

The war mobilization in the Soviet Union

by Rachel Douglas

On Feb. 23, a scant two weeks after Yuri Andropov died, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Nikolai Ogarkov revealed at a Moscow reception that Andropov's successor as party chief, Konstantin Chernenko, has been made chief of the Defense Council. It took several months for Andropov to be so designated after his accession to power; this round, Ogarkov has wasted no time in making clear that the military is in charge.

Even more revealing of the mode the Soviet military junta is in, Warsaw Pact forces carried out maneuvers in East Germany designed to mimic an attack on Western Europe. According to the West Berlin-based West-East News press agency, over 60,000 Soviet and East German troops participated in the secret mid-February exercise, in which a new element was introduced: Two of the four divisions crossed the river Elbe in parallel, under combat conditions. Other segments of the Elbe form the border between East and West Germany, so the message was unmistakable.

The Western press image of Chernenko as an accommodating old fellow from the Siberian countryside has been quickly torn apart by the Soviet marshals themselves, even though Henry Kissinger's friends are still babbling about a "return to the Brezhnev era of détente."

Soviet Armed Forces Day, Feb. 23, served as the occasion for fire-breathing by the top brass. A *Pravda* article by Defense Minister Dmitrii Ustinov, termed by the European press "the toughest anti-American statement from the Soviets since Andropov's death," did not contain a single conciliatory word, and rather fit into a wave of pre-war propaganda coming from Moscow, both for internal consumption and to terrorize especially audiences in Western Europe.

Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, speaking at a so-

called election rally on Feb. 27, followed up with another icy shower on all the fatuous talk about a speedy resumption of arms negotiations. Accusing the Reagan administration of "recklessness and irresponsibility," Gromyko was every bit as harsh as he was while Andropov was allegedly still alive.

Combat maneuvers

In the daily *Izvestia*, military commissar Gen. A. Yepish-ev wrote Feb. 23 that "the increase in the direct military threat from the U.S. and NATO requires that we be on alert and maintain combat readiness at the highest level." The current maneuvers of Soviet troops are special, he explained, simulating actual combat conditions so as to master "the science of winning modern battles."

The crossing of the Elbe was one such maneuver, which, because of its size and secrecy, made a mockery of the East-West talks on confidence-building measures going on in Sweden. Under the rules of the 1975 Helsinki agreement on European security (called CSCE), maneuvers that big should have been announced in advance.

Other Warsaw Pact troop exercises, made public, are taking place all along the frontier with the West. Some were held in northern Czechoslovakia early this month with Czechoslovak, Soviet, and Hungarian troops. The "Friendship 84" maneuvers of East German, Soviet, and Polish troops in northern Poland are beginning in the last week of February. And in March, there will be "Soyuz 84" (Alliance 84) staff maneuvers in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and southern Ukraine.

On Feb. 22, the Soviet military daily *Krasnaya Zvezda* (*Red Star*) out of the blue attacked Denmark for permitting

NATO to use the strategically placed island of Bornholm for reconnaissance plane stopovers. Bornholm, the paper noted, was taken by Soviet troops in May 1945 and those troops were withdrawn in March 1946, under the condition that Denmark would not let "any foreign troops or foreign administrators" take control of the island. NATO use of the island for reconnaissance planes would be a "gross violation" of the 1946 Soviet-Danish understanding, *Red Star* said, raising the question of whether the Soviets are looking for a pretext to seize Bornholm island again.

Below and on the following pages, we document not only the far from conciliatory statements of Ustinov and Yepishev, but the depth of the Soviet war mobilization, which has been all but blacked out in the Western press: the gear-up of the Soviet economy for war production and the internal propaganda to prepare the population for total defense of "the motherland and socialism."

Marshal Dmitri Ustinov, in *Pravda*, Feb. 23, 1984.

