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14 August 1962



TO :  Chief ONE/EE  
FROM:  OCI/SSSG

Thanks for sending over Klaus Knorr's memorandum, "Some Reflections on MILITARY THOUGHT." I found his observations to be generally accurate and in some instances incisive. It is regrettable, though, that Dr. Knorr could not have taken more time to read and analyze the materials more thoroughly than is reflected in his commentary. I take exception to certain of his statements and present my comments below. Reference is made to his paragraph numbers.

Para. 12. This, I think, is an inaccurate rendering of the three strategic concepts set forth by Goryainov as alternatives for waging a future war. Concept (c), which Goryainov found most acceptable and which appears to have been the Defense Ministry's choice as well, does not relate to a limited war. Under this concept, according to Goryainov, strategic missile forces would retain their decisive role, but combined forces "saturated with nuclear weapons" would be maintained as well. This, Goryainov

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said, is a "cautious concept, calculated to finish war in the shortest possible time, but if unsuccessful, to be prepared to wage extended war with the maximum efforts of all the forces."

Paras 13, 14, 15. I concur in the important conclusion (para. 14) that "Soviet military thought seems wholly geared to fighting a nuclear war <sup>[AND]</sup> <sup>^</sup> seems to assume that any military conflict in the NATO area is bound to escalate promptly, if not instantaneously, to general war." I do not, however, share Dr. Knorr's perception of the Soviet's "rigid focus on unlimited war"; namely, his finding that there is no evidence of a "selective, discriminative employment of nuclear weapons." (The only references to limited uses of tactical nuclears that he found concern the problem of their limited availability.) True, the materials do not discuss what we call a "controlled nuclear war". But there is good evidence of Soviet thinking on discriminate use of nuclears and, hence, on controlled nuclear war in the sense of restrained nuclear destruction:

- (1) The extreme recommendations for a country-busting strategy and extreme reliance on high yield nuclears have apparently been rejected.
- (2) While doctrine calls for the mass application of

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nuclears, this need not be construed as unrestrained, unlimited, or indiscriminate use of the warheads. On the contrary, qualifiers are generally added to the apparent extant doctrine on mass firings: nuclears must also be used purposefully, suddenly, as well as economical-ly, against the most important enemy objectives.

(3) Goryainov defines "mass" as the amount needed to accomplish a given mission; Baskakov (177) says that mass use of nuclears in an offensive means that an "absolute majority" of the nuclears must be used to destroy the enemy's nuclear means and, secondarily, the main grouping of his forces.

(4) Goryainov also worries about poisoning the atmosphere and calls for limiting the time period for nuclear bursts, Kurochkin says that nuclears must be used in a decisive and purposeful war, but "only within the limits of expediency". "Forsaking this requirement can lead to a war having catastrophic consequences for mankind."

Paras 16, 17. Dr. Knorr observes that the Soviet capability to wage conventional war would be seriously hampered by the adoption of the recommendations of several writers for an extreme reliance on nuclears and a consequent reduction of conventional forces. I agree. But to this, I would add that the Soviet conventional war-making

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capability may also be seriously hampered by other factors. In my opinion, the effective implementation of the present doctrine on military training and planning is bound to hamper importantly the capability of Soviet commanders to fight a conventional or near-conventional war. (See my OCI/SSSG Memorandum No. 34 of 9 May 1962, "Soviet Preparedness for Conventional War.")

Para. 20. As regards the question of prevention of unauthorized firings, Dr. Knorr says that "the Soviet military have apparently given no thought to this subject." I would prefer to say that this problem has been resolved in the USSR to the satisfaction of the military leaders. I think that good, if indirect, evidence can be found in the materials of careful attention to the matter of safeguarding against unauthorized firings. Dr. Knorr himself gives us an example of this in para. 22, in which he points out that "control over the warhead passes to the firing crews at what appears to be the latest possible moment."

Para. 25. Dr. Knorr notes that the Soviet authors reveal little propensity to take into account what the opponent can and might do to thwart one's plans. I would point out that a number of writers (more than <sup>Tlo</sup> three named by Dr. Knorr) do take this possibility into consideration and

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offer caveats to that effect. For example, Goryainov says that "not a single war ever went the way it was planned," and Ivanov (795) notes that "the enemy's actions will probably introduce substantial changes in our plans." More important, Dr. Knorr overlooks what I think is a fundamental characteristic of contemporary Soviet military doctrine and force structure: namely, hedging against a variety of possible developments.

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