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3 JULY 1962
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DATE: JUN 2007

SOVIET STRATEGIC DOCTRINE FOR THE START OF WAR

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CAESAR
XVI - 62

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INTELLIGENCE

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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SOVIET STRATEGIC DOCTRINE FOR THE START OF WAR

This is a working paper, the second in a series of CAESAR reports on problems of Soviet military thought and policy. This paper deals with Soviet strategic doctrine for the start of a general war.

The predecessor in this series--CAESAR-XIV of 3 April 1962; "SOVIET MILITARY THOUGHT ON FUTURE WAR: DOCTRINE AND DEBATE SINCE 1960"--was based entirely on open Soviet materials, principally professional military publications. The present study, dealing with the narrower subject of the first attack, draws upon classified Soviet documents as well as upon very recent public materials. Because the paper draws heavily on IRONBARK material, this study must remain within the IRONBARK community. Its distribution within USIB agencies should therefore be confined to normal readers of IRONBARK reports. This study may not be quoted in briefings or publications without prior consultation with the originator.

Although this paper has not been coordinated with other offices, the author has benefited much from discussion of the topic with colleagues in other components of the DD/I. Special thanks are due to [redacted] of ONE and [redacted] of ONE for their insights and advice. It should be understood the author alone is responsible for the paper's conclusions, some of which are controversial.

The Sino-Soviet Studies Group would welcome comment on this paper, addressed to Irwin Peter Halpern, who wrote the paper, or to the coordinator of the SSSG, [redacted]

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Summary and Conclusions

Both classified and open Soviet military sources indicate that the USSR has added to its strategic concepts the doctrine of pre-emptive attack. This is not a strategy for a premeditated war, but a meaningful course of action in the event deterrence fails (or is thought to have failed). We have found no indication in the military materials examined for this study that the USSR intends deliberately to initiate direct military action against the West at any time except under the threat of imminent attack by the West, or in response to a Western attack. But inasmuch as the decision to go to war is still the prerogative of the political leadership in the USSR, it would be imprudent to draw firm conclusions about Soviet intentions from the military sources alone.

The doctrine of pre-emptive attack, which was evidently added to the extant doctrines of deterrence and retaliation in 1961, gives the USSR a more flexible strategic posture, if a more complex basis for military planning. Deterrence undoubtedly remains the first mission of the Soviet military establishment, but Soviet military leaders see an urgent need for a pre-emptive capability, as their confidence in their capability to retaliate has diminished. Chary of suggesting that the USSR might initiate war, Soviet military spokesmen have tended to avoid the term "pre-emption." Nevertheless, they have made it abundantly clear that the USSR has a strike-first-if-necessary doctrine which bears important implications for the planning of Soviet strategic forces.

Our finding that a doctrine of pre-emptive attack has been adopted in the USSR is based mainly on the following evidence:

- (1) Defense Minister Malinovsky's incorporation of the doctrinal formula on pre-emption in the stated mission of the Soviet armed forces for the first time at the CPSU Congress in October 1961. (The formula is: forestall a surprise attack by dealing the enemy a "timely and devastating blow.")
- (2) The frequent reiterations of that formula in recent open publications of the USSR Defense Ministry.
- (3) The evolution in top secret Soviet publications, from hints in 1960 of a need for a pre-emptive doctrine, to virtual acknowledgment of its existence by July 1961.

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(4) The public disclosure in 1961 of the adoption of a doctrine that stresses the possibility of a decisive initial phase of a future general war. In conjunction with this, the assigning to the strategic missile forces (privately in 1960 and publicly in 1961) the mission of achieving the principal goals of war in a very short time. (The Soviets hedge against the possibility of a protracted war by maintaining large, versatile forces.)

(5) The priority given counterforce objectives--notably enemy missile launchers--in official strategic target lists published in top secret Soviet materials.

(6) The doctrinal provisions that strategic missiles should be used suddenly, purposefully, en masse, against the most important enemy objectives.

The pivotal problem in Soviet military planning, it is clear, is that of preparing the armed forces to deal with the possibility of an attempted Western surprise attack. Soviet political leaders might have little genuine fear that the West intends to mount a surprise attack against them. But the military leaders take a very serious view of the problem of surprise attack. It is their task to fight a war, should deterrence fail, and the probable enemy they face is an awesome one. They see a rapidly expanding nuclear attack force in the United States and feel the blanket of secrecy over their own strategic forces gradually receding. They are faced with the prospect of not being able to deliver an effective second strike in a nuclear war and they are aware of this. They seem to reason, in drawing up a doctrine for the start of war, that only by striking first, by blunting much of the enemy's attack forces, can the USSR survive the first nuclear phase of the war. The programming in the United States of immense nuclear attack forces may thus be said to have a dual effect on the USSR: on the one hand, the possibility of deliberate Soviet resort to war is reduced; on the other hand, the possibility of a Soviet pre-emptive attack has increased as a course of action, should deterrence fail or be thought to have failed.

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Soviet leaders evidently believe that a strategic doctrine of pre-emption is feasible: that in all probability they will have sufficient warning time to initiate military action. However, the fact that unofficial opinion is divided as to how much and how good warning will be may reflect irresolution on the question on the official level. In any case, we cannot answer the critical question, as to what kind of evidence the Soviet leadership will act on pre-emptively. We think that, owing to the improbability of their having incontrovertible evidence of an irrevocable Western intention to attack, the Soviet leadership would act on less than certain evidence. The risk to them, they may reason, is too great not to attack first; there may not be a chance to retaliate with sufficient force to enable the USSR to pursue the war.

The Soviets have already taken steps to speed up the process of making the decision to go to war as well as the implementation of that decision. These steps include the assignment of the strategic missile forces to a Supreme High Command, which exercises exclusive control over their deployment and use, and the placing of Khrushchev at the head of the country's strategic arm in the post of Supreme High Commander. This post, we think, enables Khrushchev personally, without prior consultation with the ruling collegium, to push the war button.

To the Soviets, pre-emption means more than a last-moment attempt to unleash existing weapons in the face of an imminent enemy attack. As a doctrine, it provides a basis for military planning, a guide to the development of a force structure. It defines the mission and role of Soviet strategic forces in a general way. But the doctrine of pre-emption is not a war plan that defines specific missions or a blueprint that dictates precise numbers and types of weapons. We cannot, on the basis of the doctrine alone, estimate the numbers of weapons which the Soviets regard as necessary to fulfill the tasks outlined by the doctrine. In arriving at force levels, however, the Soviets use a requirements approach, taking account of the numbers and types of important enemy targets as a basis for calculating Soviet force needs. The targeting emphasis is on the enemy's means of nuclear attack, on a strategic as well as tactical scale; industrial and administrative objectives are included, but purely population targets apparently are not.

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SOVIET STRATEGIC DOCTRINE FOR THE START OF WAR

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem

The Soviet classified documents which we have examined for this study, taken together with the open military literature, offer us insights into the thinking and planning of Soviet military leaders for future war, and specifically for its initial phase. We can reconstruct, on the basis of the Soviet military materials, the main elements of strategic military doctrine of the USSR for the start of war. Our conclusions, in a number of cases, must be inferential owing to the circumspection with which the critical question of the first attack is generally discussed-- in the private as well as in the public discourse. Although the classified documents used for this project have been classified top secret by the USSR Ministry of Defense, they do not betray the highest military secrets of the USSR; they do not discuss official war plans; they do not give numerical data on existing or projected Soviet force levels; they give no detailed data on the use and deployment of Soviet ICBMs, etc.

Hence, in this paper, we do not presume to duplicate Soviet war plans; the available evidence does not enable us to do this. Nor does it fall within our competence to comment on the actual present or possible future capability of the USSR to mount an effective first strike. There is not necessarily a direct correlation between doctrine and capability. Rather, our aim in this study is to describe and analyze Soviet strategic doctrine for the initiation of a possible future war, as the doctrine has emerged since January 1960; and then to relate the doctrine to the problem of force structure in order to determine the path being taken in the development of the strategic missile forces.

When we speak of Soviet military doctrine, we have in mind the Soviet meaning of the term. It is generally understood to be a guide for military planning,

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for defense policy and strategy. In this sense, military doctrine describes the character of future war; outlines basic strategy for the war, and indicates the kind of force structure needed to fight the war envisioned.

Soviet military doctrine, as the classified materials bear out, has to a large extent been made public. This may seem paradoxical in view of the Soviet obsession with secrecy in military matters. Yet the classified literature confirms that the current doctrine for nuclear war was largely formulated in the public speeches of Khrushchev (beginning in January 1960) and in the speeches and orders of the USSR Minister of Defense, Marshal Malinovsky. No reference has been made in the available secret materials to a secret speech or article on doctrine by Khrushchev; Malinovsky in recent years has apparently delivered only one major secret speech on doctrinal matters--in May 1960--and that is discussed in several of the classified sources. The somewhat tortuous evolution of the "new military doctrine" has already been described at some length in our CAESAR XIV study dated 3 April 1962. Suffice it to note here that the secret literature examined by us reinforces the openly published evidence that Soviet military doctrine was in a highly formative stage in 1960-1961; and that the major doctrinal questions bearing on the start of war have since been resolved and removed from the realm of theoretical controversy.

Our task, then, is to discern the doctrinal concepts that guide Soviet planners in determining the make-up of the strategic forces. We leave the much more complex task of estimating numbers of existing and planned missile sites to more competent hands, for doctrine is but one of many inputs in the estimating process.

We wish to note also that our paper focuses on problems of the start of a general war, which, in the Soviet view, will inevitably involve the mass use of nuclear missile weapons. The paper does not deal with problems bearing on the outbreak of limited or localized conflicts involving Soviet forces. In point of

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fact, there has been no discussion of a local war role and mission for Soviet armed forces in either the open or available secret Soviet military literature. Local war is discussed only in terms of a trigger for a global nuclear war. This is not to say that local war doctrine and operational plans do not exist in the USSR. We know from open sources that Soviet military cadres have been called upon to study the experience of local wars and Western local war doctrine. Undoubtedly there are contingency plans for the employment of Soviet troops in limited actions. But inasmuch as Soviet political doctrine rules out the use of Soviet troops in "national liberation" struggles in underdeveloped countries, it is unlikely that there is a military program for the use of Soviet troops in those places.

B. The Principal Sources Used

The principal source for the present study, the "Special Collection of Articles from MILITARY THOUGHT" (hereafter referred to as the "Special Collection"), merits some explanation because of its singular nature. It is classified TOP SECRET--by the USSR--but is an unofficial document. Its special status stems from the fact that it was established, in early 1960, as an ad hoc discussion forum for the airing of frank, controversial and free-ranging views of senior military officers. The articles, according to an editorial note, express only the opinions of the authors on the problems dealt with. The articles chosen for publication in the "Special Collection" were evidently regarded as too sensitive for publication in the SECRET "Collections" of MILITARY THOUGHT articles, or in the more widely circulated monthly MILITARY THOUGHT, which is evidently restricted to military stations.*

The circulation of the publication is limited to army commanders and higher. The contributing writers, for the most part, are drawn from the same narrow circle of military leaders. Numbered among the contributors are deputy ministers of defense, military district commanders and senior staff officers, chiefs and officials of military directorates, and military academy heads and theorists.

*None of the classified Soviet materials used in this study are dated later than fall 1961. Issues of the SECRET version of MILITARY THOUGHT, published in late 1961, became available too late for consideration in this paper.

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Constituting a vehicle principally for the exchange of unofficial or individually held viewpoints, the materials contain a multiplicity of recommendations for the planning and conduct of strategic and front operations in a future general war. Now and then, however, the writers allude to elements of official doctrine-- upon which we have based our conclusions in large part. The articles in the collection vary in quality. Some are distinguished for the care and thoroughness exercised in their preparation. Other articles are disjointed, strikingly naive, and woefully incomplete. The unevenness, we surmise, stems from different levels of competence and different degrees of access to data on modern weapons among the contributors.

We have also found some useful information on our subject in other top secret issuances of the Soviet Defense Ministry. One such document has been particularly valuable for this project. It is the authoritative INFORMATION BULLETIN OF THE MISSILE TROOPS, which was first issued in serial form in July 1961. The BULLETIN, as opposed to the "Special Collection," does not carry unofficial or controversial articles; its usefulness to us is principally in its technical information bearing on strategic missiles.

II. SOVIET ATTITUDES TOWARD THE FIRST PHASE OF NUCLEAR WAR

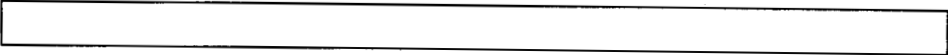
The main concern of Soviet military leaders is that of fighting a war, should it break out. Yet, the nature of modern warfare is such that the questions of deciding when to initiate war and how to fight it have become inextricably linked. In the USSR, the military leaders have hence taken a strong professional interest in the circumstances under which future war might begin. Technical requirements, such as the need for short reaction time in the initial employment of strategic weapons, have tended to increase the influence of the military in the making of critical strategic decisions. While the final authority in the launching of the first attack will, of course, be exercised by the jealous political leadership, the military--charged with reading and interpreting the military-

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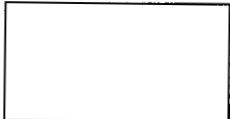
technical indications of a possible enemy attack--will exert important influence in the making of the fateful decision. As we shall demonstrate shortly, they have demanded a voice in determining the timing and conditions for the launching of the first attack. They have built a case and they have, from all indications, received the approval of the political leaders for a doctrine of pre-emptive attack.

The critical question of Soviet intention to go to war does not properly fall within the scope of this paper. Inasmuch as the decision to go to war is the exclusive prerogative of the party-government leadership, (the classified materials underscore this point), we cannot draw firm conclusions about Soviet intentions to initiate military action on the basis of the available military literature. We can, however, identify the elements of Soviet strategic doctrine that will guide the USSR in preparing its forces for the start of war, and that will suggest when and how military action should be initiated.

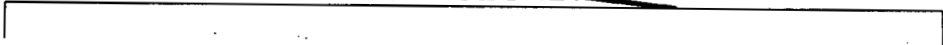
A. How War Will Begin

Future general war will begin, the Soviets predict, with a surprise attack. They give heavy odds, so to speak, that the first attack will take the form of massed nuclear strikes by one major power against another. In no available Soviet source is there even a trace of a hint that a formal declaration of war might under any circumstances precede the outbreak of hostilities.

We find no indication in any of the Soviet materials, open or classified, that the USSR plans to initiate military actions against the West deliberately, without serious provocation, and at a time entirely of their choosing. However, there is good evidence, which we shall discuss shortly, of the existence of a doctrine that calls for the initiation of war by the USSR under conditions of threat of an imminent attack against the bloc by the West. The USSR may initiate war, in short,



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but only if the war is justified as "defensive" in a political sense.* This does not rule out the possibility that Soviet leaders might fabricate grounds for launching a preventive war. While there is nothing in the sources in our possession to suggest the possibility of a military deception on the part of the Soviets, one contributor to the "Special Collection" ascribed the possibility to the West.

The classified as well as open military materials depict a Western effort to launch a surprise nuclear attack as the most likely trigger of a future war and the most dangerous threat to the security of the USSR. We cannot say with certainty whether this represents a genuine estimate of Western intentions. Soviet political leaders on the one hand may harbor very little real fear that the United States will mount a surprise attack against them. Khrushchev, it will be recalled, had told

*This presents no real problem for the USSR. A Soviet Defense Ministry book, "War and Politics" (signed to press December 1959), has already rationalized a possible first-strike strategy for the USSR within the framework of "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."

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[redacted] in 1958 that the United States could not initiate war because of its constitutional system, although he has recently made several public allusions to the dangerous implications of President Kennedy's statement that the United States might initiate nuclear war under certain conditions. Khrushchev's major military concern, too, appears to be that of deterring probable enemies of the USSR from initiating a nuclear conflict and he claims a credible deterrent force for the USSR.* If he is satisfied, as he appears to be, that the United States is deterred, then he would have no logical reason to fear a U.S. surprise attack. His estimate of the possible future correlation of forces may, of course, be different. Soviet military leaders, on the other hand, may look at the problem somewhat differently. Their professional concern is principally that of fighting a war, should deterrence fail. Hypothesizing that a war will take place, for purposes of preparing for it, the military specialists conclude that the probable enemy will attempt to gain important advantages in the war by striking first. From this, they draw conclusions about the high probability of an attempted surprise first strike--but not about the probability of war itself. Hence, their representation of surprise attack as the main danger fosters a "prepare-for-the-worst" philosophy in planning for future war. The force structure, readiness and vigilance that will result from preparing above all to forestall an enemy surprise attack, the Soviets seem to think, will prepare the armed forces optimally for any other general war contingency.

The possibility of war by accident or miscalculation has also been acknowledged in open publications, but it has not been taken up in the secret discourse. We do not know how serious a view Soviet military planners take of this possibility. But it seems, in any case, that the strategic requirements placed on

*A credible deterrent force is one that can withstand an enemy surprise attack and retaliate with such destruction as would be unacceptable to the attacker.

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the state to deal with such a contingency are probably much the same as the ones for dealing with an enemy surprise attack.

Much has been said in the propaganda about the grave danger of a local war escalating rapidly into a global nuclear war. In his speech at the 22nd CPSU Congress, Marshal Malinovsky postulated a rigid formula on this problem: any armed conflict, he said, will "inevitably" develop into a global nuclear/rocket war should the nuclear powers become involved in it. Somewhat earlier, in articles in the top secret "Special Collection," several military leaders mentioned the possibility that general nuclear war might start with a "local war" between the superpowers in "one of the areas of the world." One writer, Col. Gen. Pavlovsky, hypothesizes in the "Special Collection" that the West might first attack a bloc satellite. The USSR would then enter the war to defend the "friendly country," and the conflict would turn into a world war. Aside from this instance, no other types of local war situations are specified in the classified materials.

No explicit allowance has been made for a "pause" in localized hostilities between the superpowers, in which time a cessation of hostilities could be brought about. At most, a "pause" may be implicit in the statement by Pavlovsky in an early 1961 issue of the "Special Collection," that an attack against a Soviet satellite could "scarcely" be confined to a local war and would "most probably" lead to a world war. This is a less rigid formulation than the one presented by Malinovsky at the 22nd CPSU Congress last October. As far as we can discern, the Soviets regard the possibility of a local war escalating into a general nuclear conflict as part of the problem of surprise attack. Forewarned by the existence of a threatening period in the form of localized hostilities, the Soviet military leaders would probably expect the enemy to use the element of surprise in order to mount an attack against strategic targets in the USSR should the local war situation become unfavorable to him. (American doctrine has been made

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clear on the point of initiating nuclear warfare, but not a general nuclear war, should the Soviets take advantage of a local preponderance of conventional forces to overrun NATO positions.) Soviet strategy would thus have to be that of denying the enemy the opportunity of striking first. Thus, the danger inherent in a local war involving forces of the major powers, as the Soviets probably see it, is that the pressing consideration of preventing a possible enemy nuclear attack may be translated into action before a peaceful settlement of the local fracas could be arranged.

B. The Importance of the First Attack

Soviet concern over the importance of the first massed nuclear strikes in a future war has increased demonstrably in recent years. The heightened concern has emerged against a backdrop of significant increments to US strategic attack forces and the shrinking of the veil of secrecy surrounding Soviet strategic forces. The subject of serious debate in Soviet military circles until about a year ago, the question of the importance of the opening phase of a future general war, has since been answered by official military opinion. Military doctrine now assigns overriding importance to the initial strategic operations in a future nuclear war.

The extant doctrine on the start of war was publicly revealed for the first time by Defense Minister Malinovsky in his speech at the 22nd CPSU Congress last October, and has subsequently been reaffirmed and clarified. The principal elements of the doctrine illuminating Soviet official thought on the vital importance of the opening operations are as follows:

(a) The initial period of future nuclear war might be decisive not only for the course but for the outcome of the war as a whole. (Malinovsky, *KOMMUNIST*, No. 7, May 1962)

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(b) Strategic nuclear missile weapons, which will play the primary role in the initial period of the war, make it possible to attain the strategic goals of war "within a short period of time." (Malinovsky, 23 October 1961 speech at the 22nd CPSU Congress; Moskalenko, RED STAR, 13 September 1961).

(c) The very first mass nuclear strikes are capable 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 /Soviet/ people and the country in an exceptionally difficult position. (Malinovsky, 23 October 1961 speech at the 22nd CPSU Congress).

So serious is the Soviet military view of the initial phase of war, that Malinovsky in his speech at the Party Congress last October took the rare step of invoking the authority of the CPSU Presidium in emphasizing the need to give "special attention" to the initial period in the course of military study and training. This step might also have been taken with the aim of conveying the impression that the political and military leaders now share a common view of the problem.*

It should be noted that the doctrine does not say categorically that the first strikes will decide the war: the problem is stated in terms of "possibilities" and "capabilities." The emphasis placed on

*For a discussion of earlier differences over this question between Khrushchev and the military leaders, see CAESAR-XIV of 3 April 1962, "Soviet Military Thought on Future War: Doctrine and Debate Since 1960."

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the initial operations does, of course, suggest an estimate of a fairly high probability that the first phase of the war will be the decisive one. Herein lies an important guide to military planners in determining the future composition of Soviet forces: strategic forces are of cardinal importance. By the same token, the allowance made in the doctrine for the possible indecisiveness and inconclusiveness of the first phase of war also provides a guideline for the structuring of the armed forces: a basis is thereby laid for a more flexible and varied military force than would be needed for a short nuclear exchange.