The American imperialists, gripped by class hatred, have proclaimed the Soviet Union to be "the focus of evil" and, ignoring the lessons of history, have declared a "crusade" against the U.S.S.R. and world socialism. In practice, the United States today is playing the role of chief organizer of the imperialist policy of aggression. All of Washington's actions in the political, military, economic, and ideological fields are subordinated to the course aimed at establishing world domination and primarily at achieving military superiority over the U.S.S.R. and the other Warsaw Pact countries. To this end, the United States has unleashed an untrained arms race and is commissioning more and more new systems of nuclear and conventional weapons, on which it is spending enormous sums.

The siting of American Pershing II nuclear missiles and cruise missiles on the territory of West European NATO countries, in defiance of the will of their peoples, poses a particular danger to the cause of peace. It has enflamed the world situation even further, intensified the danger of war, created an additional threat to the U.S.S.R. and its allies, and made it impossible to continue the talks on limiting nuclear arms in Europe.

Disregarding the generally accepted norms of international law, the U.S. administration declares whole regions of the globe to be "zones of U.S. security" and flouts the sovereignty and independence of the peoples of other states. . . . In creating hotbeds of aggression and conflicts, Washington is relying on its NATO allies and striving to widen that bloc's zone of operations even further. . . .

Attempting to dull the vigilance of the peoples, alarmed by the U.S. administration's militarist course, its official representatives have begun to don the garb of "peacemakers." But the peoples cannot be deceived. They are able to see with increasing clarity, that the present U.S. leaders'

words are at odds with their actions. They are continuing to push mankind toward a nuclear catastrophe.

In the face of the intensification of imperialism's military threats, the concern to strengthen the defense capability of our Motherland and the security of the entire socialist community assumes priority significance. Historical experience teaches us that the stronger the Soviet Army and the higher its vigilance and combat readiness, the stronger is the peace on our borders and the more stable is peace on earth. We have grasped this well. The Great Patriotic War also taught us this. . . .

All [our] proposals have one goal—to safeguard the world against the conflagration of nuclear war and ensure mankind's right to life. The Reagan administration bypasses our proposals in silence and is reluctant to take concrete steps in this sphere. It intends to deal with the Soviet Union from a position of strength, threats and pressure. The U.S.S.R. resolutely rejects this approach. Attempts to conduct "strongarm diplomacy" with us are hopeless.

General Aleksei Yepishev, in *Izvestia*, Feb. 23, 1984.

The situation in the world today is alarming. Despite the lessons of history and common sense, reactionary imperialist circles want to destroy socialism as a social system. They have declared a "crusade" against our Motherland and the other socialist countries. The forces of reaction are seeking to retard the world revolutionary process by force of arms. Reactionary circles in the West are endeavoring to conceal their hectic military preparations beneath a heap of deliberate lies about the so-called "military threat" from the Soviet Union. . . .

The Soviet Union has never threatened anyone. But in conditions of the heightened danger of attack by reactionary imperialist forces, the U.S.S.R., together with its allies, is taking steps to protect its own security. By agreement with the GDR [East Germany] and CSSR [Czechoslovakia], our enhanced-range operational-tactical missiles are being deployed on their territory. Appropriate Soviet weapons will be deployed in ocean regions and at sea. Other steps are being taken. . . . Thanks to the daily concern of the Communist Party and Soviet state and the people's labor, the Army and Navy now have all they need for the reliable defense of the Motherland and the gains of socialism. Their combat might enables them to perform successfully any complex task that they might encounter in today's situation. . . .

Today you will find the sons and grandsons of Great Patriotic War heroes in the ranks of the Army and Navy. They have a high level of general education, are versed in the combat and revolutionary traditions of the party and people, and are totally loyal to their beloved Motherland. In intensive training, under conditions as close as possible to those of actual combat, the troops constantly improve their ground, air, and sea skills, mastering weapons and equipment and the science of winning modern battles.

