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GORBACHEV AND THE SOVIET MILITARY

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GORBACHEV AND THE SOVIET MILITARY¹

Although Mikhail Gorbachev's tenure can be characterized as an age of restructuring, changes in the military have been relatively subdued. Moderation and continuity are the most appropriate terms to describe the processes that have taken place. *Perestroika*,² which has shaken the ranks of the Party and government bureaucracies, has been used much less in the military sphere. In the military press, *glasnost* also has a rather superficial character.

Mikhail Gorbachev gives considerably less time to military affairs than to other subjects of concern, such as economics or cadre policy. In his six-hour address at the 27th Party Congress, the General Secretary dedicated only a few paragraphs to the armed forces. The section in the new version of the Party program devoted to defense and national security policies was trimmed substantially, compared with previous versions. Unlike his predecessors, particularly "Marshal of the Soviet Union" Leonid Il'ich Brezhnev, Mikhail Gorbachev seems to avoid any semblance of the all-too-familiar decoration displays. Military figures (with the exception of Marshal of the Soviet Union Sokolov, the former Minister of Defense, and, occasionally, the Chief of the General Staff, Marshal Akhromeev) are almost always absent from the Soviet leader's entourage. Veteran Soviet military parade watchers did not fail to notice that beginning in November 1985, the number of Soviet military leaders on top of the Lenin mausoleum had been reduced from ten to five. The military parade itself was shortened by almost half, depriving Western observers of a close-up view of the Soviet armed forces hardware and simultaneously suggesting the image of the new "Mikhail the Peaceful." Gorbachev also did not upgrade the previous Minister of Defense, Marshal Sokolov, or his successor, Army General Yazov, to full Politburo member status. Gorbachev has shown, albeit in a limited way, that not even top military leaders (or the KGB) are immune to criticism from the Party press.³

¹This is a substantially expanded and revised version of a chapter in a forthcoming book by Westview Press, *Gorbachev and the Soviet Future* (Lawrence Lerner and Donald Treadgold, eds.).

²A term that translates as "restructuring."

³See, for example, the recent rebuff of the Commander of the Soviet Northern Fleet, Admiral Ivan Kapitanets, in a Politburo resolution; Marshal Sokolov's criticism of the Air Force and Navy leadership, in *Krasnaya Zvezda*, March 18, 1987; and the harsh attack against the PVO leadership following the landing in Red Square of a small private plane piloted by a young West German, Mathias Rust, in *Krasnaya Zvezda*, June 17, 1987.



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The important question, of course, is whether all these signs constitute the decline of the Soviet military's role as an institution within the country's political power structure? To answer this question, we must consider three primary points:

- The growth of Soviet defense expenditures.
- The dynamics of personnel changes.
- Changes in political status.

DEFENSE EXPENDITURES

Having received the standard Marxist-Leninist education, Mikhail Gorbachev inevitably understands that the amount of resources he allocates for his country's defense will serve as the best indicator of his priorities. Since he came to power in March 1985, and particularly since his programs of economic modernization were approved by the June 1985 Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the 27th Party Congress, some Western analysts have begun to talk of the "diversion of resources from the defense to the civilian sector" and of all the "obstacles" that continued high levels of defense expenditures create for Gorbachev's efforts to modernize the Soviet economy.⁴ The new Soviet leader has called for a major effort to retool Soviet industrial plants and generally modernize the economy, so that it can cope with "urgent tasks," such as "increasing the volume of food supplies, consumer goods . . . and services." But at the same time, Gorbachev has conceded that there is a need "to accelerate socioeconomic development," which is imposed by "external circumstances": "We are forced to invest the necessary funds in the national defense . . . we must not permit military superiority over ourselves."⁵

The new Soviet leadership claims to be working on both maintaining the level of the defense buildup and increasing the volume of consumer goods and services. But this is not evidenced in the Soviet investment structure. In his speech at the 27th Party Congress, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Nikolai Ryzhkov, announced major investment increases for the energy and machine-building sectors, and lesser increases for agriculture and consumer investment. Gorbachev's first five-year plan (1986-90) calls for 3.5 percent

⁴David R. Jones, "The Soviet Military Year in Review: 1984-1985," *Soviet Armed Forces Review Annual*, Vol. 9, 1984-1985, Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 1986, p. 17.

⁵*Pravda*, June 12, 1985.

annual growth in the national income and 7.8 percent growth in the machine-building sector. Those familiar with the Soviet procurement system know that machine building constitutes the backbone of the country's military-industrial capacity.

Military industry appears to play a very important, if not the key, role in Gorbachev's policies of economic restructuring. In general, the Soviet defense industry performs much better than the civilian sector; Gorbachev has therefore decided to use it as a model for his economic reforms. Three major developments have been most significant here: First, one of the top defense sector managers, Nikolai Ryzhkov, was made the Chairman of the Council of Ministers and was put in charge of economic "restructuring"; he also brought a number of his former colleagues to manage important heavy industry and high-technology-related branches. Second, the system of independent quality control bodies (*gospriemka*), which clearly had its origins in the defense industry military representatives (*voenpredy*) structure, was introduced in civilian industries. Finally, two "superministries" have been established: the Agroindustrial Complex and the Bureau of Machine Building. Both of these organizations seem to be patterned after the Military-Industrial Commission of the Council of Ministers, the senior government body responsible for overseeing the defense industries.

One of the most important items on Gorbachev's agenda appears to be to bring the USSR into the forefront of modern technology. He and his top lieutenants and advisers repeatedly stressed the need for this during the 27th Party Congress, and technological renovation is the key element in plans, resolutions, decrees, and other documents that have been made public since the Congress. This emphasis on technological progress clearly has an international dimension: Soviet writings, both political and technical, stress the links among the country's economy, its scientific and technological posture, and its international status and reputation. Gorbachev has insisted in a number of pronouncements that if the present crisis in the Soviet economy persists, the country is going to lose its superpower status. The possible military implications of this are quite clear.

Expressions of concern about the long-term ability of the civilian economy to sustain military competition have appeared in Soviet military publications since the late 1970s. These writings stress the theme of the scientific-technical revolution's significance in military affairs, a theme that has, of course, been present in the Soviet military literature since World War II. The new element in these writings, particularly since the early 1980s, is the argument that scientific-technological competition has become the most dynamic factor in military competition in general. The authors generally acknowledge that the scientific-technical revolution is accelerating, bringing with it something that the former Chief of the

Soviet Armed Forces General Staff, Marshal of the Soviet Union Nikolai Ogarkov, called "revolutionary changes" in military affairs. The awareness of the Soviet political leadership of the importance of these developments is illustrated by the following statement from an article in the Soviet armed forces Main Political Administration (MPA) magazine *Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil*:

Today it is difficult to overestimate the Party's concern for the cardinal acceleration of scientific-technical progress in matters of strengthening the military-economic potential. After all, the leading directions of scientific-technical progress—robot technology, computer technology, instrument making, and electronics—are simultaneously the basic catalysts of military-technical progress.⁶

Major consequences of this "revolution in military affairs" include the reassessment of Soviet military capabilities, conduct, and preparation for future war, and the nature of the West's challenge to Soviet security interests. These factors present the Soviet leadership with very concrete questions on the proper response, questions that encompass all areas of Soviet national security policies, including arms control. It is not surprising that some serious debates on this subject have taken place among Soviet political and military leaders.

A FRUSTRATED REVOLUTIONARY: THE CASE OF MARSHAL OGARKOV

Since the late 1970s, the declining performance of the domestic economy, as well as the phasing out of detente, brought to the surface the debate over shrinking economic resource allocations to the military. Marshal Ogarkov became the major spokesman for the military on this issue.

Marshal Ogarkov replaced Marshal Victor Kulikov as Chief of the Soviet Armed Forces General Staff in 1976. Unlike the former Soviet Minister of Defense, Marshal of the Soviet Union Grechko, and presumably Kulikov as well, Ogarkov was a major supporter of the Soviet arms control policies and in fact was the mastermind behind them (see A. Shevchenko's description of Ogarkov's debates with Grechko about the SALT I Treaty⁷). Ogarkov's appointment was followed by Brezhnev's 1977 announcement of the so called

⁶Major General Yasyukov, "Politika KPSS v oblasti oborony: sushchnost', soderzhanie," *Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil* (hereafter referred to as KVS), No. 20, October 1985, p. 20; for a more recent appraisal of Gorbachev's economic policies, see Major General I. Danilenko, "Perestroika," *Soviet Military Review*, No. 11, 1987.

⁷Arkadii Shevchenko, *Breaking with Moscow*, New York: Knopf, 1985, pp. 165, 202-204.