In stressing the importance of the initial phase of war, the doctrine is primarily concerned with the possible effects of the first Western nuclear strikes against the USSR. At the same time, the doctrine--which is formulated as a sort of objective law--seems to bear on the ability of the United States to withstand the first nuclear blows from the USSR. In either case, the doctrine implies a high premium for the first massed nuclear strike. It indicates that Soviet military planners fully appreciate the advantages of launching the first as opposed to the second blow, but is not in itself proof of the adoption of a strike-first-if-possible strategy.

C. Hedging: "Try For a Short War, Prepare for a Long One"

Consistent with the doctrine which stresses the importance of the first phase of a future war is the doctrine on the anticipated duration of the war. We are afforded a clear picture of this latter doctrine by the classified materials. It is, in effect, a doctrine of hedging: it says that strategic planning must take account of the possibility of either a short or a prolonged war.

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Whether future war will be long or short was for some time a bone of contention in the open periodical press and in the top secret "Special Collection," as well. Some officers, who proposed a blitzkrieg strategy for the USSR in the top secret organ, predicted that the hostile state or coalition of states could be deprived of the capability to resist "in the course of a few hours or, at the outside, within a few days." Others argued equally categorically that the initial operations would not predetermine the outcome of war, that a war between two world systems "cannot be of short duration." Most contributions took a position somewhere between the two extremes, saying that the war might be relatively short; that it might even assume a fast-moving "blitz" character, although this was "improbable"; that the war would "not necessarily" be prolonged; but that in any case the USSR must prepare for a "protracted, hard war."

The question was resolved by Soviet officialdom in the spring of 1960. In a report (kept secret from the general public) to the All-Army Conference of Secretaries of Primary Party Organizations in May of that year, the Defense Minister eschewed both extremes, calling them "one-sided." The USSR, he said, must develop and perfect the means and methods of armed combat with a view toward achieving victory over the aggressor "above all in the shortest possible time," but at the same time must prepare seriously for an extended war. This doctrine, he said, governs the direction of military organization.

It might be added that this doctrine has, in substance, been made public although not spelled out. It was incorporated in Malinovsky's speech at the 22nd CPSU Congress last October: the Defense Minister at that time stressed both the

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importance of the initial stage of war and the continuing need for varied and large armed forces. And he reiterated that position most recently in an article in the May (No. 7) 1962 KOMMUNIST.

Thus, calculated to finish the war in the shortest possible time, the doctrine is predicated upon the assumption that the strategic missile forces will play the decisive and principal role in the war. But considering the possibility that the strategic missile forces would fail to bring about a decision in the short run, the doctrine calls for the maintenance of other types of forces (equipped with nuclear weapons and operating as combined arms) which would be prepared to wage extended war.

One of the spokesmen who supported this cautious strategic concept explained the reasoning underlying it. Major General M. Goryainov wrote in an article in the "Special Collection," that past experience teaches that estimates of enemy strength at the beginning of a war have usually proven incorrect and that "not a single war has ever gone the way it was planned." He also pointed out that a number of strategic missiles could turn out to be unreliable, and only partially fulfill the immediate tasks of war without a decisive result. In this eventuality, the author said, during the time needed for restoring the combat capability of strategic missile troops, the ground troops and aviation would play the decisive role. This is the most acceptable concept, he said, despite the fact that it is the costliest in expenditures, both before and during the war.

One cannot, we think, draw the conclusion from the doctrine of hedging--that is, preparing

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for either a long or short war--that the USSR plans to maintain a dual capability for either nuclear or conventional general war. The build-up of the older branches of service, which have been re-equipped with nuclear missile weapons, is depicted as necessary to meet the requirements of a protracted nuclear war, not an exclusively conventional war. There is nothing in the military literature, classified or open, to suggest that a separate body of doctrine for a non-nuclear war is being retained. Rather, the literature has on many occasions underscored the inevitability of the employment of nuclear weapons in a general war: that nuclear rocket weapons will play the main role in such a war is an unquestioned article of doctrine. Only within the framework of a nuclear war does the literature provide a place for conventional weapons.

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III. THE CASE FOR PRE-EMPTIVE ATTACK

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A. The New Doctrinal Formula

It has already been pointed out that Soviet military planning for future war focuses primarily on the problem of preparing to ward off an enemy surprise nuclear attack. The Soviets say that an enemy surprise attack, if carried out, would place the USSR at a very great disadvantage in the war. The problem is also expressed in terms of the immediate strategic aims which the USSR will try to attain in the first phase of the war. According to a number of statements, carried in open as well as classified military sources, preventing, or at least repulsing, an enemy strategic attack, and delivering a crushing counterblow, will be foremost among the immediate strategic Soviet aims in future war.

There are two ways of "preventing" an enemy surprise attack, according to the Soviet viewpoint. The first, and evidently preferred, method is to prevent war itself from breaking out by deterring the enemy. Deterrence is, of course, the first mission of the Soviet military establishment. This has been made abundantly clear in numerous Soviet statements. For example, the Party-Government appeal of June 1962 on the question of raising meat and milk prices stated, in justification of heavy defense expenditures, that:

the imperialists are used to respecting force only, and if so far they have not begun a war, it is only because they know our economic and military might, and know that the Soviet country now has everything necessary to cool down the militant ardor of any aggressor.

The second method of preventing an enemy surprise attack--the method that would be used should deterrence fail--is that of destroying the enemy's nuclear striking force, or as much of it as possible,

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in good time. The best and perhaps only way to achieve this is by striking the enemy first, that is, by pre-empting him. 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. This is now, from all indications, the thinking of the Soviet military leadership, and it is reflected in recently pronounced doctrine for the start of war.

At the 22nd CPSU Congress last October, Malinovsky said that the Soviet armed forces must be prepared "above all else" for the eventuality of a Western surprise attack. With clear allusion to a strategy of pre-emption, he said that military training in 1961 posed as the main task "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." Although less authoritative sources have implied the need for a pre-emptive strategy in the past, this statement represents the first time that the concept of pre-emptive action was incorporated in the stated mission of the Soviet armed forces. The new doctrinal formula--which is about as far as the Soviets can go in speaking of a pre-emptive strategy without suggesting that the USSR might initiate war--has since been reiterated several times in other authoritative contexts. The statement on the need to "wreck the aggressor's plans" by dealing him a "timely blow" was, for example, carried in a RED STAR editorial on 21 January 1962 and again in RED STAR, on 11 May, in an exposition on Soviet military doctrine. The latter source described this mission as "the most primary, the most important and the main task of the armed forces." The doctrinal formula has also been carried in various signed articles in consecutive issues of KOMMUNIST OF THE ARMED FORCES in recent months. Malinovsky too, in an article in the May KOMMUNIST, the authoritative CPSU organ, came close to repeating the formula in speaking

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of Soviet strategy "to nip in the bud" the enemy's plans for aggression and in underscoring the possible decisiveness of the initial nuclear phase of war. (A TASS English language review of the Malinovsky piece on 19 May called the point on the decisiveness of the first stage "the basic proposition" of Soviet military doctrine.) The open military press has also hinted that command-staff exercises have been "recently" held under simulated conditions of dealing a pre-emptive strategic strike against the enemy. According to KOMMUNIST OF THE ARMED FORCES, March (No. 5) 1962,

on the basis of recently held exercises, methods were worked out for the reliable rebuff of an enemy surprise attack and the explosion of his aggressive plans by means of the timely delivery of a crushing blow against him.

