

# THE THEATER NUCLEAR THREAT

by

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Since the mid-1950s, the Soviet Union has been preparing seriously for nuclear war in Europe. The first formal planning effort appears to have begun in the fall of 1954 when a high-level military group was formed to study the effect of nuclear weapons on military strategy, determine how the Soviets should exploit their use, and recommend the quantity and types of weapons that would be required by the Soviet armed forces. This study was completed in mid-1955, before Khrushchev had consolidated his power base. Khrushchev was a strong believer in the importance of nuclear weapons and, while he supported the study effort, he was not pleased with its recommendations because he believed they reflected an insufficiently aggressive outlook.

When Khrushchev was thoroughly in command, after the 20th Party Congress in 1956, he directed that planning for an entirely new nuclear strategy begin in earnest. A study group composed of top military and party officials was formed to review all aspects of national policy—military, foreign, intelligence, industrial, economic, and internal security. This overall strategic planning effort was headed by Leonid Brezhnev, certainly an important factor when one considers the long-term continuity of Soviet nuclear planning and strategy from 1956 to the present. His deputy was Mikhail Suslov, another reason for that continuity.

A military development subcommittee was headed by Marshal V. D. Sokolovskiy, then Chief of the Soviet General Staff, and included Marshals Varentsov, Zakharov, Batitskiy, Moskalinko, and Antonif.<sup>1</sup> The subcommittee's basic conclusions were that the nuclear weapon had become the decisive

instrument of war; that the mass employment of nuclear weapons would characterize future war; that nuclear war would be quite different from wars of the past because strategic results could be achieved at the start; and that surprise and first strike were of paramount importance.<sup>2</sup>

The recommendations of the Brezhnev committee, which embraced all aspects of Soviet doctrine and planning, were approved by the Politburo in the summer of 1957. These recommendations constituted the planning basis for a new nuclear doctrine and brought about the development of the seven-year economic plan that would be approved at the special Party Congress in 1959. This planning effort can be said to have been the beginning of the nuclear revolution in Soviet military affairs, an image popularized in the Soviet military press in the early 1960s.

Coincident with the committee's review, two military districts were assigned the problem of studying nuclear war and preparing new field manuals, regulations, and other supporting documents to accommodate the use of nuclear weapons. This work also was completed in the summer of 1957, and the first military plans incorporating the use of nuclear weapons were approved in the late fall.

Thus, by 1958, the Soviet Union had incorporated nuclear weapons into its plans and capabilities for war with NATO. Subsequent efforts were devoted to building up the stockpile of nuclear weapons and equipment to enable Soviet forces to fight in a nuclear environment, and to orienting military thinking—strategy, operational art, and tactics—to nuclear war.<sup>3</sup> (Almost all of the so-called "conventional" improvements

introduced in the mid-1960s to mid-1970s, such as self-propelled artillery, the BMP armored personnel carrier, new air defense weapons, major increases in tanks, and so forth, were identified as nuclear war requirements in the review that had been largely completed by 1958.)

The task of reorienting military thinking was especially difficult. It is simply not easy to change thinking within any organization, and the Soviet Army was no exception. In particular, it was very difficult to get the "World War II horse commanders," as Khrushchev referred to them, to change their way of thinking. This problem may help explain the emphasis placed on the nuclear war seminar discussions that were held in the General Staff in the late 1950s. It may also be why the "revolution in military affairs" received such propaganda emphasis in the early 1960s, including the lectures in *Red Star* and *Communist of the Armed Forces*, and the book *Problems of the Revolution in Military Affairs*, which was published in 1965.<sup>4</sup>

In January 1960, the new nuclear doctrine and a new command, the Strategic Missile Forces, were announced. Soviet military plans, capabilities, strategy, and national policy were first and foremost nuclear. Subsequent refinements blended "conventional" with nuclear operations (their combined-arms concept); provided for different ways the war could begin, including a basic shift in the mid-1960s from preemption and defense to first strike and offense;<sup>5</sup> gradually added flexibility and survivability; and provided for the more effective use of advanced technology of all varieties. But throughout this process, the importance of nuclear firepower remained the keystone of Soviet strategy.

### BASIC PRINCIPLES

As Soviet strategy has evolved since the mid 1950s, four basic concepts or principles have received special emphasis. These principles are believed to form the underpinnings of Soviet strategy and capabilities for theater nuclear war.

