the massive heroism of personnel. However, the enemy was forced to pay a costly price for the raids on the objective and the troops defending it. From July to December 1942, 709 German aircraft were destroyed by PVO Strany chasty.

In the course of the defensive battle, chasty of the air defense region together with front aircraft and army antiaircraft artillery covered the combat formations of the 62d Army, Volga crossings, and sectors of the railroad by which Volgograd troops were supplied, thereby augmenting the defense and preparing conditions for a counterattack. In the final stage of the battle on the Volga, PVO Strany Troops chasty participated in isolating from the air an encircled enemy grouping, numbering

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Those PVO troops who covered large industrial and economic centers and objectives in the depth of the country also made an important contribution to victory over the enemy. Reliable protection from air attack was one of the factors enabling our economy to achieve superiority over Hitlerite Germany in the field of military production.

Air defense for routes of communications was the second most important mission for PVO Strany Troops. From one-tenth to one-third of all fighters and medium caliber antiaircraft guns and from one-fourth to one half of all small caliber antiaircraft guns and machine guns were used to accomplish this purpose in various stages of the war. The combat activities of PVO Strany Troops in covering railroads in the Great Patriotic War was very closely associated with the course of combat operations of ground troops and basically consisted of protecting front routes of communications from air strikes to a depth of 300-500 kilometers from the front line. Beyond the boundaries of the front strip, only bridges crossing large rivers (Volga, Don, Dnepr), and also certain important objectives on the main lines leading to Moscow were covered.

This was necessitated by two circumstances. First, the greatest amount of German air force activity throughout the war occurred over the battlefield and in the front strip. Correspondingly, in this strip were concentrated the main efforts of front PVO soyedineniya, the boundaries of responsibility for which closely bordered the front lines. Secondly, ob'yedineniya of our ground troops at times did not have sufficient forces and means for covering important objectives of the operational rear. Therefore, the Supreme Command assigned to PVO Strany Troops part of the missions for covering front objectives, particularly front railroads.

While covering important front lines of communications, PVO Strany Troops in certain cases waged bitter combat operations which in scope were not inferior to the air battles for Moscow. Characteristic in this respect were the battles in the region of the Kursk staging area. In May and June 1943 alone, the German air forces made about 4,300 sorties for the purpose of bombing the railroad lines by which troops of the Central and Voronezh Fronts were supplied. The enemy tried to disrupt the flow of fresh forces, armament, fuel, and other materials to a grouping of Soviet troops who were occupying the defense in the area where the German command planned a summer offensive. Important railroad junctions, stations, and even certain routes of communications were subjected to large-scale raids dozens of times. The brightest chapter in the combat operations of PVO troops in this period was the repulsion of massive raids on the Kursk railroad junction. Nearly 800 enemy aircraft took part in the largest raid (2 June). In close cooperation with fighter planes and antiaircraft weapons of the fronts, PVO Strany Troops fought the air enemy on distant and close approaches to Kursk for almost 23 hours. The German air forces lost 162 aircraft here, but they could not destroy the

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Kursk railroad junction. Thus, by the joint efforts of PVO Strany Troops and front aviation the enemy's attempts to prevent a scheduled buildup of manpower and equipment in the Kursk staging area, which were subsequently used in the course of decisive battles in July and August 1943, were disrupted.

The strategic air supremacy won by Soviet aircraft in the Kursk battle forced the enemy air force to forego completely raids on objectives in the rear of the country and to limit the operations against lines of communications and objectives on offensive fronts. Correspondingly, the center of the burden of combat activity for PVO Strany Troops was transferred to front areas.

The swift advance of our fronts to the west required PVO troops to organize quickly an air defense for important objectives and, especially, lines of communications in liberated territory. This mission was first carried out by the advancement of part of the forces of front PVO soyedineniya. Later, chastis of fighter aviation, antiaircraft artillery, and control organs from regions deep in the country, which the enemy could no longer reach, were transferred. New PVO soyedineniya were formed from these units.

