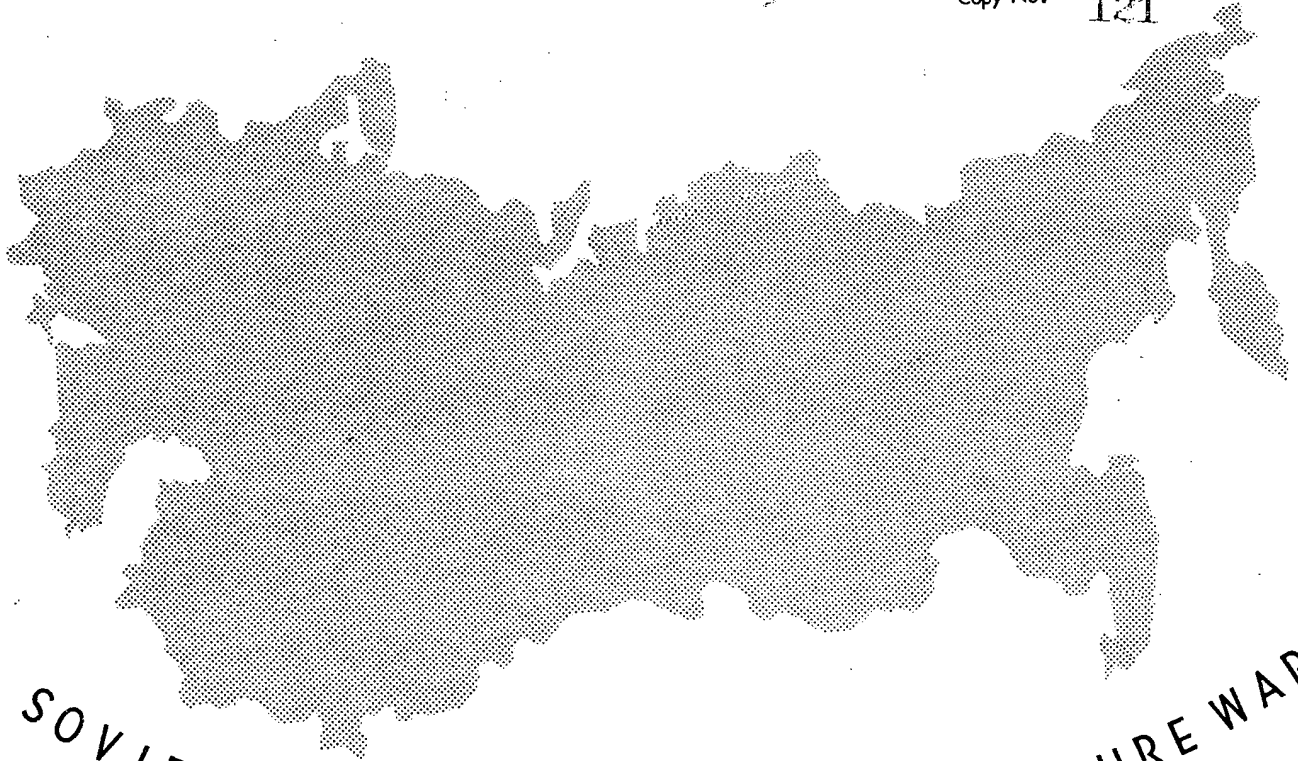


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SOVIET MILITARY THOUGHT ON FUTURE WAR

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SOVIET MILITARY THOUGHT ON FUTURE WAR  
(Doctrine and Debate Since 1960)

This is a working paper, a preliminary and uncoordinated examination of the predicament of Soviet military thought on the question of general war, particularly with regard to questions of strategic importance. Other papers on Soviet military doctrine and policy will follow.

This paper is based entirely on open Soviet materials, principally the theoretical military journals and textbooks on military science addressed to audiences of professionals. These materials taken by themselves are not, of course, a sure guide to Soviet strategy, as they are in part designed to serve foreign policy and propaganda objectives. Nevertheless, the materials contain very useful indications of Soviet military thinking on future war, including areas of uncertainty, anxiety, and confusion. We think that we can distinguish between articles of doctrine which are unquestioned and those which are subject to dispute, and that we can identify the schools of thought among military officers.



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SOVIET MILITARY THOUGHT ON FUTURE WAR  
(Doctrine and Debate Since 1960)

Summary and Conclusions

Soviet military thought on a general war of the future, as revealed in the open discourse, has been in a fluid state in recent years. Faced with the vast destructive potential of thermonuclear weapons and an accelerating weapons technology in both camps, many Soviet leaders have found it no longer possible to formulate modern strategy and tactics simply by applying time-tested principles of warfare. Incited by Khrushchev, who appears to outpace most of his experts in theorizing, some military officers have been trying to break old doctrinal molds and then to generate new concepts and fresh interpretations of existing ones. In a number of places, however, these pioneering theorists have met with resistance from their more conservative colleagues.

Far from congealing military thought, Khrushchev's presentation in January 1960 of his outline of a future war and his "New Strategy" for winning it stimulated debate among the military on the character of future war and the strategic as well as tactical conceptions relating to it. For one thing, an important segment of military opinion lacked confidence in certain aspects of Khrushchev's presentation, and in any case did not regard it as the complete or final word on the subject. While reaffirming the main lines of Khrushchev's doctrine, military officers quickly added important qualifications to it. In their view, the USSR could not rely on nuclear/rocket weapons to the extent that Khrushchev had implied, but required diversified military forces to cope with the varied and complex situations of a future war. Khrushchev himself, in speeches in 1961, modified his earlier positions to some extent along the lines of the prevailing military views. His newly voiced appreciation of the need for all types of forces, bomber aviation, and a large standing army, among other things, may have been influenced by Soviet military argumentation as well as by external circumstances.

In elaborating a theory of future war, the military have had only limited success in reaching agreement among themselves. Over the past two years, the literature has carried a multiplicity

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of views on future war, placing cheek by jowl contradictory answers to strategic and tactical questions. "Traditionalists," secure in the thought that future war will in many respects resemble World War II, have been pitted against "progressives," who predict that future war will be completely different from past wars. Different positions have been taken over such questions as the role of conventional forces and weapons, the nature of combat, the duration of the war, the effects of the first nuclear attack, and a host of substrategic matters such as positional warfare and stable defense. Military thought, in short, is in a dilemma: while encouraging widespread debate and discussion to improve and refine doctrine, the military leaders lament the fact that military opinion is seriously divided.

On the Start of War: That a new general war will probably start with a surprise attack is not disputed. Emphasis is placed, of course, on the possibility of a Western surprise blow against the USSR. Although Soviet leaders have presented conflicting views on the possible effects of a surprise attack, military leaders have tended increasingly to stress the grave danger to the USSR of a Western first strike. These statements have reflected much less confidence in a Soviet ability to absorb such a strike than expressed by Khrushchev in 1960. Such statements may be applicable, in Soviet military thinking, to the United States as well as to the USSR. In this connection, although Moscow has disavowed both a "preventive" and a "pre-emptive" strategy, important Soviet spokesmen, including Defense Minister Malinovsky, have hinted strongly at the need for a pre-emptive strategy. Such statements, if not reflecting a change in policy, may be arguing for one. This concept of pre-emption, in our view, would not mean a clumsy last-minute effort to unload attack weapons, but rather the deliberate assemblage of a military force capable of delivering an effective forestalling blow. In this connection, Soviet statements, while not suggesting an ability to destroy long-range attack forces based in territorial United States, do suggest a belief that a substantial blunting of US attack forces could be achieved by a Soviet first strike.

War After the First Attack: There is general agreement among Soviet spokesmen on some propositions as to how war might

develop after the first attack. Basic is the doctrine that the war will inevitably involve the widespread use of nuclear weapons. (While acknowledging the primacy of nuclear/rocket weapons in future general war, however, the military differ among themselves over the role that conventional forces and weapons will play in it. "Traditionalists" tend to emphasize the importance of conventional weapons while "progressives" minimize it.)

It is also the general view that war will be global in scope and involve large coalitions of states; whole continents will become theaters of war; and there will be no borderline between front and rear areas. "Mass, multimillion armies" will take part in the conflict. The war will be characterized by the "extreme decisiveness of the political and military goals of the combatant sides"; it will be waged ferociously and will impose severe destruction on all warring parties. (Boasts of Soviet victory in future war are offset by near-admissions of the possibility of defeat.)

The immediate strategic aims of the USSR in war are if possible to "prevent," and at the least to repulse, an enemy surprise attack, and to deliver a "crushing" counter-blow. Soviet strategic objectives for the war as a whole are more difficult to ascertain. The "full defeat" of the enemy is desired, but the meaning of this term is left ambiguous. The primary objectives of strategic strikes are said to be both groupings of enemy forces in theaters of operations and the disruption of the enemy's rear area. The complete smashing of the enemy's armed forces is stressed at least in traditionalist quarters; but it is not clear whether maximum or limited destruction of Western countries is planned on.

Confronted with divided opinion among its officers on the problem of conducting war after the first attack, the Defense Ministry appears to hedge in its military policy, without commitment to either side. On the one hand, Defense Minister Malinovsky acknowledges the possibility of a short war and hints of a "country-busting" mission for Soviet strategic rockets. On the other hand, he makes it clear that Soviet planning for theater warfare is predicated on the assumptions that war will be more than a missile duel, will be fought on an important scale after the first nuclear blows have been struck, and will require the coordinated employment of various types of forces. It is a cautious, if somewhat ambiguous approach, apparently in preparation for any eventuality.

The above-mentioned elements of doctrine that are firmly defined in the open discourse suggest that the Soviet military leadership has achieved a greater flexibility for military response than would have been possible had Khrushchev's strategic pronouncements of 1960 been translated into doctrine without qualification. But the leadership has adopted a more rigid strategic posture than was evident earlier, say in 1957, when the then Defense Minister Marshal Zhukov left open the possibility (in his public statements) that a future war might be fought entirely with conventional weapons.

The elements of uncertainty, division and anxiety that we have detected in discussions on future war over the past two years in themselves have implications for policy. Unable to agree in a number of important respects on what shape a future war will take, Soviet military leaders probably have had serious doubts and differences about what measures to take now in regard to troop training and force structure. The ferment in military thinking, moreover, could have been causally related to the announced military policy changes in 1961 and may foreshadow more changes, in that certain expressed military viewpoints may become incorporated in strategic doctrine.

I. THE MAKING OF MILITARY DOCTRINE IN THE USSR

A. Military Science Under Stalin in the Post-War Period

Both the content of Soviet military doctrine and the atmosphere in which it is formed have changed drastically since the days when Stalin's heavy hand checked the growth of military thought. Then, Stalinist pronouncements on the winning of the Second World War were decreed immutable laws. In an order promulgated in February 1946, Stalin declared that "the skillful mastering of the experience of the recent war" was to be the single basis for the development of military science in the future. In a Stalinist world, no cognizance could be taken of the need to alter principles of war to fit advances in weapons technology. Mass destruction weapons, then possessed only by the United States but under development in the USSR, were miraculously obscured in Soviet military doctrine. Soviet officers were ordered to prepare their strategic analyses on the strength of a simple assumption: victory in war would always be assured to the side superior in "the permanently operating factors" which determine the outcome of war. These were solidity of the rear, moral spirit of the army, number and quality of divisions, armaments, and organizational ability of the "leading staff." In the Stalinist view, the USSR was endowed with superiority in each of these factors.

Commenting on this period, a RED STAR editorial on 21 January 1962 related in a scornful tone that Stalin had regarded himself as the "only expert" on military affairs and military theory. Even his "erroneous positions" on military science, the editorial said, were postulated as "genius-like discoveries" and he was pictured in the literature as the "direct organizer and leader" of all strategic operations of the Soviet army. If military science moved ahead in Stalin's time, the editorial said, it was in spite of him--and owing to the efforts of courageous military leaders and lower-ranking party officials. Military officers in such an atmosphere, as Marshal Grechko recalled in the MILITARY-HISTORICAL JOURNAL of February 1961, were afraid to express their own views and were content to mouth "standard phrases and follow rigidly patterned schemes."