"Tula" line in nuclear policy. In his Tula speech, Brezhnev proclaimed that there would be no winners in nuclear war, and he stressed the importance of arms control initiatives and nuclear parity. Many serious observers believe that this line was completely in accord with Ogarkov's writings (since the 1970s) on the implications of the scientific-technical revolution in military affairs, particularly the new, nonnuclear technologies.⁸

Now recognized in the West (and presumably also in the Soviet Union) as one of the most consistent proponents of "weapons based on new physical principles" and high-technology warfare in general (see his entry on "Military Strategy" in the *Soviet Military Encyclopedia*),⁹ Ogarkov tended to downgrade the importance of both traditional conventional weaponry and strategic nuclear forces.¹⁰ This, of course, explains his emphatic calls for restructuring of the military procurement priorities of the 1970s. In a May 1984 interview in *Krasnaya Zvezda*,¹¹ Ogarkov offered probably the best outline of his views on the future of modern warfare: He downplayed the danger of nuclear conflict (even a limited one) and stressed instead the challenge presented by the new nonnuclear technologies, which could upset the strategic equilibrium. These coming changes, according to Ogarkov, will require major transformations in spending patterns, training, organization, command, and control.

It is probably, as the Soviets say, "not by simple coincidence" that this interview was the last statement of Marshal Ogarkov's views as the Chief of the General Staff before he was transferred to an unspecified "other job at the Ministry of Defense." Speculations on the reasons for Ogarkov's removal are numerous,¹² but we note two important aspects that

⁸See Mary C. FitzGerald, *Marshal Ogarkov on Modern War: 1977-1985*, Center for Naval Analyses, Professional Paper 443.10, 1986; William E. Odom, "Soviet Force Posture: Dilemmas and Directions," *Problems of Communism*, July-August 1985, pp. 6-14; John G. Hines, Phillip A. Petersen, and Notra Trulock, III, "Soviet Military Theory from 1945-2000," *Washington Quarterly*, Fall 1986, pp. 117-137.

⁹"Strategiia voennaia," in *Sovetskaia Voennaia Entsiklopediia*, Vol. 7, Moscow: Voenizdat, 1979.

¹⁰Marshal Nikolai V. Ogarkov, "Voennaia nauka i zashchita sotsialisticheskogo Otechestva," *Kommunist*, No. 7, 1978, pp. 110-121.

¹¹Marshal Nikolai V. Ogarkov, "Zashchita sotsializma: opyt istorii i sovremennost," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, May 9, 1984.

¹²See Mary C. FitzGerald, op. cit.; also "Marshal Ogarkov on the Modern Theater Operation," *Naval War College Review*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 4, pp. 6-25; Dale R. Herspring, "Nikolai Ogarkov and the Scientific-Technical Revolution in Soviet Military Affairs," *Comparative Strategy*, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 29-60; Robert Hutchison, "Ogarkov Tipped as Next Soviet Defense Minister," *Jane's Defense Weekly*, October 26, 1985, pp. 929-933.

deserve emphasis: First, none of Ogarkov's arguments have ever been refuted in Soviet military publications (his books, apparently, are still required reading¹³); and second, the new Soviet military procurement policies, as well as the most recent writings on the subject, seem to be in agreement with the ousted Marshal's demands. This suggests some political or personal reasons (or, most likely, a combination of them) for his removal. Ogarkov's forceful personality and reported unwillingness to compromise with bureaucratic politics might have played a crucial role. Dale R. Herspring's suggestion that the former Chief of the General Staff was pushing too hard for a "more dialectical relationship between the civilian economic and political structure on one hand and the armed forces on the other" also seems plausible.¹⁴ Were Ogarkov to obtain all he was asking for, the role of the professional military in strategic decisionmaking would probably be enhanced, particularly in the economic area.¹⁵ That could lead to what William Odom calls an increased "militarization" of Soviet society.¹⁶

PERESTROIKA AND SOVIET MILITARY AFFAIRS

It might seem somewhat peculiar that in the absence of one of its strongest proponents, Marshal Ogarkov, the Soviet military-industrial complex has been developing progressively in accord with his predictions. The Soviet military appears to be very supportive of Gorbachev's economic programs. Military planners can clearly see how they can benefit from future advances in new technologies and from modernizing and technically re-equipping production facilities. In fact, it is easy to see the parallel between Ogarkov's and others' complaints about Soviet industrial shortcomings and the direction in which the new Soviet administration wants industry to go.

A case can be made that the pressure for the shift in Soviet investment strategies originated with the military. Analysis of recent Soviet military-industrial planning does not support the popular Western view that the Soviet military "is not fully satisfied with its share of the budget."¹⁷ The military's comments on Gorbachev's economic policies, as well as

¹³Dale R. Herspring, op. cit., p. 55. Ogarkov's books are also referred to in recent Soviet publications, such as A. G. Arbatov, A. A. Vasil'ev, and A. A. Kokoshin, "Iadernoe oruzhie i strategicheskaia stabil'nost'," *SShA*, No. 9(213), 1987, pp. 5, 11.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶William E. Odom, "The Soviet Military-Educational Complex," in Dale R. Herspring and Ivan Volges (eds.), *Civil-Military Relations in Communist Systems*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1978.

¹⁷Dale R. Herspring, "The Soviet Military in the Aftermath of the 27th Party Congress," *Orbis*, Summer 1986, p. 313.

the analysis of budget allocations, particularly procurement, show nothing that could make the generals suspicious or angry.

Military writers, in articles in political, technical, and specialized military publications, endorse Gorbachev's efforts to introduce scientific and technological innovations into Soviet industrial production and note obstacles to this process which need to be eliminated. It is safe to assume that the economic policies of the new Soviet General Secretary have won him more supporters among the military than among the industrial managers. The military obviously has a more astute and personal understanding of the situation. As one of the Soviet generals summarized it, "The struggle to maintain parity between the USSR and the United States is being particularly acutely conducted in the sphere of military-technical policy."¹⁸

Soviet military strategists see a "direct relationship" between combat readiness and the kinds of modern weaponry and equipment the Soviet armed forces have at their disposal.¹⁹ They are keenly aware of the historical experience that demonstrated, as a modern Soviet military theorist put it, "that the surprise impact of a new weapon can be really devastating for the armed forces which are unprepared. The psychological effect cannot be calculated, and under certain conditions can surpass (*prevyshit'*) the material damage many times over."²⁰ The same author concedes that the quality and quantity of modern weapons are "totally dependent on the level of the country's economic development."²¹ The way to expedite this development, and thereby optimize the advancement of the crucially important new weapons, is to realize "the importance of scientific-technological progress," since it "enhances the shift in concentration of the scientific, material and financial resources on defense programs, and . . . also insures effective use of the means allocated for military-scientific research."²²

¹⁸Major General Yasyukov, "Politika KPSS v oblasti oborony," p. 19.

¹⁹"Ukrepliaia oboronu strany," *Tekhnika i vooruzhenie*, No. 9, 1986, p. 1.

²⁰Colonel, Doctor of Philosophy, G. Lukava, "Oboronnyi shchit Sovetskoi strany," *Voennyi vestnik*, No. 11, 1986, p. 12.

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 11.

²²Colonel G. Korotkov, Candidate of Historical Sciences, and Lieutenant Colonel E. Trusov, "Protiv burzhuaznykh fal'sifikatsii reshenii 27-go s'ezda KPSS," *Vestnik PVO*, No. 7, 1986, p. 79.

The Soviet economy is not by any standard a good vehicle for progress in science and technology. Therefore it is not surprising that military writers note with approval Gorbachev's exposure of the fact that in the "use of the scientific-technical potential there are a number of bottlenecks and problems."²³ The solution, as one military writer sees it, is:

- Raising the effectiveness of scientific research.
- Vigorous utilization of the most advanced achievements of science and technology in economic and social practice for the purpose of strengthening the country's defense capability.²⁴

The importance the Soviet military establishment places on Gorbachev's policies of economic "restructuring" and "acceleration" is evident in the unusually detailed analysis of his innovations in military publications. Although articles about the Party's economic strategies, etc., are commonplace in all Soviet military publications, they rarely go beyond simple repetition and rehashing of well-known official formulations. Most of these articles are written by civilian economists or are simply sent down from the Main Political Administration of the Soviet Army and Navy (MPA) and printed as editorials. They could hardly be called analytical, and they almost never mention any problematic issues. In contrast, recent articles by military experts on issues dealing with the economy and scientific-technical progress deal in depth with the substance of the problems, the deficiencies of Soviet industrial and technological management, and, of course, the implications they have for military affairs. The majority of the analyses are similar to the one by the economists from Gorbachev's advisory group (A. Aganbegian and V. Zaslavskaja) and tend to support policies of *perestroika*, *uskorenie*, and *khozratchet* (self-financing):

Our acceleration provides the most important guarantee that imperialism will not be able to destroy the existing military- strategic parity and change the correlation of forces in its favor. Therefore, the strength of the military is based upon the solid foundation of the accelerated socio-economic development of our country which finds its reflection in the 11th 5-year plan for 1986-1990 adopted by the 27th Party Congress.

²³See M. Gorbachev, speeches at the April 1985 CPSU Plenum and the 27th Party Congress.

²⁴V. Bondarenko, "Nauchno-tekhnicheskii progress i voennoe delo," *KVS*, No. 21, 1986, p. 12.