Gradually setting up air defense behind the advancing fronts, a significant number of soyedineniya of PVO Strany Troops moved into the territory of Rumania, Austria, Hungary, Poland, and Germany. Here, while covering front lines of communications, large cities, and important industrial areas, they took part in the final operations of The Great Patriotic War.

The war years were a period of rapid development, increased combat capabilities, and organizational improvement for air defense.

The well-organized military economy created by the efforts of the party and the people equipped PVO Strany Troops with effective armament, combat equipment, and ammunition in sufficient quantity. Fighter aviation chastis were fully supplied during the war. They received La-5, La-7, k-7, Yak-9, and Yak-3 aircraft, which possessed high performance characteristics and powerful cannon and machine gun armament. The speed and range of these fighters were nearly 50 percent greater than those of fighters at the beginning of the war.

Medium caliber antiaircraft artillery was completely re-equipped with 85 millimeter antiaircraft guns. In 1945, antiaircraft chastis began to receive 85 millimeter guns with considerably greater operational altitudes than the 1939 guns of the same caliber.

Radar equipment underwent particularly high development in the war years. In significant numbers, PVO chastis were equipped with gun laying radars, aircraft control and early-warning radar stations, azimuth

scanning radar stations, searchlight radars, and combat means for aircraft communications and control. As a result of this, the range and reliability of air target detection was increased, the combat might of fighters was enhanced, and the fire effectiveness of antiaircraft artillery and the operations of antiaircraft searchlights were increased.

The number of PVO Strany Troops by the end of the war had doubled the number at its beginning. Moreover, the number of medium caliber antiaircraft guns and fighter planes were twice the former number and the number of small caliber antiaircraft guns was ten times the number in May 1942.

Great changes occurred in the organization of the troops. It was already apparent in the first months of the war that the existing organizational structure did not satisfy the nature of the military operations. With the Red Army withdrawing it was necessary to regroup the forces and means of PVO Strany for the organization of air defense of new regions and objectives. However, the Main Administration of PVO, not having the functions of operational control, could not handle this task. The front commanders, to whom border PVO zones were subordinated, used PVO forces and means basically for coverage of front troops, and in a number of cases for antitank defense. Coverage for the main objectives of the country became secondary in a number of cases. In this connection, by resolution of the State Committee of Defense, the post of commander of PVO Troops of the territory of the country was established in November 1941. Attached to it were a staff, a Main PVO Administration of the Territory of the Country, and an administration of fighter aviation. PVO Strany soyedineniya and chasty were taken out of subordination to military districts (fronts) and were subordinated in all respects to the commander of PVO Strany Troops, except for the forces and means covering Leningrad which remained fully at the disposal of the front command. Instead of zones in the European part of the Soviet Union (with the exception of the Transcaucasus), corps and division PVO regions were organized. Fighter aviation, however, did not become an organizational component of PVO Strany Troops.

The next step in improving the organization of the troops was the complete subordination, in January 1942, of all fighter aviation assigned for coverage of objectives of the country to the PVO Strany command. From this time on the principle of centralization of control spread to all PVO forces and means, both operationally and tactically. Conditions took shape for more flexible, operational leadership of PVO troops and for their conducting maneuvers within the boundaries of the regions and objectives being defended. Together with this, PVO Strany Troops acquired all the basic features of an independent branch of the armed forces: in resolving a strictly determined number of missions of a

By the end of the war, they had independent command and special organs of control which were directly subordinate to a higher military control.

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In the middle of 1943, in connection with the increasing number of PVO regions and the broadening space being defended by them, two air defense fronts were created to subdivide control of PVO Strany Troops: the Western Front (commanded by Col Gen M. S. GROMADIN) with headquarters in Moscow, and the Eastern Front (commanded by Lt Gen Arty G. S. ZASHIKHIN) with headquarters in Kuybyshev. All air defense was subordinate to the commander of artillery of the Soviet Army. To assist him, a Central PVO Staff, a Main Administration of PVO Fighter Aviation, a Central Air Warning Service Post, and certain other organs were created. The creation of the fronts substantially improved control of troops under the conditions of rapid advancement of the Soviet Army to the west. However, control of the post of commander of PVO Strany Troops was dictated by subjective considerations and did not satisfy the needs.

