

# The real story of Soviet Marshal Ogarkov's 'demotion'

by Luba George

As reports of Soviet Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov's promotion to a new post are beginning to surface, the Kremlin is undoubtedly enjoying a good laugh at the expense of all those "Western experts" who have been writing the former Chief of the General Staff's political obituary.

In its Sept. 22 issue, *Jane's Defence Weekly*, a leading British military publication, writes that Ogarkov has been transferred to command the armed forces in the Western Theater, "a sudden decision, probably in the wake of an extremely important strategic national decision by the Soviet Council of Defense." (See *Documentation*, page 35.)

While most of the Western press has been filled with stories from the ubiquitous "informed sources" that Ogarkov had been demoted and that the move would signal a new "thaw" in Soviet policy toward the West, this report by *Jane's* confirms what we have been saying (see *EIR* Sept. 25, "The Ogarkov shift: the height of Soviet strategic deception?"): that Ogarkov's new assignment had to be a promotion to such a strategic-operational command post as would combine the Soviet war preparations with the drive to develop and deploy beam weapons. Ogarkov is well known as the chief military architect of the Soviet beam-weapon program. It is now absolutely clear that rumors of the Chief of Staff's demise were conscious disinformation from Soviet channels and from the Pugwash disarmament lobby in the West.

On Sept. 6, the abrupt announcement was made in Moscow that Marshal Ogarkov had been "relieved of his duties" as Chief of the General Staff, in connection with his appointment to "another post." He was replaced by Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, the First Deputy Chief of the General Staff, who got big play in the Western press as a "tankist." This gave rise to wild press speculations that Akhromeyev represented a "Ground Forces' opposition" to Ogarkov's "hard line" and "pro-high-technology factional position" within the Soviet leadership.

The "Ogarkov demotion" lie is directly traceable to the

Pugwash movement, seekers of a strategic accommodation with the Soviet leadership that would deliver Western Europe to Soviet hegemony. Leading public figures associated with Pugwash include former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and his business partner Lord Peter Carrington, currently NATO Secretary General. Pugwasher William Jackson, former disarmament adviser to Jimmy Carter, was in Moscow at the time of the Ogarkov transfer, and his talks with "high-ranking Soviet military leaders" were the source cited in many Western press accounts for the disinformation line on Ogarkov.

## Politburo advances Ogarkov's policies

The first weekly meeting of the Politburo after Ogarkov's transfer was held on Sept. 13, and its decisions amply refuted any notion that Ogarkov's policies had been overthrown. The Politburo announced a government resolution to implement a "crash program to develop nuclear energy" and gave directives to the State Planning Commission (Gosplan) and the Energy Ministry to take "immediate measures" to guarantee "a high technology level and adequate quantity of nuclear energy plants."

This call for a crash program to develop nuclear power was one of the key programmatic points formulated by Marshal Ogarkov in his book written while he was Chief of the General Staff. The continuing theme of Ogarkov's writings has been the need for a tightly centralized economy geared to the needs of a military buildup.

Another key plank drawn from Ogarkov's book is also now being implemented, and at an accelerated pace—namely the Soviet beam-weapon and space programs, including the drive to develop manned space stations. The latter is receiving enormous media play, since a front-page picture and article in *Izvestia* on July 27 featured the female cosmonaut Svetlana Savitskaya, as a space-age "Rosie the Riveter," up there in space helping to put together a space station using her electron beam gun. The device used by Savitskaya, writes *Izvestia*, is a "portable electro-beam device," known as the "universal hand tool."

It is by no accident that Savitskaya is the daughter of Marshal Yevgenii Savitskii, who from 1966 until his recent retirement was First Deputy Commander of the Soviet Air Defense Command, which includes the Moscow ABM system and is expected to include anti-satellite weapons capabilities. Marshal Savitskii was promoted in May 1961 by then Chief of Staff V. D. Sokolovskii, the author of the famous *Soviet Military Strategy*, the textbook on strategic doctrine and war-fighting in the nuclear age for a generation of Soviet officers. Marshal Ogarkov, trained in the Sokolovskii-Savitskii-Valintsov military tradition, restated and refined the Sokolovskii doctrine. The Soviets have been preparing for 20 years to fight a full-scale thermonuclear war, to survive it, and win it.