B. The Evolvement of the Concept in Secret Discourse

Various articles in the top-secret "Special Collection" also throw light on this question, suggesting that Malinovsky's thinly-veiled reference to a pre-emptive strategy in October 1961 signalled a change in military policy. To the then existing doctrine of deterrence and retaliation was added the doctrine of pre-emption, which, in our view, calls for a larger force than was previously envisaged and one which is principally counter-force in mission. More will be said later about the force implications of the new doctrine.

There was a discernible evolution in the way in which the question of strategic pre-emption was treated in succeeding issues of the "Special Collection" between 1960 and 1961. Among the articles in the "Special Collection" published in 1960, we find a number of hints of the possible need to engage in pre-emptive action on a strategic scale. Thus various articles published in that year listed counterforce targets, notably

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rocket bases, first among the objectives of Soviet strategic missile strikes. Also several articles endorsing a blitzkrieg strategy gave logical grounds for placing a high premium on striking first.

Several articles in the "Special Collection" for 1961 treated the question of strategic pre-emption more directly. Two articles carried in the first issue of the top secret organ for 1961 (signed to the press 13 January) developed a case for a strategy of pre-emption. An article by the late deputy chief of the General Staff, Colonel General N. Pavlovsky, who had died in October 1960, stressed that the chief task in the event of an enemy attack will be to "prevent" mass nuclear strikes by the enemy, instantly to deliver crushing nuclear strikes, and to initiate vigorous military operations by all types of armed forces. Pavlovsky's method of disrupting an enemy surprise attack entailed the delivery of a powerful first blow against him. The blow, he said, must be directed against the enemy's industrial and economic centers; against his missile, aircraft, and naval bases; against his stockpiles of nuclear weapons, aircraft, nuclear submarines, missile vessels, and aircraft carriers; and against the most important groupings of his ground troops, radar facilities and other objectives. By delivering its "first" massed nuclear strike "at the right time," he said, the USSR could "considerably weaken" (blunt) the strikes of the enemy, paralyze his operations for a certain time, and under favorable conditions, force him to cease active military operations. In his view, the success of such a strike would depend on (a) the readiness of all forces and weapons used to deliver it, (b) the validity of information on the objective to be destroyed, (c) the proper selection of those objectives, and (d) the skillful use of the nuclear weapons.

In the same issue of the "Special Collection," Colonel General Babadzhanyan (Odessa MD commander) pointed out that NATO did not then represent a grave threat to the USSR. He saw the West as now

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deterred from striking first by its inability to prevent the USSR from delivering a "devastating counterblow."* But he admonished that this situation could not be permanent. He expressed fear of the future, when the West "will" have a greater capability to deliver a surprise massive nuclear strike which could "destroy the most important and crucial installations of the country, disorganize national control, disrupt mobilization and deployment of armed forces, and severely reduce the combat effectiveness of the army and the country as a whole." This prospect is so serious, he said, that "every measure must be taken in order that, if the imperialists try to start a war, it will not begin by a surprise massed enemy nuclear strike." Rather than wait for the new conditions to come about, he argued for the adoption of a new strategic concept now: that concept is clearly pre-emption. He said that "if it becomes evident that aggressive forces have decided on war, and that the initiation of military operations is only a question of a short time, and if we fail to prevent the aggressor's attack by diplomatic means, then it is necessary to wreck the enemy strike by all our available forces and means during the first days of the war." What should be done "now and quickly," he emphasized, is to prepare Soviet intelligence and the armed forces in such a way that they will be in a "constant state of readiness to deliver such a pre-emptive blow against the aggressor."

Unfortunately, the writer does not elaborate on the implications of the strategic concept which he recommends for Soviet force structure. He does say, in concluding his discussion of the first attack, that

*"The strategic missiles at their disposal clearly cannot satisfy the requirements of a major war and their quality is not high, since, according to assertions by Americans themselves, only 50% of the missiles launched reach their target."

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the possibility of having only a "last minute" warning of enemy preparations for attack necessitates a "new approach" to the "preparation and definition" of the stage of readiness of Soviet means of attack.

In a second article, carried in the third issue of the "Special Collection" for 1961 (signed to the press 10 July), General Babadzhanyan spoke of pre-emptive action still more directly, not in the form of argumentation, but as if it were now official doctrine. He said that " a counterstrike, or a strike to frustrate a surprise enemy attack" would be carried out--mainly by strategic missile forces-- upon the decision of the party-government leaders. He developed a strategic concept for operations of troops of a front after the launching of either a "counterstrike or a strike to frustrate a surprise enemy attack." He rejected a "widespread" point of view that front nuclear/missile weapons (i.e., tactical nuclear weapons) must participate in a "counterstrike or a first nuclear strike." The phrase shows that the writer assumed the existence of the alternative strategies of retaliation and first strike.

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C. Soviet Strategic Target Lists

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Evidence bearing on the types of enemy targets selected for destruction by Soviet strategic rockets is fully consistent with a pre-emptive strategy. The "Special Collection" materials for 1960-61 give greatest emphasis to the problem of countering the enemy's means of nuclear attack on a strategic as well as tactical scale. It appears to be a common view among the contributors that the need for a counter-force capability for the USSR is a foregone conclusion. Even more compelling evidence of this outlook is to be found in the official INFORMATION BULLETIN OF THE MISSILE TROOPS. More authoritative than the "Special Collection," this top secret serial contains only articles that reflect official doctrine and regulations. The first issue of the journal, published in July 1961, included a target list for strikes by strategic missiles (in this case, 1100 n.m.) which was headed by enemy missile launchers. The list, evidently in order of priority, was as follows:

- strategic missile launch sites;
- sites for the production, assembly and storage of nuclear weapons and of means for delivering them to the target;
- large airfields, air force and naval bases;
- centers of political administration and of military industry;
- large communications centers;
- large factories and power centers;
- arsenals and depots with strategic stocks of armaments, military equipment or strategic raw materials;
- strategic reserves and other targets of strategic significance in the deep rear of the enemy.

Significantly, purely population targets are not included in any of the classified target lists. Aside from the proposal of a small minority that the USSR adopt a country-busting strategy with regard to Western Europe, none of the spokesmen in the top-secret Soviet materials has called for the indiscriminate destruction of cities. On

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the other hand, the fact that official strategic target lists are not exclusively counter-force in composition but include industrial and administrative objectives, points up the versatile character of Soviet strategic doctrine: the target lists are evidently designed to promote the war effort in the most effective way, whether the USSR strikes first or second.

D. Doctrine on the Use of Strategic Missiles

In addition to the above-mentioned target requirements, other Soviet concepts governing the employment of the strategic missiles are also fully in keeping with a strike-first-if-necessary strategy. Soviet military doctrine, as unfolded in the top-secret "Special Collection" materials, dictates that nuclear missile weapons must be used suddenly, effectively, purposefully, economically, and en masse. Designed to perform the leading role in the initial period of war, the missile forces will have the principal aim of radically changing the strategic situation as a whole --first of all, ending the war in the shortest possible time.*

*There is general agreement in the "Special Collection" that strategic missile forces might be called upon to support armed combat in theaters of operations, destroying main groupings of enemy forces. But according to Marshal Varentsov, the chief of the Soviet tactical-operational missile units, the strategic missile forces must concentrate on the main tasks, and the interests of the front will be served by them only if suitable reserves of their means exist. It seems to be generally understood, in short, that the strikes of the strategic missile troops will be mainly directed toward attaining the principal goals of the war.