By the end of the war PVO Strany Troops was composed of four fronts: the Western (commanded by Col Gen Arty D. A. ZHURAVLEV), the Southwestern (commanded by Col Gen Arty G. S. ZASHIKHIN), the Central (commanded by Col Gen M. S. GROMADIN), and the Transcaucasus (commanded by Lt Gen Arty P. Ye. GUDYMENKO) with headquarters in Vil'nyus, L'vov, Moscow, and Baku respectively.

The exceptional diversity of the problems being resolved and of conditions of combat activity, and the increased combat effectiveness of the means of defense and attack served as powerful stimuli for the development of the military art of PVO Strany Troops. The wide use of maneuvering operations was new in the tactics of antiaircraft artillery. A rigid system of antiaircraft coverage, as the experience of combat showed, could not react quickly to changes in a situation. Therefore, by 1943 each front PVO region began to assign a share of its antiaircraft artillery, antiaircraft machine guns, and searchlights for operations in maneuvering groups which were used at the discretion of the sovedineniya commander for destruction of enemy aircraft in their flight routes, for temporary coverage of small objectives, etc. Antiaircraft armored trains were widely used as a maneuvering means. By the end of the war there were 102 antiaircraft armored trains in PVO Strany Troops.

The tactics of group combat were thoroughly developed in fighter aviation during the war, and methods of hunting and intercepting air targets at night and of combating reconnaissance aircraft were worked out. The correlation of various methods of fighter operations were changed. Relying on radar detection systems, fighters could at times refrain from continuous patrolling and could take-off from alert positions on the airfield.

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the combat operations of PVO Strany Troops was that they frequently went beyond the tactical range and became operational. The repulsion of massive enemy air raids directed against important centers and objectives of the country took the form of a number of interrelated engagements and battles united by a common plan which continued for several days and even weeks and were characterized by a great spatial scope and the participation in them of hundreds of aircraft, large forces of antiaircraft artillery, and other PVO means. This was demonstrated in the repulsion of raids on Moscow, Leningrad, objectives of the Kursk staging area, and several others where enemy air force operations were virtually countered by PVO Strany troops operations. These events objectively testified to the birth of the operational art of PVO Strany Troops.

Radar equipment undoubtedly played an important role in the formation and development of this art. As the system of reconnoitering the air enemy was changed to radar systems, the PVO command was able to be constantly aware of the aerial situation in the entire zone being defended, to foresee its development, and, judging from this, to ensure the coordinated operations of troops located in the given region according to an overall plan. It became possible in the course of a battle to maneuver fighter aircraft from one direction to others for the purpose of creating superior strength over the enemy. Thus, to repulse the raids on Kursk in 1943, fighter aircraft based within a radius of 200 kilometers from Kursk were used. In 1944, several fighter aviation regiments which were covering Kiev and Zhitomir were used to repulse the night raids on Korosten'. In other words, aircraft began to be used in the interests of cover for all objectives located within their range. That is, a trend was set for changing from point air defense to defense of all targets located within an entire region. This is one of the most characteristic features of the operational art of PVO Strany Troops.

PVO Strany Troops operations were usually conducted by all or by the majority of the forces of a PVO army in close cooperation with neighboring air defense ob'yedineniya and soyedineniya, and at times with the PVO troops and fighter aviation of fronts and fleets. In this connection, methods of operational coordination of ob'yedineniya and soyedineniya of PVO troops with ob'yedineniya of ground troops and the navy, particularly methods of organizing reconnaissance of the air enemy and mutual warning, planning, and conduct of combined operations of fighter aviation and anti-aircraft artillery, were thoroughly developed during the war.

Of considerable interest are the principles developed during the war for the operational employment of various PVO forces and means of the various branches of the armed forces operating in one zone and resolving common missions (for example, the experience of the defense of Odessa, Leningrad, and certain other objectives). Experience showed that it was most expedient under these conditions to create a unified PVO system that included the forces and means of all departments and a unified control of them, especially fighter aviation, from one center.

