

## Pre-war dynamic accompanies Soviet breakdown crisis

by Konstantin George

If one were to believe U.S. President Bush and his administration, the Soviet threat has somehow miraculously “vanished” during 1989. On Sept. 27, the Pentagon released, after long delay, its annual report, *Soviet Military Power*. The delay was deliberate; it was first released only after Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze’s meeting with President Bush and the Sept. 22-23 Wyoming talks with Secretary of State James Baker III, and its release was timed with a Pentagon invitation for Soviet Defense Minister Dmitri Yazov to visit the United States.

The Wyoming talks produced an array of agreements and understandings, which if not reversed, will effect irreparable damage to European security. The United States and the U.S.S.R. agreed to rush into signing an agreement on big reductions in European-based conventional forces by mid-1990, with the prospect of even deeper cuts to follow. In short, the post-INF conventional American decoupling from Europe is on in force. The talks also produced an understanding, trumpeted by Radio Moscow, that Washington would do nothing concerning Eastern Europe or the national freedom movements in the U.S.S.R.

These talks were followed by the ongoing Yazov visit to America, which was upgraded at the last minute to include a White House meeting with President Bush, National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft, and Secretary of State Baker. The main agenda item, again according to Radio Moscow, was American and Soviet force reductions in Europe, with Bush declaring to Yazov that the talks with Shevardnadze were “extremely fruitful.”

The 1989 edition of *Soviet Military Power*, reflecting the worse-than-Neville-Chamberlain appeasement syndrome of the Bush administration, stated that “the Soviet threat . . . is now perhaps the lowest it has ever been since the postwar period began.”

The Soviet Union has done everything, beginning with the October 1986 Reykjavik meeting between Reagan and Gorbachov, through a multi-faceted



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*Soviet Defense Minister Gen. Dmitri Yazov at an Oct. 6 Pentagon press conference with U.S. Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney. The Pentagon's annual Soviet Military Power was released during Yazov's visit, desperately downplaying the threat of Soviet military expansion.*

“arms control” and propaganda offensive to convey such an image. Moscow has gone out of its way since 1988 to convince the West that it has adopted a new “defensive” military doctrine. This campaign hit a climactic phase around Gorbachov’s December 1988 United Nations “troop reduction” address, proclaiming a unilateral reduction of 500,000 troops, and the specification that six tank divisions would be withdrawn from the so-called German Democratic Republic and Eastern Europe.

The entire Soviet package of “troop reductions,” both unilateral, and reciprocal ones via agreements with NATO, is worse than a fraud. It is a crucial component of a crash plan by the Soviet Military Command to bring the entire Soviet armed forces to full war readiness in the next two years, and part and parcel of Moscow’s real new doctrine, a deadly new *offensive* doctrine. This is the reality, and not the comforting and consciously false assertions appearing in *Soviet Military Power*. This crash plan is itself a crucial war readiness component of the unfolding decisive phase of what knowledgeable Western military experts refer to as the “Ogarkov War Plan.”

### **The Ogarkov War Plan**

The Ogarkov War Plan is named after recently retired (April) 72-year-old Marshal of the Soviet Union Nikolai Ogarkov. Ogarkov functioned as Chief of the General Staff, January 1977-September 1984, and from September 1984 till early 1989 as Commander-in-Chief of the “Western Strategic

Direction,” the Soviet term for the wartime High Command responsible for military operations against NATO. In those years he became the architect and most prestigious exponent for new policies and doctrines that would produce by the early 1990s a decisive margin of military superiority for the U.S.S.R.; a military superiority it could then use to dictate surrender terms to its Western adversaries. Ogarkov, in short, had the foresight to see that the only capability Moscow could develop to overcome its systemic crisis, was the development of sufficient military superiority to expand the economic zone of looting available to the Russian Empire to include the high technology and industry of Western Europe, and oil-rich resource regions in the Near East.

The basic tenets, the content and new doctrines associated with the Ogarkov War Plan, can be summarized as follows:

1) Enforcing the principle of “maximal technological attrition” on the Soviet military. This means the continual development and introduction of newer technology weaponry, logistics, and communications equipment, at a in rapid turnover rate, replacing lower technology at the fastest rates possible. From this flows the next principle.