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Official Soviet military thinking also stresses the importance of concentrating the massed nuclear blows against the "main enemies,"* and striking at "the most important objectives." Maximum destruction of the enemy, the annihilation of whole countries, was not included among the official missions of the strategic missile forces. This is despite claims (quoted in the 'Special Collection') by Khrushchev and Malinovsky of a Soviet capability to "wipe any aggressor from the face of the earth" or to reduce small countries to a "radioactive desert."

E. The Feasibility of Pre-emption

Before exploring the meaning and implications of strategic pre-emption, let us tie together the threads of evidence to be found in Soviet military literature in support of our hypothesis that a doctrine of pre-emptive attack was adopted by the USSR sometime in 1961. We have thus far founded our hypothesis upon

(a) the incorporation of the concept in the stated mission of the Soviet armed forces for the

*According to [redacted] Khrushchev also believes that the strategic missile strikes should be directed principally against the "main partners" of the Western coalition. Khrushchev is said to have told a meeting of the Soviet Supreme Military Council (date not given): "Cut down a tree, and the boughs will fall off--destroy the United States and with it England, and the other capitalist fortresses will surrender."

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first time, in Malinovsky's speech at the 22nd CPSU Congress last October;

(b) the evolution in the treatment of the question in the "Special Collection" between 1960 and 1961;

(c) the doctrine that stresses the possibility of a decisive initial phase of war;

(d) the doctrine that assigns the strategic missile forces the mission of achieving the principal goals of war in a very short time;

(e) the priority given counter-force objectives in official target lists; and

(f) concepts calling for the use of the strategic missiles "suddenly, purposefully, en masse, against the most important objectives of the main enemies."

This same body of evidence suggests that the Soviet military leaders regard strategic pre-emption not only as a desirable course of action but also as a practicable one. But does their outlook make good sense in the light of U. S. plans for a massive strategic striking force composed mainly of Minuteman and Polaris ballistic missiles?

There is a belief among Western students of military strategy that as the size of the U. S. long-range striking force grows and its vulnerability decreases, the advantages of striking first diminish. This reasoning is perfectly sound, it would seem, as regards the question of deterring the USSR from initiating a "preventive" war. Indeed, this reasoning properly underlies the U.S. strategy of deterrence: the enemy cannot hope to knock out all or even most of our strategic attack forces with the first blow and is consequently discouraged from embarking on the path of premeditated war to attain his foreign policy aims.

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But, in our opinion, such reasoning does not make the choice of a pre-emptive strike any the less desirable to the Soviets. On the contrary, it seems to us that an important reason why they are seeking a pre-emptive strike capability is because the United States has undertaken to build an immense missile attack force--even though it was conceived here as primarily a retaliatory one. Rather than discourage the Soviets from planning for pre-emptive action, the trend toward more powerful and less vulnerable U.S. nuclear forces compels Soviet military planners to tailor the characteristics of their strategic forces to the target requirements. One effect that the trend in U. S. weapons developments has had on the USSR already is the stepping-up of the Soviet ABM program.

The Soviets probably reason that the U.S. nuclear missile forces are becoming so powerful that there may not be a reliable alternative to striking first. In other words, should the United States succeed in striking first with its massive forces, the USSR may not have the opportunity to strike back with the force necessary to continue in the war. On the other hand, should the USSR succeed in striking the first blow, while it would surely be subjected to powerful strikes from numerous surviving U.S. forces, it might be afforded the opportunity of carrying on the war and winning it.

It could be said, in short, that the U.S. weapons program is having a dual effect on the USSR: On the one hand, it reduces the likelihood of war by assuring the Soviet leaders of widespread nuclear devastation should they elect to launch premeditated war; on the other hand, it tends to heighten Soviet concern over the first nuclear attack and elevates the importance in their eyes of a strategy of pre-emption.

To be feasible, a pre-emptive attack need not result in the absolute destruction of the enemy's means of nuclear attack. The available evidence suggests that Soviet military planners will settle for

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much less than the absolute destruction of the enemy in the first massed nuclear strike. Nowhere in the "Special Collection" materials or in the open sources has the thought been expressed that the USSR might emerge barely scathed from a nuclear war--started under any conditions. The one contributor to the top-secret "Special Collection" who called for dealing country-busting blows to the enemy (he had European countries in mind) framed his strategy on the assumption that the USSR would be struck first. (Col. Gen. Gastilovich, first issue for 1960.) Other contributors who addressed themselves to the question in the "Special Collection" wrote that a successful pre-emptive blow could substantially blunt ("weaken") enemy retaliatory strikes and "under favorable conditions" even cause the enemy to cease active military operations. And a Colonel General Tolkonyuk made the bald statement, without reference to strategic pre-emption, although he may have had this in mind, that it is neither possible nor necessary to destroy all the states comprising the enemy coalition. To effect a blitzkrieg, the writer said, it is necessary to strike with nuclear blows only "the main partners" of the enemy coalition; to take out "the most important" of the enemy objectives; and to destroy the minimum number of targets necessary for the success of the operation.

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IV. SOME IMPLICATIONS OF PRE-EMPTION

A. Pre-emption As a Guide to Force Structure

None of the materials in our possession provides a clear-cut explanation of the Soviet understanding of pre-emption. Yet, from what we know of the Soviet conception of military doctrine, we can conclude that the doctrine of pre-emption serves as a guide for the planning of the USSR's future strategic offensive-defensive forces. What we are suggesting is that pre-emption means more to the Soviets than a last-moment attempt to unleash the country's strategic attack weapons in an effort to blunt an imminent enemy attack. To the Soviet military leader, pre-emption is more than an action; it is a strategy on which military planning is based. Its recent adoption as official doctrine is bound to have an effect on the size and shape of Soviet strategic forces programmed for the future.

A few examples from the Soviet materials will illustrate our point about the link between the doctrine and force structure. In the top-secret "Special Collection," it will be recalled, Col. Gen. Babadzhanian argued in early 1961 for the adoption by the USSR of a "new" concept--strategic pre-emption. Not stopping there, he called for improvements in the intelligence collection system and for other unspecified measures to be taken to bring the armed forces into line with the doctrine which he proposed. That he had in mind as one of the measures a sizable increase in strategic missiles is suggested by the thrust of his reasoning. To call flatly for a larger strategic missile force than was already programmed might have been considered too presumptuous an act for a second-level military leader, even within the covers of the closely held journal. The first order of business, as Babadzhanian probably saw it, was to sell the idea of a need for a doctrine of pre-emption; therein would be the policy guide to the force structure, and the battle would be partly won.