This statement is from the official recommendations issued by the MPA of the Soviet armed forces for political training classes for privates and non-commissioned officers (NCOs).²⁵ Captain 1st Rank A. Plekhov, in special recommendations for the officers' Marxist-Leninist training seminars, takes an even more straightforward approach. He says that the April 1985 Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee opened "principally new possibilities for the secure defense . . . of socialism."²⁶ It is noteworthy that Plekhov's article, written in October 1986, singles out the April 1985 Plenum—the first one at which Gorbachev outlined his economic strategies. That suggests that military observers in general see the continuity in Gorbachev's effort and also give him credit for setting his priorities right from the very beginning: "This April 1985 Plenum will play its role in strengthening our defense potential."²⁷

Even if one assumes a more cautious approach and questions the sincerity of the military's enthusiasm about Gorbachev's plans, it is difficult to deny the fact that the nature of Soviet defense planning, research, development, and procurement precludes any drastic shift of resources away from the defense sector. The U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee report, *The Soviet Economy Under a New Leader*, confirms this:

In view of immense sunk costs for plant and installed equipment in the defense production facilities, and the fact that these cannot be readily converted to civilian use, the industrial modernization is unlikely significantly to impede the completion of the major developments of strategic weapons that the Soviets have programmed through the 1980s.²⁸

Although the growth of Soviet military procurement (according to U.S. government estimates) has leveled off somewhat over the past decade, this leveling occurred at a high rate, thus "allowing for continued growth to the already large stock of Soviet military assets"²⁹ (see Fig. 1). U.S. Department of Defense estimates show that weapons the Soviets

²⁵Colonel I. Aristov, "27-oi s'ezd KPSS o neobkhodimosti vysokoi bditel'nosti i postoiannoii boevoi gotovnosti armii i flota," *KVS*, No. 19, 1986, pp. 80-81.

²⁶Captain 1st Rank A. Plekhov, "Politika KPSS v oblasti oborony," *KVS*, No. 20, 1986, pp. 15-23.

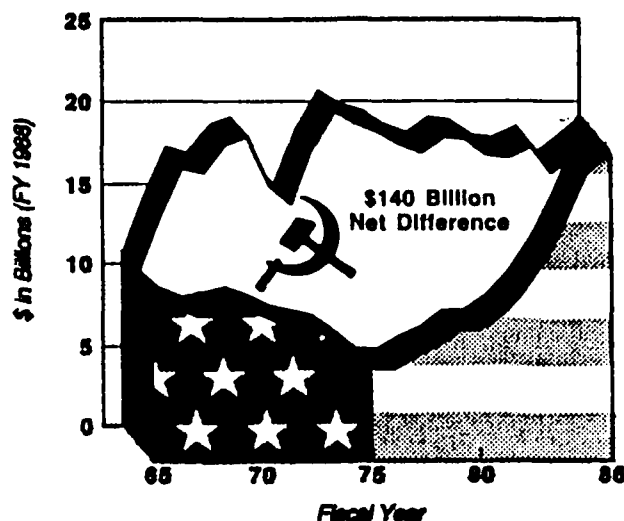
²⁷*Ibid.*

²⁸*The Soviet Economy Under a New Leader*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1986.

²⁹*Secretary of Defense Annual Report to the Congress, FY 1988*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 12, 1987, p. 19.

Chart I.B.1

A Comparison of U.S. Strategic Force Procurement with the Estimated Dollar Cost of Soviet Strategic Force Procurement



From: SoD, Caspar W. Weinberger Annual Report to the Congress, FY 1988 (Washington, D.C.:GPO, 1987, p.26)

Fig. 1

bought during the past 15 years cost roughly \$1 trillion—over 30 percent more than the cost of weapons procured by the United States in the same period. It should also be kept in mind that weapon modernization is a continuous process in the Soviet Union: The Soviets never complete the deployment of one system without immediately beginning the development of a follow-up, next-generation system. Therefore, the ambitious Soviet offensive force modernization continues under Gorbachev; the newest generation of weapon systems includes two new ICBM systems, the SS-24 and SS-25 (three more are also being developed); the Blackjack strategic bomber; long-range, more accurate SLBMs; more advanced, quieter Delta IV and Typhoon-class submarines; T-80 tanks; cruise missiles; and Su-27 and MiG-29 fighters. In addition, the Soviets continue to develop both passive and active strategic defense programs, “including many technologies which the U.S. includes under the umbrella of the Strategic Defense Initiative program (SDI).”³⁰ It is true that

³⁰Ibid.; also, *The Military Balance: 1986-1987*, International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), London, 1986, p. 35.

military leaders sometimes criticize Soviet industry and express reservations about its ability to keep up with progress in science and technology.³¹ However, this criticism is very much in line with the general tone of the Gorbachev era: It is by no means a hostile criticism, but rather a *kritika* of the comrades-in-arms.

PERSONNEL CHANGES

Gorbachev's first two years at the helm of the Defense Council brought a number of personnel changes in the top echelons of the Soviet military. Actually this process of change began in 1984, when an unusual combination of transfers, reorganizations, retirements, and deaths between February 1984 and February 1987 led to more than 45 personnel changes in the Soviet military establishment, not counting changes in the *Teatr Voennykh Deistvii* (TVĐ), or Theater of Strategic Military Actions.³² During Gorbachev's first two years,

Table 1

NEW APPOINTMENTS IN THE SOVIET REGIONAL COMMANDS, 1972-1986

Year	No. of New Appointments
1972-73	10
1975-76	10
1977-78	9
1979-80	11
1981-82	10
1983-84	12
1985-86	15

NOTE: Excluding TVĐ
command staff appointments.

³¹For examples, see Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov's writings; Marshal Sokolov's speech at the 27th Party Congress; "Ukrepliiia oboronu strany," *Tekhnika i vooruzhenie*, No. 9, 1986.

³²Dictionary of Basic Military Terms: A Soviet View, Moscow: Voenizdat, 1965 published under the auspices of the U.S. Air Force in Soviet Military Thought Series No. 9, p. 220 defines TVĐ as:

A particular territory, together with the associated air space and sea areas, including islands (archipelagos), within whose limits a known part of the armed forces of the country or coalition operates in wartime, engaged in strategic missions which ensue

some 23 other changes occurred at the military district commander level and above. This large number of new appointments represents a significant change from Brezhnev's tenure. However, these personnel shifts are less dramatic than the changes in the Party and government bureaucracies initiated by Gorbachev.³³ Also, the military in general is much more mobile than other parts of the Soviet *nomenklatura*, and widespread personnel changes there are not unusual. Harriet F. Scott estimated that from 1955 through 1985, the number of annual changes in the command at the military district level and above varied from one to ten, the average being five.³⁴ When one looks at this general pattern in the dynamics of Soviet regional command changes, the Gorbachev period looks a bit less dramatic. (See Table 1) Although the large number of appointments, transfers, and promotions under the new Soviet leadership seems to be out of the ordinary, one should not automatically draw parallels with the purges that are going on in the Party and government apparatus. Changes of military personnel normally represent a "ripple effect," when "a vacancy in one district will be filled by the commander from another," and a single reassignment can generate two or three changes.³⁵ Widespread changes in the Soviet military high command (particularly at the military district level), however, represent something the Soviet literature calls "the continuous improvement of the structure of the Soviet armed forces." This "improvement" consists of restructuring the existing command-and-control structure to incorporate the new TVD level of command,³⁶ a process that started in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Three new peacetime TVD HQs were established in 1984. The pattern of changes at the regional command level follows this *perestroika* (see Table 1). This process is still ongoing, and the trend will probably continue. The changes at the very top level of the Soviet military

from the war plan. A theater of operations may be ground, maritime, or intercontinental.

³³For an analysis of changes in the Party and government structure, see Thane Gustafson and Dawn Mann, "Gorbachev's First Year: Building Power and Authority," *Problems of Communism*, May-June 1986, pp. 1-19. Also, the most recent account of Gorbachev's personnel replacements shows that turnover since his coming to power has affected 70 percent of the heads of the Central Committee departments, 60 percent of the USSR ministers, and 46 percent of the *obkom* and *kraikom* first secretaries (see Alexandr Rahr, *The Ouster of Boris El' tsin—The Kremlin's "Avant-Gardist,"* Radio Liberty Research Bulletin 506/87, December 18, 1987.

³⁴Harriet F. Scott, "Red Star in Motion," *Air Force Magazine*, March 1985, p. 58.

³⁵*Ibid.*

³⁶John G. Hines and Phillip A. Petersen, "Changing the Soviet System of Control," *International Defense Review*, Vol. 19, No. 3, March 1986, pp. 281-289; Jack Sullivan and Tom Symonds, *Soviet Theaters, High Commands and Commanders*, Fort Meade, Md.: Air Force Intelligence Service, 1986.

establishment, however, are much more interesting. These changes reveal much about the nature of civil-military relations under Gorbachev, as well as important tendencies in Soviet military strategy.

Two major changes in the Soviet military hierarchy occurred just before Gorbachev became Secretary General: In September 1984, Marshal Ogarkov was suddenly replaced as the Chief of the Soviet Armed Forces General Staff by his first deputy, Marshal Sergei F. Akhromceev. Then in December 1984, after the death of Marshal Ustinov, his first deputy, Marshal Sergei Sokolov, was chosen to become the Minister of Defense. We do not know how much influence Gorbachev had in the selection of Sokolov as Ustinov's successor, but the choice of the 74-year-old Sokolov, who clearly did not have any affiliation with the new Soviet leader, had the stamp of Chernenko's style of personnel policies. Another indication that Marshal Sokolov was chosen by Chernenko is the fact that he has not been elevated to full Politburo membership (unlike his two predecessors). This perception was reinforced by his unceremonious firing after the Rust incident.