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B. Military Thought Under Khrushchev, 1953-60

Upon the death of the dictator, the military establishment was among the first elements of Soviet society to feel the thaw of the long Stalinist winter. In the second half of 1953, isolated voices began to question basic military doctrine in public for the first time in decades. The nascent reformers worried particularly about the need to overhaul Soviet strategic doctrine in order to take full account of the U.S. capability to deliver (with impunity to the American continent) a nuclear surprise attack against the USSR. Though the atmosphere had become freer, most military leaders, trained to operate according to fixed "scientific" principles of war, were loath to abandon cherished maxims of the past. All the same, Soviet military thought had at last embarked on the tortuous road of modernization and adjustment to the swift developments in weapons technology. And the new political leadership would allow no turning back: "Soviet military science must be moved ahead in every possible way," Khrushchev told military academy graduates in November 1957.

In the process of the transformation, Stalin's "permanently operating factors" of war were de-emphasized and recast in a different form, but were not expunged from Soviet military science. Military spokesmen continued to acknowledge the great importance of the stability of the rear area, the morale of the army, the number and quality of divisions, armaments, and the competence of commanders in the conduct of war. But they no longer attributed discovery of these factors to Stalin; rather, they said, these "basic" factors were well known to such outstanding military leaders of old Russia as Peter I, Suvorov, and Kutuzov. Moreover, the reformers declared that these were only some of the factors that may influence the course and outcome of war in the present era--as strategic surprise, science, and technology may also exert a "decisive" influence on the war as a whole.

More important is the belief now that superiority in the so-called decisive factors (which the Soviets tend to claim for the USSR) does not automatically bring victory; the

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factors only provide "possibilities" for victory.\* These possibilities can only be realized by "much organizational and creative work by people"--the total efforts of commanders, soldiers of the line, and civilian workers in the rear areas. (Maj. Gen. M.V. Smirnov, et al., "On Soviet Military Science," USSR Ministry of Defense: Moscow, 1960.)

As regards the basic revisions in Soviet military doctrine that have been made, the years 1953-55 and 1957-60 stand out as major watersheds--the first period registering the impact of the nuclear and thermonuclear weapon on Soviet strategic and tactical concepts, and the second the organizational integration of the ballistic missile into the Soviet force structure. In neither period was there a full disclosure of the scope of doctrinal change involved, although such evidence as was made available indicated that the tactical and strategic conceptions of Soviet military planners were now keeping pace with the implications of technological progress and political change. Moreover, with the advent of the ICBM in 1957, important differences in view became apparent among the military officers, on the one hand, and between the officers and Khrushchev, on the other, over the strategic significance of the new long-range rockets and their implications for Soviet military doctrine and force structure. Military theorists exchanged contrary views on such a critical question as strategic surprise, while Khrushchev and the military dickered (without directly confronting one another) over the relative importance of conventional forces and strategic nuclear/rocket weapons.

Soviet military doctrine, as it emerged from the theoretical reassessments that accompanied the development of the ICBM, was sketched out by Khrushchev in his January 1960 speech. In that presentation, he defined the strategic conceptions underlying his decision to reduce by one third the size of the Soviet armed forces--a justification which underscored the new role assigned the nuclear/rocket weapon

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\*Thus, they say, superiority in firepower (armament) is essential for victory in combat on a tactical or strategic scale, but does not automatically or necessarily lead to victory. Lt. Col. Popov, RED STAR, 18 July 1961.

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in the Soviet Union's future political and military strategy. Superiority in "total firepower" was defined as the criterion of military strength; the ballistic missile was designated as the principal instrument of Soviet "firepower"; and the newly formed "rocket troops" were named the "main type" of force in the Soviet military establishment.

The political concept underlying the "new strategy," it was implied, was an estimate that the Western states could be deterred from launching general war by the fear of massive retaliation. Khrushchev's image of the character of a future war, in the event that deterrence failed, was more difficult to deduce from his speech. Khrushchev drew a picture of a rapid exchange of massive strategic blows between the major antagonists during the first hours of a future war, but he said nothing about subsequent stages of war or the role of conventional forces in it. Rather, he left the impression that there would be only the first stage--which would take the form of a nuclear/missile duel; and that one of the warring sides would then capitulate.

The fact that a major reorganization of the armed forces accompanied the Khrushchev statements seems to indicate that the Soviet leader's picture of future war was drawn from a sober military estimate. (During his speech Khrushchev even assured his listeners that he had consulted the General Staff beforehand.) The estimate on which the speech was based, however, was not necessarily geared to 1960, the year of the speech, but might have been related to a future time when the USSR would possess the rocket weapons necessary to fulfill their projected strategic tasks. Furthermore, Khrushchev's January 1960 pronouncements on strategic doctrinal matters were taken by a number of military spokesmen at the time as a "genuine contribution to Soviet military science" and have since been similarly applauded by some of the military theorists and leaders.

### C. Military Thought Since January 1960

One might have expected a "definitive" presentation such as Khrushchev's to have signalled the end of contention in the military literature about the significance of nuclear/

rocket weapons for strategic doctrine. But as it turned out, Khrushchev's characterization of future war and doctrine was neither the complete nor the final word on the subject. Military officers speaking or writing during the next few months reaffirmed the main lines of Khrushchev's doctrine, but added qualifications and personal touches that tended to invest that doctrine with greater professional sophistication. All acknowledged the new primacy of rocket weapons in the Soviet military arsenal, and some asserted that the initial period of a future nuclear war would be of overriding importance. But along with this, many of the military spokesmen professed undiminished devotion to some of the classical principles of military theory significantly ignored by Khrushchev. Most notably, many stressed the continuing validity of the combined-forces doctrine--the view that victory in war requires the coordinated action of all arms of service. In making this point, the military spokesmen may have been concerned merely with insuring a role for their own individual services in a period of rapid reorganization. But they were also expressing a basic military estimate: that the Soviet armed forces could not rely on a single weapon system to deal effectively with the complex and varied war situations which they might be called upon to face. As professional specialists they seemed to be recognizing that however effective it might be as a political strategy, Khrushchev's doctrine of massive retaliation did not offer a complete blueprint for the construction of a modern and diversified military establishment.

Even after the amendments and qualifications to Khrushchev's outline of strategy and future war were proffered in the months following his speech, one could not say that the major disputed issues were resolved. On the contrary, over the past two years, the military literature has burgeoned to an unprecedented degree with differing viewpoints on future war and expressions of uncertainty about existing doctrines on the whole spectrum of issues which Khrushchev had ostensibly ironed out in January 1960. The whole body of Soviet military doctrine has in fact been undergoing close review as to its adequacy for future war conditions. This process has been fostered by the military leadership, which has enjoined the entire officer corps to help develop, test, and refine the concepts that will govern the conduct of a third world war and the preparations for it.

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Military writers have stressed the need to re-examine the substance of "certain concepts" which are "now firmly integrated" in military and naval doctrine, but which have not yet received "a new scientific interpretation in connection with changes in the conditions in which military operations are conducted." (Rear-Admiral V.S. Sysoev, NAVAL JOURNAL, No. 4, April 1961) They stress the need to "support and encourage original, independent decisions, bold strivings toward new methods of combat commensurate with contemporary weapons." And shunning the alternative of exclusively private debate and review, they have insisted that the problem can effectively be tackled only by drawing upon the "widest circle" of officers. (Col. Sushko, et al., KOMMUNIST OF THE ARMED FORCES, No. 18, September 1961) In short, debate made public in military journals has become an accepted method of developing military doctrine as well as of educating the troops.

Additional evidence of ferment in Soviet military thought is seen in the extent to which Khrushchev himself has deviated from his earlier statements on war, in the course of explaining the changes in force structure that took place "as a result" of the U.S. arms build-up and the Berlin crisis in 1961. For example, in speeches made last summer Khrushchev acknowledged the need for a large standing Soviet army despite his earlier claims that increments in Soviet firepower made this unnecessary regardless of the size of armies in the West. He acknowledged the need for all types of services to fulfill the country's defense requirements, although previously he was content to rely almost entirely on nuclear/rocket forces. He called for the further development of military aviation, whereas he had earlier sought its demise. He admitted the possibility that a general war would begin along the frontiers in Germany, although he was the author of the formula that war would begin with strategic strikes against the rear areas of the antagonists.

Taken together, these changes add up to a shift in Khrushchev's thinking: a step in the direction of the commonly held viewpoints of Soviet military leaders. Again, Khrushchev's change of mind amounts to plain evidence that an important segment of military opinion lacked confidence in his military estimate of early 1960. The Soviet chief himself was persuaded in 1961--probably through the give-and-take of argument among the military as well as by external circumstances--to modify his own strategic outlook.

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It should not be inferred from the above discussion, however, that Khrushchev has done a complete turnabout from his earlier positions. Khrushchev may have begun to think more like his military lieutenants in a number of important respects, but, as recent evidence reveals, he has not cemented all the fissures between his and their conceptions of future war. There is at least a basic philosophical difference--which may have implications for policy--between Khrushchev and the military. Whereas he is inclined to stress weapons and to belittle the role troops will play in future war, the military stress the role of man as well as weapons in war.\* (Albanian press organs on 22 February 1962 made a point of this distinction with some accuracy in attacking their bête noire: "What disgust and aversion is aroused by Khrushchev's revisionist views in his appreciation of men and technique

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\*Thus, in a recent message to President Kennedy on the problem of disarmament Khrushchev said:

In the nuclear rocket weapons age--and we have entered this age--the numerical strength of the forces does not by a long way have the importance it had in World Wars I and II. War now would at once become total, worldwide; and its outcome would depend not on the actions of troops stationed along the line dividing the combatants but on the use of nuclear rocket weapons, with whom the decisive blow can be struck even before vast armies can be mobilized and thrown into battle. (TASS, 23 February 1962)

A contrary picture of the importance of troops in future war was painted in an editorial in the MILITARY-HISTORICAL JOURNAL for December 1961:

...Final victory over the aggressor can be attained only as a result of joint operations of all types of armed forces. Future war, if unleashed by the imperialists, will be waged by multimillion mass armies. Its course and outcome will be to a decisive extent dependent on armies and the people alike, on the firmness of communications between front and rear, on the ability of the Soviet system to pour all forces and means into the struggle with the enemy.

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during war. With undue emphasis on the technical side, he minimizes the decisive role of man, of the soldier on the field of battle, and he makes a wrong evaluation of the role of the various elements on the battlefield.")

D. The Search for a Single Military Doctrine

Soviet military thought as revealed in open sources is in a dilemma. On the one hand, the military leaders encourage widespread debate and discussion on doctrinal matters; on the other hand, they find the fact that military opinions have not been able to congeal into a single military doctrine very disquieting.

Writing in the May 1961 issue of the MILITARY-HISTORICAL JOURNAL, of which he is an editor, Major General P. Zhilin lamented the absence of agreement on a single military doctrine. He wrote that in contrast to the "exhaustive" presentation of the political aspect of military doctrine--betraying his conservative colors, he relegated Khrushchev's 14 January 1960 speech on war and strategy to this category--there are still "many disputable and vague propositions in the elaboration of the military-technical part of the doctrine." Evidence of this, he said, could be seen in the fact that despite numerous discussions in the military press and within the General Staff and Frunze academies, "a unity of views has not been achieved" on the "laws" and "regularities" of military science. It has been necessary, he said, to review the fundamental postulates of Soviet military doctrine owing to the political and military changes that have taken place in the world. But he implored that it is also "necessary, now as never before, to have a unity of views on all of the most important questions of military art and the employment of troops in war." This unity of views, he added, must be achieved not only in the USSR armed forces, but also in the armed forces of all member countries of the Warsaw Pact.

Underlying Zhilin's concern is the belief, widely in evidence in Soviet literature on military science, that a fully developed military doctrine is a sine qua non for the successful conduct of armed struggle. Military science textbooks published by the USSR Defense Ministry declare that the success of military operations "on any scale" depends

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greatly on how correctly military theory has been elaborated in peacetime and mastered in troop training. (E.g., Maj. Gen. Smirnov, et. al., "On Soviet Military Science," 1960.) Military leaders place particular emphasis on the need to perfect a doctrine that would define the requirements for strategic as well as other forces at the start of a future war. In his speech at the 22nd CPSU Congress last October, Marshal Malinovsky invoked the highest political authority on this very point:

The Presidium of the Central Committee of the party and the Soviet Government have demanded and do demand that we devote special attention to the initial period of a possible war.

