

# In Soviet Russia, a wartime political leadership is now in the making

by Konstantin George

In the last week of June, the Soviet Union conducted global naval maneuvers which featured a mass deployment with over 24 missile and attack submarines into the Atlantic, including at least 20 nuclear-powered submarines, with additional submarine units simultaneously deployed in the Pacific Ocean.

One week later, on July 2, Soviet TV, in its coverage of the Supreme Soviet session, focused on a smiling Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, the "brains" of the Soviet War Plan, and wartime Commander in Chief of all Soviet forces deployed against the United States and its NATO allies.

If these signals of Soviet war intentions were not sufficient, Soviet Communist Party chief Mikhail Gorbachov added a blunt warning that the Soviets would quit even the pretense of negotiating at Geneva, unless the United States submitted to their ultimatum and dropped the Strategic Defense Initiative, the new defensive system which would make nuclear missiles "impotent and obsolete." The message was released through U.S.A.-Canada Institute head Georgii Arbatov, who wrote in *Pravda* on July 1: "The Geneva arms control talks will be the first victim of the American SDI."

## Nuclear missiles off the U.S. shore

Most of the 24-plus submarines operating in the Atlantic, plus an unspecified number in the Pacific, stationed themselves off the U.S. coast, and simulated a thermonuclear "Pin Down" barrage over U.S. missile sites, and what is called a "strategic decapitation" barrage against Washington, D.C. and other military-strategic command centers.

The "Pin Down" barrage—for which the United States would have only 5-10 minutes' warning—is a crucial feature of the first hour of the maximum option of the "Ogarkov Plan" (the Soviet plan to wage and win a nuclear war, worked out by a team of top military figures under the guidance of Marshal Ogarkov, who, since September 1984, has been entrusted with direction of the Soviet military in a war with the United States and NATO). This would be an all-out assault, kicked off with a surprise, thermonuclear first strike, knocking out nearly all U.S. and NATO military, command, and logistical facilities. Its most crucial function would be to eliminate as many missiles of the U.S. retaliatory strike force

as possible, before they could be launched against Soviet targets. The "Pin Down" barrage is meant to prevent U.S. missiles from being fired till some 15 minutes later, when the precision Soviet ICBMs arrive and destroy the missile silos.

The submarine force off the U.S. Atlantic Coast consisted of nuclear-powered nuclear ballistic missile submarines of the Delta I and II class, and the earlier Yankee class, since refitted with 3,000 km range nuclear cruise missiles. In addition there were 6-8 Victor III class nuclear-attack submarines. These Victor III submarines are no longer simple "hunter killer" submarines whose only function is to hunt and destroy U.S. subs, but since a June 1983 re-equipment program launched by Yuri Andropov, the 18 Victor III Class submarines in the Soviet Fleet (10 with the Atlantic Fleet, and 8 with the Pacific Fleet) have been outfitted with 3,000 km range nuclear cruise missiles.

## By land and by sea

Starting in late spring, the Russian forces have begun rehearsing, with increased intensity, the land and sea-based components of the Ogarkov Plan maximum option, surprise attack. From May 26-May 31, Soviet-Czech maneuvers in Czechoslovakia near the West German border, were notable for having begun with no prior detectable signs that anything would occur. This type of "instant maneuver," out of the barracks and rolling westward, will be the hallmark of Soviet maneuvers to come, as the Soviet forces in East Germany and Eastern Europe perfect the execution of a total surprise attack.

One month later, in the final week of June, some 60,000 Soviet, Hungarian, and Czech ground troops and air force units were engaged in the annual "Danube" series in western Hungary, very close to the Austrian border.

The maneuvers in Czechoslovakia and Hungary were only the beginning of a round of big, summer maneuvers, which, judging from those which have already occurred, will feature many new, and nasty, surprises.

One such surprise occurred on June 4, a one-day exercise involving some 500 Soviet combat aircraft flying over 1,000 sorties. For the first time ever, units of naval aviation Backfire, Bear, and Badger bombers, including Backfires and

Bears armed with the recently installed long-range AS-15 air-launched cruise missile, based in the Baltic States of the U.S.S.R., flew west en masse over the Baltic, then, over the East German island of Rügen, turned sharply to the southeast, and landed at air bases in East Germany and Poland. Defense-related sources insist that the maneuver was not simply an "air defense maneuver" as reported in the press, but, was an exercise designed to ensure "attainment of air supremacy" in a war. Other observers, cited recently in *Die Welt*, are worried that such flights Soviet bombers westward over the Baltic might become an exercise pattern, and lull NATO to sleep with the new "routine." Then, one day, they will fly westward—and not turn back.