- The first principle concerns the strategic importance of nuclear weapons.<sup>6</sup> The characteristic features of nuclear weapons permit strategic results to be achieved immediately, in contrast to the time before their advent, when numerous tactical and operational successes were required to build strategic success. With nuclear weapons, the war can be decided—won or lost—at the start. Thus nuclear weapons are regarded as *decisive*.<sup>7</sup>

This in no sense, however, implies that nuclear weapons are absolute or ultimate weapons. The Soviets emphasize quite the contrary. While nuclear weapons can decide the war, they cannot win the war. To win, ground troops are needed. Only ground troops can capture and occupy territory—the essence of war.<sup>8</sup> To "free" the people and permit the installation of "progressive" socialist governments, soldiers are required. This is the political side of war, the side that ultimately governs Soviet military strategy.

Nuclear war to the Soviets is not just an exchange of missiles and bombs.<sup>9</sup> Nuclear weapons are not to be used in isolation, but rather in coordination with other means that both make their use more effective and exploit the results of that use. The initial nuclear strike may even be delayed until more telling results can be achieved—normally a question of target acquisition and of the readiness of air and ground forces to exploit the results of the strike.<sup>10</sup>

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Because nuclear weapons can be decisive, the first nuclear strike is the most important act of the war.<sup>11</sup> This is true for both sides; hence, the Soviets see a need to prevent NATO from striking first, reserving that telling blow for themselves to administer.<sup>12</sup>

• The key to striking first is surprise, and the need to achieve surprise is the second main principle that underlies Soviet strategy.<sup>13</sup> The importance of surprise dominates Soviet military thought. The logic is quite straightforward. Because of the importance of the first strike, any prudent opponent that senses that his enemy is about to strike will preempt. Thus surprise is essential to striking first, and the principle has application in both a strategic context and a tactical one. In the strategic dimension, surprise is achieved mainly by deception—for example, by convincing enemy leaders that the Soviets would not strike first, that nuclear weapons are not usable, and that nuclear superiority is a meaningless concept. In the tactical dimension, surprise is achieved through use of a wide variety of measures including secrecy, camouflage, and—again—deception by inserting misleading or false information into the enemy's decision-making process.<sup>14</sup>

A consequence of the need to strike first and to achieve surprise is the necessity to be ready to implement a coordinated attack. The forces required to achieve immediate strategic goals are to be fully mobilized, at full strength, and maximally ready. Systems are to be in place and ready to fire. Targets are to be assigned before the outbreak of war and updated in a crisis. Readiness also includes the critical study of the enemy's doctrine to identify the best time for a Warsaw Pact strike and the most likely times that NATO might attempt to strike first.<sup>15</sup>

Underlying the bent to strike first and achieve surprise is the need to attack NATO nuclear forces before they can be employed in a preplanned and coordinated manner against the Warsaw Pact<sup>16</sup> or, as a fallback strategy, to preempt if NATO is believed to be on the verge of striking. The much less favorable alternative is preemption. Preemption should

not be confused with striking first, which implies the choice of time. A preemptive strike is dictated to some extent by the other side. It would be undertaken to prevent NATO from achieving an effective first strike. Thus, it might not come at an opportune time from the Soviet point of view. It is a second-best option. The desire to strike first rather than just preempt also is reflected in the emphasis the Soviets place on not just responding to NATO actions but *anticipating* NATO actions,<sup>17</sup> and on Soviet intelligence, where strategic warning is a first-priority mission that stresses agent (vice sensor) reporting as the most important warning information.<sup>18</sup>

The Soviet effort to attack, disable, and destroy NATO nuclear forces before they can be employed against the Warsaw Pact forces would not be just an attack on NATO nuclear weapons, but an attack on the entire nuclear system. The key components that would come under attack include the political consultative process; command, control, and communications facilities and equipment; intelligence and target acquisition support; and the weapon systems and their immediate support.<sup>19</sup> As will be discussed below, this "attack" would begin even before the war starts and would utilize all forces and means—radio electronic means, sabotage, and chemical and conventional weapons.