2) Highest priority in terms of scientific manpower, funding, and production facilities is accorded to research, development, testing, and finally serial production of the most modern military technologies. The priority is always on the “next generation” of new weapons technology that will “revolutionize the battlefield.” Examples of this include:

a) A crash military space program to gain control of outer space, and achieve a true "three-dimensional" offensive war-fighting capability, or, better stated, war-winning capability. The Ogarkovian Soviet High Command envisages, correctly, any future as being "three dimensional in full," with control of space being key. The future war would break the confinements of what the Soviet military privately terms the present "two-and-a-half dimensions" (land, sea, air). The program includes the Soviet drive to develop and deploy a space-based laser anti-ballistic missile system and anti-satellite weapons to knock out in a lightning strike U.S. military and military-communications' satellite capabilities. The "logistical" basis for this has already been created through the Mir giant space platform, and the Mir-servicing Buran space shuttle, and Energiya giant rocket booster programs. Moscow already has the first operational ground-based laser ABM facility in the world, and has never, unlike the United States, scrapped its conventional ABM missile sites that protect Moscow.

b) A crash program to develop and deploy "post-nuclear" radio-frequency and microwave weapons of mass destruction. According to Western intelligence sources, the Soviet Union has already begun with the deployment of first-generation, area radio-frequency weapons. The "revolution in firepower" created by this new generation of weapons, which will be realized as soon as compact, portable versions are available, brings us to the next tenet, the new doctrine, developed in the Ogarkov War Plan.

3) A new offensive doctrine, featuring a priority assigned to elite *spetsnaz* (commando) and airborne units and teams, with the mission of eliminating key NATO targets, such as key bases, headquarters, logistical facilities. Ogarkov understood that the new generation of portable radio-frequency weapons entailed the capability to assign a decisive role to elite commando units in a future war on the European battlefield. With portable radio-frequency weapons, a nine-man *spetsnaz* team could, equipped with a weapon giving these nine men the firepower of a regiment, hit and knock out a NATO complex.

4) A streamlined, strictly wartime military command and control system, based on the U.S.S.R. Defense Council, the General Staff, and subordinated to the General Staff, wartime Theater Commands. The Theater Commands, West, Southwest, and South (a Far East High Command had been formed in 1978) were created by Ogarkov in September 1984. In a transitional phase, September 1984-January 1989, they co-existed alongside a traditional peacetime structure of Military Districts and the Soviet "Groups of Forces," as the Soviet forces based in Eastern Europe are called.

Now, in 1989, the Soviet command structure has been reorganized into a solely wartime mode, centered on the Theater Commands. Each Theater Commander has total and sole control over all military forces within his geographical

theater; land, sea, air, air defense, missile, and artillery.

The wartime command streamlining is also being implemented with the front-line, or first echelon Soviet forces facing NATO, above all facing West Germany. The end of June, when the "Group of Soviet Forces in Germany" was renamed "Western Group of Forces," signaled the future merger of three Soviet Groups of Forces (those in the German Democratic Republic, the "Northern Group" in Poland, and the "Central Group" in Czechoslovakia) into one Western Group of Forces. That means all first echelon Soviet forces facing West Germany will soon be, as Ogarkov had advocated since the 1981 Zapad-'81 exercises (the first Western Theater-wide Soviet military exercises, personally commanded by Ogarkov) under one unified command, directly subordinate to the Western Theater Commander.

### **New weaponry and the war economy**

Beyond the cardinal premises we have just outlined, no description of the Ogarkov War Plan would be complete without featuring Ogarkov's always repeated stress that military power is, in the final analysis, a function of a country's overall industrial and technological economic strength. Thus, his principle of maximum technological attrition rates was, and is, meant as necessary not only for military technology, but for the overall industrial economy of the U.S.S.R. *Perestroika* ("restructuring"), at least from the standpoint of intention and plan, with its stated priority of restructuring through modernizing as rapidly as possible the U.S.S.R.'s industrial base, was nothing more than the adoption of the economic tenets of the Ogarkov War Plan for the Soviet economy as a whole.

Similarly, under *perestroika*, the direction of the U.S.S.R. economy has passed, quietly but definitively, under the control of leaders of the Soviet military-industrial complex. This trend has been emphatically escalated since February 1988, with:

1) The promotion of war economy specialist Yuri Maslyukov, till then First Deputy Chairman of the State Planning Committee (Gosplan) in charge of U.S.S.R. defense industry, to become Gosplan chairman, with jurisdiction over the entire economy. Maslyukov was also then made a candidate member of the Politburo.

2) The simultaneous promotion of Oleg Baklanov, who had headed the U.S.S.R. high-technology missile and military space production programs, to Central Committee Secretary, responsible for all military industry.

The latest consolidation of this pattern occurred at the Sept. 19-20 Central Committee Plenum of the Communist Party, where Maslyukov was elevated to full membership in the Politburo, the top executive body of the ruling party.