Purge against the opponents of U.S.S.R. war economy

by Clifford Gaddy

The Feb. 24 edition of *Pravda* carried on its front page, instead of an editorial, a statement from the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party which announces the beginning of the first big public purges in the Soviet Union since the appointment of Konstantin Chernenko to replace the deceased Yuri Andropov.

The target of the purge will be the academic economic establishment—the theoreticians, planners, and researchers attached to the Economics Institute of the Academy of Sciences. The Central Committee document accuses the institute of shortcomings across the board and demands that the body “get rid of persons who are fruitless from the point of view of the results of their scientific work.” The Russian emigré press has reported that one shakeup already occurred in Novosibirsk, with the removal of Academician Abel Aganbeyan from the Institute of the Economics and Organization of Industrial Production at the Academy’s Siberian Branch.

The scathing attack in *Pravda* leaves no doubt that the objective is to get rid of everyone involved in Soviet economic policy who either cannot or does not want to follow the line that the military junta has staked out for the economy. There is every indication that the announcement of the purges marks the beginning of implementation of a “surge economy”—a total war mobilization of all available economic resources, as if in war, but launched *before* the war starts.

This is the concept presented in the writings of Soviet Chief of Staff Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov as early as 1981. What Ogarkov calls for is emphatically *not* the launching of a new phase of economic development through long-term, high-technology investments, but rather pure and simple austerity—“primitive accumulation” at the expense of built-up wealth in capital stocks and labor power. It is the kind of fascist, slave-labor economy that existed in the Soviet Union in 1942-45, when Stalinist Russia used the same brutal methods to rebuild what had been destroyed by the initial Nazi onslaught. The methods envisaged are old; Ogarkov’s innovation is that, this time, the Soviets will start that process *before* the attack begins, not after.

The Soviet High Command has been ruling the country since, at the latest, the point when Yuri Andropov disappeared from public view last August. But the appointment of Chernenko was a necessary step to start implementing the final phase of a fascist economy. Sweeping purges will have to be carried out, and Chernenko—who actively took part in the Great Purges of the 1930s—is the kind of person that can wield the axe. He is well known for his intolerance of all academic economists. Last June, for instance, he accused Soviet economists of being “inflexible” and “scholastic,” people who produce treatises that he said are “frankly of little value.”

Portents of the countdown

But even before the Feb. 24 *Pravda* attack, the signs had been piling up that such a move was on the way. Here is a portion of the evidence that the Soviet Union is in the economic “surge phase” of a countdown to war:

- On Feb. 21, Warsaw Pact Commander-in-Chief Marshal Viktor Kulikov announced in *Red Star* that the Pact is going to launch a massive buildup of its conventional forces. The Soviet economy is already strained to what normally would be regarded as its limit by current rates of arms production. Anything more, and especially on the scale envisaged by Kulikov, can only be achieved by war mobilization measures.

- The “school reform” announced on Jan. 4 calls for abolishing the ban on child labor in the Soviet Union, and universal vocational training for all students. The Soviets know quite well what such a program implies for the future if it were sustained for long: the undermining of the country’s scientific base in the next generation. They would not institute such a measure unless they were forced to mobilize all resources they have in the short term for a final showdown.

- The last week in February, new decrees were issued in the U.S.S.R. which make the disclosure of statistics or other information related to the Soviet economy a crime equivalent to the disclosure of military secrets. Punishment is by death.

- On Feb. 21, the Soviet press commemorated the 80th anniversary of the birth of the late Aleksei Kosygin, the former prime minister. The adulatory articles praised Kosygin above all as one of the main organizers of the World War II economic mobilization. He performed the war-economy tasks as the plenipotentiary of the State Committee of Defense, the articles noted.

- On Feb. 21, funeral services were held in Moscow for Marshal Pavel Batitskii, the man who, as commander of the national air defense forces (PVO) from 1966 to 1978, was in charge of the development and deployment of the Soviets’ first-generation anti-ballistic missile (ABM) system and helped launch their beam weapons program. One special honor guard at the funeral was made up of only two men, who symbolize more than any others the alliance between the

Soviet High Command and the centralized direction of the national economy: Nikolai Baibakov, the Chairman of the U.S.S.R. State Planning Committee (Gosplan), Smirnov, the Chairman of the U.S.S.R. Military-Industrial Commission.

