STUDY PROJECT

GORBACHEV'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIET MILITARY: CONSENSUS OR CONFLICT?

BY

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An Individual Study Project

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ABSTRACT

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Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary of the CPSU in March 1985. Almost immediately he began a restructuring of the Soviet economy. His perestroika program, to include the twin pillars of glasnost and demokratizatsiya, was necessary to ensure that the Soviet Union remained competitive with the West. The restructuring has unleashed unforeseen turmoil in the republics of the USSR and in Eastern Europe. The Soviet General Staff has reacted warily to these developments and to the force structure and budget reductions which are a part of perestroika. Initially, there was resigned acceptance of the cuts and need to divert military resources to the civilian sector of the economy. After five years of sacrifices, however, perestroika has failed to achieve measurable improvements. As a result, the General Staff is now resisting calls for additional sacrifices by the armed forces. They desire a more cautious, controlled approach as regards internal changes in relations with Eastern Europe. Such a course seems particularly prudent at this juncture as the perceived NATO threat has not appreciably decreased. Given the increasing opposition to his policies from both the left and the right, Gorbachev will need the military's support to stay in power and to effectively implement perestroika. Such support is, however, unlikely. The military will increasingly resist restructuring, glasnost and democratization and will seek allies in the conservative wing of the CPSU, who share similar views. Such an alliance will further undermine and jeopardize Gorbachev's already tenuous political position.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GORBACHEV'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIET MILITARY: CONSENSUS OR CONFLICT?

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since coming to power in March 1985, General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev has proposed and begun to implement a reform program (i.e. perestroika) which, if successful, will have a fundamental impact on the nature of the Soviet Union.[1]

The success or failure of many aspects of perestroika will hinge on Gorbachev's ability to convince the Soviet military that the long-term benefits of restructuring are worth the short-term sacrifices in defense. The General Secretary's efforts to assuage and co-opt the General Staff are not proceeding smoothly, despite the fact that the party and military generally share the same vision of the future -- an era in which the Soviet Union is a truly multifaceted superpower. Initially, the military accepted the sacrifices associated with restructuring, for the promises associated with a stronger industrial-technical base.[2] However, as Gorbachev has further refined his objectives, calling for additional sacrifices by the defense establishment, he has encountered increasing resistance from influential elements in the

military. After five years of supporting perestroika, the General Staff has not realized any measurable benefits. As a result, they have serious reservations about accepting new forfeitures, particularly as restructuring unleashes additional turmoil in the Soviet republics and Eastern Europe. Their concerns are reinforced by the widely held view that the NATO threat has not appreciably diminished.

It is important to keep these growing disagreements between Gorbachev and the military in proper perspective. Given the latter's acknowledged responsibilities in matters of national security and its role in the formation of the military-technical aspects of Soviet military doctrine, it is to be anticipated that the officer corps would voice its opinions about certain aspects of perestroika. In this sense, the party expects the military to perform a socratic function in the legitimization of Gorbachev's policies.[3]

It is also important to emphasize that:[4]

> the military lacks the political power to launch an independent campaign against the new political thinking on security. As in war, men in uniform may be on the front lines, but elements of the political leadership are in command.

Further, the current military response to perestroika has been split along what might be called branch and generational lines. Since the military's views are fragmented, they are less threatening to the political leadership.[5]

While the above factors argue against a "military coup," the increasing intensity and scope of the General Staff's criticisms of perestroika, and the wide publicity they are receiving suggests high-level political backing and encouragement from certain elements within the party.

As noted at the outset of this chapter, Gorbachev needs the support, or at a minimum the acquiescence, of the defense establishment if perestroika is to succeed.[6] This is becoming more important as the program fails to achieve timely, measurable returns and as objectives are slipped to some ill-defined date in the future.

The military could pose a significant threat to Gorbachev, if it were to side with other disgruntled elements in the Central Committee and Politburo. Gorbachev is astute enough politically to recall history and to understand that his position is precarious.

The remainder of this paper is designed to substantiate the foregoing propositions by analyzing the current relationship between Gorbachev and the Soviet military. The assessment will also attempt to provide some reasoned predictions about what the future may hold.

ENDNOTES

1. It should be understood from the outset that Gorbachev's perestroika is meant to reform the Soviet system, not abolish it. The General Secretary clearly understands that there is a fundamental dichotomy between the Soviet Union's command economy and the imperatives associated with the scientific-technological revolution. Perestroika is the architecture for handling these imperatives, in a manner which will allow the Soviet Union to retain its superpower status.