Moreover, the penalty for not having a fully-developed theory and a viable, up-to-date doctrine for the conduct of war once the fracas begins has been inscribed in bold letters in recent Soviet military historiography. A number of military historians--including the collective that prepared the latest official multi-volume history of World War II--have come to attribute the calamitous defeats of the Soviets in the early part of the last war mainly to the inadequacy of prewar military doctrine.\*

#### E. The Contending Schools of Thought

Military spokesmen generally acknowledge that, owing to the presence of stockpiles of modern weapons in the arsenals of East and West, a war of the future will be waged differently than any war of the past. Sharp differences in view have been registered, however, over the degree to which a future war will differ from World War II. As we have noted above, contrary positions are taken on such questions as the applicability of experience of past wars to a future war, the viability of long

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\*This has been a hotly disputed issue in the historical literature. Because of its relevance to the problem of military thought on future war, a discussion of the debate is appended to this report.

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established military doctrines on strategy and tactics, and the role of conventional types of weapons.

Among the theorists, there appear to be basically two schools of thought as to the best avenue of approach to the problem of theory and doctrine on future war. One school--let us call it the traditionalist--tends to be conservative, reluctant to make radical changes in time-tested concepts and practices, and relies heavily on the lessons of the past--particularly those of World War II--in working out problems of military science. The theorists of this school do not rule out but soft-pedal the use of prognosis and non-historical theory. They tend to believe that future war in many important respects will resemble World War II. Such leading military figures as Marshals Grechko and Rotmistrov\* and Army General Kurochkin appear to belong to this school. The MILITARY-HISTORICAL JOURNAL, a sophisticated historical monthly of the Ministry of Defense, tends to be its principal public forum.

The attachment of the "traditionalists" to the past is at once apparent in their writings on future war. Thus, in an article in the historical journal stressing the close relationship between military history and military theory and doctrine, Marshal Grechko declared:

Only those who are ignorant of Marxist dialectics maintain that the new historical period wipes out the past in the field of military affairs and military thought.

Despite the fact that a future war...will be conducted with new, unprecedentedly powerful means of destruction, elements of military art known from the experience of the past war will nevertheless remain in use. Concentrating now all energies on the study of the new and striving to look into the future, it is necessary along with this to continue

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\*Marshal Rotmistrov, a doctor of military science, was ironically one of the most prominent revisionists in 1955.

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mastering the experience of the Second World War with the aim of using everything that has not lost significance for contemporary conditions. (Marshal Grechko, MILITARY-HISTORICAL JOURNAL, No. 2, February 1962)

In a similar vein Marshal Rotmistrov expressed the view that a mastery of World War II experience is essential in working out doctrinal problems of future war:

Successful solution of the problems connected with determining the methods of conducting modern battle, operations and war as a whole is impossible without skillful theoretical study and the use of the past, especially experience of the Great Fatherland War. (Rotmistrov, MILITARY-HISTORICAL JOURNAL, No. 8, August 1961)

No one advocates a return to the Stalinist period. Even the most stalwart conservatives--who expect to fight future war in much the same manner as in World War II--deplore a return to Stalinism. Thus Marshal Grechko, in his article stressing the usefulness of military history in developing a theory of future war, took pains to separate himself from the slavish, uncreative tradition of military and theoretical writing under Stalin. He called for the serious study of Soviet military failures as well as successes, for the study of the military experience of the capitalist countries in World War II as well as that of the Soviets, and emphasized that, above all, research into military history must be conducted objectively. In his opinion military history is too closely tied to the problem of drawing up a dynamic military doctrine to permit the "mouthing of standard phrases and drawing of stereotyped schemes" that characterized the Stalin period--when both military history and doctrine were utterly stagnant. (MILITARY-HISTORICAL JOURNAL, No. 2, February 1961)

The second school of thought--let us call it the progressive one--tends to shun or, at the very least to de-emphasize, the historical approach to working out a theory of future war, contending that it will be completely different

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from the past. This school reasons that in the absence of experience in nuclear/missile warfare, one must not look to the past but peer into the future--to foresee and foretell the prospects for the development of armed combat on the basis of profound logical analysis and troop exercises under simulated conditions of nuclear warfare. The articulate adherents of this school appear to be mainly lower-ranking officers--such as Colonels P. Sidorov and S. Kozlov--who have been principals in the movement to revise Soviet military doctrine since 1955. Among the senior officers, Marshals Moskalenko and Yeremenko seem to share the outlook of this school. The official view of the USSR Defense Ministry--revealed in the pronouncements of Marshal Malinovsky and in RED STAR editorials--is inclined to sympathize with this school. The theoretical journal, KOMMUNIST OF THE ARMED FORCES, is perhaps the principal forum for expression of the progressive viewpoint.

The progressives teach that one must theorize about the character of future war through "scientific prediction" based on "theoretical study" (as opposed to historical study) of the tendencies of development of social conditions and military technique. (Col. Sushko, et al., KOMMUNIST OF THE ARMED FORCES, No. 18, September 1961) The school's emphasis on prognosis is summed up in the following passages:

The significance of prediction in military affairs has grown unusually great under contemporary conditions. Over the expanse of a long period of history, military theory was limited to the generalizing of past experience of armed struggle. The absence of sufficient prognostication into the future was not very much reflected in its service role. Since the development of military affairs proceeded slowly and the technical base and the firm material conditions of armed struggle changed gradually, the generalized experience of the past wars could be used over a long period.

For this reason, big mistakes in the past in evaluating prospective war frequently were corrected during its course. A

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completely different situation has taken place at the present time. The main powers of the world have created and continue to accumulate and modernize weapons which must play an enormous role right in the beginning period of war. Therefore, military science right now must work out methods of applying new superpowerful and superlongrange weapons, despite the fact that these weapons never were used, excepting Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The task of working out new methods of struggle can be resolved only by scientific, military-theoretical thought relying on all around practical experience of the troops and the generalizing of it. (Col. Sushko, et al., KOMMUNIST OF THE ARMED FORCES, No. 18, September 1961)

The philosophy of the progressive school hence puts little store by past experience and takes few time-honored concepts at face value.

We can no longer be satisfied in any sense with those methods of combat organization which were characteristic of the period of the Great Fatherland War, including even its final periods. (RED STAR editorial, 8 June 1960)

How sharply different this approach may be from the historical method is illustrated by the following, somewhat extreme, statement by a "progressive" spokesman.

Rocket technique remolds all previous concepts of the character of war: in particular, of its initial period, of battles and operations, of the front and the rear, of the use of space and time, of the character of this or that theater of operations, and of other problems of military art. Khrushchev has spoken in detail about this.... (Col. P. Sidorov, KOMMUNIST OF THE ARMED FORCES, No. 12, June 1961.)

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The distinction between this school of thought and that of the traditionalists is also sharply drawn in the statement (by a less extreme progressive than Sidorov) that the method of approach to reality from study of the past represents "the main danger for military theory in the current stage of its development." (Col. S. Kozlov, KOMMUNIST OF THE ARMED FORCES, No. 11, June 1961) According to this writer, "adherence to the past always entails an underestimation of the new and...a hostile attitude toward it. This is the main danger of dogmatism." Col. Kozlov sees battling with "dogmatism" and overcoming stagnation and routine in military affairs, as inseparably connected to the primary task of revealing the new in military science. But at the same time, he deplures extreme positions: "Soviet military science also has to "struggle with extremes engendered by the turbulent growth of techniques, with exaggerations of all types, with unfounded conjectures and projection, and an alienation from reality." Finally, he condemns those who, "nihilistically reject experience of the past," though warning again that it has very limited value.

The schools of thought discussed here are of course not mutually exclusive--they undoubtedly do not embrace all military viewpoints, and individual military leaders in an effort to be openminded may sometimes favor an opponent's approach, depending on the specific issue at hand. Also, within the schools, as within individual journals, there may be a sharp difference of opinion expressed over various doctrinal matters.

A case in point is the debate carried on in the pages of the MILITARY-HISTORICAL JOURNAL between October 1959 and July 1961. The debate was especially remarkable for the vigor and directness of its disputes and its generally inconclusive, protracted character. It affords revealing insights into the atmosphere of the Soviet general staff. The debate ostensibly centered on problems of World War II historiography, but the purpose of the debate in raking over the lessons of World War II was admittedly to help work out a

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theory of the initial period of future war.\* The points of disagreement often exceeded in number the areas of agreement. And such questions of critical doctrinal significance as the character of the first phase of war, the role of weapons and high command, that were aired in the debate were not resolved.

Unfortunately, the open materials do not carry enough evidence of the kind required to pin a progressive or traditionalist tag on most of the senior Soviet military leaders. Recent policy statements by Marshal Malinovsky, however, do reveal that the progressive approach currently has an important edge over the traditionalist outlook in Soviet officialdom. This is seen in Malinovsky's pronouncement of last October on the new study year. (PRAVDA, 24 October 1961) The statement emphasizes the working out of a theory of future war on the basis of maneuvers and training under simulated conditions of nuclear war--particularly its initial phase--but makes no mention of the usefulness of studying the lessons of past wars. In addition, the recently stepped-up official attacks against Stalin, for inhibiting the development of Soviet military science, undoubtedly has been grist for the mill of the progressives in their efforts to discredit the views of their more conservative colleagues. As recently as 21 January 1962 the Defense Ministry, in a RED STAR editorial, urged conservative-thinking military officers to keep pace with the mainstream of developments: "Much remains to be done in liquidating the consequences of the cult of personality in the sphere of military theory, construction and history."

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\*An article by Maj. Gen. I. Rukhle and published in the October 1959 issue of the journal served as a catalyst. A vigorous discussion of the article was held in the Military Historical Section of the Military-Science Society of the Military-Historical Department of the General Staff on 18 December 1959, according to a report published in the April 1960 issue of the MILITARY-HISTORICAL JOURNAL. A number of articles addressed to the subject were then published in succeeding issues of the JOURNAL, culminating in an article, in the July 1961 issue, by the chief of the General Staff himself, Marshal Zakharov.

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## II. STRATEGIC DOCTRINE FOR THE FIRST ATTACK

How war will begin and what the consequences of the first nuclear strikes will be for the warring sides are questions of greatest concern to Soviet military leaders. Since at least 1955, this matter has commanded the most attention in theoretical discussions of future war. Judging from recent evidence, the heavy emphasis on the importance of the initial phase of war has been sustained if not increased. And the concern voiced by Soviet military leaders over the possible effects of a Western surprise attack against the USSR would appear to have important implications for Soviet military planning.

### A. Surprise As a Likely Trigger of War

Entangled as it is in a whole series of political and military issues, the question of initiation of war is bound to be handled in Soviet discourse in a manner that would best serve policy or propagandistic aims. It would of course be folly to take such statements at face value. Yet it would be useful to identify the expressed Soviet views on this question, in order to relate them later in this study to other conceptions of future war and to probe their implications for Soviet military strategy.

To begin with, no Soviet spokesman has voiced expectation that a declaration of war would precede the outbreak of hostilities between the major powers. Rather, military discourse has repeatedly stressed the likelihood that a future general war would begin with a surprise attack with mass destruction weapons by the West against the Soviet camp. In an article in the April 1961 MILITARY-HISTORICAL JOURNAL, Major General M. Cherednichenko cast this view in terms of a rigid formula:

It is becoming a definite lawful regularity that wars in the contemporary epoch are being unleashed by imperialist aggressors by surprise, without declaration, drawing into the conflict enormous forces from the very first days of the war for the attainment of the most decisive objectives.

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Writing in the August 1960 issue of the same journal, however, two other military writers left open the possibility that either side might launch a surprise attack: "As shown by past experience, wars most often are started by surprise attack by one of the sides...."

While ruling out the possibility that a major power would willfully forewarn its opponent of a definite intention to attack, the Soviets have considered that a threat period could precede the first nuclear salvo, if the countries were in the midst of an international crisis. (A complaint heard during the Berlin crisis in 1961 was that the USSR is confronted with "the prospect of war only because it wishes to sign a peace treaty with Germany.")

Soviet military spokesmen have also said that a third world war could begin under any of the following circumstances:

1. Local war (small-scale war between states) which in certain cases would "inevitably" and in others would "tend to" develop into a general war. Soviet spokesmen agree that any armed conflict will inevitably develop into a global nuclear/rocket war should the nuclear powers become involved in it. (Marshal Malinovsky, speech at the 22nd CPSU Congress, 23 October 1961)

2. Attack against a satellite of the Soviet Union. "The armed forces of the Soviet Union," Marshal Malinovsky declared in PRAVDA on 24 January 1962, "are always ready to retaliate with a crushing blow at the aggressor and we shall smash those who attack us or our allies." (In other recent statements of this nature, however, Soviet leaders--including Malinovsky--have exhibited some reluctance to pledge to defend all satellites indiscriminately. In the heat of the polemic with the Albanians and Chinese, for example, Soviet leaders early this year spoke of defending the "socialist countries which are our friends.")