• A third basic principle is the importance of the offensive. In the nuclear age, the offensive is the key to success, and Soviet doctrine is clearly offensive and explicitly stated to be so.<sup>20</sup> (Current propaganda statements to the contrary are inconsistent with party and military literature designed for internal consumption and, therefore, can be looked upon as disinformation.) While emphasis on the offensive is a logical continuation of the importance of surprise and striking first, the Soviet offensive concept includes much more. Soviet strategy emphasizes the need not only to seize the initiative (strike first) but subsequently, and of equal importance, to maintain the initiative.<sup>21</sup> This latter aspect is of special importance. Once the war begins, it is to be pursued with *increasing* vigor until Soviet

strategic goals are attained. And this is to be done in the most aggressive and decisive manner to win the war as quickly as possible.<sup>22</sup> Such vigorous and aggressive pursuit of goals and objectives is referred to as the principle of combat activeness.<sup>23</sup> The importance of this principle is reflected in the consistent attention the Soviets have focused on, and the resources they have devoted to, the problem of achieving high rates of advance. Particular attention has been given to mobility, logistics, and to nighttime, bad weather, and continuous operations. The less time the enemy has to react, the more he is kept off balance and the easier and cheaper it is to achieve victory over him.

• The final two principles are to concentrate efforts at the decisive time and place and to attack throughout the depth of the theater. The notion of gradual escalation is not a Soviet concept.<sup>24</sup> One wins a war at minimal cost by being decisive as quickly as possible. Nuclear weapons and modern delivery means provide the capability to do just that. And, as will be discussed more thoroughly, all forces and means are to be used throughout the depth of the theater to secure victory before the enemy can react. This principle provides a method for limiting the scope of the war—i.e., ending the war by winning it quickly.

#### PRELIMINARY OPERATIONS

Independent of whether the beginning of the war is to be nuclear or conventional, the war would really start before this distinction is made with a massive sabotage and disinformation campaign. In-country agents and specially trained sabotage or "Spetsnaz" units would act to demobilize NATO on the eve of the war. Their operation would be designed to paralyze governments, sever all high-level command and control, prevent any industrial or military mobilization, disable all warning capabilities, and destroy or disable all NATO nuclear capabilities.<sup>25</sup> Communications, electric power, intelligence, and warning capabilities would be heavily struck. Chemical and biological warfare agents might be used against both military and civil sectors.<sup>26</sup> False communication stations

would be established to add to the confusion, to create disharmony within the NATO alliance, to cause popular uprisings, and to encourage individual nations to withdraw from the war even before military hostilities have begun.<sup>27</sup>

The Soviet takeovers of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and Afghanistan in 1979 provide small-scale examples of such operations. In both cases, immediately before the invasion, Soviet Spetsnaz teams seized control of top government officials, immobilized military commands, seized airfields and converted them to Soviet use, seized major radio stations, and inserted Soviet-controlled communications.

While the tendency here is to think mainly in terms of military or paramilitary operations, terrorist acts and intense civil disobedience could play important roles. The Soviets stress the importance of not attacking if the territory is not adequately prepared. A significant part of this preparation is the development of indigenous communist or communist-supportive groups that will act to the benefit of the Soviet Union both in preventing war by opposing NATO policies to go to war, and by facilitating the introduction of new governments and control of the population after a war has been won.<sup>28</sup>

With regard to the paramilitary sabotage operations, it is instructive to examine the Soviet approach to covering important targets. Key targets would be subject to a coordinated series of attacks, each bringing to bear a different destructive or disruptive capability. Critical targets for destruction would be attacked first by sabotage teams. And, as already indicated, the most important targets are NATO nuclear capabilities. Although the ultimate requirement would be the capture or destruction of the nuclear weapons, the initial sabotage attack would likely capitalize on special vulnerabilities, which in general include command, targeting, communications, fire control, and navigation.<sup>29</sup>

#### THE BEGINNING OF HOSTILITIES

At the peak of this activity, the war would begin—through the use of either

nuclear weaponry or conventional. The war could begin with a massive nuclear strike. For many years, at least into the 1970s, this was regarded as the likely scenario. In this case, the Soviets would hit NATO with an initial nuclear strike that could easily include several hundred military and control targets, depending on NATO dispersal actions and on the number of logistic and nonnuclear NATO targets to be destroyed in the initial strike. This initial strike would be a missile strike, likely followed by air reconnaissance and selected on-call strikes, and these in turn followed by missile restrikes and strikes on newly acquired targets.<sup>30</sup>