In between, as can be documented from periodic statements by Gorbachov and others, issued in the Soviet parliament, the country's most powerful institution, the Defense Council, has been vastly upgraded to include a permanently

functioning sub-leadership, including Maslyukov and Baklanov, responsible for military industry and indeed for U.S.S.R. industrial economic policy.

This brings us to a current phenomenon in the U.S.S.R.—which has historical parallels, most notably from the early 1930s—that, despite a veritable breakdown occurring within the overall economy, defense production in every priority and important field not only proceeds uninterrupted, but accelerates.

In the 1930s, the Tukhachevsky War Plan buildup went ahead, alongside a physical breakdown of food production and distribution caused by forced collectivization and the mass revolts it engendered, which reached civil war dimensions in some regions, notably in the Ukraine and Kazakhstan. In that period, which Soviet figures themselves have often referred to as “the Second Civil War,” collectivization caused the loss of more than half of the Soviet Union’s total livestock. The human cost was staggering: 8 million Ukrainians and 2 million Kazakhs starved to death or were butchered in brutal repressions, to name but the two most barbarous cases.

Today, again, the Russian Empire is in the grip of a momentous systemic crisis, featuring a growing physical breakdown of the civilian economy, a proto-civil war situation building in various republics, and the beginning of a mass strike wave, of a scale unknown since the last decades of Czarist Russia. Yet, there is occurring the across-the-board introduction of new equipment and weapons systems in the armed forces, on a scale and at a rate not even equaled in the similar period in the 1930s.

In 1989, more new models of aircraft have entered serial production than in any year since the war. These include the Su-27 “Flanker” modern fighter-interceptor; the giant An-225 air transport, capable of carrying 300 tons, and of transporting the Buran space shuttle; several new medium-sized air transports; and new attack and transport helicopters. Alongside this, production of MiG-31 and MiG-29 interceptors has been heavily stepped up (the latter one also for export).

For the Strategic Rocket Forces, full production rates have been realized for the SS-25 and giant SS-24 rail-mounted mobile ICBMs. Every year, another Typhoon-class giant nuclear missile submarine is launched and enters service; a second production line has been opened for modern Akula-class nuclear attack/cruise missile submarines. Two wholly new tank models, the FST-1 and FST-2 are being produced for the Army (starting in 1989, the FST-1 production rate is 1,500 per annum).

These are only a few of many examples, and many of these details can be found in the 1989 *Soviet Military Power*. What these details mean, however, is turned upside down, with the report’s absurd, and consciously false, conclusions.

### **Spetsnaz-centered offensive doctrine**

Given that the 1989 edition of *Soviet Military Power* omitted, for the first time, even a passing reference to Soviet

*spetsnaz* forces and Soviet development of radio-frequency and other “post-nuclear” weapons of mass destruction, it would be appropriate to conclude with a more detailed exposition of the new “high-technology” *spetsnaz*-centered offensive doctrine.

To summarize the matter: The highly publicized new Soviet “defensive military doctrine” is a cover for the refinement and improvement of the traditional Soviet military offensive doctrine, featuring the use of *spetsnaz* and airborne forces at the center of the new offensive posture, based on post-nuclear, emerging technologies weapons. The new offensive doctrine is designed to secure by means of full-scale deployment of these elite forces and post-nuclear new technology weapons, the destruction of the enemy’s rear area nuclear forces, aircraft, and logistics, to score decisive victory at the outset of war.

The existence of the new offensive doctrine was confirmed publicly in a Radio Moscow interview on July 29, 1988 with Gen. G.V. Batenin, a military adviser to the Central Committee, on loan from the General Staff. In the interview, Batenin revealed that during the past two years “most of our military exercises [have] involve[d] repelling submarine, airborne, and commando attacks.”

Batenin specified that such exercises have been most heavily concentrated in the Leningrad Military District, which includes the Kola Peninsula and the Northern Fleet, and in the Far Eastern Military District, which includes the Pacific Fleet.

Batenin’s revelation is important on two counts. First, it marks a clear admission that since 1986 the main weight of Soviet military exercises has shifted to a vast increase in military exercises involving offensive operations by elite *spetsnaz* and airborne units staging “airborne and commando attacks” which “defenders” have tried to repel. Beyond the Leningrad and Far East Military Districts named as where such exercises have been most heavily concentrated, the same pattern has been in evidence among all the Soviet “Groups of Forces” stationed in Eastern Europe, and in the Odessa and Baltic Military Districts as well.