3. Accidental war, which could be set off by defective radars or by "the 'accidental' appearance of a foreign aircraft and the 'accidental' dropping of a bomb." (Khrushchev, PRAVDA, 15 March 1958)

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Each of these possibilities is invoked in the propaganda from time to time in order to inhibit Western military activities detrimental to Soviet interests. This is not to say that the various notions on how future war might begin are without significance for Soviet military doctrine. The fact that Soviet military discourse focuses mainly on the problem of surprise attack (or first strike) against the USSR is in itself significant from a military standpoint. This significance will be brought out in the ensuing discussion of other dimensions of the problem of surprise attack.

B. Views On the Importance of First Strike

During the past two years Soviet spokesmen have presented conflicting views on the possible impact of a surprise attack on the USSR.

On the one hand, in his speech announcing the troop cut in January 1960, Khrushchev had denied that "any country" would derive decisive advantage by launching a surprise attack against another nuclear power: "The state subjected to a sudden attack--if, of course, the state in question is a sufficiently big one--will always be able to give a powerful rebuff to the aggressor." Khrushchev clearly had political reasons for saying this. A major objective of his speech was to assure his listeners--both domestic and foreign--that the proposed troop cut would in no way affect the capability of the Soviet Union to defend itself. In denying the effectiveness of surprise attack, he was buttressing the image of an assured Soviet capability to retaliate in force, even under the worst possible conditions. In support of his argument that the USSR had a guaranteed capability to strike second with its nuclear/rocket weapons, Khrushchev said that Soviet territory was immense and that Soviet missile facilities (threatened by NATO bases along the periphery of the USSR) were located in such a way as to insure duplication and triplication as well as adequate dispersion and camouflage. Later, in the wake of the U-2 incident, Khrushchev again sought to assure the West as well as bloc leaders at the June 1960 Conference of Communist parties in Bucharest that the USSR could strike second even if the United States discovered the location of Soviet rocket bases: "It is not possible to put a rocket base out of commission by one, two, or several attacks; rocket

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technique insures a counterattack in every instance." In neither instance in which he evaluated the strategic significance of striking first did Khrushchev seem to vouch for the capability of the West's strategic forces to survive a surprise attack by Soviet missiles, although this possibility cannot be ruled out.\*

Another authoritative disparagement of the ultimate effect of surprise attack was contributed by Lieutenant General Krasilnikov in RED STAR of 18 November 1960:

Soviet military science affirms the following: Regardless of the fact that a sudden attack can cause very great harm, it still cannot become a decisive factor in the course and outcome of the war.

This statement too, when examined in context, seems designed to emphasize the Soviet Union's ability to retaliate, rather than the West's. For the preceding sentences were: "By means of a massed sudden attack the imperialists dream of inflicting blows on the socialist countries which would immediately decide the war in their favor. We cannot afford to ignore such intentions of the enemies of socialism."

Statements such as these, in short, implied that the Soviet leaders had a high confidence in a Soviet (but not necessarily Western) strike-second capability. But neither military spokesmen nor Khrushchev have belittled the importance of surprise attack or boasted of an assured Soviet strike-second capability in public since 1960. The prolonged reticence on such a critical issue as this could mean that the Soviet

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\*For obvious reasons, Soviet spokesmen do not directly and openly discuss the question of the possible effects of a Soviet first strike against the U.S. The marshals give assurances that the USSR "will never strike the first blow." They have made sweeping threats in the mass propaganda, such as Malinovsky's boast in PRAVDA on 24 January 1962 that the USSR could destroy "any target, all political-administrative centers of the US" with a single nuclear/rocket attack. But they have not specified that such an attack would be launched under conditions of a first strike or surprise attack.

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leaders are less certain now than they were in 1960 about the Soviet ability to withstand a first nuclear strike by the West.

In this regard, it is also significant that since the Khrushchev speech of January 1960, and in subtle rejection of it, a number of military spokesmen have stressed the possible decisive effect that a surprise attack might have on the war as a whole. Statements to this point made in 1961 by two ranking military leaders stand out as most important.

In an article summing up a lengthy debate on the initial period of war, developed in consecutive issues of the MILITARY-HISTORICAL JOURNAL, the Chief of the General Staff endorsed the view that strategic surprise could be of overriding importance in a future war. In the July 1961 issue of the journal, Marshal Zakharov focused on the danger to the USSR (with possible reference to the West as well) of a successful surprise attack:

The nuclear-rocket weapon, having enormous destructive force and practically unlimited in its radius of operations, opens before the aggressor wide possibilities for delivering a surprise blow of enormous force. Nuclear weapons permit in the very first hours of the war the delivery of such blows as can turn out to be decisive for the course of the war. In these conditions, lack of military preparedness for resistance against an aggressor attack can entail far heavier consequences than was the case in the USSR in 1941. Of highest importance here is the attainment of high vigilance and constant preparedness of armed forces to prevent a surprise blow.

Marshal Malinovsky, in his speech to the 22nd CPSU Congress on 23 October has provided the most authoritative opinion on strategic surprise to date. His view of the issue was consistent with the military literature stressing the decisive role of strategic surprise in a future war but, like Zakharov's, was out of step with Khrushchev's presentation of January 1960. Malinovsky seemed at pains to get across the idea that the political and military leadership were now

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fully in accord in their estimate of the importance of surprise. Thus he took the rare step of invoking the authority of the CPSU Presidium in emphasizing the need to study the problem of the initial period in a war:

The Presidium of the Central Committee of the party and the Soviet Government have demanded and do demand of us that we devote special attention to the initial period of a possible war. The importance of this period lies in the fact that the very first mass nuclear strikes are capable, to a vast extent, of predetermining the whole subsequent course of the war and could lead to such losses in the rear and among the troops as would put the people and the country in an exceptionally difficult position.

In stressing the grave danger to the USSR should the West succeed in striking the USSR first, the senior military leaders betray their doubts and fears about the ability of their country to withstand a massed nuclear attack. At the very least, their statements reflect much less confidence in the USSR's ability to absorb nuclear blows and to strike back effectively than Khrushchev and General Krasilnikov had expressed in 1960. At the same time, the statements on the possible decisiveness of strategic surprise may bear on the ability of the United States to withstand such an attack. Were this the case, the statements could be used in support of an argument for a Soviet strike-first strategy and for the USSR's acquiring a weapons capability commensurate with that task.

More will be said shortly on the probable implications of the heightened Soviet concern over the question of surprise for Soviet strategic planning. Suffice it to note here, that the evident Soviet uncertainties about the effect of the first attack has probably contributed to the disarray in military thinking on such questions as the duration of the future war, the kind of role the older component forces will play, the relative importance of conventional weapons, the scale of wartime economic production, and a variety of related questions.

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C. Strategy For the Initial Stage of War

As revealed in the open sources, the Soviets envisage fighting a "defensive" war in the political sense but an "offensive" war in a military sense. They give no indication in their writings or pronouncements of planning for a "preventive" war--that is, a deliberate, unprovoked attack against the West. The fact that they plan to fight a "defensive" war, however, does not rule out their striking another power first, by surprise, should they deem this important to their security. A USSR Defense Ministry book, "War and Politics" (signed to press in December 1959), thus rationalized a first-strike strategy for the USSR within the framework of a "defensive" war in a political sense:

Contemporary methods of conducting wars have greatly increased not only the significance of surprise but also the role of attack--which is the basic and most important way of conducting war, and of providing for the decisive destruction of the forces of the enemy and the preservation of one's own forces. Attack in the military sense of strategy by no means contradicts the defensive character of war in defense of the socialist fatherland from the political point of view.

Marx and Engels constantly advised communists that a...just war, defensive in character, does not preclude strategic attack operations but on the contrary presupposes them.

According to numerous Soviet military statements, preventing, and at the least, repulsing an enemy strategic attack, and delivering a crushing counterblow, will be the most important of the immediate strategic aims of Soviet forces in a future war. From other statements on how the war will develop in its initial phase, it is clear that seizing the strategic initiative and creating favorable conditions--through strategic nuclear strikes--for the further development of operations are included among the immediate objectives.

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To prevent an enemy surprise attack, should deterrence fail, means to destroy the enemy's nuclear striking force--or as much of it as possible--in good time. The best and perhaps only way to achieve this is by striking the enemy first. Such was the thinking of a group of Soviet military theorists who, in 1955, advanced the view that a surprise attack could be frustrated if the enemy were himself surprised as he prepared to strike.

It has not been the policy of the Soviet Union to admit in public the adoption of a pre-emptive strategy. On the contrary, on a number of occasions since 1955 Soviet spokesmen have explicitly disavowed it.\* Nevertheless, in the period under review, there have been some crystal clear allusions to the need for the USSR to be in a position to strike the first nuclear blow, should war become inevitable. Thus, in a debate in the military historical section of the General Staff (reported in the April 1960 issue of the MILITARY-HISTORICAL JOURNAL), a Colonel Nazarov made the following statement about the "new problems" in the preparation for war and the conduct of armed struggle in its initial period:

The first problem is insuring for oneself the advantages for the successful realization of a surprise first blow or the prevention (predotvarshchenie) of such a blow on the part of a probable enemy. This problem, as history has shown, has become the central one in the preparation of countries for war and in the preparation of armed forces and of the military high command.

In an article in the March 1961 issue of the MILITARY-HISTORICAL JOURNAL, Army General Kurasov hinted, though in more cautious language, at the need for the USSR to strike first in the event of war. He quoted Lenin to the effect that

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\*The above-mentioned book, "War and Politics," for example, said: "It is well known that, unlike the imperialists, military and political leaders of the Soviet Union have many times stated that the USSR will never start wars. They have always denied the strategy of 'pre-emptive blow'."

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it would be "stupid and criminal" not to attack an enemy "acting against us." He recalled that Lenin wrote (Works, Vol. 26, p. 152) that "one must try to catch the enemy in disarray, to strike at the moment when his troops are assembled." And he noted Lenin's adage that "in war you do not communicate to the enemy when you are going to attack."

Voicing concern in his 22nd CPSU Congress speech last October about the possibility of a Western surprise attack against the USSR, Marshal Malinovsky not only called for preparedness to repel such an attack, but hinted strongly at a pre-emptive strategy. He said that in 1961 the armed forces were called on to work out means of "exploding" the aggressor's plan by a "timely and devastating blow against him":

In realistically appraising the situation, one must hold that it is precisely a surprise nuclear attack on the Soviet Union and other socialist countries that the imperialists are preparing. This is why Soviet military doctrine regards as the most important, the principal, and primary tasks of the armed forces to be in constant readiness to repulse reliably a surprise attack of the enemy and to thwart his criminal plans. The point at issue is that, in contemporary conditions, any armed conflict will inevitably develop into a universal nuclear-rocket war, should the nuclear powers be involved in it. Thus we are forced to prepare our armed forces, the country, and all the people primarily for a struggle against the aggressor, mainly in the conditions of nuclear warfare....

The main common task posed for all our armed forces in military training in 1961 was the study and working out of the means of reliably repulsing a sudden nuclear attack by the aggressor and also the means of exploding his aggressive plans by a timely and devastating blow against him.

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There are two important differences between the present and past treatment of the pre-emptive question in the open discourse. First, although allusions to a pre-emptive strategy have been carried in less authoritative sources in the past, only recently has the concept of pre-emptive action been incorporated in the stated mission of the USSR armed forces.\* Second, the strident confidence expressed by some military spokesmen prior to 1960 in having ample warning of an impending enemy attack has not appeared in recent military discourse. Rather, emphasis has been on vigilance and split-second reaction in the expectation that there will be little advance warning. The spokesmen give as the main reason for this the threat posed by American overseas bases. "The presence of numerous military bases of imperialist states around the USSR and other countries of the socialist camp determines that the time for bringing out forces to immediate combat preparedness must be measured not in days or even in hours, but in a series of cases literally in minutes and seconds." (Major General N. Kiryaev, KOMMUNIST OF THE ARMED FORCES, No. 17, September 1961)

American overseas bases, moreover, are given first priority among the prominently announced targets of a Soviet counter-strike. The whole system of bases ringing the Soviet camp, they boast, can rapidly be knocked out of commission. But the Soviets have observed a curious reticence with respect to SAC and missile bases located within the United States. At the most, they speak of attacking "very important targets" within the United States or imply a capability to destroy them by drawing on authoritative American statements bearing

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\*Thus in February 1961, Malinovsky said only that the Soviet armed forces would "repel the attack of the enemy and deal him immediately a crushing, retaliatory blow."