## 'Strategic decision' caused Ogarkov shift

We publish here excerpts from "The 'demotion' of Marshal Ogarkov: the facts," by Yousser Bodansky, published in the Sept. 22 issue of Jane's Defence Weekly.

Marshal S U N. V. Ogarkov seems to have been nominated to a central combat-operational command post in which he would actively be able to lead the Soviet armed forces, should the need arise, in the strategic military operations which he himself has refined and introduced as the primary type of war of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, there are indications that until the above happens, Marshal Ogarkov might be engaged in the formulation and writing of the new generation of Soviet Military Strategy for the rest of the century. Neither assignment can be interpreted as a "demotion." It seems that Marshal Ogarkov's reassignment has been a sudden decision, probably in the wake of an extremely important strategic national decision by the Soviet Council of Defense. . . .

### Strong leader

Since the late-70s, Marshal Ogarkov has emerged as one of the stronger leaders in the Soviet Union, if not the strongest. Therefore, his removal would require great political manoeuvring and muscle-flexing on the part of the initiating body, ostensibly Chernenko and the CPSU. However, even a brief examination of the top Soviet leadership shows that this could not have been the case.

The current situation in the Soviet military establishment further indicates a smooth transfer of power and a promotion for Marshal Ogarkov. Assuming that his removal has been politically oriented, it is inconceivable that his most loyal and trusted lieutenant, Marshal Akhromeyev, would take over his post. Since 1977, Marshal Ogarkov was the leading figure in the formulation of contemporary and future Soviet Military Science and Art of War. The magnitude and overall significance of this evolution has been considered by the Soviets to be comparable with the introduction of artillery to the Russian Army some 600 years ago. These doctrinal refinements were labelled by Marshal Ogarkov as "a Revolution in Military Affairs," and are therefore comparable to the significance of the Soviet acquisition and operational absorption of nuclear weapons. . . .

The adoption of the contemporary strategy has been followed by the most thorough post-war reorganization of the

Soviet armed forces, by the development and operational absorption of greatly refined operational art and tactics, and by the fielding of new generations of weapons systems. One of the most significant by-products of the development of the contemporary and future Soviet Military Science and Art of War has been the emergence of Marshal Ogarkov's "think tank". . . .

It is possible to define the basic circumstances surrounding the new nomination of Marshal Ogarkov: he was promoted, in line with the further pursuit of the course he had formulated. The reassignment was a result of a military-political development that called for a sudden national-strategic decision and its prompt execution. . . .

The two possible assignments for Marshal Ogarkov do not contradict each other. Most Soviet students and faculties of the military academies have emergency assignments in case of a war or a major crisis. Thus, in peacetime, Marshal Ogarkov could concentrate on the writing of his *Military Strategy*, still fully ready to become the senior representative if necessary. Since it is highly likely that Marshal S U V. I. Govorov will become the Chief Inspector, this post is not available to Marshal Ogarkov. Furthermore, there exist two other key events which ought to be taken into consideration: these are the meaning of the sudden decision, and the reason for the large-scale disinformation campaign launched by the Soviets to present Ogarkov's reassignment as a politically-oriented demotion.

### Senior command post

Marshal Ogarkov is likely to be nominated to a senior command post in the European part of the U.S.S.R., as the ultimate goal of his command is total victory against the West. In peacetime, Soviet senior commanders carry territory-related titles. Thus, TVD [theater of military operations] and front commanders, as well as their senior aides, have peacetime positions in military districts or groups of Soviet forces. . . . A senior officer in Marshal Ogarkov's position should also have a regional-related title. The Soviet war which Marshal Ogarkov will have to conduct if required to, will be fought in many TVDs and GTVDs. The overall control-management towards the attainment of the national-strategic objectives and goals will be conducted in a theatre of war. Since the main geographical direction of the Soviet attention is the West, it is safe to assume that the title of Marshal Ogarkov would be Commander-in-Chief of the Western Theatre of War. The essence of the role is that of a supreme representative of the "Stavka" [headquarters] of the Supreme High Command.

As the Commander-in-Chief of the Western Theatre of War, Marshal Ogarkov is entrusted with the actual conduct of the Soviet War. Therefore his assignment ought to be considered as a promotion and a demonstration of ultimate trust by the supreme Soviet leadership.