Marshal Ogarkov's departure from the position of Chief of General Staff and his new, still not officially announced position created a whole new branch in Soviet military studies which one could call "ogarkology."³⁷ Although the argument about the reasons for his new appointment remain largely unresolved, it is possible to make several reasonably safe assumptions about the nature of his job. First, Marshal Ogarkov is alive and well and apparently quite active, as are his colleagues, the TVD Commanders-in-Chief, as well as their newly formed operational staffs.³⁸ Second, full CPSU Central Committee status was given to Ogarkov and to three other TVD Commanders—Army General Ivan A. Gerasimov, Army General Ivan M. Tret'ak (later appointed Deputy Minister of Defense), and Army General Mikhail M. Zaitsev. Third, Ogarkov's books are cited in Soviet publications and, according to some Western sources, are even on the required reading list.³⁹ This suggests that he still enjoys high *nomenklatura* status and is considered politically reliable.

³⁷For an interesting analysis of the "Ogarkov affair," see FitzGerald, op. cit.; also Dale R. Herspring, "Nikolai Ogarkov and the Scientific-Technical Revolution in Soviet Military Affairs," *Comparative Strategy*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1987, pp. 29-60.

³⁸Marshal Ogarkov was shown on Soviet TV during the 27th Party Congress in February 1986, as well as during the 70th October Revolution Anniversary celebration. He and other high-ranking members of the TVD commands were identified in the Soviet and East European press while appearing at various official functions.

³⁹Dale R. Herspring, "Nikolai Ogarkov and the Scientific-Technical Revolution in Soviet Military Affairs," p. 55.

CHANGES IN THE SOVIET HIGH COMMAND

Unlike changes in the Party and government apparatus, new appointments at the top echelons of the Soviet military leadership have little, if anything, to do with interfactional struggle and the purges of old Brezhnevites initiated by Gorbachev. In fact, as has been pointed out (see Table 1), the current reorganization of the Soviet command structure started before Gorbachev came to power. However, it is important to analyze some of the top appointments approved by Gorbachev's Politburo and Defense Council, since they reveal important trends in Soviet "military development" and also shed some light on the position of the military as an institution.

During his first two years in power, Gorbachev has presided over nine new appointments to the sixteen-man Collegium of the Ministry of Defense.⁴⁰ The most significant, of course, were the retirement of the Minister of Defense, Marshal Sergei Sokolov, the firing of the Air Defense Forces (PVO) chief Marshal, Aleksandr Koldunov, the retirement of the long-time chief of the MPA of the Army and Navy, Army General Aleksei Epishev, and the replacement of the father of the modern Soviet Navy, Admiral Gorshkov.

There is little doubt that the replacement of the 76-year-old Sokolov was just a matter of time. The fact that he, unlike his two predecessors, has not been made a member of the ruling Politburo and yet has not been pushed out indicates that neither the political leadership nor Gorbachev himself had a suitable replacement candidate. The spectacular flight of Mathias Rust into Red Square in an American-made plane on Border Guards Day—the ultimate humiliation—forced the rapid Politburo decision. Ironically, the top Soviet political and military leaders were in East Berlin at the time, discussing military and political matters with their Warsaw Pact allies. It is very likely that the question of strengthening air defense was on the agenda. The unsuspecting Marshal Sokolov was shown on TV sitting at the table next to Gorbachev.

Relatively little is known about the new Soviet Defense Minister, Army General Dmitry Yazov. The career of this 64-year-old World War II veteran followed quite a dramatic curve when in a few short months he rose from a remote military command to the

⁴⁰The Collegium of the Ministry of Defense is the Ministry's leading collective organ that helps to manage Soviet armed forces affairs in peacetime. It includes the Minister of Defense as Chairman, three First Deputy Ministers, the Chief of the MPA of the Army and Navy, and eleven Deputy Ministers of Defense (see Harriet F. Scott and William F. Scott, *The Soviet Control Structure: Capabilities for Wartime Survival*, New York: Crane, Russak & Co., 1983).

helm of the world's largest military machine. There are some indications, however, that General Yazov had been hand-picked by Gorbachev to replace Marshal Sokolov before the "Red Square landing" scandal.

The new Soviet Defense Minister has more in common with his Party superior than one might think. First of all, Yazov spent a number of years within the Ministry of Defense Main Cadre Directorate—the body very closely connected with the CPSU Central Committee department dealing with the military *nomenklatura*, as well as with the KGB military branch, the so-called Special Department. Therefore, he is likely to have been supported in his nomination by these two influential bodies. Second, a closer look reveals that Yazov's ideas are definitely in unison with those of his commander-in-chief.

For example, as early as 1983, Yazov argued for rooting out mismanagement, embezzlement, and corruption in the military, and he even called for *glasnost*. He was also among the very few Soviet officials who, before Gorbachev's time, emphasized the important role of the wife in one's military career.⁴¹

The following events preceded Yazov's appointment:

- March 1986: Yazov was elected a CPSU Central Committee Candidate Member.
- July 1986: Gorbachev visited the Far East, and Yazov, as the Military District Commander, accompanied him and apparently made a good impression.
- July 1986: Yazov's superior, Army General Ivan Tretyak was promoted to Deputy Minister of Defense; Yazov, to the surprise of many analysts, did not replace him. Gorbachev apparently had something more important in store for him.
- Early 1987: After the Central Committee Cadre Plenum, Yazov was promoted to Deputy Minister of Defense in charge of military personnel, obviously indicating that Gorbachev wanted to entrust this important job to his future choice for Defense Minister.

The retirement of Brezhnev's long-time friend, the ultraconservative Epishev, could, of course, have been simply attributed to age—he was 77 at that time and died soon after his retirement. But because General Epishev had the reputation of being a totally intransigent, Suslov-like dogmatist, even among his colleagues (the military-political officers), it seems

⁴¹"Nravstvennyi primer," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, July 7, 1987.

quite likely that he would have been replaced in the new era of *glasnost* in any case. His replacement, Army General Aleksey Lizichev, is, at 59, the youngest member of the Collegium. He is typical of the new, post-World War II Soviet political officers who began their professional careers after graduating from the special political officers' training school and went through the ranks. His writings and speeches have not distinguished him as an ideologue, but he seems to be quite secure in his position, and his bureaucratic experience as an *apparatchik* will probably guarantee him a long and successful career.

Unlike Epishev, Admiral Sergei Gorshkov's departure made a lot of waves in the West and, presumably, inside the Soviet naval establishment as well. His thirty-year tenure as Chief of the Soviet Navy, which he transformed into a modern force with global reach, was brought to an abrupt and shocking end when he was sent into retirement without even being allowed to launch his first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier and without any official praise for his services. It is difficult to explain why Gorbachev and other members of the Defense Council decided to retire their admiral in such a dishonorable way. It is much easier to understand their choice to replace him—Admiral V. Chernavin, Gorshkov's first deputy. The 59-year-old Chernavin has been a long-time advocate of combined-arms operations, with the Navy being an integrated part of theater-level operations. His views on the Navy's independent mission differed from those of Gorshkov, and also from those of many members of the Soviet Navy leadership. These differences of view clearly put Admiral Chernavin in favor with the Soviet High Command, which, for a number of years, had been planning future strategic operations as a combined-arms effort on the TVD level, with the Navy acting in support of and in conjunction with the ground forces, the Air Force, and the Strategic Nuclear Forces (SNF).

Similarly, the appointment of combined-arms commander Army General Yuri Maksimov to replace Marshal Vladimir Tolubko as the Commander-in-Chief of the Strategic Rocket Forces (SRF) suggests the direction of modern Soviet strategic thinking on the character of future war. This is just another example of the long-term trend of scaling down the importance of the SRF, which was once considered "the most important means for the defense of the Motherland."⁴² The replacement of Tolubko, who was the SRF Commander-in-Chief for almost fourteen years with the ground forces officer, who had no institutional allegiance to the SRF, appeared to be a logical move, for a number of reasons. First, it was a way to reinforce the combined-arms approach, which does not grant any particular service or type of weapons exclusive status. Second, it removed a potential

⁴²22-oi S" ezd KPSS. *Stenograficheskie otchet*, Moscow: Politizdat, 1962, p. 311.

obstacle in the way of demystifying nuclear weapons and reallocating resources and R&D efforts into new, potentially promising, but not necessarily nuclear- or missile-dominated weapons. Finally, a 71-year-old was replaced by a 61-year-old who had TVD command experience and for whom a missile is nothing more than a longer-range version of an artillery piece.

