

Soviets set out to bully Japan

By Clifford Gaddy

Some of the leading figures of the Soviet High Command have been treating Japan, in 1985, as if it were Japan in 1935. Using the 40th anniversary of the defeat of Japan in World War II as a pretext, these Russian military commanders are creating a climate of psychological terror, paired with brute military force, to "Finlandize" the present-day government of Japan in much the same way that Moscow has been approaching Western Europe. The difference is only that in the Japanese case, the Soviets intend to push the process much faster.

In the early days of September—40 years after the Japanese signed the documents of unconditional surrender aboard the battleship Missouri on Sept. 2, 1945—Russian military spokesmen from Defense Minister Sergei Sokolov on down, took to the pages of the Soviet dailies and gave nationally televised speeches declaring that modern-day Japan is rapidly repeating the 1930s process that led to its wars of conquest in the Pacific. With a straight face, the Soviets are going so far as to declare that Japan is preparing a nuclear attack on the U.S.S.R.!

The reality, of course, is that the Soviet Union in the past 6-7 years has built up an unprecedented offensive capability in the Far East, and targeted that capability mainly against Japan. For that reason, it is especially ironic that the most outrageous accusations leveled against Japan were made in a Sept. 1 article in the Defense Ministry daily, *Krasnaya Zvezda* (*Red Star*), by the man who perhaps bears more immediate personal responsibility for the Soviet Far East build-up than any other, Marshal Vasili Petrov.

Petrov is the former commander of the Soviet Ground Forces and was promoted to the post of First Deputy Defense Minister at the beginning of this year. But his actual responsibility is the Soviet Far East.

After a 20-year career there, rising through a series of field commands to four-star general commanding the Far Eastern Military District, Petrov was chosen in early 1979 to re-establish and head the High Command Far East—a step which marked the launching of the Soviet drive for definitive supremacy in the region.

The setting up of such a high command was an ominous move. It had previously only existed during wartime—the

Second World War and the Korean War.

Under Petrov's supervision—first directly on the scene, and later indirectly—Moscow has put in place a missile installations, a force of 55 divisions (well over half a million men), and nearly 2,500 combat aircraft, plus another 500 helicopters.

In his *Krasnaya Zvezda* article, Petrov dispenses quickly with an account of the Soviet fighting against Japan in World War II (the pretext for the article) and proceeds to his real topic: a series of threats and warnings to Tokyo today: "One of the most important lessons and results of the war was that the Far Eastern aggressor suffered not merely a military and political, but also an economic defeat. . . . As the history of the Japanese military seizures convincingly confirmed, Japan has neither the territory nor the resources to wage war against a powerful adversary."

Having thus defined the futility of any efforts on the part of modern-day Japan to defend itself against the most likely "powerful adversary" in the area, Petrov goes on to explain why the Soviet Union is nevertheless "threatened" by Japan.

"The forces of militarism and revanchism" are growing again, and they have "set themselves the goal of revising the outcome of the war and bringing about 'the rebirth of Greater Japan.'" The marshal continues: "Right now, there is a great deal in Japan that reminds one of a repetition of the past. There is an intensification of the same economic, social, and political processes that once led Japan to militarize the entire life of the country. Building up its military and economic potential, Japan has now become . . . one of the main centers of world imperialism."

Sounds frightening, except, of course, for the fact that this "main center of world imperialism," "militarist" Japan, devotes as much of its resources to military as do such world powers as Iceland, Luxemburg, Barbados, and Lesotho. Clearly a level of "militarism" to make a nuclear global superpower tremble.

According to Marshal Petrov, these "militarists" in Tokyo are working hand-in-hand with the United States to transform Japan into an "American nuclear base" and to integrate it into "a new NATO-like military bloc structure in the Asian-Pacific region, the kernel of which would be an American-Japanese-South Korean aggressive alliance. All this runs counter to the vital interests of the peoples of Asia and the Japanese people itself."

Could they be regarded as mere propaganda, the absurd allegations of Marshal Petrov regarding Japanese military potential and intentions could be ignored. However, they are accompanied by the kind of threat that no nation can ignore. In his characteristically brutal style, Petrov—a man known to be more arrogant and imperious in his manner than even Nikolai Ogarkov—concludes that because certain people in Japan are in favor of more defense spending, "it is obvious that not everyone has drawn the proper conclusions from the lessons of the Second World War and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki."