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## Book Review

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# The real military threat to Europe

by Carol White

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### Soviet Military Strategy in Europe

by Joseph D. Douglass

Pergamon Press, 1980

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Since the shooting down of the KAL plane last September, the Soviets have dropped the pose of détente and openly threatened the NATO alliance. The fact of increasing Soviet belligerence has been reflected in NATO and related policy thinking; however, the nature of the threat is misunderstood. Partly this is because of deliberate misinformation circulated by the Soviets. At present the attempt is being made to create the impression that it would be possible to contain a war begun by a Soviet invasion of the Federal Republic of Germany within Europe, and that such a war could be conducted as conventional war. Such an analysis depends upon a total misreading of Soviet strategic planning.

With the exception of *EIR's* analyses, the best treatment of this question I have come across is that of Dr. Joseph D. Douglass, particularly in this book. I intend to set out the context of the strategic discussion by referencing discussion in German and British military circles, and then quoting from *Soviet Military Strategy in Europe*. I would encourage people to read the book in full.

### Recent scenarios

The widely discussed Dec. 5 issue of *Newsweek* magazine reported a conventional-warfare scenario for a Soviet invasion of Western Europe as part of a review of a recent study from the Soviet Studies Research Centre of Sandhurst, Britain's military academy. According to *Newsweek*, Christopher Donnelly, head of the research center, believes that Soviet commanders are planning "nothing less than a complete operational shakeup designed to produce an effective method of winning a war [in Europe] by conventional means alone."

The highest-level public appreciation of the real danger that the Soviets intend a strategic confrontation with the West,

possibly as early as the next several months, appeared in an interview given to the West German military news service PPL-Wehrreport on Jan. 23, by Lothar Ruehl, state secretary in the Federal Republic of Germany ministry of defense, who warned of the imminence of such an attack in Western Europe. Denying the significance of so-called confidence-building measures discussed at the Stockholm Gromyko-Schultz conference, he said: "Soviet military strategy and even the doctrine of the conduct of operations have been predicated for some time on a quick military decision achieved by means of the destruction of adversary forces on the territory of the adversary. New Soviet troop structures correspond to this doctrine. Obviously the Soviet military leadership is going to continue the development of the doctrine and armed-forces planning, without regard for any conference or conference agreement whatsoever."

A separate report from PPL-Wehrreport quotes military sources "off the record": "The enormous mobility of the armed forces of the Warsaw Pact is making it more and more difficult for the West to determine whether an Eastern maneuver is really only a maneuver, or possibly a preparation for attack. There is the additional element that the East employs numerous methods to hide its actual intentions. . . . In the view of sources in Bonn, the Eastern side has 'undertaken worrisome steps over the course of the 1970s to mechanize their armed forces, increase airborne mobility, and train for a surprise attack.'

"The Red Army invasion in Afghanistan at the turn of the year 1979-80 demonstrated that 'the Red Army is capable of bringing numerous divisions into jumping-off positions from their original quarters in a very short period of time, and over great distances. . . .' It is the conventional superiority of the Warsaw Pact which permits the Pact 'to conduct a large-scale aggression against Western Europe at any time.'"

These quasi-official statements from the German defense ministry are extremely important. Nonetheless it is essential to underline that in fact the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan is probably not an appropriate parallel for their intentions in Western Europe.

### The Soviet modus operandi

A series of articles by Douglass over the past two years has emphasized the key role of deception in Soviet strategy. In the September 1983 issue of *Armed Forces Journal International*, he and Samuel Cohen wrote an article to this point, emphasizing that U.S. intelligence estimates do not take into consideration that "the problem is that while American planners are beginning to recognize Soviet doctrine, they have yet to accept some of its most central tenets, one of which emphasizes the importance of surprise and the need to employ secrecy, cover, and deception to mislead the enemy."

In a recent conversation with this writer, Douglass reiterated his conviction that there have been no changes in Soviet policy which would cause him to change the evaluation cited in *Soviet Military Strategy in Europe*, that the Soviets *do not consider conventional warfare a serious option in the Euro-*

pean theater. The formation by the Soviets of Operations Maneuver Groups to penetrate deeply behind NATO lines, which is the occasion for evaluations that claim that the Soviets are now building up their conventional capability, is fully featured in *Soviet Military Strategy in Europe*.