The other new appointments to the Collegium of the Ministry of Defense—Army General Peter Lushev as the First Deputy Minister of Defense for General Matters; Army General Ivan M. Tretyak as the Chief Inspector and later as Chief of the PVO troops; Army General Vladimir Govorov as the Chief of Civil Defense; Army General Dmitrii Sukhorukov as the Chief of Main Personnel Directorate; and Army General Aleksey Sorokin as the Chief Inspector—were the result of either their predecessors' age or illness (Moskalenko, Shkadov, Petrov), reassignment (Yazov, Sukhorukov, Sorokin), or poor performance (Govorov, Koldunov). The new military appointees can hardly be considered to be of Gorbachev's generation: Their average age is 62.9, years which makes the average age of the Collegium members 64.4 years. One of the probable reasons for the appointment of these senior men is the unwillingness of Collegium members to give top military positions to men who did not share the World War II experience (only two Collegium members are not World War II veterans). Also, because the new Minister of Defense and three new Deputy Defense Ministers (Tretyak, Govorov, and Sorokin) worked together at the Far Eastern TVD, one can surmise the establishment of a strong "Far Easterners" group in the Soviet High Command.⁴³ The possible implications of this situation for the future Soviet buildup in this area or for Soviet relations with China and Japan remain to be seen.

To summarize, the unusually high number of personnel changes under Gorbachev must be attributed not only to Gorbachev, but also to the process of restructuring the Soviet armed forces command that was started before Gorbachev came to power. Yazov's appointment as Minister of Defense and the changes in the military hierarchy after the Rust incident, however, opened the way for more replacements at the top.

Yazov, who has bypassed three Marshals of the Soviet Union (Akhromeev, Kulikov, and Ogarkov) on his way to the top, will most probably try to get rid of them in the near future. It is easy to see how these three veterans (particularly Kulikov and Akhromeev) could simply sabotage many of his initiatives and reforms. Yazov, who has not

⁴³Other strong "Far Easterners" who have recently been promoted to Moscow are Army General S. I. Postnikov, 1st Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Forces; Colonel General V. N. Lobov, 1st Deputy Chief of the Soviet Armed Forces General Staff; Colonel General N. V. Kalinin, Commander of the Airborne Troops; and Lieutenant General V. A. Silakov, Chief of the PVO Forces Political Administration.

distinguished himself as a military theoretician, probably feels somewhat uncomfortable around these men, who have considerable experience in both theoretical writing and practical skills and have been in the middle of the power circles for a number of years.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Warsaw Pact, Marshal Kulikov, who is a member of the Soviet High Command and who had very close ties to Brezhnev, is probably on his way out. Marshal Akhromeev, although seemingly close to Gorbachev and strongly supportive of his "new political thinking" and denuclearization doctrine, might also have to go as a sacrifice to the new Minister of Defense.

POLITICAL STATUS OF THE MILITARY

The role of the Soviet military as a political institution has not really been reduced under Gorbachev, but the dynamics of its internal and external functions have gone through several significant developments:

- The Armed Forces membership in the CPSU Central Committee was not altered by the 27th Party Congress.
- The military has failed to regain its full Politburo membership.
- The role of the Party and the KGB in national security decisionmaking has increased.
- The policies of *perestroika* and *glasnost* are yet to be implemented in the armed forces.
- The public prominence of Soviet military might has been played down.
- The military has become increasingly politicized.

Military membership in the Party's leading representative bodies—the Central Committee and the Central Auditing Commission—did not really change at the 27th Party Congress: It accounts for 7.5 percent of the full membership of the Central Committee (7.2 percent in the previous Central Committee), and 11.3 percent (12.6 percent in 1981) of the Candidate members. The number of members of the Central Auditing Commission stayed the same.

A much more important development was the failure of the Minister of Defense to gain full member status on the Politburo. The former Minister of Defense, Marshal Sokolov, has failed to achieve full Politburo membership in two and a half years, and his successor, General Yazov, has also been given only candidate member status. Although one should not expect the new Minister of Defense to be elevated to full membership

immediately, the fact that KGB chairman Army General Viktor Chcbrikov has a seat on the Politburo does not please the professional military.

The loss of the Politburo seat was just one link in a long chain of events that reveals the political leadership's desire to play down some traditionally militaristic aspects of the armed forces' role in Soviet society. This trend actually began with the notable absence of military officers at Chernenko's funeral. Since then, the number of men in uniform at the top of Lenin's mausoleum during official functions has been reduced from ten to five. Similarly, the time for the traditional parade and display of modern weaponry during the October Revolution celebration was cut by more than half. Lengthy praises of the military are conspicuously absent from Gorbachev's public addresses. He never displays his decorations, nor has he awarded himself any. We do not even know his status as a reserve officer.

Some objective as well as subjective factors can be cited to explain this trend. On the one hand, Gorbachev—like such other top Soviet leaders as the Prime Minister, Nikolai Ryzhkov; the "second" CPSU Central Committee (CC) secretary, Egor Ligachev; the President, Andrey Gromyko; the Party Secretary in charge of defense affairs, Lev Zaikov; or even the Chairman of the Military-Industrial Commission of the Council of Ministers, Yuri Masluikov—have never served in the military. Unlike their predecessors, they never had a chance to form personal ties and alliances with the country's military leaders. They look at the military with respect, but without sentimentality or nostalgia. The same goes for World War II glory, which for many years has been a "sacred cow" for the Soviet military-industrial complex. It is apparent that some Soviet propagandists (presumably with some sort of official blessing) are questioning how long the military expects to live on its World War II glory⁴⁴ and where the new, fresh examples of its heroic deeds are. The recent public criticism of the military's performance in the aftermath of the Rust scandal only reinforces this argument. Also, scaling down the visibility of the military serves Gorbachev's image as an "arms-controlnik" in the West and is, in fact, a part of what the Soviets call "the growing role of the Communist Party leadership in military affairs."

The new CPSU Program states that "the CPSU deems it necessary to continue to strengthen its organizing and directing influence on the life and activity of the armed forces. . . . Policies in the sphere of defense and state security and Soviet military doctrine . . . are formulated and implemented with the Party playing the leading role."⁴⁵ Some Western

⁴⁴See, for example, the interview with Army General Aleksei Lizichev in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, February 25, 1987, p. 10.

⁴⁵"Programma Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuzia. Novaia redaktsia. Priniata 27 s"ezdom KPSS," *Pravda*, March 7, 1987.

observers contend that this does not serve the military's interest. Sidney I. Ploss has said that this statement in the Party Program "breaks ground by reserving for Party leaders the right to formulate Soviet military doctrine."⁴⁶ Dale Herspring finds "the explicitness of language utilized in the Party Program a bit unusual," but he notes that this does not necessarily constitute a greater "civilian involvement in the formulation of military doctrine."⁴⁷ In fact, the statement should not be surprising to anybody who is familiar with CPSU military policies. As has been stated in a number of Soviet reference publications, military doctrine has two closely related aspects: the socio-political and the military-technical. The socio-political aspect pertains to the "methodological, economic, social and legal basis of achieving military objectives in a future war."⁴⁸ Soviet doctrine is based on "Marxist-Leninist theory and rooted in the nature of the social and political system of the Soviet State,"⁴⁹ with the CPSU, of course, playing a leading role.

There are some new developments, however, which suggest that Gorbachev is indeed serious about increasing the input of the Party and other institutions to Soviet military and security affairs. Chief of the General Staff of the Soviet Armed Forces Marshal Sergei F. Akhromeev calls this "the new political thinking" and "new approaches" to "defense and . . . international security." The essence of these new approaches, according to Akhromeev, is that in our "nuclear and space age the guaranteeing of security appears ever more to be a political problem. It can never be guaranteed solely through military-technical means. . . . Solving this problem can and should be done by political means."⁵⁰ These thoughts have subsequently been developed in a number of pronouncements by Gorbachev and other Soviet leaders and have become an integral part of the "new political thinking."⁵¹

⁴⁶Sidney I. Ploss, "A New Soviet Era?" *Foreign Policy*, Spring 1986, pp. 55-56.

⁴⁷Dale R. Herspring, "The Soviet Military in the Aftermath of the 27th Party Congress," *Orbis*, Summer 1986, p. 309.

⁴⁸See "Doktrina Voennaia," in *Voennyi Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar'*, 2nd ed., Moscow: Voenizdat, 1986, p. 240.

⁴⁹*Ibid.* For studies of Soviet military doctrine, see Peter Vigor, *Soviet View of War, Peace and Neutrality*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975; Alfred L. Monks, *Soviet Military Doctrine: 1960 to the Present*, New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1984.

⁵⁰*Sovetskaya Rossiya*, February 21, 1987.

⁵¹See, for example, M. S. Gorbachev, "Reality and the Guarantees of a Secure World," *Pravda*, September 17, 1987; also, Soviet Foreign Minister E. A. Shevardnadze, speech to the United Nations General Assembly, September 23, 1987.