2. Jacob W. Kipp, "Perestroika and Order: Alternative Futures and Their Impact on The Soviet Military," Military Review, December 1989, p. 9. See also Alexander Rahr, "New Thinking Takes Hold in Foreign-Policy Establishment," Report on the USSR, 6 January 1989, p. 4.

3. For a discussion of the so-called three stage model of Soviet decision-making see R. Hyland Phillips and Jeffrey I. Sands, "Reasonable Sufficiency and Soviet Conventional Defense," International Security, Fall 1988, p. 166.

4. Stephen M. Meyer, "The Sources and Prospects of Gorbachev's New Political Thinking on Security," International Security, Fall 1988, p. 133.

5. Dale R. Herspring, "The Soviet Military and Change," Survival, July/August 1989, pp. 324-326.

6. It can easily be argued that the military is more important and influential in the perestroika equation due to its extensive claim on resources and because of its pivotal role in defending the national security interests of the Soviet Union.

CHAPTER II

THE INSTITUTIONAL SETTING

Since the creation of the Soviet state, there has been a debate among Kremlinologists about the nature of the relationship between the civilian (party) leadership and the military high command. While theories are numerous, two pre-eminent schools of thought, representing diametrically opposed views, have emerged during the past twenty-five years.

One school of thought is admirably represented by Odom, Cotton, and Green.[1] Sometimes referred to as proponents of the totalitarian model, they believe that there is no intrinsic disagreement between the party and military over goals and objectives.[2] Accordingly, a symbiosis or community of interests exists and supposed differences, as gleaned primarily from Soviet publications, are exaggerated and misconstrued. Adherents of this school are convinced that:[3]

> the Soviet military is part and parcel of both the Soviet national ethos and the world communist movement, and that Western concepts of struggles between Kremlin 'hawks' and 'doves,' and of the military as an element distinct from the party are specious and misleading.

After all, officers are members of the party who share power, prerogatives, and privileges precisely because of their party membership.

Odom goes much further in arguing that the notion of conflict between the civilian and military elites is a function of someone's analytical aberration. He posits five assumptions to substantiate this view.[4]

1. The military is an administrative arm of the party, not separate from and competing with it.*

2. The party-military relationship has symbiotic aspects in domestic politics.

3. The military is first and foremost a political institution, closely tied to the party structure and value system.

4. The military's political life is bureaucratic in character, not parliamentarian and not lobbyist.

5. A mechanistic factor is at work to make top-level military policymaking distinct from decisionmaking at the lower levels.

The other school of thought concerning the relationship between the party and military is eloquently represented by Kolkowicz, Tatu and Conquest.[5] These scholars argue that the relationship is one of tension, contradictory objectives, shifting alliances and, at times, intrigue. This school

* Odom's view is not only technically incorrect but, as my later comments will indicate, substantively questionable.

believes that party leaders are genuinely concerned about a military threat to their political hegemony. The dilemma is how to effectively control this potential adversary, while ensuring it defends the state and actively supports national security goals. Various schemes (to include purging and political officers) have been utilized by the civilian leadership to guarantee loyalty and eliminate military elitism or detachment from society.

Despite the party's concerted efforts to subordinate the military, the trend since Stalin's death has favored a more independent defense establishment. In particular, the requirements associated with technology and specialization have tended to increase the military's prerogatives and prestige. The officer corps has also become more monolithic in its outlook and more indispensable as regards national security.

Kolkowicz believes there are five traits which are intrinsic to any professional military organization, but abhorrent to the party:[6]

1. The military considers itself an elitist element while the party requires equalitarianism.

2. The military desires professional autonomy while the civilian leadership demands subordination to ideology.

3. The military is imbued with a sense of nationalism while the party espouses proletarian internationalism.

4. The military desires detachment while the party requires social involvement.

5. The military believes in the importance of heroic symbolism while the party prefers anonymity.

An analysis of these antithetical traits leads Kolkowicz to two primary conclusions, which are universally shared by members of the "Conflict School":[7]

* There is an intrinsic and irrevocable separation between the civilian leadership and the military. The antagonisms inherent in this cleavage have been stifled by the party's ubiquitous control over the high command. However, the differences will inevitably play a role in eventual changes in the political system.

* In order to ensure efficiency and effectiveness, the military must be autonomous. The party's control system denies this independence and, as a result, sacrifices capabilities. This inevitably breeds tension.