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on Soviet strategic attack forces.\* More common in military discourse are references to strikes against such rear area targets as "industrial and vital centers," "communications junctions," "political-administrative centers," "naval bases," and "everything that feeds war."

The fact that there is little if any specific mention of hitting long-range attack elements located within the United States cannot be explained simply by a reluctance to broach a subject that impinges on a strike-first strategy, for Soviet spokesmen forthrightly speak of a counterforce strategy--implying first strike--with respect to American rocket and SAC bases overseas.

There are several possible explanations for Soviet reticence on the subject of mainland U.S. military targets. It could, for example, reflect a military estimate that U.S. overseas bases, being mainly rocket bases, represent the primary threat to the Soviet camp; whereas the long-range attack forces based within the United States are still mainly aircraft, a part of which are on air alert, and can be dealt with by existing Soviet air defense forces (whose role is heavily stressed in the literature). A second possible explanation is that Soviet military planners lack confidence in their ability to strike at ICBM sites and SAC bases within the United States--or at least in good time--with existing capabilities. Still a third possible consideration is that the Soviet leaders, desiring to give stability to mutual deterrence, find it in their interest to maintain American confidence in SAC's retaliatory capability to deter the USSR--but at a level low enough to discourage an American surprise attack against the USSR.\*\*

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\*"The strength of our rocket weapons is also acknowledged abroad. For example, commander of US SAC General Thomas Power declared openly that under present conditions any target can be destroyed with an accuracy of up to 95%, even if this target is at a distance of 8 to 10 thousand kilometers. Power draws the conclusion: 'In effect all the Soviets need to put our atomic weapons out of commission are 300 rockets. All this in some thirty minutes.'" (Marshal Moskalenko, RED STAR, 13 September 1961)

\*\*Another method the Soviets have used in maintaining American confidence in its ability to deter the USSR is the practice of publicizing expectation of the vast destruction that the USSR would suffer in the event of a new war.

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D. Conclusions

What is most striking about Soviet statements on the problem of the initial stage of war is the uncertainty that underlies them. The fears of Soviet leaders regarding the effects of a surprise attack carried out against the USSR have already been mentioned. We also encounter evidence of uncertainty in the fact that some officers have voiced doubts over whether strategic decisions taken by the military leadership can control events in the first phase of a future war.\*

That such fears and uncertainties are in evidence undoubtedly has important implications for Soviet strategic planning. This has been made clear in allusions by top military leaders to a pre-emptive strategy. If not reflecting a change in policy, their statements may be arguing for one. For they seem to compel the practical doctrinal conclusion that the Soviet Union ought either to prepare to accept a surprise nuclear attack by the United States or to launch one itself.

The Soviets do not, of course, spell out for us the meaning of pre-emptive action. In Soviet thinking, the

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\*In 1960, a sharp controversy took place in the military-historical department of the General Staff, as reported on the pages of the MILITARY-HISTORICAL JOURNAL, over the relative importance of the decisions of the military high command on the one hand, and technique (armaments) on the other, in forming the initial phase of war. Some officers contended that the military high command can in peacetime predetermine the character of the initial period of war; opponents of this viewpoint argued that the character of the initial period of war is above all determined by methods and weapons--that is, by factors independent of the will of individual persons. Marshal Zakharov, who summed up the debate in an article in the July 1961 issue of the MILITARY HISTORICAL JOURNAL, sidestepped this contention, leaving the question among a number of others unresolved. He was content to say that the character of armed struggle in the initial period of war is determined by "many conditions," including plans and armament.

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concept of pre-emption may not necessarily entail a strategy on which military planning is based. It may have no bearing on the choosing of weapons in the USSR. It may simply mean a last-minute attempt to unload the country's strategic attack weapons in an effort to blunt an impending enemy attack.

Such a concept of pre-emption, however, would imply an irresponsible attitude on the part of thinkers so committed as are the Soviets to the principle of total planning. We believe it much more likely that their concept of pre-emption is indeed expressed in planning, is organic to their war planning. In this sense the concept not only means the launching of a forestalling first blow (as opposed to an unprovoked first strike against an opponent); it also means a strategy that would dictate the assemblage of a military force that is capable of delivering an effective forestalling blow, even though such a blow would not absolutely destroy the enemy's capabilities.

As to current Soviet calculations of the effects of a Soviet first strike against the United States, we can only guess in the dark. The military do not come to grips with this question directly in the open discourse. At the most, one could point to indirect indicators of Soviet thinking on this matter, without drawing any firm conclusions. In electing, as they appear to do, a pre-emptive attack strategy, the military leaders imply the belief that substantial blunting of the enemy's attack forces could be achieved by a Soviet first strike. This hypothesis is buttressed by their expressed confidence in an ability to destroy the whole system of American overseas bases, as well as by their statements that a surprise attack could be decisive. On the other hand, their statements bearing on strategic targeting in the first phase of war seem to reflect a lack of confidence in an ability to destroy the long-range attack forces based within territorial United States. This would seem to suggest that, in their view, an important part of the U.S. long-range attack force would survive even under the most adverse conditions of a Soviet nuclear attack. Nevertheless, it seems obvious that the level of destruction would be higher in a pre-emptive blow than in a retaliatory blow, so the inability to effect total destruction would not invalidate a pre-emptive strategy.

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III. DOCTRINE FOR WAR AFTER THE FIRST ATTACK

The Soviet military leadership, from all indications, is preparing the Soviet armed forces for future war on the guiding assumptions that it will involve more than a missile duel between the major powers and will continue on a large scale after the first nuclear blows have been struck. On the same assumptions, the military leaders have sought to work out a body of theory on the character of the entire course of future war as a basis for Soviet war planning. The fact that they have not had complete success in this enterprise has already been noted in this study, as has the tendency of groups of officers to take traditionalist or progressive positions. In the sections that follow, we shall first outline the specific conceptions of how war will develop after the first attack, distinguishing, as we go, between points of agreement and controversy in the military literature. Then we shall assemble evidence of probable Soviet strategic objectives for war as a whole and of methods of attaining them.

A. Characterizations of Future War

1. Duration of War

The question of a future war's duration is a contentious one in the Soviet military establishment. There is no hard and fast doctrine on this matter, although there once was. Up until 1960, the notion that future war would be very long and attritional was not disputed in the military literature.\* In fact, as late as 1959, a Defense Ministry textbook, "In Aid to Officers Studying Marxist-Leninist Theory," envisioned a third world war as lasting longer than World War II. But since 1960, many views have been expressed on the subject. Some writers, principally military economists, continued to predict that a future war would be lengthy because of the fact that both coalitions possessed immense human and material resources as well as a large territory, which could not be knocked out by nuclear blows in a short time. (Major General Lagovsky, SOVIET FLEET, 6 February, 1960; V. Uzenyev, KOMMUNIST OF THE ARMED FORCES, No. 6, 1961)

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\*Calls for upgrading the importance of surprise may have implied short war.

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On the other hand, others have mused over the possibility that war might be concluded with the first nuclear broadsides. One source went so far as to acknowledge the feasibility of a blitzkrieg in the future under the "right conditions," but went on to discount it at least as a practicable Western strategy against the USSR with its vast territory and possibilities for dispersion of means of defense.\*

The likelihood that a future conflict will take the form of a blitzkrieg or single-stage war is clearly a minority viewpoint in the Soviet military, however. Even the outspoken progressive experts on military science now tend to discount this notion. Colonel S. Kozlov, one of the co-authors of the 1960 textbook on "Soviet Military Science" that entertains the possibility of a blitzkrieg, in 1961 wrote disparagingly about unnamed Soviet officers who privately look toward a blitzkrieg as the war of the future. (KOMMUNIST OF THE ARMED FORCES, No. 11, June 1961)

Prevailing military opinion, avoiding both the extremes of blitzkrieg and of a lengthy war of attrition, anticipates a war which will continue beyond the first stage but which will not be long and drawn out like World War II. Military spokesmen tend to agree that at least the initial phase of war--which, by definition, will end when one of the sides attains its immediate strategic aims--will be very short. Khrushchev's picture of the initial phase of future war, drawn in January 1960, had scheduled the delivery of the decisive strategic strikes "not only during the first days but during the first minutes of the war." Similarly even certain of the more conservative military types (who, incidentally, expect much to be done in the initial phase, including the completion of troop mobilization and transformation of the economy to a war footing) say that the first stage will be counted in "hours or in days." (Colonels Kolgushkin and Bershadsky, MILITARY-HISTORICAL JOURNAL, No. 8, August 1960)

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\*"Soviet military science does not deny the blitzkrieg method of conducting war. It points out, however, that the successful conduct of a blitzkrieg requires an advantageous combination of economic, political and military conditions..." (Defense Ministry textbook, "On Soviet Military Science," Moscow, 1960.)

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More noteworthy is the fact that senior military leaders, notably Marshals Malinovsky and Moskalenko, have of late conveyed the impression for the first time that they expect not only the initial phase of war but the war as a whole to be short. They divulged this outlook in the course of dramatizing the swiftness with which strategic objectives could be attained with the use of ballistic missiles. Moskalenko, in an article on Soviet rocket power in RED STAR of 13 September 1961, explained the new outlook in terms of the revolution in weapons technology.

Until the appearance of rocket-nuclear weapons there were no means with the aid of which it would be possible to attain the decisive goals of a war within brief periods of time and in any theater of military operations.

In the past the strategic goals of a war were attained by means of consecutive or simultaneous solutions of tactical and operative tasks in theaters of military operations on land, and this was accompanied by a considerable loss of time, effort, and means.

Today our armed forces dispose of powerful strategic rockets with nuclear charges which make it possible to attain the strategic goals of a war within short periods of time. The rocket troops are capable of conducting operations of varying scope in any area of the globe, and they can exert an essential influence not only on the course but also on the outcome of a war as a whole.

And Malinovsky underwrote his colleague's statements in a speech before the 22nd CPSU Congress in October 1961:

The use of atomic and thermonuclear weapons with unlimited possibilities of delivering them to any target in a matter of minutes

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by means of rockets makes it possible in the shortest period to achieve decisive military results at any range and over immense territory.

## 2. Weapons of War

Khrushchev's pronouncement of January 1960 that nuclear/rocket forces will play the main role in future war is now an unquestioned article of Soviet military doctrine. Unchallenged though it may be, this canon is open to different interpretations as to its meaning for the ways in which war may be conducted after the first strategic strikes.

Soviet military spokesmen do not, as a rule, go so far as to say that future war will simply be a "missile duel or a "push-button war." (Khrushchev had implied that war would take such a form in January 1960, and again in February 1962 in a note to President Kennedy on disarmament issues.) While acknowledging the primacy of nuclear weapons, the military nevertheless see a place for conventional types of forces in a future general war. They differ among themselves, however, over the kind of role that conventional forces and weapons will play in it.

Progressive-minded individuals, on the one hand, minimize the importance of conventional weapons and similarities between methods of waging the future war and those of the past. In their view, only nuclear/rocket weapons can fulfill strategic missions in modern warfare. (Marshal Yeremenko, INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, No. 6, June 1961) Even in tactical situations, they say, battles will be decided by blows dealt by nuclear weapons; and they picture battles as generally being fought with nuclear weapons. (Lt. Col. M. Popov, RED STAR, 18 July 1961)

Traditionalists, on the other hand, tend to emphasize the importance of conventional weapons. They raise the possibility that conventional weapons might even play a primary role in secondary theaters of operations, or in the main theaters at certain stages in the war. Typical of this viewpoint (its popularity is indeterminable from available evidence) is the following estimate by General of the Army P. Kurochkin:

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A future war is unlikely to have identical forms of struggle in all theaters of military operations. The most powerful weapons will obviously be concentrated in the chief theaters and directions. But in the other theaters and sectors of the struggle it is not excluded that military operations may be conducted in the main with conventional weapons. Thus the battle itself in these theaters will acquire forms which will be in some degree similar to those which characterized the Second World War. (MILITARY-HISTORICAL JOURNAL, No. 8, August 1961.)

Defense Minister Malinovsky himself takes a more balanced, open-minded view of the relative importance of modern and conventional weapons in his statements on policy for Soviet force structure, as will be seen in discussion of Soviet strategy for theater warfare later in this study.

