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EMIGRE DISCLOSES RECENT DEBATE ON SOVIET MILITARY DOCTRINE

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EMIGRE DISCLOSES RECENT DEBATE ON SOVIET MILITARY DOCTRINE

According to a Soviet emigre scholar ² a study by sociologists undertaken in the early 1970's for the Soviet Defense Ministry concluded that:

Contrary to the views of "military specialists," the Soviet Union could not sustain an initial nuclear blow and continue military operations; and

An arms policy based on a "balance of terror" is not a reliable basis for peace.

The existence of such a study, hitherto unpublicized, was revealed early this year by Ilya Zemtsov, a former Soviet party functionary and prominent sociologist, in the Frankfurt journal GRANI (January-March, 1977). According to Zemtsov, the study sparked an intensive debate on military doctrine in upper levels of the Defense Ministry and the party bureaucracy during 1971 and 1972. He claimed that one result of the debate was a Soviet decision to stop work on the development of a "clean atomic bomb."

The revelations about the military sociologists' study are included in extracts from a history Zemtsov is writing on the development of Soviet sociology published in GRANI. Zemtsov, who emigrated from the Soviet Union in late 1973 or 1974, was an aide to Azerbaydzhan First Secretary Aliyev and later head of a department in the Institute of Concrete Social Research and an instructor in the CPSU Central Committee's Information Sector. He has indicated that his knowledge of highly classified sociological studies came through his work as member of the board of the Soviet Sociological Association and member of the editorial board of the association's "Information Bulletin."* A translation of his revelations about the sociologists' work on military subjects is attached to this report.

* * * * *

Zemtsov said that during 1970-72 sociologists commissioned by the Ministry of Defense tasked with making a study of the "Social Problems of War" arrived at conclusions conflicting with accepted

* For additional details on background, as well as accounts of previous revelations regarding the CPSU leadership, see ²

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military doctrine. Their report challenged the contention of "military specialists" that human losses in a nuclear conflict could be limited sufficiently to permit continuation of military action after a first strike, and it challenged the General Staff's ability to predict accurately the character of any attack and determine the appropriate responses. The sociologists argued that nuclear war could not be viewed simply as a larger version of conventional war, because there would be no victors and because it would be over in minutes, with little role for the traditional military to play.

In addition, the sociologists disputed what Zemtsov described as accepted Soviet military doctrine on the arms race, which he said was based on the American theory of "deterrence." The sociologists argued against the theory on the grounds that the "balance of terror" on which it rests is an ineffective method to preserve peace because:

- + it stimulates arms development and encourages bluffing and deception, which can get out of control;
- + neither side can feel secure because each has an imperfect knowledge of the other's strength, and moreover, both have differing ethical norms;
- + and, in any case, an initial strike will guarantee success in spite of any countermeasures.

These arguments, though said to have been "oblique" and "cloaked" in scholarly language, represented an unprecedented criticism of military doctrine, according to Zemtsov. Despite their seriousness, he said, there was no attempt to accuse the authors of "subjectivism" or "lack of party principle." Instead, the conclusions were discussed at a series of conferences in the Ministry of Defense and even in the Central Committee Secretariat during 1971 and 1972, and a special military-party-government commission was created to study the concepts. According to Zemtsov, one of the outcomes was that the government, directly responding to the opinion of the sociologists that the "USSR should subordinate military tactics to politics," stopped work on a "clean atomic bomb." It is unclear whether the sociologists opposed the bomb on the grounds that the Soviet Union had no political need for such a weapon, or whether they used other arguments, such as the incompatibility of the weapon with the Soviet Union's public posture on arms control.

Apparently reflecting the success of the above study, the Ministry of Defense sociologists subsequently received other important defense-

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related assignments. Apparently they are now studying factors which might lead the United States to deliver a nuclear strike and ways to rebuild the economy after a possible atomic conflict.

The 1970-71 study was said to have been carried out by the military division of the Soviet Sociological Association under the leadership of Col. V. Konoplev. Identifications in the press (e.g., RED STAR on 18 December 1969) indicate that Col. V.K. Konoplev was chief of the department of military-sociological research of the Main Political Administration of the Soviet Army and Navy at the time the study began. Konoplev has clearly played a prominent role in Soviet sociology, representing Soviet sociologists at the 1970 international sociological congress, according to a February 1971 COMMUNIST OF THE ARMED FORCES, and being reelected chairman of the bureau of the military division of the Soviet Sociological Association in 1973, according to the 27 May 1973 RED STAR. In 1973 or 1974, perhaps reflecting the success of the study described above, he was promoted to major general (so identified for the first time in the 17 January 1975 RED STAR). Since 1975, still as head of the Defense Ministry's military-sociological research department, he has been active in delivering lectures on military-patriotic training. Konoplev published an article on the impact of the scientific-technological revolution on war and the military in SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH No. 2, 1975.