Which of the two school of thought concerning the nature of the party-military relationship is right? The truth probably lies someplace in the middle or along a continuum where each school's theses may be correct for a given period

of time. In the aggregate, however, the basic tenets of the Conflict School have proven to be fairly accurate weather vanes of developments within the Soviet Union. This is not to say that the Totalitarian Model has no relevance. It too provides an effective frame of reference and has helped eliminate some of the harsh hyperbole and questionable conclusions of the Conflict School.

My own view is that the differences between the party and military have, historically, been numerous and, at times, severe. As the analysis will show, this is particularly the case as regards Gorbachev's perestroika program. At the same time, it is important to emphasize that these two conflict prone institutions have generally been able to arrive at a modus vivendi before disagreements become unmanageable. It is also evident that consensus on key domestic and foreign policy issues is the norm rather than the exception. One must remember that the military is not a totally homogeneous group. Programs and policies that produce negative attitudes in one element often generate positive support in another. The military certainly has reasons to both support and fear the consequences of Gorbachev's policies and their statements and actions indicate such ambivalence, anxieties and confusion.

The foregoing caveats aside, it is important to conclude by noting that party-military cooperation and consensus tends to breakdown during periods of stress or rapid change. With the passage of time and the increase in perestroika - generated turmoil, the military has increasingly sought to exercise an independent voice and has tended to side with and support those more conservative elements within the political elite that share similar views, concerns and objectives. Generally, Gorbachev has been able to contain the military's resistance by manipulating the personnel system: he has promoted his supporters into key military positions and has removed antagonists.

The key, as Atkeson points out, is not to dismiss the military "as a potentially significant factor in Soviet policymaking. No leader or group at the top of the Soviet political structure can disregard the military dimension without risk."[8] To date, Gorbachev has been able to avoid this pitfall but as problems mount, his ability to pacify the military and other discontented elements within the party may jeopardize the essence of perestroika and/or his own position.*

* Gorbachev's unique dilemma as the advocate for perestroika is to maintain the party's traditional dominance over the military, while not alienating the military to the extent that they ally themselves to some competing, conservative element within the party hierarchy.

ENDNOTES

1. William E. Odom, "The Party Connection," Problems of Communism, September-October 1973, pp. 12-26. Timothy Cotton, Commissars, Commanders and Civilian Authority. William C. Green, "Are There 'Hawks' and 'Doves' in the Soviet Leadership?" Strategic Review, Winter 1987, pp. 31-42.

2. Jerry F. Hough, "Gorbachev Consolidating Power," Problems of Communism, July-August, pp. 21-43.

3. Edward B. Atkeson, "Perestroika and the Soviet Armed Forces," Army, December 1989, p. 20.

4. Odom, "Party Connection," pp. 23-25.

5. Roman Kolkowicz, The Soviet Military and the Communist Party. Michel Tatu, Power in the Kremlin: From Khrushchev to Kosygin, trans. Helen Katel. Robert Conquest, Power and Policy in the USSR: The Study of Soviet Dynastics.

6. Odom, "Party Connection," pp. 14-16 and Kolkowicz, pp. 21-28.

7. Odom, "Party Connection," pp. 13-14.

8. Atkeson, p. 20.

CHAPTER III

THE BREZHNEV LEGACY

In order to fully appreciate Gorbachev's program and the nature of his relationship with the defense establishment, it is necessary to review the legacy of his predecessor, Leonid Brezhnev.

The first half of the Brezhnev era has been aptly described as the "golden age" for the Soviet military.[1] From 1964 to approximately 1976, the high command enjoyed almost unlimited access to resources and considerable freedom in matters of military strategy. Defense-related R&D, procurement and the fielding of new weapons systems proceeded at a rapid, uninterrupted pace. Gone were the days of Khrushchev's "hare-brained" unilateral reductions, intrusive dabbling in military-technical matters and overreliance on strategic nuclear forces.

In my view, it is likely that the Soviet high command's support of Brezhnev was an important element in Khrushchev's demise. Brezhnev was probably seen as the best option among the various party contenders - - an individual who would likely pave the way for improved military - civilian relations.

In retrospect, the specific early policies of Brezhnev met all of the military's expectations:

* Defense spending grew at an average rate of 4-5 percent per year from 1965 to 1975.[2]

* Policy statements (for both internal and external consumption) clearly called for a strengthening of the Soviet armed forces and sacrifices on the part of the populace to ensure military preparedness.

* Civilian leaders who criticized the military buildup were silenced or dismissed.[3]

* To correct the force structure imbalances generated by Khrushchev's policies, strategic nuclear forces no longer received the lion's share of funding; emphasis was now placed on improving ground forces, the navy, and air forces.