Second, all such exercises are, by their airborne and commando nature, numerically relatively small, and thus are below the 13,500 threshold of troop numbers requiring that Western observers be present, and also requiring public announcement. This feature of Soviet military exercises continues. This autumn, for example, all major Soviet military exercises being conducted in East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the Baltic republics, have been deliberately scaled down to below the 13,500 threshold.

The new Soviet airborne and *spetsnaz* centered offensive doctrine forms the “secret” behind what has appeared to the West as the “stunning” military personnel shifts during 1987-89. During this two-year time frame, those generals who have been most extensively involved in reshaping the Soviet armed forces in conformity with the dictates of the new doc-

trine, have been the ones propelled and in some cases catapulted into the highest command positions of the military.

Batenin's revelations concerning the crucial role the Far East Military District has played in rehearsing "airborne and commando attacks," explain why a 49-year old general, Mikhail Moiseyev, who has spent the last five years in the Far East Military District, at the center of the airborne and commando "experiments" consolidating the new doctrine, has been suddenly elevated from Far East Military District commander to Chief of the Soviet General Staff. The same principle holds true for the rapid rise of Gen. Dmitri Yazov, 18 months earlier, from Far East commander, to deputy defense minister, to defense minister on May 30, 1987.

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The new airborne-centered offensive doctrine is also the reason why within a month of Yazov becoming defense minister, three generals who had been at the center of developing and expanding Soviet airborne-*spetsnaz* capabilities since the 1960s, M.I. Sorokin, D.S. Sukhorukov, and I.M. Tretyak, became deputy defense ministers.

The Leningrad Military District, also correctly singled out by Batenin, produced a crop of generals, expert in conducting airborne *spetsnaz* operations, who have become, together with Afghanistan War veterans, the new command team for the Soviet forces stationed in Eastern Europe. These include General of the Army Boris Snetkov, commander-in-chief of the Western Group of Forces in East Germany; General Colonel Ivan Fuzhenko, commander of the Turkestan Military District, bordering on Iran; General Colonel Ivan Korbutin, now at the Western Theater Command; and last but not least, General Lieutenant Vyacheslav Achalov, the Leningrad Military District

chief of staff in 1988, who in January, at the age of 42 became commander of Soviet Airborne Forces.

### The new doctrine

The new Soviet offensive doctrine was evaluated in a presentation at an *EIR* seminar on electromagnetic weapons in London, June 24, 1988 as follows by Lt. Gen. Gerard C. Berkhof (ret.) Royal Netherlands Land Army:

"The doctrine is aimed at:

- "achieving surprise by the manipulation of political tension and other *maskirovka* [deception] measures;
- "conducting deep operations by air assault brigades, *spetsnaz* companies of the armies . . . and assisting the operations of the ground forces by amphibious landings;
- "conducting the operational/strategic air operation by attacking important military targets in NATO's rear area using missiles, the *spetsnaz* brigades of the fronts, and the naval *spetsnaz* brigades of the fleets, and aircraft attacking through air corridors.

"By simultaneous operations at the front and the rear, the Soviet military hoped that the military and political integrity of NATO would be destroyed before nuclear weapons were used. The air operation, subsequent attacks with non-nuclear missiles, *spetsnaz* brigades, and aircraft against NATO's nuclear forces, command and control systems, and air defenses, figured prominently in this concept."

The new doctrine is linked to Moscow's ongoing crash efforts to develop and deploy new technology weapons, referred to by Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev and other Soviet military leaders as "conventional weapons" which "approximate nuclear weapons in power, range, and accuracy."

With the firepower revolution effected by such weapons and the offensive "mobility revolution" attained by the extraordinary emphasis on airborne *spetsnaz* operations, numerical reductions in the armed forces, as Gorbachov has now announced, are not only possible, but actually necessary to bring the entire armed forces to the level of total war readiness required to score victory in the crucial outset of war.

Is there a foreseeable "outset of war" in the fairly near future? For the answer we can turn to Marshal Ogarkov himself, the father of the Soviet War Plan. Ogarkov resurfaced after his retirement, for an interview with the early June edition of the military bi-monthly *Kommunist of the Armed Forces*. Ogarkov compared the present period to that of 1939-41, and urged the Soviet leadership not to repeat any of the "errors" that were made in 1939-41, while Russia was preparing for war. The comparison of 1989 with 1939 by Ogarkov, provides the definitive refutation of the Bush administration's Big Lie that the Soviet threat "is at perhaps the lowest level" ever. The myth of the "vanished" Soviet threat will rank in infamy with Neville Chamberlain's 1938 proclamation of "Peace in Our Time."