It should also be pointed out that Soviet literature takes into account the possible use of chemical-biological warfare in a future general war. Attention has been drawn to the fact that advances in rocket techniques may radically increase the military effectiveness of chemical and bacteriological weapons "whose development in the West is proceeding intensively." (Major General N. Talensky, INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, No. 10, October 1961) Curiously, discussion of CBW is limited to the use of such weapons by the West and defense against them by Soviet forces.

### 3. The Role of Man in War

The new emphasis on weaponry notwithstanding, military thought stresses the role that men will play in modern warfare. Understandably, troop indoctrination in the USSR emphasizes this point in an effort to buoy up morale and to impart a sense of purpose and importance to officers and men. There is, however, a technical military dimension to this question as well. Doctrine now categorically states--as it had before 1960--that future war will demand the participation of "mass, multimillion armies." (Marshal Malinovsky, 23 October 1961 speech) Khrushchev had evidently tried to get the military to break with this old maxim in playing down the need for large armies in his January 1960 presentation. His viewpoint found



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expression in articles by some military officers in early 1960. Thus, Major General G. Pokrovsky (in SOVIET FLEET, 9 March 1960), hailing the announced troop cut as consistent with the general trend of the history of warfare, argued that a war of the future would be waged with smaller land armies than in the past. Even Colonel I. Grudinin, who treated the troop cut as a peacetime measure, foresaw only a "certain" increase in the size of the armed forces in case of war. (RED STAR, 16 February 1960)

In late 1960, however, the old maxim reappeared in the military literature. In a new war, General Krasilnikov wrote in RED STAR in November of that year, "mass, multi-million strong armies will participate."

In early 1961, there were stirrings among the military about the practicability of large-scale mobilization in wartime. A military economist seemed to question the wisdom of those who believed that massive military mobilization could be realized after the shooting had started. He wrote:

The constant increase of military action at the rear of warring countries causes great losses among the civil population and cuts down on the number of reserves which can be mobilized. An increase in the strength of the armed forces of the warring coalitions is possible only under conditions of a great increase in the number of countries actively participating in the armed conflict. (V. Uzenyev, KOMMUNIST OF THE ARMED FORCES, No. 5, March 1961)

By April 1961, it had become clear that the question of the need for large armies in wartime (at least) was resolved for Soviet military doctrine. RED STAR of 5 April 1961 carried what appeared to be a definitive article on the subject, and the military literature has since not questioned the "mass, multimillion armies" concept. The doctrine (adopted in early 1960) that makes a country's military potential dependent primarily on firepower rather than numbers of troops has been retained at the same time, however.

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#### 4. The Scope of War

Another basic tenet of military doctrine is that future war will be global in scale and involve large coalitions of states in armed combat against one another. "A considerably greater number" of countries are expected to be drawn into a new war than took part in the last. (Lt. Gen. Krasilnikov, RED STAR, 18 November 1960) Europe, America and "other continents" will become "theaters of war."\*

Military opinion envisages the conduct of theater warfare throughout the course of a future war--however long or short it may be. Theorists picture the war as starting with a strategic attack by "nuclear-tipped rockets, aviation, or combined strikes by those and other means." At the same time, they say, "several fronts would spring up in different theaters of military operations" in which the other types of service would go into action. (Col. P. Sidorov, KOMMUNIST OF THE ARMED FORCES, No. 12, June 1961)

Taking a page from Khrushchev's book, they say that there will be literally "no borderline between the front and the rear area; the territory of each state that is involved in the war will become a theater of military operations." (Col. A.M. Yevlev, RED STAR, 5 April 1961) With some exceptions,\*\* they add that the war will be waged on land, sea and in the air simultaneously and in many theaters of operation. (Major General (Res.) V.A. Semenov, "Short Outline of the Development of Soviet Operational Art," 1960)

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\*Col. R. Gridasov, RED STAR, 18 June 1960. Major General N. Talensky may have had Communist China in mind as well as the United States when he wrote, in an article in KOMMUNIST of May 1960, that there cannot be a "third and winning party" in a future war.

\*\*The authors of the 1960 textbook "On Soviet Military Science" were taken to task by Col. General N. Lomov (RED STAR, 10 May 1961) for "incorrectly" implying that in a (hypothetical) short war, there would be no land, sea, and air battles, that the war would simply consist of a missile exchange.

## 5. Decisive Character of War

Military doctrine also teaches that the warring sides will strive for total victory in war. Discussions of future war often mention the "decisive" political and military aims or goals to be pursued, and emphasize the severe consequences that will befall the warring parties--though not in equal measure. A future war, according to Marshal Malinovsky, will be,

with respect to its political meaning, a decisive armed clash of the two opposing social systems. It should be quite clear to us that the sharp class nature of such a war will predetermine the extreme decisiveness of the political and military goals of the combatant sides....The employment of means of mass destruction and annihilation will impart to war an unprecedentedly destructive nature. (PRAVDA 14 September 1961.)

Discussion of the consequences of war generally appear in political contexts and cannot readily be evaluated for the meaning it might have for serious Soviet military thinking. It is noteworthy, however, that no Soviet source has indicated that the prospect of war is agreeable to Soviet military leaders; nor has the tenor of military literature as a whole borne a highly optimistic outlook with respect to the outcome of a future general war for the USSR. Military leaders, on the contrary, tend to paint a gloomy picture; in keeping with the mainstream of propaganda, they predict that a nuclear war would entail great disasters for all participants, indeed for all mankind. Thus, Marshal Malinovsky wrote in PRAVDA on 24 January 1962, a future war would do "irreparable damage to all countries." Spokesmen frequently assert that the USSR would vanquish the imperialists and capitalism would meet its demise in the event of war; but only infrequently do they speak in terms of a clear-cut military victory. They never directly admit the possibility of defeat of the USSR

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in war, although several public statements carried in the mass propaganda media during the past year have come close to such an admission.\* It should be noted however, that the Soviet losses that have been explicitly conceded refer to a war initiated by the West. The Soviet leaders' estimate of the losses that the West might be able to inflict on the USSR after being subjected to a Soviet first strike, of course, has not been discussed.

The statements acknowledging that the USSR would suffer greatly in the event of war obviously are publicized for propaganda effect--to underline the sincerity of the Soviet government in its striving to avoid a new war and to stabilize mutual deterrence. The extent to which the statements reflect actual military estimates of anticipated levels of destruction cannot be determined. It can only be surmised from the general tenor of open military discourse--the fears of a Western first strike, the appreciation of nuclear weapons effects, etc.--taken together with the absence of evidence to the contrary, that the expressed fears on the consequences of war are quite genuine.

B. Alternative Strategies: Maximum or Limited Destruction

Soviet strategic objectives beyond the immediate strategic aims of the war are difficult to distinguish with

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\*Thus Malinovsky, in his 22nd Congress speech last October, expressed agreement with Kennedy's statement (as did Khrushchev in the previous month) that the superpowers are "capable of destroying each other." Although the Defense Minister went on to make the customary boast that the USSR would destroy any aggressor in a new war, he did not assert that the USSR would survive it. The mass propaganda also came very close to admitting the possibility of a Soviet defeat in war when TASS, on 22 January 1962, quoted Togliatti as saying that "neither of the two sides can say that it has the slightest confidence that it will survive an armed conflict with its opponent." A PRAVDA version of the Togliatti speech in which that statement was made significantly omitted it, but carried another forceful statement of the same tenor: "War must be averted at any price."

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certainty. The "full defeat" of the enemy is desired, but the meaning of this term is not spelled out. It is not clear how close the Soviet forces must come to total annihilation of the enemy--his armed forces, his civilian population, and his overall war-making capacity--to accomplish the "full defeat" of the enemy.

The Soviet strategic attack effort, as explained in open sources, will be diffused. Groupings of enemy forces in theaters of military operations and important targets in the enemy's rear area will both be "primary objectives" of strategic strikes. The destruction of the enemy's forces in the field is seen as a major prerequisite for victory. At least in traditionalist quarters, emphasis has been placed on the complete smashing of the enemy's armed forces. (Marshal Grechko, PRAVDA, 9 May 1960) On the other hand, this principle no longer enjoys the overriding emphasis which was placed on it before the 1960 doctrinal revision. Once the guiding strategic concept, it must now, under "progressive" influence, share primary importance with rear area bombardment in official (public) doctrine.

The present emphasis on rear-area bombardment appears to be predicated on the assumptions (1) that at the very least, the destruction of rear area civilian-military targets would bring victory more quickly than if the full weight of the Soviet attack were directed against groupings of armed forces in the field; and (2) that under optimum conditions, heavy rear area attack might bring the swift capitulation of a number of countries, thereby precluding the need for major engagements with enemy armed forces in the field and the complete destruction of those forces.

With regard to the fight against enemy rear areas, open discourse unfolds a variety of strategic designs, interwoven with propagandistic aims. Which one or which combination of the following strategies plays a part in Soviet war planning cannot be determined from the open sources alone.

(1) Maximum retaliatory damage or "country-busting" (not a Soviet phrase) is one likely alternative suggested by the public Soviet statements.

a. In Western Europe, certain countries subjected to Soviet nuclear strikes may, because of their small

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size, be "knocked out of the war" with the first salvos. "Whole countries will be turned into lifeless deserts covered with ashes." (Malinovsky, 23 October 1961) These countries will be the ones which house U.S. or NATO strategic attack forces and thereby present a grave danger to the USSR.

b. Regarding the United States, the USSR will "wipe from the face of the earth any aggressor, wherever he may be" should he "try" to encroach upon the Soviet camp. (Marshal Malinovsky, PRAVDA, 23 February 1962) Up until late 1959, the propaganda pictured only the NATO allies as vulnerable to a Soviet attack on a "country-busting" scale. But in November 1959, and again in the following two months, Khrushchev by implication directed his "country-busting" threats against the United States as well.

(2) Limited destruction of different countries, on the other hand, can also be seen as a strategic objective underlying certain statements made over the past two years.

a. Western European allies of the United States may not be designated for complete destruction; indeed, the thorough destruction of the Western coalition may not be foreseen as a strategic aim of war. The brunt of the Soviet nuclear/missile attack might be directed against the U.S. land mass and its overseas bases, whereas less drastic means might be used to neutralize the European allies (should they survive the strikes against the American bases on their soil). This distinction appears to be made in the following statement: "We have at our disposal the necessary means of combat not only to deal a crushing blow against the territory of the United States, but also to render harmless the aggressor's allies and to crush the U.S. military bases scattered all over the world." (Khrushchev, PRAVDA, 8 August 1961.)

b. As for the United States, many threats of Soviet retaliatory blows bear the implication that this country will suffer more limited destruction than its smaller allies and overseas bases because of its great size and widely dispersed population and industry. It has never been said by Soviet spokesmen about the United States, as it has about Western Europe, for example, that a specified number of nuclear weapons would knock out this country. The distinction is apparent in the following statement by Army General Ivanov,

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made in a message to U.S. veterans over Radio Moscow last September:

About ten Soviet nuclear bombs would be sufficient to wipe out countries like Britain, West Germany and France. The United States would not escape either.

The picture painted above of mixed objectives--if assumed to be a deliberate and coordinated one--probably is designed to keep the West off balance as to where to expect the main direction of Soviet strategic attack. On the other hand, if it is not the result of a coordinated effort, the picture could possibly reflect indecision or differences in view among the Soviet military planners themselves over basic objectives and capabilities required to attain them. Indeed, it is difficult to know whether Soviet strategic planning, as revealed in the open sources, is purposefully confusing--or merely confused.

It may shed some light on the problem to study the contradictory nature of the alternative strategies of maximum and limited destruction of enemy countries. First, if maximum destruction of NATO allies in Europe by a single nuclear salvo were planned (logic tells us, as it probably has Khrushchev), the war in Europe would be short; there would be no expectation of massive land engagements between Western and Soviet armies; and there would be no need to occupy enemy territory (which according to Malinovsky would be reduced to "lifeless deserts and heaps of rubble"). Soviet doctrine, stipulating that the immediate strategic aims of war can now be achieved in a very short time, is consonant with such a strategic outlook. But doctrine calling for a "mass, multi-million" army would appear to be anomalous for such a situation. Yet both points of doctrine are simultaneously espoused by the military leadership.