Marshal Akhromeev's statement is quite remarkable and sheds new light on Soviet security and arms control policies. According to Akhromeev, who works closely with and consults Gorbachev on military affairs, the "new political thinking" penetrates all aspects of national security affairs, including, most notably, modifications to Soviet military doctrine. He says that Soviet military doctrine is being developed in accordance with these principles, characterizing it as "a system of the fundamental views on the nature and *prevention* of war, military development, preparation of the country and the armed forces for staving off the aggression, [and] methods of conducting of armed combat to defend the native land."⁵²

This is quite different from the formula in Marshal N. Ogarkov's 1983 *Military Encyclopedic Dictionary*, where "Military Doctrine" was defined as "a system of beliefs on the nature, objectives, and character of possible future war, preparation of the country and its armed forces for it and ways to conduct it."⁵³

Gorbachev's major "contribution" to Soviet doctrinal thinking was the publication by the WTO Political Consultative Committee of the statement "On Military Doctrine of the Warsaw Pact Member States."⁵⁴ This document, which clearly was intended primarily for propaganda purposes, spells out the major objective of Soviet and WTO military doctrine as not victory, but "prevention of war."⁵⁵ It also states that the Soviets will not use nuclear weapons first. These statements, which are totally in line with the new Soviet leadership's public diplomacy, as well as with the "new political thinking," have been developed by the leadership's military spokesmen, including the new Minister of Defense.⁵⁶

One can clearly see a politicizing of the military doctrine, with much greater prominence given to its socio-political aspect. In this connection, such forms of gaining military advantage without going to war as arms control negotiations, so-called "active measures" (*dezinformatsiia*), and domestic "liberalization" become increasingly important.

⁵²*Sovetskaya Rossiya*, February 21, 1987.

⁵³*Voennyi Entsiklopedicheski Slovar'*, N.V. Ogarkov (ed.), Moscow: Voenizdat, 1983.

⁵⁴*Pravda*, May 30, 1987.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*

⁵⁶Army General D. Yazov, "Voennaia doktrina Varshavskogo Dogovora -doktrina zashchity mira i sotsializma," *Pravda*, July 27, 1987.

This new trend toward greater prominence of the political aspect of Soviet military doctrine is also seen in the new edition of the *Military Encyclopedic Dictionary*.⁵⁷ Twenty-two entries have been revised, and four new ones have been added in the "War and Politics" category,⁵⁸ making it the category with the most new entries. The added changes deal with such subjects as "Aggression by U.S. Imperialism," "the 1972 ABM Treaty," and "the Strategic Defense Initiative," i.e., they fit perfectly into the "political"/arms-control part of the Soviet military doctrine. Rephrasing Clausewitz, one can really say that arms control has become for the Soviet Union the way to wage war by other means.⁵⁹

The expansion of the role of the Party and other institutions (particularly the KGB) in the management of Soviet military and national security affairs has been the subject of a number of theoretical articles in Soviet military publications. Professor N. Minaev writes in the *Air Defense Herald* that the augmentation of the CPSU's leading role in the armed forces is an "objective process" that is an outgrowth of the Party's growing role in Soviet society as a whole. He gives three main reasons for the increasing CPSU role in organizational military development (*voennoe stroitel' stvo*):

- The complicated international situation and the unprecedentedly high level of responsibility for correct analysis of the military-political situation and timely decisionmaking.
- The increasing dependency of military strength and combat readiness on the level of socioeconomic and cultural development and the moral-political potential of the country.
- The expansion of international missions in defense of socialism.⁶⁰

These three factors clearly show that the military as an institution cannot and should not be given sole responsibility for defense affairs. Since for the Soviet Union, as a major

⁵⁷*Voennyi Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar'*, 2nd ed., Sergei F. Akhromeev, Moscow: Voenizdat, 1986.

⁵⁸I want to thank Michael Sadykiewicz for sharing the results of his analysis of this new edition.

⁵⁹I want to thank my colleague, Irina Rabinovich, for this observation.

⁶⁰Professor N. Minaev, "Vozrastanie rukovodiashchei roli KPSS v sovetskikh vooruzhennykh silakh," *Vestnik PVO*, No. 8, 1986, pp. 6-9.

military superpower, such institutions as the CPSU, the KGB, and the foreign ministry are closely connected with foreign policy, arms control, international duties (i.e., military adventures abroad), and finally, the country's economic potential, these organizations will be assuming a greater role in the management of Soviet military and security affairs.

The role of the KGB in the management of Soviet national security affairs has been growing at least since Yuri Andropov became General Secretary in 1982. Its influence in the management of military affairs continues to expand under Gorbachev (who was one of Andropov's proteges), not only because the KGB is responsible for acquiring crucially important Western technology or because it is in charge of part of the new "political dimension" of the Soviet military doctrine (deception, disinformation, influencing of Western public opinion, etc.), but because of the promotion of a number of its former officials to top state and Party offices and Gorbachev's reported close ties with some of Andropov's other proteges.

The new, important role of the Committee for State Security is reflected in the section of the new Party Program that deals with military affairs. Unlike the previous Party Program, the new one closely ties the functions of the armed forces to those of the KGB, listing them together twice in the two opening paragraphs:

The CPSU regards the defense of the socialist homeland, the strengthening of the country's defense, and the *safeguarding of state security* as one of the most important functions of the Soviet state . . . so it is necessary to pay unremitting attention to reinforcing the USSR's defense might and strengthening its security. The armed forces and the state security organs must display great vigilance and be always ready to suppress imperialist intrigues against the USSR and its allies and to rout any aggressor.⁶¹

Compared to the growing role of the KGB, the other institutions' expanding functions in Soviet civil-military affairs should not be overemphasized. However, we should mention the creation of a special military section in the CPSU Central Committee International Department headed by General Starodubov. The greater prominence of arms control in Soviet military doctrine makes the USA and Canada Institute, the World Economy Institute (IMEMO), and the USSR Academy of Science, in general, more important, as Soviet spokesmen on this subject in the West. The most recent phenomenon in this sphere is the summons by a Soviet military spokesman for "more purposeful (*tseleustremlennoe*) cooperation of scientists from the leading civilian institutes and social scientists from the

⁶¹"Programma Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuza. Novaia redaktsiia," *Pravda*, March 7, 1987.

military academies for the purpose of systematic study of the problems of the general theory of war and peace."⁶²

POLITICIZATION

The reduction in the preeminence of the image of Soviet military might and the increased importance of political elements in military doctrine do not signify that Soviet national priorities have been changed or that the military is being pushed out of politics by other institutions. Although some signs point to some reduction in the military's role in Soviet top-level decisionmaking, the military has by no means ceased to play a significant political role. On the contrary, the military leaders have become, if anything, more active in Moscow's political game—which, not surprisingly, is primarily public-relations and Western oriented.

The appearance of Marshal Ogarkov at the press conference following the Soviet shooting down of a Korean passenger airliner was regarded by the Western media and many Kremlinologists as an extraordinary event. But Ogarkov's successor, Marshal Akhromeev, now meets with the press almost every week and even appears on American TV. He also led the Soviet team dealing with arms control and security issues at the summit meetings in Reykjavik and Washington. Members of the General Staff Department who deal with arms control and international treaties, Generals Chervov and Lebedev, grant interviews to almost anybody who can show press credentials. Soviet generals comment on arms-control-related issues for the TV news programs. Cosmonauts holding the rank of general tour U.S. educational institutions. The Soviet Novosti Press Agency began publishing the *APN Military Herald*, in which Soviet military leaders comment on controversial issues in the spirit of *glasnost*, primarily for foreign consumption.

The list is actually much longer. We do not know what the military leaders think of this new public high profile. Some of them may not like it, since public visibility does not yield any real political power, but others, such as Marshal Akhromeev, might enjoy their new role both for personal political gain and because they understand the importance of politicization for Soviet military doctrine.

⁶²Professor, Lieutenant General V. Serebriannikov, "S uchetom real'nostei iadernogo veka," *KVS*, No. 3, 1987, p. 16.

DOES THE MILITARY REALLY WANT TO BE "RESTRUCTURED"?

Although the military generally supports Gorbachev's policies for restructuring Soviet society and overhauling the stagnating economy, its leaders seem to take exception to these principles being applied to them. The statements of their major spokesmen, as well as their articles in specialized publications, present a revealing picture. The military was essentially given a free hand to continue a modernization process that was started well before Gorbachev's time.

One cannot help noticing how the military interpretation of "restructuring" differs from official Party statements. Although the Soviet military has to pay lip service to Gorbachev's policies of *perestroika* and *glasnost*, it is quite apparent from even the official statements of the top military leaders that they are not very enthusiastic about changing their ways of operating. The military spokesmen are apparently trying to say that they tacitly approve of Gorbachev's anti-corruption, pro-modernization drive, but only to the point where it helps Soviet society, particularly the economy.

At the same time, the military wants to be largely exempt from this self-criticism and "repentance" campaign; it is essentially saying to the political leadership, "You are responsible for the existing mess, so, please, clean up your 'stables,' but leave us alone, since we were among the few who managed to run our affairs efficiently. We will support you as long as we think that whatever campaign you are conducting helps us to fulfill our mission, which is also in your interest—to keep the superpower status of the USSR by maintaining armed forces that are not inferior in any respect."

An interview with MPA Chief Army General Aleksei Lizichev in one of the organs of *glasnost*, *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, illustrates this general attitude. This is one of the most frank and interesting interviews that the chief of this quasi-military body has ever given to the Soviet press, yet it reveals two quite different interpretations of the nature of *glasnost*: While the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* correspondent wanted to push General Lizichev to answer some sensitive questions, the MPA Chief skillfully avoided any "hot" issues, claiming that *perestroika* and "new thinking" have become an "integral part" of day-to-day Soviet military life.⁶³ This interview is an important example of stretching the limits in discussions of the problems and shortcomings facing the military. Among the issues addressed by the article were such taboo subjects as:

⁶³"Mesto v stroiu," *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, February 25, 1987, p. 10.