The magnitude and severity of the Soviet nuclear strike probably would be adjusted to complement the effects of initial sabotage, conventional, and other operations. The weather and NATO effectiveness in camouflaging its positions and otherwise countering Warsaw Pact intelligence and reconnaissance efforts would also influence the strike. While the strike would be massive, it is important to understand that its size would reflect only the desire to achieve strategic results. A mass strike can be as few as several score weapons.<sup>31</sup> It would probably appear to be indiscriminate from a Western perspective. But such a reaction does not mean that cities would have been attacked. The population does not appear to be a primary Soviet target. Soviet targets do include government and administration centers, logistic and industrial capabilities, and military forces, but, as a general rule, not population centers distinct from these. Soviet targeting, to the extent that it can be divined from the Soviets' doctrinal literature, is designed to win the war militarily, to preserve the values of an ordered society in the territory that they intend to capture in the course of the war, and to not interfere with their own military operations. Moreover, the use of nuclear weapons is to be minimized—i.e., one does not waste nuclear weapons. Where other means are available and more appropriate, they would be preferred.<sup>32</sup>

There is also the possibility that the war might not begin as a nuclear war, but rather as a conventional war or, more correctly,

with an initial conventional phase.<sup>33</sup> This possibility had emerged clearly in the Soviet military literature by 1965.<sup>34</sup> The idea of a conventional phase bears careful scrutiny to assess its possible meaning and implications and, equally important, to avoid drawing erroneous conclusions.

There appear to be several motivations behind the emergence of the conventional phase in Soviet strategy and training. First there is the possibility that the Soviets reacted to the United States' shift in policy in 1961 to "put the nuclear genie back in the bottle." US thinking in the early 1960s, and then NATO doctrine in 1968, acknowledged the clear possibility of a conventional phase, although the subject was viewed with considerable circumspection. Second, and quite possibly related to this new US outlook, the Soviets had concluded that the United States would not use nuclear weapons in limited engagements in Europe, that is, in a conflict over Berlin or in a conflict confined to the NATO flanks.<sup>35</sup> Accordingly, the Soviets in the mid-1960s began to develop contingency plans for conventional wars in these areas. Third, they began to realize that the nuclear pendulum had swung too far, that too much reliance was being placed on nuclear weapons, that is, nuclear weapons were being asked to do the whole job. To redress this problem, they increased emphasis on non-nuclear unit operations, under the rationale that nuclear weapons might not be available, owing to NATO actions, or might not be usable because their use would interfere with Warsaw Pact operations, or would destroy areas the Soviets wanted to preserve for their own use; thus, the war might be fought using only conventional means for some time.<sup>36</sup> This emphasis on conventional *unit and subunit* operations was not, however, a shift away from nuclear war planning. It merely recognized the importance of conventional operations, *independent of whether the war itself is nuclear or conventional.*<sup>37</sup>

A final comment regarding the conventional phase concerns its relation to nuclear warfare. Because of the potential decisiveness of nuclear weapons and the fact that both sides would have a nuclear

capability and a nuclear doctrine, even a "conventional" phase, in Soviet planning, is dominated by its potential for suddenly terminating should nuclear weapons be introduced by either side. Thus, should a war begin with a conventional phase, the Soviet strategy and posture would still be basically nuclear. The main missions would be basically the same, as would the targets. And the war would be fought with the expectation that it could turn to nuclear war at any moment. If that expectation were realized, the transition to nuclear warfare could then be made as smoothly and rapidly as possible.<sup>38</sup>

### THE MAIN ATTACK

Soviet strategy calls for a high-speed offensive.<sup>39</sup> The Soviets' objective would be to advance into NATO's rear area before NATO could employ nuclear weapons, disrupting NATO mobilization and troop movements. In this assault, a wide variety of forces and weapons would be employed. In the rear area, Spetsnaz sabotage operations would be well underway. Similarly, airborne and seaborne assault teams would operate in advance of and in cooperation with advancing units. The primary advancing units would be battalions or regiments whose missions would not be to engage the main enemy forces, but rather to advance into the enemy's rear area as swiftly as possible.<sup>40</sup> Frontal aviation, in addition to combating NATO tactical aviation, would support these advancing units.

The major tasks would be to destroy NATO nuclear power, seize important logistic choke points, prevent industrial and military mobilization, capture or destroy NATO ground forces, disable air defenses, destroy the leadership, and install new "progressive" regimes.<sup>41</sup> Several aspects of this plan are of particular significance because they rarely are accounted for in Western studies of theater nuclear war.

- One is the intense initial battle that would be waged against NATO command, control, communications, and intelligence (C<sup>3</sup>I), both to prevent effective force

utilization and because C<sup>3</sup>I is seen as the vulnerable dimension of most NATO nuclear capabilities. The Soviets have worked up a model of NATO C<sup>3</sup>I in detail and have thereby determined the required nature and extent of damage each communications link, node, and command-and-control facility must receive to disable NATO command and control. All kinds of forces would be used in this attack—sabotage teams, airborne assault teams, and advancing lead battalions, using both conventional and chemical weapons, as well as electronic countermeasures.<sup>42</sup> If the Soviet efforts were to succeed, most NATO C<sup>3</sup>I would be destroyed or effectively suppressed within a few hours.