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In summary, the operational part of PVO is basically consisted of the theory and practice of preparing and conducting operations by PVO ob"yedineniya, both independently and in cooperation with other branches of the armed forces.

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As a whole, air defense of the country emerged as a combination of all government measures having to do with the field of strategy. It was created and developed according to a single plan on a nation-wide scale. Dispersal of PVO troops efforts to regions and to the most important objectives and the coordination of their efforts with other branches of the armed forces was carried out by the Supreme Command in accordance with the strategic missions being resolved in various stages of the war.

The important strategic significance of air defense of the country and the dependence on it of the status not only of the work of the rear of the country, but also the development of military events on land, sea, and in the air was demonstrated with maximum clarity in the first days of the fighting against the fascist German invaders. The lessons of the war irrefutably testify to the fact that the most crucial period for air defense troops was the initial period, when the main mass of the air forces were used to seize the strategic initiative, and that the key to victory over a strong air enemy is a high combat readiness of all PVO forces and means. Almost all the great failures of PVO troops and the extremely unfavorable development of events at the outset of the war, and the gross deficiencies which showed up in the repulsion of raids on Gor'kiy in June 1943 were first of all connected with insufficient combat readiness.

The Great Patriotic War made it possible to accumulate a wealth of extremely instructive experience in the organization of air defense and the conducting of combat operations by PVO troops. Many theoretical and practical suppositions that were worked out in the course of combat against the fascist German air force have not lost their significance even today. But it must be born in mind that in the final stage of the war air defense troops operated in rather uncomplex situations. They seldom had to repel massive enemy air raids that were concentrated in time. They definitely did not have to combat self-propelled missiles, ballistic missiles, or conduct operations under conditions attending the employment by the enemy of interference by radio and radar PVO systems. Therefore, in practice the tendency of the means of defense to lag behind the means of air attack was less noticeable in our air defense than in the West, although in certain types of activities it was clearly evident throughout the war.

Particularly evident was the low effectiveness of fighter aircraft at night. Of the 3,930 aircraft shot down by PVO fighters during the war in aerial combat, only 301 were destroyed at night. Even in the fighter units defending Moscow, where the best trained pilots were serving, only 7 percent of enemy aircraft were downed at night.

Several steps on the road to creation of special night interceptors were taken during the war. One of the first attempts was the equipping, in 1942, of the Pe-2 aircraft with the "Gneiss" radar apparatus. By the end of the war the Soviet aircraft industry was turning out fighter-interceptors equipped with "Gneiss-2" radar. However, as use of them on the front demonstrated, these were imperfect aircraft. They were merely the first step on the road to creation in post-war years of valuable all-weather interceptors.

The need to increase the altitude range of antiaircraft guns was distinctly felt in antiaircraft artillery, since the flight ceiling of reconnaissance aircraft was raised and they became invulnerable to anti-aircraft fire. Immediately after the war, therefore, work which was begun in the pre-war period on the creation of large caliber antiaircraft guns was renewed; and the development of a principally new weapon -- surface-to-air guided rockets -- was accelerated.

In summing up the results of the combat activities and development of PVO Strany Troops during the war, it can be noted that despite the difficulties and certain failures they successfully carried out their assignments and at the end of the war emerged stronger, numerically larger, and enriched with a wide-range of combat experience.

As in all branches of the armed forces during the war, the high moral and combat qualities of Soviet soldiers -- faithfulness to military duties, massive heroism, and unswerving will for victory -- were displayed in PVO Strany Troops. Fighter pilots, antiaircraft artillery gunners, searchlight operators, and air warning service soldiers performed many heroic deeds in carrying out their combat missions, which have entered the chronicles of the war for all time.