* Under Khrushchev, war had become "less thinkable." Now doctrine returned to its traditional emphasis on war-fighting and war-winning, even in a nuclear environment.

* The General Staff gained a new role in the formulation and execution of the socio-political element of military doctrine.

* Political interference in purely military matters was kept to a minimum and criticism of the General Staff was muted.

In sum, Brezhnev sponsored an atmosphere of cooperation with the military, replacing the acrimonious approach fostered

by Khrushchev. The suspicions of the military's innate Bonapartism became a thing of the past, as the military again found its place in the senior civilian councils of the party and government.[4] Brezhnev was ushering in an era where an organic civil-military symbiosis had been achieved that insured harmony between two historically separate entities. Further, the Soviet Union was becoming a state in which power was concentrated in the hands of a,[5]

> military-industrial complex in which the military enjoyed first claim on resources, and in which policy was increasingly directed toward militaristic, or at least militarily oriented, goals.

The civilian leadership now found itself in a position where its decisions could be challenged by the General Staff.

While such an assessment might be substantiated up to 1975, the data available beginning in 1976 clearly indicates that Brezhnev and other senior political leaders began to implement policies which ran counter to military interests.* Further, this evidence corroborates the view that the relationship between the military and civilian elites was returning to a nonsymbiotic state characterized by tension and

* The change in policies was an outgrowth of economic problems, which required the military's resource allocations to be reduced.

conflict, with the party clearly in ascendancy. Brezhnev's post-1976 policies were the precursor and foundation for many of Gorbachev's efforts. Indeed, a distinct continuum is evident, particularly concerning resource allocation.

The first indication that the nature of the military-civilian relationship was undergoing a change came with the April 1976 selection of Dimitri Ustinov as Defense Minister, following the death of Marshal Grechko. This appointment has to be construed as a "blow to the high command" and signified that the military had lost a significant spokesman and avenue of redress in higher party councils.[6]

A second and much more important change in the military-party relationship came in the area of resource allocations: as a result of the general slowdown in the rate of economic growth, the military was to receive less money. Further, the manner in which the high command spent what it received was to be more carefully scrutinized and managed by the civilian leadership.[7]

Brezhnev set the stage for reducing the military's share of the budget as early as 1974 and more clearly delineated reductions in the Tenth Five-Year Plan (1976-1981). As a result of these actions, the military could no longer expect large annual increases in defense spending.[8] The decision to

begin shifting additional resources to the civilian sector reflected an awareness of the growing imbalances in the economy and concerns about heightened consumer dissatisfaction. Brezhnev's apprehensions forced him to "scrutinize the budget submissions of the military with unaccustomed rigor and seized upon Marshal Grechko's death as an opportunity to force the General Staff to accept a variety of 'savings'."[9]

As a result of Brezhnev's efforts, Soviet defense spending fell from 4.5 percent of the GNP per year to an average of approximately 2 percent per year during the latter half of the 1970's and early 1980's, "with virtually no increases in spending on military hardware."[10] While the Soviet military continued to garner some 15-20 percent of the GNP, the high command certainly understood that the golden age had come to an end and that the defense establishment would have to compete with the civilian sector for scarce resources.[11]

While the military must have been disturbed by these trends, Brezhnev's reassertion of party control over military doctrine was equally unsettling. The specter of Khrushchev's "hare-brained" schemes certainly came to mind.

Brezhnev's January 1977 speech in Tula signaled the beginning of revisions to some of the fundamental tenets of doctrine. More specifically, the General Secretary:[12]

- Questioned the winnability of nuclear war.
- Claimed the Soviet Union had already achieved invincibility.
- Suggested that capitalist states were no longer planning to attack the Soviet Union or its allies.
- Implied that it was pointless to seek strategic superiority.
- Displayed a readiness to renounce "first use" of nuclear weapons.
- Asserted that Soviet military doctrine was singularly defensive in nature.
- Suggested that the existing nuclear parity was tolerable and should not be upset.
- Asserted that forces sufficient to deter aggression were acceptable.

During the Tula speech, Brezhnev summed up his military views by noting that it was pointless to throw scarce resources into "the bottomless chasm of military preparations."[13]

While it can be argued that some of the Tula pronouncements were intended for external consumption, it is clear, when combined with trends in arms control negotiations and in the budget arena, that Brezhnev was embarked on a new

road, which would inevitably require the military to tighten its belt and to accept less in the way of resources. Additionally, if the party leadership prevailed in its programs, the military elite would have to make unwanted changes in force structure and strategy.

