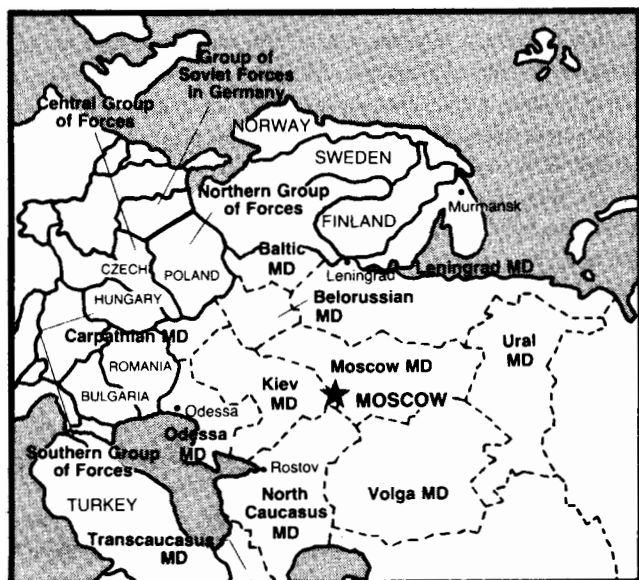


U.S.S.R. military: arms control has limits

by Rachel Douglas

Officials involved in preparations for the next Soviet-American summit and a possible strategic arms treaty, have reported a sensation that, "it was almost as if someone in Moscow had decided to put on the brakes." Even as the Soviet leadership readies this spring spectacular, which will have the President of the United States arriving to pay his respects in the Soviet capital at the very moment the Muscovite empire marks the millennium of its Orthodox Church, its military component is speaking more audibly and with force.

In a major article for the military daily *Krasnaya Zvezda* (*Red Star*) of March 20, Chief of Staff Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev questioned whether the arms control process would proceed. "Influential circles in the West—and it would be incorrect to ignore this," Akhromeyev wrote, "are frightened by the prospects of further easing of international tension and real disarmament. They voice doubts with increasing frequency: Should there be further progress along this path?"



Soviet Military Districts and Groups of Forces in High Command West.

Source: "Global Showdown Escalates," *EIR Special Report*, 1987.

A specification, that "doubts" have arisen also on the Soviet side, came in a March 16 *Izvestia* interview with Gen. V.M. Arkhipov, commander of the Moscow Military District. "The majority of the military . . . is for the treaty," he said, with reference to the Intermediate-range Nuclear Force (INF) treaty, signed last December; in other words, there lacks unanimity. "Different points of view are expressed," said Arkhipov, "Some think that, with the uneven reduction of these missiles, we will weaken the country's defense capabilities. They think that we don't need such a treaty."

In February, Arkhipov was promoted to the rank of General of the Army (four stars), as was Gen. N.I. Popov, commander of the Turkestan Military District on the Soviet border with Afghanistan.

Ogarkov in Eastern Europe

These admonitions from top Soviet military commanders serve to illustrate, not that the locomotive has jumped the arms control track, but the underlying purpose of arms control as they conceive it—to secure military-strategic advantage. The Soviet high command's intention to maintain a mighty military machine, dominant over the continent that General Secretary Gorbachov's propagandists sweetly name "our common European home," was otherwise evident in late winter activities in the European theater—the territory of High Command West, under Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov.

On March 10, Marshal Ogarkov met in Poland with that country's defense minister, Gen. Florian Siwicki, and Gen. Lt. Ivan Korbutov, commander of the Northern Group of Forces (Soviet forces in Poland). He was accompanied by Gen. Col. B.P. Utkin, the chief political officer for High Command West. Their conference, reported in *Krasnaya Zvezda* the following day, confirmed that Ogarkov, now 70, continues actively to carry out his function as Western theater commander. It also reflected Moscow's concern about the instability of Poland (see "Poland's economy set to explode," *EIR*, March 25, 1988, Vol. 15 No. 13).

EIR learned recently, that Polish reserve officers, from the rank of captain up to colonel, have been summoned back to active duty. Soviet military contingency plans for Poland were also demonstrated, obliquely, by the movements of Utkin. In early 1988, *Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil* (*Communist of the Armed Forces*) reported that Gen. Utkin was present at a meeting in the Carpathian Military District. He would not attend such a meeting as a matter of routine, since the Carpathian MD nominally comes under High Command Southwest, commanded by Gen. Ivan Gerasimov from Kiev. The fact that he did, indicates that a unified command is in place, for all Soviet groups of forces and military districts bordering on Poland.

In mid-March, more than 17,000 troops of the Soviet Central Group of Forces (based in Czechoslovakia) and the Czechoslovak People's Army maneuvered for seven days in northern Bohemia, near southwestern Poland.