The first to receive the lofty title of Hero of the Soviet Union were fighter pilots -- Jr Lts M. P. ZHUKOV, S. I. ZDOROVITSEV, and P. I. KHARITONOV. Covering Leningrad from raids of enemy aircraft, they downed several enemy bombers during the first days of the war by using ramming attacks. The ramming tactic was the weapon of fearless, unsurpassed masters of aerial combat. The pilots who were protecting Moscow from air raids used it with particular skill and aggressiveness. More than 20 ramming attacks were made here, including the first night ramming attack in history -- successfully performed by Jr Lt. V. V. TALALIKHIN, and the first high altitude ramming attack -- performed by Lt A. N. KATRICH. Fighter-Pilot Lt V. Ye. KOVALEV, of the 6th PVO Air Corps, displayed exceptional courage in repeating the feat of Capt GASTELLO on the approaches to the capital.

The combat activities of soldiers in other arms was also marked by glorious military feats. The feats of Lts. G. M. VOLNYANSKIY and P. N. PETRUNIN, antiaircraft gunners; Sgt ZORNIKOV, chief of an observation post in the air warning service; and others are mentioned in the chronicles of the war as models of fearlessness and courage.

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and fear-
lessly in PVO Strany Troops. In numerous battles against the enemy they
served courageously, prudently, and clamly.

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Under fire of war PVO soldiers reached manhood and their combat skill, fortitude, and staying power grew. Many PVO chastî and soyedîneniya which distinguished themselves in battles against the German invaders were decorated with combat orders and awarded honored titles. 17 fighter aviation chastî and soyedîneniya and many anti-aircraft chastî became members of the Soviet guards. A great number of PVO soldiers were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. Many thousands of soldiers, sergeants, and generals were decorated with orders and medals.

In the two decades that have passed since the victorious conclusion of the Great Patriotic War, deep, truly revolutionary changes have taken place in all fields of military affairs. Massive numbers of new combat means have entered the troops -- nuclear weapons, various classes of rockets, and radar apparatus, calling for radical changes in the nature, scale, and methods of conducting war. It has become possible in the first minutes of military operations to deliver blows of enormous destructive force on the most important elements of the military and economic power of hostile sides, no matter where they may be located, close to state boundaries or deep in their rear areas. The increased significance of the surprise factor, and the possibility of decisively influencing the course of armed conflict or even of predetermining the outcome of a war by the surprise, massive employment of air and space forces immeasurably increased the role of air defense. Under modern conditions a strong, effective, constantly operating air defense is one of the criteria of the preparedness of the country militarily. It is called upon to protect from enemy nuclear strikes the population, the economy, and the armed forces and to ensure the vital activities of the state and the use of our means to punish the aggressor.

Therefore, in the system of military construction the Soviet government is paying special attention to the development and improvement of PVO Strany Troops and to maintaining them in a status which will ensure the repulsion of any strikes by the air and space forces of an aggressor. According to their technical nature, modern PVO troops are completely unlike the troops of the Great Patriotic War period. Owing to the outstanding achievements of Soviet science and technology and the enormous successes in the development of a socialist industry, they have been armed with principally new, highly effective means for combating an air enemy -- surface-to-air guided rockets, rocket-carrying aircraft complexes for interception, various radio electronic equipment, and automatic control systems. Our scientists and engineers also created complexes of various means for protecting our motherland from nuclear-rocket attack. The sphere of operations for PVO Strany Troops has widened significantly.

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Their missions, means of operation, and, consequently, their theory of employment have changed. In connection with the intentions of US imperialists to harness space forces to the chariot of war, the necessity has arisen of keeping under control not only air space, but also cosmic space. The missions of PVO Strany Troops today have gone beyond the limits of combating offensive enemy aircraft. They must also be able to intercept and destroy ballistic missiles and space means of attack. In other words, a modern air defense must be antiaircraft, antimissile, and anti-space. A high combat readiness of air defense troops and their ability to counter immediately acts of aggression and attempts by imperialist states to violate Soviet aerial boundaries with hostile intentions have acquired a more decisive significance than ever before.

The complex process of changing PVO Strany Troops into a new qualitative condition continues in our time. And it is being done without ignoring the experience of the Great Patriotic War, but by using everything instructive and valuable that it gave to the theory and practice of military affairs. The glorious combat traditions, heroics, and feats of the past war, which for the new generations of soldiers serve as models of selfless service to the fatherland, have also been taken into the armament of the troops.

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