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Later, after the adoption of the pre-emptive doctrine, Col. I. Sidelnikov, in an article in the 11 May 1962 RED STAR, made a strong pitch for a force structure that would meet the requirements posed by the new doctrine of pre-emption. He spoke only in generalities, but his point was clear. Defining and outlining present-day Soviet military doctrine--the "guide" to defense policy--the author stated that "it is not enough to possess a correct and scientifically elaborate military doctrine." The lessons of the Second World War, he said, teach that it is also necessary that the combat might and readiness of the armed forces "fully correspond to the requirements posed by war and derived from Soviet military doctrine." As regards World War II, the author had said that the fatal Soviet error in the beginning of the war lay not in the basic tenets of Soviet military doctrine--"which were correct"--but in the fact that military combat readiness, weaponry, and organization did not conform to the "requirements of the doctrine."

The thrust of his argument, in short, was that the question of the doctrine had been settled; now it was necessary to obtain the hardware commensurate with the doctrine.

Then Marshal Malinovsky, in a KOMMUNIST article--signed to the press only four days after Sidelnikov's article appeared--also made it clear that the question was no longer one of doctrine but of military spending and choice of weapons and forces. The question as to "how and in what direction to take the construction of the armed forces" had already been worked out by Soviet military doctrine, he said. He went on to present an unusually explicit defense of the military budget, which could also be taken as an argument for continued high allocations or even increased allocations. He declared that Soviet military expenditures are "absolutely necessary," that they are "strictly regulated," and that there cannot be any "exaggeration" of them.

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The Malinovsky and Sidelnikov articles, as it turned out, preceded by less than three weeks a government announcement of an increase in meat and milk prices. The announced price increase was, in classical simplicity, a guns-for-butter decision. It made it plain that a decision had been reached to provide additional funds to agriculture without diverting resources from either defense or heavy industry. But it is not clear whether the decision also signified the planning of further increases in the military budget to buy the hardware needed for an effective pre-emptive capability.

In short, doctrine is closely tied to the planning of forces and weapons in the USSR. And the decision made sometime in 1961 to adopt a doctrine of pre-emption bore far-reaching implications for the planning of the strategic forces of the USSR. It was but one of a number of important military policy decisions that were taken in that year--others included the suspension of the troop cut, the resumption of nuclear testing, the expanding of the (overt) military budget, the frustrating of efforts (mainly Khrushchev's) to divert resources from heavy industry to consumer welfare. Taken together, these measures signaled that a major reassessment of the military needs of the country had taken place.

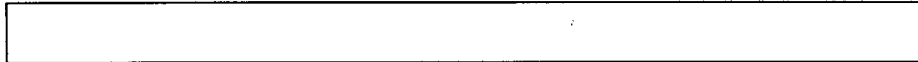
B. Some Notes on Estimating Force Levels

A knowledge of the military doctrine guiding the development of Soviet strategic missile forces is an essential ingredient in the process of estimating Soviet force levels, but it is not sufficient for that purpose. Estimating force levels is not simply a matter of extrapolating numerical data from military doctrine. The estimating process is far more complex and requires other types of inputs which

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cannot be analyzed in this paper. What we do gain from a knowledge of Soviet military doctrine is, above all, a rough idea of the mission and role designated for the strategic missiles. This provides a sound foundation for the other building blocks of the estimating process. This foundation has been laid, we think, in the preceding sections of this paper.

There is yet another important service that the Soviet materials render as regards the problem of estimating force levels. While devoid of hard information on the size and composition of present or projected Soviet strategic forces, the classified sources do offer insights into the Soviet methodology of planning strategic forces.

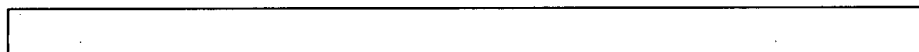
First there is good evidence--especially in the form of Soviet target data--that the "requirements approach" is being used by the Soviet military planners. Perhaps the most explicit statement to this effect is the following extract from an article by Major General I. Zavyalov in the first issue of the "Special Collection" for 1960:

It is beyond any doubt that both sides... will attempt to discover and to study all of each other's most important targets and particularly those such as missile sites, nuclear weapons storage sites, and military-industrial and political centers. The opponents will estimate and prepare the quantity of nuclear weapons needed for the annihilation of these targets and will take every measure required to accomplish the tasks of the war with the first massive salvoes of nuclear/missiles, using fixed launch sites already prepared in peacetime, and missile submarines and aviation.

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This approach is also reflected in statements in the "Special Collection" bearing on strategic weapons. Major General Gorbatov, for example, chided his comrades for talking imprecisely about having "sufficient quantities of weapons" without saying what this means in terms of numbers. In his view, the numbers of weapons needed will depend "entirely" on how many weapons the enemy has. Moreover, there is nothing in the materials to suggest that the USSR would count on the absolute destruction of the enemy's means of nuclear attack in the first massed nuclear strike. As pointed out earlier in this paper, doctrine stresses the economical and purposeful use of strategic weapons as well as the importance of destroying "the most important" enemy objectives.

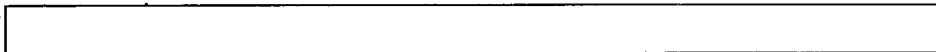
"Also, there are strong indications that the USSR is approaching the problem of preparing its armed forces for the start of a new war not in terms of all-offensive weapons but in terms of a versatile mix of weapons systems to meet the challenges posed by advances in Western weapons technology. Soviet requirements for a strategic force structure are calculated in terms of an attack-defense equation. Doctrine stipulates that "the success of nuclear/missile strikes, on the one hand, and of operations of the PVO Strany, on the other, particularly at the beginning of a war, will determine its further development to a great extent." (Pavlovsky) Through active and passive defense measures, the USSR evidently hopes to minimize the loss of life and general destruction expected to accrue from the enemy weapons not taken out in the Soviet first strike. It would seem from the impetus given the ABM program in the USSR, not necessarily to the neglect of offensive weapons, that the Soviet planners are placing increasing emphasis on their defensive requirements for a strike-first as well as retaliatory capability in view of the trend toward reduced vulnerability of U.S. attack systems.

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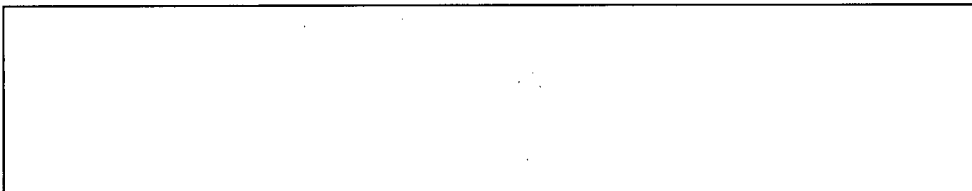
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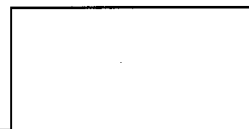
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These insights permit us then to reconstruct, in part, the kind of methodology that the Soviet military planner uses in determining the force requirements appropriate to a doctrine of pre-emptive attack. First, he has to take into consideration the size, hardness and mobility of the enemy forces, as well as their communications and control systems. He must also weigh such factors pertaining to his own offensive weapons as C.E.P., yield, reliability, and assurance of delivery to target. He must consider his active defense (ABM and SAM) and passive defense capabilities and programs. And finally, he must take the value judgement as to what level of damage the USSR could absorb and still remain a great power, in order to determine the minimum force needed to do the job of pre-empting.