- Another aspect of the plan given inadequate attention in Western studies is the number and diversity of independent small-unit operations that would be conducted in NATO rear areas—sabotage, airborne assault, and seaborne assault. As an indication of the size of the problem, a number of different authorities have estimated that several hundred sabotage and reconnaissance squads would be operating in NATO rear areas. In addition, almost every Soviet military unit of regimental size and above now has attached airborne assault teams to operate in advance of the unit.<sup>43</sup> Further, higher-level commands have airborne regiments, brigades, and divisions to insert deep in NATO rear areas at the start of the war. The war in the rear will be as tough as the war at the front.

- A third aspect too often overlooked is chemical warfare, especially during a conventional phase.<sup>44</sup> The Warsaw Pact has an immense stockpile of chemical munitions, is well prepared to use them, understands their advantages, and recognizes NATO's lack of preparedness to cope with their use.<sup>45</sup> Against numerous targets, chemical weapons can be far more effective than conventional munitions—on a par with small nuclear weapons but without the attendant side effects. Chemical weapons might make the Soviet high-speed offense work because they could disable NATO defenses quickly and effectively without posing a severe logistical burden on the Warsaw Pact. The principle

chemical targets would be NATO airfields (both military and civilian), supply depots, port facilities, command-and-control facilities that do not have chemical-protective filters, NATO nuclear missiles, ground forces, logistic choke points, forward-defense positions, and cities.

• A fourth aspect is the nuclear strike. Considering the importance of the strike, it is amazing how little attention it receives in the West from an operational or strategic perspective. One problem may be that most of the analysis on such a strike is based on exercise intercepts and therefore is done at the classified level. On the other hand, there is ample data in the unclassified literature on Soviet operations and nuclear targeting strategy from which representative scenarios and strategies could be constructed.<sup>46</sup> A second problem may be the general Western approach, in which planning seems to end from the time that the war would go nuclear. Thus, little attention is directed to the nature of the nuclear strike, and the critical Soviet concept of exploitation is almost never addressed.<sup>47</sup> A third problem is that the West thinks mostly in terms of deterrence, with the result that the Western analysis effort is focused on counting systems and sizing warheads. Some effort also is focused on targets, but almost none centers on nuclear operations or strategy.<sup>48</sup>

The first-priority targets of the Soviet nuclear strike would be known nuclear warheads and delivery systems.<sup>49</sup> The most important of these would be the NATO quick-reaction-alert strike force, other nuclear-delivery-capable aviation, all naval forces, and the French intermediate-range ballistic missile sites. The highest-priority targets probably would be the nuclear carriers and, second, the major airbases on land. There would also be an intense effort to destroy NATO undersea assets, including their communications. Ports harboring combatant ships would also be struck. Finally, command-and-control headquarters, intelligence centers, and administrative centers of special importance would be prime candidates for initial nuclear strikes.<sup>50</sup> Troop-movement logistics would be cut to hamper

NATO deployments. Elements of NATO's logistic structure that could be used to support the high-speed Soviet advance would be preserved if possible.<sup>51</sup>

When should NATO expect such a strike? When NATO is least prepared, when the strike might otherwise be least expected, or when it would be to the Soviets' greatest advantage. From the Soviet perspective, there seem to be two obvious times when a strike would be most feasible.

The first is at the start of the war. This time would be the most opportune for the Soviets if NATO has not gone on alert or dispersed its forces. In this case, the targets would be well identified, and the strike would be able to destroy quickly all or most of NATO's nuclear capability in one blow. Under such circumstances, it would seem bad military judgment not to strike at the start and capitalize on the opportunity.<sup>52</sup> A possible scenario for such a case might be an emerging US-Soviet crisis, not involving NATO, in some other area of the world, that erupts into a general war that would eventually have to include Europe.