- Draft-dodging and pacifist tendencies among some conscripts, widespread lawlessness, and humiliation and violations of the rights of first-year soldiers.
- A call for revision of the patriotic education of the Soviet youth, with less emphasis on the experiences of World War II.

The Soviet military has always allowed some self-criticism, but never before has it permitted the nonmilitary media to scrutinize its performance even, as in the case of the *Literaturnaya Cazeta* article, in areas where army problems are closely linked with issues that concern the rest of society. Although the MPA Chief admitted that some of the "painful processes" in the military "have not been the subject of wide publicity in the past" and asserted that "the reputation of our armed forces will not suffer if we openly discuss our problems," it remains to be seen how far the military will allow *glasnost* to go in its domain, particularly when the inquiries come from the traditionally suspicious and despised nonmilitary press.

As the *glasnost* campaign in the Soviet nonmilitary media continues, various authors attempt to question both the morality of Soviet nuclear deterrence and the high priority accorded the military in society. Well-known Belorussian writer Ales' Adamovich, for example, published an article disputing the notion of nuclear retaliation even after a devastating first strike from the West. In this article, he quoted a conversation he had with the commander of a Soviet nuclear submarine who allegedly supported his argument. Adamovich concluded the article by stating: "For me there are no military men more courageous and worthier than those who give their military expertise to the antiwar movement."⁶⁴

This article quite predictably received a very strong negative response from the military at the Writers Union plenum in April 1987. The response was delivered by the Deputy Chief of the MPA, Colonel General Volkogonov, who accused Adamovich of "dangerous pacifism" and dismissed his "dialogue" with the submarine commander, declaring that "such a commander of a Soviet atomic submarine does not exist."⁶⁵

Another unusually open attack on the military was delivered at a roundtable discussion conducted by *Literaturnaya Gazeta* in May 1987. The participants, who included prominent members of the USSR Academy of Science, strongly condemned the drafting of

⁶⁴*Moskovskie Novosti*, March 8, 1987.

⁶⁵*Literaturnaya Gazeta*, May 6, 1987.

college students into the military (which normally happens between the student's first and second year of study). One of the participants questioned whether Soviet society "needs soldiers more than it needs physicists, biologists, engineers, and social scientists." Another discussant said that "it is stupid and short-sighted to draft students into the army."⁶⁶

Obviously, the military counterattacked with the standard accusations of "pacifism" and political "short-sightedness."⁶⁷ Deputy Chief of the Soviet Armed Forces General Staff Colonel General Gareev went even further, accusing members of the panel of lack of "patriotism" and "ideological deviations."⁶⁸ Gareev referred to his position and view as "we" and "ours," making it obvious that he was delivering an expression of official displeasure from the Soviet military.

It is clear that this fight is not finished and that the military does not plan to give an inch in its status, *glasnost* or no *glasnost*. How long the civilian critics will be allowed to have their relative freedom is another interesting question.⁶⁹

The concept of "restructuring," the main issue on Gorbachev's agenda, is interpreted by the military differently from the definition given in the official Party statements. In his speech at the January 1987 Central Committee Plenum, Gorbachev characterized "restructuring" as:

- An assertive break with stagnation, creating new and dependable mechanisms for acceleration, utilizing new achievements in scientific-technical progress.
- Development of democracy, mass initiative, *glasnost*, criticism, and self-criticism.

⁶⁶"Pochemu u nas malo po-nastoiashchemu obrazovannykh liudei?" *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, May 13, 1987.

⁶⁷*Krasnaya Zvezda*, May 22, 1987.

⁶⁸Colonel General M. Gareev, "Eshche raz ob obrazovannosti," *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, June 8, 1987. See also Major General A. Fokin, "V pylu retoriki," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, May 16, 1987; A. Kachalin, "Eto po-nastoiashchemu tvorcheskie liudi," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, July 7, 1987.

⁶⁹For a continuation of this discussion that touches on many other important political and strategic issues, such as moral aspects of deterrence and the place of pacifism in Soviet society, see A. Khorev, "Artilleriia b'et po svoim?" *Krasnaya Zvezda*, August 29, 1987; "Ekho zlosloviia," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, December 12, 1987; V. Begun and V. Bovsh, "Otluchenie ot perestroiki," *Sovetskaya Kultura*, December 10, 1987; Ales' Adamovich, "Esli ne my, to kto zhe?" *Sovetskaya Kultura*, December 10, 1987.

- Increasing the role of the intensive factors in economic development, *khozraschet*.
- Development of science.
- Giving priority status to the development of the social sphere, improvement of living conditions, medical service, work conditions, and cultural development.
- Eliminating deviations from socialist morality, democracy, and social justice.⁷⁰

Marshal Akhromeev, in his February 21 article, in turn gave his definition of *perestroika*:

- Improving the work style of our personnel, development of initiative and an active posture, and increased responsibility.
- Strengthening the one-man command and the growing role of political bodies and Party and *Komsomol* organizations.
- Increased use of the most recent achievements in scientific-technical progress and Soviet military science.
- Improving cadre policy, bringing to the top command the new breed of well-educated, progressive individuals.⁷¹

Akhromeev obviously finds only two of Gorbachev's six points relevant for the military.

Even at the Party *aktiv* meeting in the Ministry of Defense, which was reportedly dedicated to discussion of the results of the January 1987 Central Committee "Cadre" Plenum, Defense Minister Marshal Sokolov's speech was not very much different from those given by his predecessors on similar occasions five, ten, or fifteen years ago. After giving the customary praise to the Party's guidance, Sokolov concentrated on criticizing the bureaucratic approach to troop training, poor discipline, forms and methods of work, cadre policy, etc. His only concession to openness was a strong criticism of the combat training process in the Air Force, the PVO troops, and the Navy. Indeed, military publications, unlike other organs of the Soviet press, were not much different from those in the *pre-glasnost* era.

⁷⁰*Pravda*, January 28, 1987.

⁷¹*Sovetskaya Rossiya*, February 21, 1987.

The situation began to change after the dismissal of Marshal Sokolov, followed by the strongly worded rhetoric of the May 30, 1987, Politburo resolution. On June 17, 1987, *Krasnaya Zvezda* reported Politburo Candidate Member Boris Eltsin's speech at the Moscow PVO district Party *aktiv* meeting. Eltsin, who was known for his no-nonsense, often abrasive style of public speaking (which eventually brought his downfall), delivered an unprecedentedly critical Party assessment of the military's incompetence and its reluctance to accept the guidelines of *perestroika*.

The major faults the Moscow PVO (and undoubtedly the military in general) were accused of were the following:

- Lack of *perestroika*, i.e., adherence to old and obsolete methods and forms of work, fear of innovations.
- Ostentation (*pokazushnost'*).
- "Wrong" personnel policies.
- Absence of *glasnost* and criticism.
- Poor discipline and abuse of first-year soldiers by second-year soldiers.
- Unsatisfactory performance of the party-political apparatus.⁷²

Eltsin suggested that a purge in the military ranks was probably imminent. At the meeting, it was announced that First Deputy Moscow PVO District Commander Lieutenant General Yuri Brazhnikov and two other generals had been expelled from the Party.

This strong criticism by Eltsin was followed by a number of articles in the military press. (It is interesting that the nonmilitary media have stayed away from this campaign despite *glasnost*.) This follow-up campaign of criticism and self-criticism, however, were relatively mild compared with what was written about other areas of Soviet life. That suggests Gorbachev's desire to handle military affairs with a velvet glove—which, however, does not mean that his grip is not tight.

The wave of self-criticism and condemnation that followed Sokolov's dismissal has apparently begun to calm down, particularly since the meeting of the Ministry of Defense Party *aktiv* which was reported on July 19, 1987. In his report at that meeting, Minister of Defense Yazov presented an outline of what seem to be the military's objectives in the process of restructuring. These include:

⁷²"Po zakonam vysokoi otvetstvennosti," *Krasnaia Zvezda*, June 17, 1987.

- An increased role for the "human factor," i.e., "primarily raising the responsibility, professional preparedness and exactness of the command and political cadres from top to bottom."
- Democratization of army life (which, of course, should not "contravene the provisions of regulations, orders, and directives").
- Improvement in the military's work style and methods.

Yazov also declared the need for a "resolute struggle" against those who oppose *glasnost*. However, he stressed that "attempts to exploit openness . . . are not permissible."⁷³

The early developments in the aftermath of the Rust incident suggest the following conclusions about Gorbachev's new approach to military affairs:

- Although the military is no longer exempt from criticism, the areas of open public discussion are still very limited. Those that are being played up include ostentation (*potemkinshchina*) in both combat training and political indoctrination, corruption and embezzlement, and uncritical assessment of achieved results.
- Gorbachev intends to charge his protege, Yazov, and his hand-picked associates with cleaning up the military house, which he believes has been infected with "the phenomenon of stagnation."
- The MPA of the Soviet Army and Navy, which will be put in charge of this *perestroika*, has the unequivocal order to be a real Party watchdog and resist the temptation to play the commanders' game, something Eltsin called the "respect-for-rank instinct."⁷⁴

Why have the restructuring and openness assumed such a peculiar character in the military? The answer probably lies in a combination of two reasons:

⁷³"Uglubliat' perestroiku," *Krasnaia Zvezda*, July 17, 1987.