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C. The Problem of Warning

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There are, of course, a number of prerequisites for a successful pre-emptive action on a strategic scale. These include such factors as advanced warning, a high state of readiness, the proper hardware in the proper amounts, the reliability and accuracy of the delivery systems, the timing and evenness of the first volley, and so forth. For the purpose of this report, and adhering to the limitations imposed by our source materials, we shall discuss only two of the prerequisites for a pre-emptive strike: warning and readiness of the high command.

The classified materials air unofficial military views on the problem of warning, but shed little light on official military thinking with regard to how much warning they expect to have and how good the evidence will be regarding an attempted enemy surprise attack. The materials do not provide the answer to the critical question--on what evidence would the Soviets decide to launch a pre-emptive attack? Articles in the top secret "Special Collection" materials for 1960-61 do reveal that there was a sharp difference of opinion over whether a threatening period would precede a Western effort to mount a surprise attack. Some writers said categorically that a threatening situation would always occur, even if very short in duration. Others insisted that it would be foolhardy to count on a threatening period--i.e., aggravated international tensions. One writer stated that "if the armed forces are ready when there is no threat period, then they will always be ready when there is one." But he did not spell out what he meant by readiness when there is no threat period.

It is probably the case that the difference of views among individual military officers in the "Special Collection" reflects uncertainty and irresolution on this question on the official level. In any event, Soviet military planners must reason that the probability of having ample advanced warning of an enemy attack is great enough to justify the adoption of a pre-emptive

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during such a threat period. They made such recommendations as putting forces in a state of readiness for "immediate" employment, protecting troops, issuing them ammunition, giving them advanced orders, and, "above all," exercising secrecy in these matters. But the critical question--on what evidence would the Soviets attack pre-emptively?--still remains unanswered. There is the possibility that the minimum threshold for taking the fatal decision to attack pre-emptively may not yet be determined in the USSR. For the party leadership jealously guards the prerogative of deciding on war, and might be loath to relinquish this decision to a fixed set of criteria that would automatically cause military action to be initiated. What the political leadership has done to safeguard its prerogative is the subject of the concluding section of the paper.

D. Strategic Command Machinery Streamlined

There is good evidence that the Soviet leadership has already taken measures of a command and organizational nature designed to speed up both the process of deciding to initiate war and the implementation of the decision. These measures enhance the feasibility of a strike-first strategy, whether or not they were taken for that purpose. They include the establishment in peacetime of a Supreme High Command, the direct and exclusive subordination of the Strategic Missile Forces (and possibly Long Range Aviation) to that authority, and the placing of one man--Khrushchev--at its head in the post of Supreme High Commander.

From their inception as a separate organizational entity in the USSR military establishment, the strategic

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missile forces have been centrally controlled. The establishment of "rocket troops"* as the "main" type of service, it will be recalled, was first announced by Khrushchev in his speech on the new doctrine in January 1960. Public statements by Khrushchev and Marshal Grechko in May 1960 made it clear the missile troops had their own command administrative structure comparable to other component force headquarters. But not until February 1961 was it made public, by Marshal Sokolovsky in a TASS interview, that the missile troops were divided into separate strategic and tactical elements, and that it was the "strategic" missile forces which constituted the main branch of service. The classified materials throw additional light on this matter. They indicate that in early 1960, the decision had already been taken to establish the "strategic missile forces" as a separate component force controlled exclusively from Moscow, and to subordinate tactical-operational rocket units to the Ground Troops and other major force components. They also indicate that provision had been made at that time for the creation in peacetime of a Supreme High Command to exercise control over the strategic missile forces.

The post of Supreme High Commander was apparently established more recently. In public statements made last fall, first Marshal Malinovsky and then Marshal Varentsov--commander of the tactical missile and artillery forces--referred to Khrushchev as the "Supreme High Commander." None of the classified materials which we have thus far examined--all of which were prepared before last fall--mentions the title.

*We use the terms "rocket" and "missile" interchangeable in this paper. "Rocket" is a literal translation of the Soviet "raleta"; "missile" is the preferred American translation of that term.

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Both that post and the institution of the Supreme High Command existed during World War II. Stalin, of course, wore the mantle of Supreme High Commander of the armed forces, relinquishing it at the end of the war. The revival of this command structure in peacetime is an extraordinary step--forced, it seems, by the nature of modern warfare. It is the Soviet view, apparently, that the vital requirements of constant readiness and of greatest speed in deciding on war and in implementing that decision do not permit a time-consuming transition to an alternate command structure--at least so far as the strategic forces of the country are concerned. Moreover, these requirements commend the placing of the decision-making power in the hands of one man. The assumption of the post of Supreme High Commander by Khrushchev--which of course implies his personal favor for the doctrine of pre-emption--effects the union of the highest political and military authority in one person, and gives Khrushchev a stature and authority comparable to that of the President of the United States.* Previously, the highest constitutional military authority in the USSR was in the person of the Minister of Defense, who held (and probably still holds) the title of Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. The highest actual military authority in the past (in the post-Stalin period) was, of course, centered in the ruling Party Presidium. Now, however, Khrushchev personally has assumed--or perhaps more correctly,

*Khrushchev recently alluded to his personal authority to initiate future war. At a rally in Sofia on 19 May, Khrushchev said, with reference to President Kennedy's statement on the circumstances under which the United States might initiate nuclear war:

Does not this statement mean that the President of the United States wishes to urge me to compete with him in who will be the first to push the button?

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has been granted--the power personally to make the decision to initiate military action, and if necessary to circumvent the ruling party collegium in doing so. This, of course, has important political implications in that it undermines further the principle of collective leadership. Inasmuch as Khrushchev has already established a definite style of rule and has concentrated great powers in his own hands--he heads the government, the party, bureau for the RSFSR, and the Supreme Military Council--his assumption of control of the military will probably not result in any major changes in the internal political situation.* We surmise that, time permitting, Khrushchev would consult with the other Party Presidium members, or at least those representing the Party on the Supreme Military Council.**

Khrushchev's occupancy of the highest military office also has important implications for the political-military relationship in the USSR. As pointed out earlier, the technical nature of modern warfare, notably the need for short reaction time, has tended to increase the influence of the Soviet military in the making of critical strategic decisions. In placing himself at the head of the military establishment, the country's political leader counters this trend and re-asserts party-political supremacy over the military.

* But should the institution of Supreme High Command become a permanent one, as it seems to be, it might create a serious problem in the struggle for succession after Khrushchev leaves the scene.

**We have learned [redacted] that a Supreme Military Council exists. We are not informed of its precise functions, but it appears to be a high level military policy-making body consisting of several party presidium members and a number of senior military officers.

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At Khrushchev's disposal are the strategic missile forces. According to articles in the "Special Collection," the strategic missile forces are under the direct operational control of the Supreme High Command and are designated as "Reserve of the Supreme High Command." (A recent open source--KOMMUNIST OF THE ARMED FORCES, No. 6, 1962--identified the strategic missile forces as the "instrument of the Supreme High Command.") They comprise a sizable organization with all the staff and support services usually associated with a full-fledged branch of the armed forces.

The decision regarding the objectives, the timing and the force of the strikes of the strategic missile forces is said to be entirely the prerogative of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command. The decision will depend on the Soviet capability at the time to use the strategic nuclear missile weapons as well as on the nature of "the total situation." In this latter regard, the "political" factor is said to be the decisive one. It will, in short, be Khrushchev's decision.

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