The second obvious time is coincident with or in anticipation of a breakthrough by Warsaw Pact forces into NATO territory. A possible scenario in this case might begin with a deepening crisis in which NATO and Warsaw Pact forces go on alert, disperse, and deploy. Many targets and forces would have moved, and a nuclear strike at this point in time would be ineffective. The Soviets have estimated that over 70 percent of the targets might be "lost" at this point in the scenario. Further, the ground forces would not be ready to exploit the strike—they would be ready to attack, but not to exploit the strike. Under these circumstances, from the Soviet perspective, the war might profitably begin with a conventional phase.<sup>53</sup> A war begun with conventional operations would provide the opportunity to conduct massive air reconnaissance in order to recover targets, to insert behind-the-lines forces, to disable NATO C<sup>3</sup>I, and to reduce NATO nuclear capabilities. Lead Soviet regiments could advance against NATO covering forces, break through, identify main points of

resistance (targets), and prepare to exploit a nuclear strike. After all of that has taken place, or in anticipation of it, the second obvious logical time for the Soviets to execute a massive nuclear strike would be at hand. This could be as early as five hours into the battle or as late as a day or two.

At this time, it is also possible that the Soviets might decide against executing a nuclear strike. A decision not to strike, however, would not be based upon the fact that things were going well for them, if indeed they were. If things are going well, the tendency expressed in Soviet military thought is to strike earlier, not later.<sup>54</sup> A more logical reason for not executing a strike at this time would be that NATO nuclear forces are already disabled, NATO defense forces are in a state of disarray,<sup>55</sup> and European governments are in a condition of what has been referred to as preemptive surrender.

Would the strike end the war? Would there be anything left worth fighting for after the strike? As already explained, the nuclear strike, while designed to be decisive, is also designed with full awareness of the effects of nuclear weapons and with the objective of preserving the values of the territory. In general, military needs will come first, but even extremely important military targets can be excepted for political reasons—or attacked with other weapons.

There are many specific indications in Soviet printed matter of Soviet interest in reducing unwanted or unnecessary damage—for example, the use of multiple small weapons rather than one big one, the use of minimum yields where possible, the selection of yields that will only put facilities out of commission rather than destroy them, and avoidance of ground or low-altitude bursts. There is also considerable concern over damage, such as rubble, tree blow-down, fire storms, and floods, that could hinder the maneuver of Soviet military forces. In fact, it has even been proposed that all nuclear employments in front of a ground-force commander's area of operation be subject to his approval. And, rather than attack whole target sets, the Soviets stress the need to identify and attack only critical branches.

This "systems approach" can be found in many Soviet targeting discussions.<sup>56</sup>

On the other hand, Soviet concern for damage is certainly different from Western concern. Ten million or 50 million casualties would not seem to be of great import—except as a decrease in the labor force available to reconstruct damaged areas, especially those in socialist countries. Moreover, the Soviet approach to assessing damage is believed to be more one of examining ratios than absolute numbers. In other words, what would be of prime concern to the Soviets would be the relative damage done to the Western European subcontinent, not the absolute damage considered in isolation from that which remained undamaged.

Overall there would be considerable damage, but far, far less than what is often implied would be the case. There might even be only limited fallout. There is considerable concern over fallout, but in general there are very few targets in NATO that would seem to justify a low-altitude burst. While weapons would be widely employed by both strategic and tactical systems, there would be care taken to avoid damage considered undesirable from the Soviet military or political points of view. This concern probably would not affect the targeting of NATO nuclear capabilities, however, whose destruction is the immediate strategic priority of all forces, means, and plans.

- Another aspect of Soviet strategy that is generally neglected in Western studies of theater nuclear war is the composite effect when all the activities that have been discussed here take place concurrently. There is only one place where attention has been given to this very significant point—in Warsaw Pact operations planning. Western studies examine many individual aspects of the problem, but rarely the whole problem. The orchestration of many forces and means, however, is a critical component of Soviet strategy,<sup>57</sup> and one that needs to be understood in order to establish an effective defense or plan a counteroffensive that will meet with success.

- A final aspect is the Soviet defensive preparations that have been undertaken to

offset the effects of NATO's nuclear weapons. Actions have been taken to protect, especially, the Warsaw Pact's C<sup>3</sup>I, nuclear capability, air and ground forces, and combat support. There is considerable redundancy built into the Warsaw Pact force structure. Mobility, essential for high-speed advance, also provides a capability for dispersal and nuclear-defense maneuvers, which are planned to take place when the war goes, or is expected to go, nuclear. Supplies have been stockpiled for an extended war—up to 90 days (by which time the Soviets plan to have recovered military industry).<sup>58</sup> Ample amounts of these supplies are to be positioned far forward to minimize the logistic burden.<sup>59</sup> Israeli forces have recently recovered enough Soviet war stocks, hidden in deep cellars and galleries in Damour, Lebanon, to equip five or six divisions, ten times the volume previously reported by Israeli intelligence. These stockpiles provide further insight into Soviet forward-positioning capabilities and intent.<sup>60</sup>