⁷⁴"Po zakonom vysokoi otvetstvennosti," *op. cit.*

- First, real revolutionary changes, including restructuring, had been going on in Soviet military affairs for a number of years prior to Gorbachev's arrival.
- Second, the secretive nature of Soviet society, particularly in military affairs, is unlikely to change, at least in the near future. Even if some important changes are being introduced, their full extent is not likely to be reflected in the Soviet open press.

CONCLUSION

To make any projections about future civil-military relations in the Soviet Union, one must address two fundamental questions:

- Does the military agree with the Party on the future goals and objectives of the Soviet Union?
- Does the military concur with Gorbachev's ideas about the way to achieve these objectives?

It is quite clear that there is no argument between the political and military leaders of the Soviet Union on how they see the future of their nation. They all would like it to be the major superpower, second to none. It also goes without saying that it is precisely the military potential that gives the USSR its superpower status, since economically, technologically, and ideologically the country lags well behind the major industrial nations and needs its military might to keep its empire intact. Therefore, it would be logical to conclude that the Politburo has as much stake in Soviet military power as does the military leadership.

Does the military support Gorbachev's policy of "restructuring" and "openness" and his "new political thinking," which will have major effects on Soviet society, including the military? Soviet military writings and statements on the subject indicate that the military appears to be very supportive of these programs. In fact, the military leaders seem to be more enthusiastic about Gorbachev's economic reforms and changes in the society than many civilian managers and Party bureaucrats.

Of course, there are a number of analysts in the West who will question the sincerity of this seemingly too enthusiastic approval of the new Party policies. And they will be correct to doubt anything that appears in the Soviet open press. However, there are some larger implications of Gorbachev's economic and social policies that directly affect Soviet

military posture, or what the Soviet literature likes to call "the defense capabilities" (*oboronnye vozmozhnosti*). These "defense capabilities" are of primary concern to both Gorbachev's administration and his military lieutenants, and here we can see the real unity of goals. This unity is sometimes overlooked in the West when military and socioeconomic issues are viewed separately.

For both the military and the political leadership of the USSR, the concept of "defense" was always much broader than just "the capability of resisting attack" or "the military, government and industrial aggregate especially in its capacity of authorizing and supervising arms production."⁷⁵ For Soviet leaders, the country's defense potential includes economic, scientific-technological, social, moral-political, and military components.

Each of these components is important in itself, but all of them contribute to the sacred duty of strengthening the "defense potential of the Motherland."⁷⁶ The Defense Council under Gorbachev became acutely aware of the weakness of the two major components of the defense capabilities—the economic and technological aspects. These in turn affect the social and moral components, which the Soviet literature calls the "human factor." Ultimately, the military component is also affected. As a result, the defense potential is weakened, and this, according to Gorbachev, is the legacy of the leadership of Leonid Brezhnev.

The proposed and implemented economic and social changes clearly show that the Gorbachev Defense Council's ultimate goal is precisely to strengthen the country's "defense capabilities." Soviet theoretical writing very recently came up with a "broad interpretation" of the country's defense potential, using such terms as "defense readiness"⁷⁷ and "defense capabilities"—the term used in the January 1987 CPSU Central Committee Plenum resolution.

⁷⁵*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1979, p. 679.

⁷⁶For a recent discussion of this issue, see Captain 1st Rank A. Plekhov, "Politika KPSS v oblasti oborony," *KVS*, No. 20, 1986; Colonel, Doctor of Philosophical Science G. Lukava, "Oboronnyi shchit Sovetskoi strany," *Voennyyi Vestnik*, No. 11, 1986; Lieutenant General P. A. Zhilin, "Razvitie leninskogo ucheniia o zashchite sotsialisticheskogo Otechstva v materialakh 27-go s"ezda KPSS," *Voенно-istoricheskii zhurnal*, No. 7, 1986; Colonel V. K. Semenov (Candidate of Philosophical Sciences), "Leninskaia metodologiia issledovaniia material'nykh osnov voennoi moshchi sotsialisticheskogo gosudarstva, boevoi moshchi ego vooruzhennykh sil," in Major General A. S. Milovidov, *Voенно-Teoreticheskoe Nasledie V. I. Lenina i Problemy Sovermennoi Voiny*, Moscow: Voenizdat, 1987, pp. 173-195.

⁷⁷Colonel, Doctor of Philosophical Science G. Lukava, "Oboronnyi shchit Sovetskoi strany," *Voennyyi Vestnik*, No. 11, 1986.

The latter term is broader than the traditional "defense potential of the state" (*Oboronosposobnost' Gosudarstva*), defined in the standard reference publications as "mobilizational capabilities of the state, quantity and quality of the armed forces and their combat readiness and capabilities."⁷⁸

A good theoretical analysis of the "total" view of the country's defense was recently published by a Polish military economist (Polish military publications tend to be much more explicit than the Soviet military press in their discussion of defense matters). This economist defines defense economy as a "national economy as seen from the point of view of its utility for the state's defense functions." He continues: "From the theoretical point of view there are no grounds to believe that in the national economy there are some aspects that do not have any value for the defense (actual or potential)."⁷⁹ He concludes by reconfirming the "total" point of view, which is undoubtedly shared in Moscow: "In a total war everyone becomes a soldier, and from the economic point of view, one large defense economy emerges."⁸⁰

This view seems to follow the theoretical writings of one of the creators of the Red Army, Mikhail Frunze, whose views have recently been reappraised. As early as 1925, Frunze wrote that in a modern war the rear assumes the new role of direct participant in the armed struggle, and therefore, "it is natural that the task of the comprehensive and well planned preparation of the rear becomes paramount in peacetime."⁸¹

Without taking it to extremes, it is obvious that Gorbachev's policies are perfectly designed to enhance the listed components of "defense capabilities"—economic reforms aimed at accelerated development of machine building, the design of electronic and other high-technology industries to improve the ailing economic and scientific-technological components, policies of *glasnost*, cultural liberalization, and the struggle with official corruption which is meant to enhance the social and moral (i.e., "human") factors. Finally, the military component, which ultimately benefits from all of the above, continues to enjoy traditionally preferential treatment in budget allocations, as well as deriving advantages from the "revolution in military affairs."⁸²

⁷⁸*Voennyi Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar'*, 2nd ed., Sergei F. Akhromeev (ed.), Moscow: Voenizdat, 1986, p. 4.

⁷⁹Mirosław Sulek, "Defense Economy Planning and Its Object," in *Zeszyty Naukowe*, No. 4(125), 1985, p. 151.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*

⁸¹M. V. Frunze, "Front i tyl v voine budushchego," in *Voprosy strategii i operativnogo iskusstva v sovetskikh voennykh trudakh: 1917-1949*, Moscow: Voenizdat, 1965, pp. 64-65.

⁸²Although the military element is clearly the most important one in this structure, Soviet writers like to emphasize the "dialectical" relationship of all five, where the strength

~~In summary~~, the importance of the military under Gorbachev has not been reduced. In fact, it has grown. However, the role the military plays in society has changed. This change has occurred as part of the larger changes in the institutional structure of Soviet society under the new leadership—changes that increase the role of the Party and the KGB in military affairs.

However, the increased role of these two political institutions does not mean that defense matters have declined in importance. The relationships among institutions in Soviet politics cannot be characterized as a zero-sum game, particularly in matters of national security. The change in the role of the Soviet military is illustrated by the following excerpt from a recent Soviet publication: "Defense of the Socialist Motherland seen in a broad sense includes the following basic elements:

- Economic defense (competition with capitalism, achieving economic and technological independence);
- Political defense (active foreign policy, treaties that enhance our security⁸³);
- Ideological defense (struggle with bourgeois ideology, propaganda of our view abroad);
- Military defense.

In a narrow sense . . . it includes only military defense of the Socialist Motherland."⁸⁴

This article clearly spells out what the increasing involvement of the Party and the KGB means for defense in practical terms: It enhances defense by giving it "broader interpretation." And although military defense is defined as "the narrow interpretation" of

of the whole is critically dependent on the reliability of each individual component. For example,

We can not find even a single aspect in the complex system of the material goods production and in the country's economic system as a whole that either directly or indirectly will not be influencing military affairs. Also there is not a single aspect in the military affairs that in one way or another will not be dependent on the level of the country's economic development." (Major General A. S. Milovidov, *Voenna-Teoreticheskoe Nasledie V. I. Lenina i Problemy Sovremennoi Voiny*, Moscow: Voenizdat, 1987, p. 181.)

⁸³It is interesting to speculate on whether these include arms control.

⁸⁴Captain 1st Rank A. Plekhov, "Politika KPSS v oblasti oborony," *KVS*, No. 20, 1986.

this concept, the Soviet military knows that it is and will remain the most important and indispensable component of Soviet society. The military can hardly ask for more.