Soviet, East German, and Czech ground and air forces are in the midst of big maneuvers in East Germany. An abnormally high percentage of East German territory has been declared off limits to the members of the U.S., French, and British, Allied Military Missions in Potsdam. In the Soviet Union, maneuvers involving 25-50,000 troops plus air units, began on July 6 in the Carpathian Military District. On July 16, large ground and air maneuvers began in the Trans-Caucasian Military District, in Soviet Georgia, and Azerbaijan. They will culminate near the borders of NATO member, Turkey, and also Iran.

### **Gorbachov inspects the troops**

Gorbachov is going out of his way to publicize himself as the General Secretary who is working with and for the military, and for war production. He began on July 11, a publicized tour of the Byelorussian Military District in the western U.S.S.R., bordering on Poland and Lithuania. The Byelorussian Military District contains by far the largest ground and air forces of any Military District in the Western Soviet, if not indeed in the entire Soviet Union, excepting the Far East Military District.

The Commander in Chief of Soviet Ground Forces, General of the Army Ivanovskii, was, from early 1981 till recently, Commander of the Byelorussian District. Gorbachov was accompanied on the tour by Defense Minister, Marshal Sergei Sokolov, and Lev Zaikov, Leningrad Party Chief who succeeded the now disgraced Grigori Romanov. This trip thus also shows Gorbachov flaunting his purge triumph at the July 1 Central Committee Plenum, which directly preceded the convening of the Supreme Soviet.

On July 1, a Central Committee plenum convened, chaired by Mikhail Gorbachov. The plenum was used by Gorbachov to advance his consolidation of power, and prepare for an accelerated war economy drive. Gorbachov's personal rival, Politburo member and former Leningrad Party boss Grigori Romanov, was ousted from the Politburo and the Secretariat, "in connection with retirement on health grounds"—even though Romanov is only 62. Gorbachov also kicked Andrei Gromyko, Soviet foreign minister since 1957, upstairs, by naming him President of the Supreme Soviet.

# Threat to Egypt is

by Thierry Lalevée

U.S. failure to strike back at the terrorist command-centers behind the Shi'ite hijackers of TWA Flight 847 on June 14 has created a dynamic of disasters in the entire Middle East region. The root of the dangers now looming is the miscalculation that when the U.S. State Department and President Reagan praised Syrian President Hafez al Assad for being "helpful" in the crisis, this didn't imply concessions beyond a de facto recognition of Syrian sovereignty over Lebanon.

Can there be any doubt that guarantees given to Syria, also extend to Libya and Iran? If Syria didn't specify this clearly, Moscow did, in no uncertain terms! Assad has been crowned Melekh (King) Assad, but so have his friends, Muammar Qaddafi and Ayatollah Khomeini.

The results are all too visible.

The first victim, of course, has been the Lebanese nation which has been handed over to Syria, not only politically, but economically. What is the meaning of the resolution declaring an economic and military boycott against Lebanon, voted by the U.S. Congress on July 9, except that Syria and Iran will become the main economic and financial powers over a bankrupt Lebanese state? As Sheikh Abbas Moussavi of the Hezbollahi declared on July 10 to AFP: "We are getting our money from Iran"!

The second victim, has been the peace initiative, launched by Saudi King Fahd and Egyptian President Mubarak, built around the Feb. 11 agreement between Jordan's King Hussein and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, permitting Jordan to represent the Palestinians in negotiations with Israel. But U.S. Undersecretary Richard Murphy, the partisan of a pro-Syrian policy from the outset, has already forgotten that he was to visit Amman for a meeting with a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.

Jordan and the PLO are being besieged politically and militarily. Syria launched an unsuccessful coup attempt against King Hussein in mid-June, and Egypt had to send troops to the Jordanian border with Syria at the end of June, to act as deterrent. On July 8, the remaining Palestinian forces loyal to Arafat, the Badr Brigade in the Bekaa Valley, were militarily expelled from Lebanon by Syria.

Yet, this is only the beginning of things to come, as the Soviet strategic alliance of Syria, Libya, and Iran grows