To confuse and mislead NATO nuclear targeting, the Soviets place major emphasis on cover, concealment, and deception. Targets would be hidden through the use of camouflage, intelligent use of the terrain (including towns), communications security, and underground installations, which number in the hundreds in Eastern Europe and are used for a variety of purposes, such as truck and tank storage; petroleum product storage; aircraft operations and maintenance; command, control and administration centers; medical facilities; munitions production; and so forth. In addition to the employment of extensive cover and concealment measures, considerable emphasis is placed on the development of false targets, whose purpose is to distract enemy intelligence and to draw fire, especially nuclear fire. The techniques discussed most often in this regard are electronic—false emitters; bogus command, control, and communications centers; and the widespread use of radar reflectors to simulate military units and such man-made features as bridges.<sup>61</sup> Considering the dependency of NATO target acquisition on various electronic capabilities, these types of measures

could introduce considerable confusion into NATO nuclear targeting, exactly as they are intended to do.

#### IN SUM

These are the principal aspects of Soviet strategy and techniques for theater nuclear war. Overall, this strategy probably can be characterized simply as one of offense and territorial conquest, capitalizing on the strongest capabilities of all weapons and forces acting in concert. It is a decisive and short-war-oriented strategy, but one that recognizes the prospect of extended conflict. As indicated earlier, preparations to support this strategy have been underway since the mid-1960s when the Soviets shifted to a first-strike strategy, although the initial planning began in the mid-1950s. Such measured progress reflects the close bond between doctrine and capabilities in Soviet strategy and another of their principles of military art, which cautions that goals and plans must fully conform to the situation and be commensurate with one's own forces and means, as well as taking into account those of the enemy.

In the 1950s, the Soviets adopted a new doctrine, a new strategy, and accompanying tactics and equipment requirements. In the 1960s, the strategy and tactics were refined, incorporating a flexibility needed as a by-product of an emerging Soviet military superiority. In the 1970s, the Soviets focused on combat readiness, stressing equipment, training, command, and control. In effect, the 1970s was a decade of making the theory work, and if one were to single out the primary focus, it probably would be on what the West refers to as command and control. Given sufficient systems and forces, command and control is the key to making the combined-arms concept work.

Looking forward into the mid- and late 1980s, one should expect this pattern to continue, with increased attention placed on command and command independence, on operations at the regiment and reinforced-battalion levels, on the coordinated employment of weapons and subunits, and on

individual soldier training.<sup>62</sup> The basic concepts of surprise, the offensive, high-speed advance, and the use of all forces and means throughout the depth of the theater will likely continue to be emphasized, with detailed attention placed on the effective use of new technologies such as high-accuracy delivery systems, highly effective chemical and biological weapons, computers, and electronics of all varieties.

