

Gorbachov's 'defensive sufficiency' deception

by Scott Thompson

On May 25-27 at Norfolk, Virginia, the site of the world's largest naval base, Old Dominion University sponsored a conference entitled, "Soviet Military Doctrine in an Era of Change." The conference pitted a handful of military intelligence analysts representing the West Point tradition—briefly revived by Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger—against a ragtag assembly of "defense intellectuals" who tried to convince everybody that the West can unilaterally disarm and pull troops out of Europe, because Mikhail Gorbachov has adopted a purely defensive strategy.

The military analysts drew indirectly from the work of jailed statesman Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. with the National Security Council in the early 1980s, to develop the Strategic Defense Initiative as the first of successive revolutions in military technology, which would outpace the Soviets largely through the superiority of Western culture, as Lazare Carnot and the Ecole Polytechnique had developed this strategy of rapid technological attrition after the French Revolution (the school of the Prussian reforms and West Point). They warned that although the Soviet economy was necessarily inferior, Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov and his kindergarten within the Soviet general staff had actually been the initiators of Gorbachov's *perestroika* reform program. Ogarkov feared that without modernization, the Soviets would be left behind when the West developed a next generation of weapons based upon "new physical principles"—e.g., radio frequency weapons.

William F. Scott of the Defense Intelligence College strongly asserted that this was the essential linkage between Gorbachov and the generals, namely, to modernize the Soviet military with weapons systems based on "new physical principles." Although he could not explain the actual difficulties arising from a Soviet "scissors crisis" and why this Ogarkov-Gorbachov plan for world conquest was running into economic difficulties, he added in private discussion that should Gorbachov not succeed, the KGB joined by the military might overthrow him, rebuild the Soviet system based upon the fascist Pamyat Society, and launch world conquest with the Soviet might that remained.

Dale Herspring of the Office of Naval Intelligence argued that the reason why Gorbachov was prepared to make unilat-

eral arms control reductions was that the Soviet military was undergoing the most profound transition since the introduction of nuclear weapons, under the direction of Marshal Ogarkov's remaining forces within the general staff. With this change, current weapons—e.g., the tank—will be thrown on the technological ash heap, while the Soviets produce a smaller, more efficient, and more mobile strike force. Hence, to achieve political goals, the Soviets will be willing to throw away masses of obsolete junk, while they prepare a technological breakout that will redefine strategy and tactics.

Rose Goettmoeller of RAND countered that while everything these military analysts had said was true of Marshal Ogarkov, he had nonetheless lost a factional battle within the Soviet *Nomenklatura*. His theory had caused too much rancor with his colleagues such as Akhromeyev, Ustinov, Yepish-ev, and many of the old tank warfare strategists from World War II. In this, Goettmoeller was merely parroting a standard disinformation line issued by the Soviets themselves, which is shown to be a lie by any serious investigation of Soviet military technological developments.

'Proclaiming nirvana'

Other civilian analysts went even further toward proclaiming what one naval intelligence specialist characterized as "spreading rose petals on the water and proclaiming nirvana." Thus, Roy Allison of the University of Birmingham, England, argued that since at least Gorbachov's visit to France in October 1985, he had been pushing a theory of "reasonable sufficiency," which meant that the Soviets would only build sufficient military capability to stop aggression. Michael McGwire, a Scotsman working at Brookings Institution, went even further in strewing rose petals. He argued that Gorbachov will simply refuse to supply his generals with the means to wage war. "Sufficiency," therefore, means that the Soviets will adopt a lesser contingency of dismantling their military until it is a small, territorial army defending Moscow!

Harriet Fast Scott, an adviser to the Arms Control Disarmament Agency (ACDA), countered that Soviet talk of a "defensive strategy" went back to Brezhnev, when, in fact, the Soviet strategy remained that developed by Marshal Sokolovsky, of an offensive war fought on enemy territory through deep rocket strikes, disruption behind enemy lines, and the development of weapons based upon "new physical principles," such as the Soviet equivalent of the Strategic Defense Initiative. She noted that even Marshal Ogarkov, who embodied these principles, had later adopted the "defensive strategy" ruse in describing his plan for global conquest.

The "nirvana" crowd of defense analysts, who are largely also driven by a growing desire to slash defense spending because of the rottenness of the Western economy, did not let this reality faze them, but merely stated that Gorbachov was the man on a white horse who would close the gap between rhetoric and reality with his doctrine of "defensive sufficiency."