APPENDIX

IL'YA ZEMTSOV ON DEVELOPMENT OF SOVIET SOCIOLOGY

Frankfurt GRANI in Russian No. 103, January-March 1977, pages 258-279.

(Second and last portion [pages 269-271] of Il'ya Zemtsov article: "History of the Development of Soviet Sociology")

(Excerpt) In 1969 sociologists of the Ministry of Defense received an order to look into the reasons for the lack of popularity of service in the army. They learned: frequent transfers, unsatisfactory pay, and insufficiently rapid promotion in the service. As soon as the conclusions of the sociologists reached the desk of the Minister of Defense, the government, having found funds, raised officers' pay by 20 percent and pensions by 12 percent, to the universal joy of the army. Moreover, length of leave was extended, the diplomas of all the higher military educational institutions were made equivalent to those of universities, a new more stylish uniform was introduced, and special settlements in which military units had been quartered were modified.

A very special assignment was given to sociologists in 1971--to investigate the social problems of war.* The extent to which the conclusions of the sociologists contradicted existing ideological stereotypes can be seen from some of their conclusions presented below.

Present day military conflict cannot be considered as war, since nuclear-missile combat presupposes:

--the absence of victors and vanquished, and mutual annihilation and destruction;

--decisive importance belongs not to the army but to the scientific-technical forces; differences between cadre military units and the civilian population are obliterated;

--a characteristic feature of past war has been a significant interval of time, allowing organization of alliances and changes of strategy and tactics; the outcome of a modern conflict will be decided in minutes;

* The study was conducted by the military branch of the SSA [Soviet Sociological Association] under the leadership of Col. V. Konoplev. The report was discussed in the military branch of the SSA in February 1970. The project was called "Social Problems of War."

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--war in the past has encouraged a spirit of collectivity; modern war reduces to zero individual bravery and ability to resist and results in passivity.

The study was conducted under the leadership of V. Konoplev and went beyond the limits of an objective statement of facts. It clearly took a critical position toward the doctrine of the "arms race" accepted in military circles of the USSR and stemming from the American doctrine of "deterrence."*

Here are some arguments presented by V. Konoplev:

--if we proceed from the principle of USSR-U.S. confrontation, it is evident that mutual danger will constantly contribute to the arms race and therefore also to the planning of a retaliatory strike (udar vozmezdiya).

--it follows from game theory that the first action will lead to success regardless of any subsequent countermeasures. As a result, each side will increase the scale and tempo of its arms procurements, which inevitably will give rise to such phenomena as bluffing, deceit and other factors which, getting out of control, will cancel out the chances for peace;

--the existing balance is a fragile balance of fear, because it ignores such a real factor as the relativity of ethical norms. Meanwhile, political decisions are frequently carried out without adequate knowledge of the distribution of forces and they do not contribute in any way to the preservation of calm.

Aside from these defects, the doctrine of "deterrence" engenders purely linguistic ambiguity in its argumentation, since one understands the concept of "control over disarmament" to mean "control over armament production."

Doubt was cast on the confidence of military specialists that it is possible in practice to carry out measures which can limit human casualties in a nuclear conflict to the point that the war game can be continued, to the end. The sociologists cast doubt on the ability of the General Staff to accurately determine the type of attack and the range of retaliatory measures.

Soviet military doctrine until then had never encountered such destructive and profound criticism, even though it was oblique and "packaged" in a system of thoughtful scholarly definitions. As a

* The study was made by the military branch of the SSA in 1971-72 under the leadership of Rear Admiral V. Shelyag in the Military Section of the CC CPSU, in April 1972. [As published].

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result endless conferences on the most diverse levels began in 1971-72: from the collegium of the Ministry of Defense to the Secretariat of the CC CPSU.

It is noteworthy that despite the fact that the conclusions of the sociologists exploded Soviet military doctrine, which had consumed an astronomical quantity of material assets and on which the global policy of the government was based, no one tried to accuse the scholars of "subjectivism" or "lack of party principle." A special military-party-governmental commission was created to study the concepts of the General Staff. And one of the decisions of the government--to cease development of a "clean atomic bomb"--stemmed directly from the opinion of the sociologists, who believed that the USSR should subordinate military tactics to politics.

At the present time, the sociological group under the Ministry of Defense has embarked on a study of problems connected with studying the reasons which could cause the United States of America to deliver a nuclear missile strike and of questions connected with restoration of the economy after a possible nuclear conflict.

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