Soviet writers have offered justifications for a massive Soviet land army that tend, if somewhat weakly, to reconcile it with a "country-busting" strategy. The high attrition rate due to enemy nuclear strikes and the depth and breadth of operations (even if conducted with small units) are given as reasons for needing "great reserves of command personnel and enormous contingents of rank and file troops." (Lt. Gen. Krasilnikov, RED STAR, 18 November 1961)

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Also, the argument has been advanced that great numbers of troops may be needed for defensive operations on Soviet soil:

In addition to the troops that will conduct the combat operations directly, a great number of troops will be needed for anti-aircraft, anti-atomic and anti-chemical defense, to guard the communications, to liquidate the consequences of the employment of means of mass destruction, to destroy airborne and naval landings, etc. (Col. A.M. Yevlev, RED STAR, 5 April 1961)

On the other hand, if only partial destruction of the NATO allies were planned, there would be clear justification for a powerful Soviet land army, and the belief that there would be intensive theater warfare on ground, sea and air. In this event, large groupings of NATO forces would be expected to survive the initial nuclear exchange and there would be important, inhabited territory to be seized and occupied by Soviet forces. Logic tells us, though it does not assure us, that the USSR would prefer to leave as much of Europe as possible intact in order to have benefits to reap in the event of victory.

Taking the problem of conflicting evidence of Soviet strategic objectives a step further in our discussion, we can draw some tentative conclusions about the strategic outlook of the Soviet military leadership.

In his policy statements, Marshal Malinovsky has acknowledged the possibility of a short initial period of war if not a short war as a whole; he has given strong hints of a "country-busting" policy with respect to Western Europe, if not to the United States as well ("we will wipe any aggressor from the face of the earth"). At the same time, he has carved out an important role for the conventional arms of service in a future war, taking into account the possibility that war might last well beyond the initial nuclear exchange.

Clearly this is a markedly cautious if somewhat contradictory approach to the problem. The Defense Minister is preparing Soviet forces for a number of eventualities. He is seeking a flexibility that would have been denied the Soviet armed forces had Khrushchev's strategic blueprint of

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January 1960 been translated without modification into military policy. He would not gamble, as Khrushchev seemed willing to do, on relying almost completely on nuclear/missile weapons. In his view, nuclear/missile weapons might be sufficient to the task of deterring the enemy from going to war; but should war break out, other weapons and forces would be required to see it through to victory.

C. Strategic Planning for Theater Warfare

Soviet strategy has not exaggerated the importance of the newest weapons. The mass application of atomic weapons does not at all eliminate waging future war in the form of land, sea and air operations. Without these forms of armed forces, and without their correct inter-coordination, it is impossible to wage war successfully. The construction of the Soviet armed forces as well as their operational-tactical training is being conducted in accordance with this precept." (Maj.Gen. V.A. Semenov, "Short Outline of the Development of Soviet Operational Art," 1960)

Such is the credo of Soviet military science, the keystone of doctrine for theater warfare.

The inter-coordination of nuclear/rocket and conventional forces is central to this credo. The theater warfare missions assigned to the nuclear/rocket forces of the strategic command and to the other types of forces in the USSR are at once different and complementary. In the Soviet view, the nuclear salvos on a strategic and tactical scale serve as an entree for follow-up operations by other types of forces. Through its nuclear/rockets, according to a prominent progressive view "the strategic command influences the subsequent operations of groups of armed forces, predetermining their success as a whole." On a tactical scale, nuclear/rocket strikes solve the main tasks and the operations of other types of forces realize and improve on what was accomplished by the nuclear/missile attacks. (Col. S. Kozlov, KOMMUNIST OF THE ARMED FORCES, No. 11, June 1961)

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## 1. Ground Warfare

Soviet military leaders foresee an essential if secondary role for Soviet ground troops in a future war. "It is only with the help of the ground troops," they say "that the successes gained with the new means of warfare can be secured and expanded." (Marshal Yeremenko, INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, No. 11, November 1960) Until January 1960, the ground troops played the leading role in Soviet strategic planning and were regarded as the "main type" of armed forces. Now, however, the Strategic Rocket Forces, as the basic force for the employment of nuclear weapons, are officially regarded as the "main type" of service. Nevertheless, as noted earlier, some of the more conservative military thinkers envision the ground troops as playing even the principal role in "secondary" theaters of operations.

According to authoritative Soviet statements, the ground troops have themselves been transformed into a nuclear/rocket force. Rocket units of "operational-tactical designation," with ranges up to "many hundred kilometers," have supplanted the artillery as the "main fire striking force" of the ground troops. In an article in RED STAR of 18 November 1961, Chief Marshal of Artillery Varentsov presented a list--"by no means complete"--of the tasks of operational-tactical rocket units:

Dealing blows to targets situated in close proximity to our tanks and infantry, destroying the most important groupings of enemy means of nuclear attack, major control points of operational significance, important communication centers, and air-fields of atom-carrying aircraft that are located in the deep operational rear.

At the same time, military doctrine has stressed the limitations of even the tactical nuclear/rocket weapons, warning that they alone cannot bring victory in combat. "It is not profitable to use atomic weapons against targets which are very widely deployed and dispersed," said a military lecturer. "Some targets cannot be destroyed by nuclear weapons when one's forces are in close proximity to those of the enemy. Moreover, as a result of highly developed engineer fortifications (inzhinernoe oborudovanie mestnosti) much of

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the firepower of the enemy can remain intact in a region subjected to an atomic blow." (Lt. Col. Abramov in a talk over RADIO VOLGA to Soviet forces in Germany)

Reasoning thus, the military leadership continues to equip the ground troops with conventional types of weapons. Marshal Malinovsky made a point of this in his speech before the 22nd CPSU Congress last October:

We are not relaxing attention to the conventional types of weapons, in particular to artillery. Our motorized rifle division is considerably smaller in number of personnel than it was at the end of the last war, but its firepower--exclusive of rocket weapons--has increased over fourfold. As regards tanks, there are more of them in our modern motorized rifle and tank divisions than in the mechanized and tank corps of the Great Fatherland War, and in the corresponding divisions of any NATO country. /In addition, much attention is being paid to the airborne troops and military aviation transport.

Doctrine, it would seem, assigns the ground troops the task of destroying enemy troop concentrations not taken out by strategic missile strikes. But it is not clear whether the doctrine envisions massive and extended land campaigns or only smaller, "mopping-up" operations for the combined ground and supporting air teams. Estimates of the strength of enemy troop formations that might survive the blows of the strategic rocket forces are not given. A number of writers appear to be open-minded on this question, allowing for operations of both large, head-on engagements and small detachments.

Seizing the enemy's territory is implicit in the mission of the ground troops of following-up strategic strikes and consolidating victories, but is seldom mentioned. The subject was broached, however, in a 1960 textbook on military science, which spoke of capturing the "economic material bases" of the enemy, and included among the goals of a military campaign in future war the gaining of effective control over the enemy's territory. (Maj. Gen. M. V. Smirnov, et al., "On Soviet Military Science.")

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Khrushchev in January 1960 had publicly disavowed the idea of occupation of an opponent's territory, breaking with the military doctrine which stipulated that "despite new weapons, troops occupying the opponent's territory would determine the outcome of war." (SOVIET FLEET, 5 January 1957) His motivation in doing so may not have been entirely political: he may not have been able to reconcile territorial occupation with his strategy of "country-busting." In his January 1960 speech he justified the Soviet troop cut not only on the grounds that firepower rather than numbers of troops was the chief indicator of a country's military potential, but also on the grounds that the Soviet strategy was to develop a force capable only of destroying an enemy, not of occupying his territory. Only a country bent on aggression, desiring to conquer another people, he said, requires a large army.

## 2. Naval Warfare

The importance of the Soviet naval arm in a future war against the United States has recently been underscored in Soviet statements. As depicted in Soviet military discourse, the war will be carried to the United States via nuclear strikes from rockets, submarines and possibly manned aircraft. No mention is made of the possibility of conducting ground warfare in this country. The strategy that is discussed for the second stage of war against the United States is to inhibit forces and material based there from crossing the ocean. Khrushchev made a point of this defensive strategy in his address to the 22nd CPSU Congress last October. He stated that an enemy attacking the USSR--namely the United States--must achieve supremacy of the seas in order to be successful. But this requirement could not be met by the United States, said Khrushchev, owing to the enormous capability of the Soviet submarine fleet to interdict foreign shipping and to deny command of the seas to the enemy. In stressing this point, he repeated the claim first made a week earlier in an IZVESTIA article on Soviet atomic submarines

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that the Soviet underwater fleet is equipped with "target-seeking" rockets for use against moving targets.\*

Soviet military writers have dealt with the question of dominance of the seas in the past but have not in recent years posed it as a requirement for victory over the USSR. They have always regarded America's geographical separation from its allies as a serious liability, however. (Marshal Vasilevsky, for example, in an article in RED STAR on 14 August 1957 stressed the Soviet advantage of not having the American problem of vital communication lines over the sea with its allies.) And they have consequently regarded the increased vulnerability of surface vessels, owing to modern weapons developments, as a tremendous advantage to the USSR.

Despite Khrushchev's indiscriminate disparagement of surface ships in the past, Soviet naval leaders speak of important and varied roles for surface vessels of different classes as well as submarines in a future war. The atom-powered submarine equipped with nuclear rocket weapons is now regarded as the "backbone" of the Soviet navy, and the submarine arm is portrayed as its main striking force. But voices are heard cautioning against placing excessive emphasis on the submarine at the expense of other naval weapon systems. According to Rear Admiral V. Prokofiev:

Soviet naval thought opposes the onesided exaggeration to an extreme of any particular arm of the navy. Naval combat operations will develop over enormous ocean and coastal areas and will require the

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\*Soviet submarine armament is said to include long-range ballistic rockets with nuclear warheads, self-homing rockets (winged rockets) for firing at various naval targets, and an assortment of torpedoes--magnetic, self-homing, and others--for attacking surface ships and submarines. An atomic submarine with its rockets can destroy "a large naval base of the enemy, a large industrial center, or a formation of aircraft carriers." (IZVESTIA, 10 October 1961)

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cooperation of all forces as well as comprehensive combat support for the main striking forces--the submarines. Surface ships in particular will have to solve a large number of tasks, which in contemporary warfare conditions have become exceptionally complex. (RED STAR, 13 January 1962)

The general missions of the Soviet navy, equipped with rocket cruisers, atomic and conventional submarines, and cutters armed with rockets, have been cited by a number of different Soviet sources. These are

- (a) to conduct battles against a strong naval enemy, destroying its striking power;
- (b) to break ocean and sea lines of communications;
- (c) to destroy ports, naval bases, and other installations on the shore;
- (d) to influence the achievement of the general aims of the armed conflict; and
- (e) together with other arms, to defend the shore from enemy invasion from the sea and from strikes from the direction of the sea.

Concern over the U.S. Polaris submarine has for a long time been registered in Soviet military discourse. (Malinovsky boasted that the Polaris submarines will not escape destruction, in an Army-Navy Day article in PRAVDA of 23 February 1962). Against these and other NATO submarines, the Soviets will deploy their naval air arm and killer submarines. Thus rocket-carrying naval aircraft, which were demonstrated for the first time at Tushino in July 1961 are said to be capable of detecting at great distance and destroying enemy ships of all types, "both on the surface and submerged." (Marshal Vershinin, RED STAR, 16 September 1961) Another source has said that, in a future war, underwater combat will be one of the basic methods of defending sea borders against the approach of enemy submarines: "The new power and the new weapons open for the Soviet atomic submarines great opportunities for the struggle against the enemy submarines." (IZVESTIA, 10 October 1961)

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### 3. Aviation and Air Defense

The Soviet air forces will also be assigned varied and important support missions in a future war. Air force leaders have consistently declared that manned aviation will play an important role irrespective of developments in rocket technology, even when Khrushchev and certain military leaders voiced contrary views. Now there appears to be a concensus among the party and military leaders on the need to develop manned aviation for offensive strategic and tactical missions as well as defensive missions. The change in Khrushchev's view is striking:

"The military air force and /surface/ navy have lost their previous importance.... Almost the entire military air force is being replaced by rocket equipment. We have already sharply cut and it seems will continue to cut sharply and even discontinue, the manufacture of bombers and other obsolete equipment." (14 January 1960 speech.)