There are two more general trends that support the hypothesis of a shift to a "surge economy." First of all, the Soviet Union has indicated in the recent period that it will be pushing for a much tighter "integration" (read:

of the economies of the East European satellite nations. An extra burden on the satellites is one thing that these countries fear will be the result of Kulikov's announced arms buildup.

Second, several observers of the East-West trade situation have recently declared that "the era of great projects in the Soviet Union is over." As in the case of education, long-term infrastructural investments are something that must be cut as all resources are poured into a short-term "endgame" military build-up.

Marshal Semyon Kurkotkin, chief of Rear Services (the entire logistical-economic support system of the Armed Forces) laid out in the party weekly Ekonomicheskaya Gazeta (No. 9,

Feb. 1984) a main plank of the military's policy, the complete integration of the Soviet economy into the preparations for war. Kurkotkin's article featured the ideas developed by Chief of Staff Ogarkov in recent years:

The planned economy of the U.S.S.R., as a single national economic complex embracing all the links of social production, and the high level of development of productive forces, science and technology make it possible to resolve successfully a broad circle of questions in the area of strengthening the defense capability of the Soviet state. Therefore the socialist economy is the firm base of the defense might of the Motherland and the material foundation of the combat power of the Armed Forces. . . . Our country's economy, science and technology are now at a high enough level, for us to be able to produce any type of weapon on which the enemies of peace might place their wager, in the shortest period. . . .

The Rear Services of the Armed Forces are in step with scientific and technological progress and are the connecting link between the country's economy and its Armed Forces. They provide for the growing requirements of the troops for everything necessary to carry out the tasks before them.

War propaganda for the Soviet population

Marshal Semyon Kurkotkin, chief of logistics for the Soviet armed forces, stressed in the *kaya Gazeta* (No. 9, Feb. 1984) the importance "uncrushable moral spirit of the defenders of the Fatherland" and "ideologically to the Motherland." The Soviet population is being subjected to heavy doses of "ideological steeling," whose refrain under the Nazis.

Commentator Col. A. Leontyev of the military daily *Krasnaya Zvezda* said in the Feb. 25 edition, that the United States is now acting as Nazi Germany did shortly before its surprise preparing fascist Germany hid their true intentions by making occasional 'peace-loving statements.' 'It declared many is preparing a preventive war against the U.S.S.R.' Today, Washington has, for purposes of deception, begun to affirm relations something totally different."

On Feb. 27, *Pravda*, too, accused the West of preparing a war drive like of Bulgarian communist Georgi Dimitrov's return to Moscow after being accused of setting the German Reichstag on fire in cause célèbre—*Pravda* declared that the West is using anti-communism as a set-up, as the Nazis did, "to push themselves to power and war."

The comparison of President Reagan to Hitler was first made in early 1983 by Chief of Staff Marshal Ogarkov himself, according to a recent Radio Liberty survey of Soviet anti-U.S. propaganda. Radio Liberty monitors report that Radio Volga, men, has repeatedly evoked the World War II mobilization, including on Jan. 30, when it played a wartime recording of Josef Stalin saying "The war in which you are fighting is a war of liberation, a just war" and praising "the gallantry of our great ancestors," the military leaders of Russia's Tsarist era. It was "the first time in decades" Stalin has been heard on Soviet radio, Radio Liberty reports.

On Feb. 26, a West German television story that featured Marshal Ogarkov speaking on the "completely new basis of weapons and training" of the Soviet Armed Forces, showed a construction site outside Moscow, where a huge "arch of triumph" is being built on a highway into town; on it will be placed the flag hoisted by Soviet soldiers over the Reichstag in 1945.