#### NOTES

1. Interview with General Major Jan Sejna.
2. The first analysis of this shift is Herbert S. Dinerstein's "The Revolution in Soviet Strategic Thinking," *Foreign Affairs*, 36 (January 1958).
3. See Joseph D. Douglass, Jr., and Amoretta M. Hoeber, *Conventional War and Escalation: The Soviet View*, National Strategy Information Center (New York: Crane Russak & Company, 1982), for a more detailed discussion.
4. William R. Kintner and Harriet Fast Scott, *The Nuclear Revolution in Soviet Military Affairs* (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1968).
5. Interview with General Major Jan Sejna. This evolution of Soviet military strategy is treated in greater detail in Joseph D. Douglass, Jr., *Soviet Military Strategy in Europe* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1980).
6. "Strategic" as used by the Soviets does not refer just to ICBMs but rather to any items of paramount importance in the implementation of effective military strategy, which itself is simply defined as the art of winning wars.
7. V. Ye. Savkin, *Basic Principles of Operational Art and Tactics (A Soviet View)*, number 4 in the series *Soviet Military Thought* (Washington: GPO, 1974), pp. 248, 253, 255.
8. I. G. Pavlovskiy, "In the Battles for the Motherland," *Izvestiya*, 13 March 1975, trans. US Air Force, *Soviet Press Selected Translations*, no. 75-5 (May 1975), p. 25.
9. *Marxism-Leninism on War and Army* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972; rpt. Washington: GPO, 1976), p. 12.
10. Douglass and Hoeber, pp. 17-23, 45-51.
11. The initial nuclear strike is discussed in great detail in Douglass, pp. 70-79.
12. See General Major N. Vasendin and Colonel N. Kuznetsov, "Modern Warfare and Surprise Attack," *Voyennaya mysl'*, (No. 6, 1968), FPD translation 0005/69, 16 January 1969.
13. Savkin, pp. 230-40.
14. General Major V. Kruschinin, "Contemporary Strategic Theory on the Goals and Missions of Armed Conflict," *Voyennaya mysl'* (No. 10, 1963), FDD translation 965, 20 July 1966, p. 18; reprinted in *Selected Readings from Military Thought 1963-1973, Studies in Communist Affairs*, Vol. 5, Pt. 1 (Washington: GPO, 1982). See also M. M. Kir'yan, "Surprise," *Soviet Military Encyclopedia*, Vol. 2 (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1976).
15. General Major V. Zemskov, "Wars of the Modern Era," *Voyennaya mysl'* (No. 5, 1969), FPD translation 0117/69, 18 December 1969, p. 61. See also Douglass and Hoeber, pp. 44, 48.
16. Vasendin and Kuznetsov, p. 46.
17. Colonel M. P. Skirido, *The People, The Army, The Commander (A Soviet View)*, number 14 in the series *Soviet Military Thought* (Washington: GPO, 1978), p. 76; Colonel General N. A. Lomov, ed., *Scientific-Technical Progress and the Revolution in Military Affairs (A Soviet View)* (Moscow: n.p., 1973), number 3 in the series *Soviet Military Thought* (Washington: GPO, 1974), p. 147; and General Major A. S. Milovidov, ed., *The Philosophical Heritage of V. I. Lenin and Problems of Contemporary War* (Moscow: n.p., 1972), number 5 in the series *Soviet Military Thought* (Washington: GPO, 1974), p. 261.
18. See, for example, General Headquarters of the Czechoslovak People's Army Working Group No. 2 according to Ministry of Defense Order No. 4, *Analysis of the Intelligence Sector*, circa 1967, DIA translation LN 431-79, 4 December 1979.
19. Colonel M. Shirokov, "The Question of Influence on the Military and Economic Potential of Warring States," *Voyennaya mysl'* (No. 4, 1968), FPD translation 0052/69; reprinted in *Selected Readings from Military Thought 1963-1973, Studies in Communist Affairs*, Vol. 5, Pt. 1 (Washington: GPO, 1982); for excerpts, see Leon Goure and Michael J. Deane, "The Soviet Strategic View," *Strategic Review*, 8 (Winter 1980), 81-83. See also Douglass, pp. 70-79, 139-46.
20. Colonel A. A. Sidorenko, *The Offensive (A Soviet View)*, number 1 in the series *Soviet Military Thought* (Washington: GPO, 1973).
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22. Marshal V. D. Sokolovskiy, *Soviet Military Strategy*, edited with analysis and commentary by Harriet Fast Scott (New York: Crane Russak and Company, 1968), p. 306.
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25. See, for example, Chapman Pincher, *Their Trade is Treachery* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1981), p. 181; John J. Dziak, "Soviet Intelligence and Security Services in the Eighties: The Paramilitary Dimension," *Orbis*, 24 (Winter 1981), 771-86; and Aleksei Myagkov, "Soviet Sabotage Training for World War III," *Soviet Analyst*, 20 December 1979 and 9 January 1980.
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28. See, for example, Colonel M. Shirokov, "Military Geography at the Present Stage," *Voyennaya mysl'* (No. 11, 1966), FPD translation 0730/67, p. 59; reprinted in *Selected Readings from Military Thought 1963-1973, Studies in Communist Affairs*, Vol. 5, Pt. 1 (Washington: GPO, 1982); and Admiral V. Andreyev, "The Subdivision and Classification of Theaters of Military Operation," *Voyennaya mysl'* (No. 11, 1964), FDD translation 924, 20 June 1965.
29. See Douglass, pp. 134-46.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 100-04.
31. General Major G. Biryukov and Colonel G. Melnikov, *Antitank Warfare* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972), p. 105; see also Douglass and Hoeber, pp. 42-44.
32. Shirokov, pp. 33-39; and Colonel D. Samorukov, "Combat Operations Involving Conventional Means of Destruction," *Voyennaya mysl'* (No. 8, 1967), FPD translation 0125/68, 26 April 1968, pp. 60-61.
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