"In equipping the armed forces with rockets and an atomic submarine fleet we do not discount the air force but continue to develop and improve it." (Speech delivered at the 22nd CPSU Congress, October 1961)

The new optimistic view of the usefulness of bomber aviation in a future war seems to spring mainly from the new possibilities given it by rocket armament. Soviet officers describe air-to-ground rockets, which they now claim for the USSR air forces, as "bomber aircraft weapons" which permit the bombers not only to avoid entering the anti-air defense zone of the target but "to avoid approaching it." And they ascribe to such rocket-equipped bombers a "considerably lowered vulnerability." (Col. Gen. A.N. Ponomarev, RED STAR, 18 November 1961)

Bomber aviation is apparently slated for a supplementary or support role in the fulfillment of strategic as well as sub-strategic missions in a future war. According to Marshal Malinovsky, the Soviet air force is capable of delivering nuclear strikes against an aggressor "jointly with the strategic rocket troops." (Speech of 23 October 1961, at the 22nd CPSU Congress) This capability, he says, derives

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from the "new" jet aircraft, including "intercontinental supersonic bombers," which carry rockets capable of destroying enemy installations "many hundreds of kilometers from the spot where the rocket is launched." (PRAVDA, 23 February 1962)

As for air defense, other elements of the air forces, notably, fighter aviation, "working in cooperation with the anti-aircraft defense forces of the country," will strive to repulse air attacks. (Malinovsky, 23 October 1961 speech) Military doctrine provides that in a future war, "the crushing of the nuclear-rocket and rocket-carrying forces and the nuclear air force of the enemy will become one of the main /strategic/ tasks." (Lt. Gen. Krasilnikov, RED STAR, 18 November 1960) Accordingly, the air defense forces must give timely warning of the threat of a nuclear attack and detect and destroy approaching enemy forces before the deadly payloads reach their targets. There is no disputing these basic imperatives in the military literature.

The time factor is repeatedly underscored as being vital to the success of the operation. Inasmuch as the outcome of battle will be decided in "not only minutes but even fractions of seconds," the enemy must be "wiped out on the first attack or the first launching of a rocket." (Marshal Biryuzov, RED STAR, 23 September 1961) Air force commanders are admonished that to permit even one target to reach the objective can have "very unfortunate consequences," and that the NATO forces have powerful means of long-range attack and will use radar interference on a "wide scale" to prevent counteractions by Soviet forces. (Marshal Savitsky, RED STAR, 14 November 1961)

Now, the Soviets say, the anti-aircraft defense of the country is based primarily on the anti-aircraft rocket troops. But they already look forward to the time when a substantial antimissile force will also protect the USSR. In evident anticipation of this capability, Marshal Malinovsky --having previously announced that the USSR had solved the problem of destroying missiles in flight--now claims that the Soviet air defense forces "possess equipment and weapons capable of destroying enemy air and space methods of attack at great heights and distances." (PRAVDA, 23 February 1962)

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The projected role of a missile defense system for the USSR is worth mentioning. For advanced weapons technology now has a coveted place in Soviet military thinking on the waging of a future war as well as on the problem of deterring it. Frequently in the military literature--as well as in Khrushchev's speeches--attention is drawn to the need for the USSR to have a weapons superiority over the probable enemy. The concept of superiority, in so far as it is revealed in the literature, is derived from an assessment of qualitative criteria as well as numerical comparisons. They say that "if one side has a more effective weapon, it is possible for that side (all other things being equal) to hold the upperhand over the enemy which possesses inferior weapons." (V. Uzenyev, *KOMMUNIST OF THE ARMED FORCES*, No. 6, March 1961) Reasoning thus, they emphasize scientific and technological capabilities as such, and are very much concerned with gaining lead time over the United States in the development of weapons and counter-measures. "The Soviet Government is not limiting itself to those military means which the adversary already has," said a USSR Defense Ministry book, "for undoubtedly this would be insufficient. Any preempting of the adversary's potential in the creation of the newest means of combat not only gives undoubted superiority in case of war, but also makes it difficult for the aggressive imperialist forces to unleash wars." (E. I. Rybkin, "War and Politics") And they warn, furthermore, that "slowing down in any of the links of the complex system of defense or in the construction on a broad scale of contemporary technology, can lead to the most difficult consequences for armies and countries." (General V. Kurasov, *MILITARY-HISTORICAL JOURNAL*, No. 3, March 1961) If we may hazard a conclusion from this brief discussion of the concept of military superiority, it is that the Soviet Union is not necessarily committed to maintaining a substantial lead in the quantities of modern weapons: it may rely to a considerable degree on technological (qualitative) advances in the development of weapons for future war.

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#### IV. APPENDIX: THE STATUS OF SOVIET MILITARY DOCTRINE ON THE EVE OF WORLD WAR II

The search for a dynamic military doctrine which will facilitate accurate prognostications for the future war is having a salutary effect on Soviet military historiography. The trend toward greater objectivity is becoming more pronounced as more and more participants in World War II are being encouraged to write memoirs and tracts in a forthright and objective manner. Soviet military leaders who put much store by past experience insist that the objective truth must be found and stated in the writing of military history in order that the proper lessons can be learned and a viable doctrine prepared for the contingency of a future war. Whether truths will be stated even if politically inconvenient, however, remains to be seen.

In the process of rewriting military history, one of the central issues debated has been the question of the status of Soviet military doctrine on the eve of World War II. Although a contentious question, it served the purposes of the various debaters who were intent on impressing others with the importance of having a fully elaborated, up-to-date theory of future war and the inevitable penalty to be paid in the absence of such a theory. Because of the relevance of this question to our study, and because of the insights the discussion affords us into the process of reassessing established doctrines in the USSR, we shall by way of a postscript outline the principal arguments on the status of pre-war military doctrine that were published between 1959 and 1961.

\* \* \* \* \*

In October 1959, prior to the publication of the latest official multi-volume history of World War II, Maj. Gen. I. Rukhle set off a sharply-worded debate in the pages of the MILITARY-HISTORICAL JOURNAL, with a free-wheeling criticism of both the pre-war military doctrine and the specific contributions of certain Soviet military theoreticians. Most of the participants in the discussion in the JOURNAL materials were inclined to support Rukhle's view--which eventually became the official view--but there were some notable departures.

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The following views on the subject are presented in chronological order to give the flavor of the debate as it unfolded on the pages of the MILITARY-HISTORICAL JOURNAL.

In December 1959, Rukhle's position was debated in the General Staff military section, and an account of the debate was carried in the April 1960 issue of the journal. A Col. Nazarov recalled that pre-war military doctrine had considered the possibility of surprise attack--but had not drawn the necessary conclusions:

...The possibility of starting a war with a surprise attack and striving to deliver the first powerful blow was examined in the theory of military art between the first and second world wars. However, neither ours, nor foreign military theory, foresaw all the consequences of a surprise blow, and neither worked out measures for its prevention.

Col. Verzhkovsky, in the same discussion, was fully sympathetic with Rukhle's position:

Before World War II, this problem /the initial period of the war/ was not worked out in sufficient degree. Perhaps this played a certain rôle in our failures in the first days of the war.

Lt. Gen. Skorobogatkin, on the other hand, attacked Rukhle for berating pre-war military doctrine. The same issue of the JOURNAL reported him as saying at the meeting:

I cannot agree with Rukhle's assertion on the backwardness of Soviet military science before World War II. Soviet military science worked out, earlier than the German, not only the theory of battles and operations in depth, but also organization of troops, as well as the practical decisions of this theory. We had the first mechanized corps, we earliest of all began to apply air strikes and to introduce the use of tanks in large formations (soedinenia). All these problems were already worked out by our military science by

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1937. In the Red Army large scale maneuvers were conducted with the participation of mechanized corps. But later, the mechanized corps, in spite of the theory, were disassembled. During the war we could not for a series of reasons realize our theory in the first period; later, however, it justified itself.

Rukhle's position won out, for the time being, and found its expression in Volume I of "The History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union, 1941-45." (Signed to the press 28 May 1960). According to that authoritative source, Soviet military doctrine was inadequately developed to meet the situation encountered in the early part of the war. The following excerpts represent the gist of the official position on the pre-war doctrine:

Soviet strategy [on the eve of the war] recognized the defense as a necessary form of armed struggle but subordinated its role to the offensive. As regards the question of defense, our theory was not fully worked out. It considered defense as possible and necessary in separate directions, but not on the whole strategic front. In principle, strategy considered a forced withdrawal possible, but only on separate sectors of the front and as a temporary phenomenon connected with the preparation of an offensive. The question of withdrawal of large forces from the threat of an encirclement had not been worked out.

The question of the counteroffensive as a particular kind of strategic offensive before the great patriotic war was not posed despite the rich experience of the counteroffensive in the civil war of 1918-20.

A major shortcoming in the training of the high command cadres of the Red army on the eve of the war was the absence of a manual on attack.

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The whole organization of the defense of the state border proceeded from the fact that a sudden attack by the enemy was excluded...

The issue was not yet resolved, however. In the September 1960 issue of the JOURNAL--several months after the publication of the official history of the war--Maj. Gen. Mernov offered a dissenting view. Like General Skorobogatkin, he defended the stature of the pre-war doctrine:

We consider that Soviet military theoreticians studied the new character of armed forces...and had provided for the strategic deployment of armed forces in the event of enemy surprise attack as well as in the case of a declared war. For this purpose it was recommended that there be an army of defense in constant military preparedness as a first strategic echelon. These views were based on a correct understanding at that time of the nature of future wars as wars of long duration involving multi-million mass armies, with the deployment of subsequent strategic echelons.

The pendulum swung the other way in the following spring, however, when Lt. Gen. Kolchigin--in the April 1961 issue of the JOURNAL--rapped the knuckles of Mernov for being an apologist for the pre-war military theorists:

...Maj. Gen. Mernov in his article tries to deny the mistakes committed in the pre-war period by certain of our military theoreticians (Melikov, Eideman, Tsiffer) in questions of the initial period of war, in particular in respect to the organization of defense. These theoreticians, as Rukhle correctly observed, "mistakenly thought that the initial period of the war would involve operations of small armies defending 'the right to be deployed.'" (pravo razvernut'sia) They did not foresee the possibility of the application by the enemy

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of secret methods of mobilization and deployment of armed forces with the objective of a surprise attack at once by the main forces and therefore considered that the initial period would be characterized by operations of small armies under defense which would be effected by the strategic deployment and actions of the main mass of armed forces. Not denying this position, General V. Mernov writes: "Maintenance in constant readiness of a strong army of defense along the border would have facilitated the transition of the army of peacetime onto a war footing under any circumstances." In our view, this is a mistaken point, since it was made without account of the situation of 1941,.... Despite the opinion of General Mernov, we also consider that the prewar theoreticians insufficiently studied the new character of armed forces and in particular, the rapid and deep invasion by enemy armies.

Major Gen. Cherednichenko came to Rukhle's and Kolchigin's support in the same issue of the JOURNAL, once again underscoring the shortcomings of the pre-war doctrine and the mistakes of the strategists in the first days of the war:

Rukhle in his article, in our opinion, has correctly observed the mistakes of military theoreticians in the prewar years, including V. Melikov and R. Eideman, on questions of the initial period of war....Soviet armed forces by the beginning of the war turned out not to have been (deployed) in an appropriate strategic and operational way, battle-ready, or prepared to rebuff a surprise attack by the ground and aviation forces of fascist Germany. All this had serious consequences on the course of the initial period of war....Events at the beginning of the war would have taken a different character if our armed forces had in good time been battle-ready and properly deployed; if aviation and artillery had immediately directed counter-strikes against the advance groups

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of the fascist troops, their artillery and aviation; and if fronts and armies had at once developed active and organized combat operations to frustrate the aggressor's attack. There were possibilities for this, but they were not utilized.

Our army, having suffered serious losses at the start of the war, needed to retreat deep into the country. Such operations came as a surprise to the operational and strategic leadership as well as to the troops. Great flexibility, a rapid evaluation of the complex situation, the posing of correct tasks to the fronts, aviation and fleets and the organization for fulfilling these tasks were required, under the new conditions, of the strategic and operational leadership. However, in the first days of the war, because of incorrect evaluation of the situation, the Soviet forces were given unfulfillable tasks, and their position was further aggravated and made more difficult.

Finally, Marshal Zakharov, in an article concluding the debate in the July 1961 issue of the JOURNAL, also reinforced the official position in a brief but sharp criticism of the pre-war doctrine:

It must be said that on the eve of the Great Patriotic War, despite the fact that the aggressors had already had experience in conducting surprise attacks in the West, little attention was paid to the conduct of beginning operations in our military theory. An especially big omission from theory and practice as well, ... was such an important question as conducting operations under conditions in which the enemy takes the initiative from the outset of the war; in short measures for resisting a surprise attack were not foreseen. Therefore, since the situation at the start of the war was unforeseen by our side, the Soviet high command had to take hasty, partially improvised decisions, not responding quickly to the changing situation.

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