The issue involved for strategic planning today is of sufficient importance to warrant extensive quotations from that book, and to advise its most careful consideration by policy planners. (Douglass cites approximately 50 Soviet sources directly in this work.)

Douglass points out that the development of conventional forces is not counterposed to nuclear capabilities by the Soviets, as it is within NATO doctrine. He writes: "The overall Soviet approach is to achieve and maintain a superior capability to conduct war, be it conventional or nuclear. The so-called conventional improvements in Soviet forces, unlike those in their United States counterparts, are in the main designed not merely for conventional war but nuclear and chemical war as well. The ground forces are equally important in both conventional and nuclear conflict and have been trained and equipped for both. In a nuclear war the objectives of the Soviet ground forces are to complete the destruction of NATO forces and to seize and occupy territory. These missions cannot be accomplished with nuclear weapons alone. *As the Soviets make quite explicit, they need strong conventional forces to exploit a nuclear strike quickly by seizing and occupying NATO territory* [emphasis in original].

"Most of the Soviet 'conventional' force improvements have been bought with this in mind. For example, Soviet tanks are equipped to operate in a chemical, biological and radiological (CBR) environment. The major developments in self-propelled artillery, in surface-to-air missile (SAM) capabilities, and most vitally in command and control, are all explicitly seen as essential to the conduct of nuclear war. There is no indication in Soviet literature that these improvements were purchased primarily for conventional war alone. Most of them are associated with the nuclear revolution in military affairs and its demands for force development. In fact, very few systems can be said to have been purchased exclusively for conventional war, while several systems such as IRBMs and tactical ballistic missiles (TBMs) have been developed specifically for theater nuclear use. Soviet combined arms and tank armies should not be viewed as conventional forces. Rather they should be viewed as *dual-purpose forces* [emphasis in original] that are equipped and trained to fight both nuclear and conventional (including chemical) war. Western strategic forces have always encountered difficulty in the concept of dual-purpose forces. Apparently the Soviets have not. . . .

"Under a doctrine which calls for a pre-emptive strike if war seems imminent, the Soviet approach is to prepare to fight using all means—nuclear, chemical and biological—each to its best advantage in a sudden, decisive, successful onslaught. Soviet military planners put major effort into coping with and operating in contaminated environments—both military and civilian. The chemical and civil defense forces

are clear and unmistakeable evidence of the serious Soviet attitude in this regard."

Not only do the Soviets have an integrated strategy for conventional and nuclear warfighting, but the NATO separation of these offers the Soviets the opportunity for deception operations. Clearly, under conditions of nuclear warfare, any massing of troops offers a convenient target, which means that the front as such will no longer exist. Conventionally armed forces, like the Operations Maneuver Groups, are aimed against NATO's Eastern front. They can be used in the conventional phase of a war to locate and target NATO missile sites and other targets for a nuclear strike. This is, along with air reconnaissance, an especially important part of the first phase of a war, since such reconnaissance opportunities are limited in peacetime. After a nuclear strike, troops are used to consolidate the victory by seizing key salient points, and so on.

Because the Soviets emphasize the need for surprise and misdirection of the enemy as to their own intentions, they foresee being able to turn a flexible response policy to their own advantage. The flexible response doctrine explicitly calls into question America's resolve in extending a nuclear umbrella to Europe. President Reagan made an important re-statement in *Le Figaro* (see *EIR*, Jan. 24) of the United States' commitment to consider *any* Soviet attack upon Europe, conventional or nuclear, as a strategic attack to which the United States would respond in full. Nonetheless, Europeans are entitled to doubt U.S. seriousness while Henry Kissinger is allowed to assert the contrary publicly, while fulfilling various quasi-official functions.

The doctrine of flexible response asserted by Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara under the Kennedy presidency implicitly poses a limited war in Europe as the alternative to placing the U.S. mainland under threat—thereby surrendering Europe in advance. The doctrine is a military disaster even in its own terms.

### **The folly of 'flexible response'**

As Douglass points out, it is to the Soviet advantage for a war to begin with a conventional phase, so that they can have the advantage of preparing a surprise nuclear attack. Douglass quotes the Soviet authors Vasendin and Kuznetsov in *Modern Warfare and Surprise Attack*. It is worthwhile to repeat the argument with which he introduces the Soviet authors.

Douglass writes: "Another aspect of the Soviet interest in a conventional phase—as opposed to conventional war—involves the undoubted advantages which can accrue from it. These advantages—stated most forcefully in Soviet literature from the late 1960s through the 1970s—all relate to the problems inherent in an initial nuclear strike; that is, in transitioning from a 'peacetime' posture to that of a high-speed nuclear offensive. In general terms, a conventional phase enables the Soviets to execute more effectively the transition, initiate an attack, launch a surprise nuclear strike and exploit it.

"Numerous specific benefits that may be derived from a conventional phase are discussed in the Soviet literature. While it is assumed that the majority of these would accrue to the Soviets, there is a recognition that some would also apply to NATO. First, a conventional phase enables the Soviets to increase their readiness by providing time and 'cover' to bring nuclear weapons forward from the rear areas."

The Soviets themselves say: "Such a beginning of war can create favorable conditions for the movement of all nuclear forces to the regions for combat operations, bringing them to the highest level of combat readiness, and subsequently inflicting the first nuclear strike with the employment in it of a maximum number of missile-launch sites, submarines and aircraft at the most favorable moment."

Not only will the first, conventional phase of a war be useful to the Soviets, but, conversely, their very success in such a war would impel them to a preemptive surprise nuclear strike. Douglass quotes the Soviet author Postovalov in *Modeling the Combat Operations* to this effect.

Postovalov writes: "First on the duration of the non-nuclear operations. This is an extremely important question, the answer to which is of great importance because it pre-determines the resolution of many other missions involving the conduct of military operations. The duration of this stage depends on many factors, and in particular on the capability of both sides to continue the struggle without the use of nuclear weapons. Usually at NATO the training exercises, the duration of the non-nuclear stage depended on the capability of the troops to hold the advance defensive line. Recently the tendency to increase its duration has begun to appear, and it is possible to conduct large-scale operations in the course of this stage."

To which Douglass remarks: "Implicit in the quote is the recognition that either side's decision to go nuclear will be strongly influenced by its ability to continue the struggle without the use of nuclear weapons. It follows that the Soviets should be expected to transition when a Soviet conventional breakthrough appears imminent. According to NATO strategy and exercises, NATO would go nuclear either in response to a Soviet first use or to avert such a breakthrough and subsequent capture of significant territory or forces. For example, as stated by the United States Secretary of Defense in 1977:

"In structuring U.S. nuclear forces, attacks in Central Europe or in Korea are considered the most likely to call for backup. A decision to use tactical nuclear weapons would depend upon 1) an enemy conventional breakthrough which could not be countered, or 2) his first use of nuclear weapons."

The Soviets have made it abundantly clear in their literature that they do not accept the McNamara doctrine that nuclear war-fighting is unthinkable. It is worse than unrealistic for Western military strategists to entertain the delusion that a war in Europe could be contained: That is a built-in recipe for defeat.

# KISSINGER'S PLOT TO TAKE OVER THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION

The surprise naming of Henry Kissinger to head the President's Bipartisan Commission on Central America is part of a long-standing attempt to subvert the Reagan presidency. Henry Kissinger's return to official life is far more significant than the Central American appointment would suggest.

This two-part study by **EIR** Washington bureau chief Richard Cohen is essential reading for any citizen concerned with the future of the United States as a republic. Part One was written in late 1982, long before anyone else recognized the Kissinger operation. It documents the months-long process of inserting, with the friendly offices of Secretary of State George Shultz, "Kissinger's boys" throughout the administration. Part Two analyzes recent developments, including Kissinger's boast at a cocktail party in Israel, just before his nomination to the Commission, that "within two weeks I will be back in government; within a short period after that, I will be running the government."

**The report is available for \$250.00.**

For further information, contact  
William Engdahl, *EIR* Special Services  
304 W. 58th Street, 5th floor MC-1,  
New York, New York 10019  
(212) 247-8820