As evidenced by the content of the Eleventh Five-Year Plan (1981-1986) and the continued debates between the military and party leadership, Brezhnev's successor's, Yuri Andropov and Constantine Chernenko, basically reaffirmed and reinforced his policies from November 1982 to March 1985. Indeed, as Azrael points out, the national security aspects of Andropov's inaugural address could have been given by Brezhnev.[14] He pledged that civilian programs would continue to get the lion's share of resources.

The foregoing discussion indicates that Brezhnev and his political associates knew that Soviet economic growth was beginning to slow down. To rejuvenate the economy, fundamental changes in resource allocation would be necessary. Brezhnev's solution was to shift funds from defense to the civilian sector and to negotiate arms control agreements with the West.

In effect, Brezhnev began his own, albeit smaller, perestroika. It was left to Gorbachev to correctly assess the magnitude of Soviet economic problems and to conceptualize solutions on a grander scale.

ENDNOTES

1. Much of the analysis in this chapter is based on data in the following Rand study: Jeremy R. Azrael, The Soviet Civilian Leadership and the Military High Command, 1976-1986.

2. Ibid., p. 3, citing National Foreign Assessment Center, Estimated Soviet Defense Spending in Rubles, 1970-1975.

3. Harry Gelman, The Brezhnev Politburo and the Decline of Detente, pp. 80-83.

4. Strobe Talbott, Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament, pp. 1-53.

5. Azrael, p. 5.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., p. 7.

8. Ibid., pp. 6-7.

9. Ibid., p. 7.

10. Ibid. See also Rebecca Strode, "The Soviet Armed Forces: Adaptation to Resource Scarcity," Washington Quarterly, Spring 1986, p. 55.

11. Despite pressures from the General Staff, Brezhnev was committed to consumer satisfaction, because of its importance to political legitimacy. For further details see Strode, p. 57.

12. Leonid Brezhnev, "The International Situation: Peaceful Cooperation Between States," Vital Speeches of the Day, 15 February 1977, pp. 262-265. See also Edward L. Warner III, "New Thinking and Old Realities in Soviet Defense Policy," Survival, January/February 1989, pp. 13-33.

13. Azrael, p. 9.

14. Ibid., p. 27.

CHAPTER IV

GORBACHEV'S PERSONNEL POLICIES

The discussion of the Brezhnev era allows us to put the military policies and problems of Gorbachev into perspective. As should now be evident, it can be argued that many of the "new" concepts implemented by Gorbachev are merely an extension of the programs initiated by his predecessors. Indeed, the problems which caused the party to begin curtailing the resources provided to the military are essentially the same today, but have been exacerbated by time and the ineffectiveness of the initial civilian response. In effect, Gorbachev has been forced to radicalize the nature of the solution.

Brezhnev's success in handling conflicts with the military did not obviate a requirement for Gorbachev to develop his own modus vivendi with the high command, which insulated his political power base and paved the way for acceptance of his more radical solutions.

Available evidence concerning Gorbachev's early career strongly suggests that he, unlike Khrushchev and Brezhnev, did not have any close ties to a specific group of military

officers. In addition, his party responsibilities would have minimized his contacts with the General Staff.[1] It is likely, however, that four separate incidents left the new General Secretary with a healthy skepticism of the defense establishment's effectiveness and foreign policy acumen. These military embarrassing affairs included:[2]

* SS-20 deployments to Europe.
* The invasion of Afghanistan.
* The KAL-007 shoot-down.
* The Mathias Rust affair.

Shortly after Gorbachev became General Secretary, new language was added by the 27th Party Congress (February, 1986) to the Party Program which clearly established the party's leading role in all matters pertaining to defense, security, military policy and doctrine.[3]

Gorbachev also began, almost immediately, to ensure that those more likely to support his policies (younger, "unattached" officers) were placed in key military positions and those of questionable allegiance were removed.

This careful manipulation of the personnel system was initially designed to ensure that neither Marshals Petrov or Ogarkov, who wanted additional resources to be given to the

military, were elevated to more important military positions.[4]

Subsequently, the changes in the high command have been widespread:[5]

* By the spring of 1989, 15 of the 17 officers belonging to the prestigious Ministry of Defense Collegium had been replaced.
* Since 1988, Gorbachev has replaced all four TVD commanders.
* All fifteen military districts have new commanders.
* The commanders of the four Groups of Soviet Forces deployed in Eastern Europe and the four Soviet Naval Fleets have turned over.

Of the foregoing personnel changes, two are particularly noteworthy:

* On 28 May, 1987 Mathias Rust penetrated Soviet airspace and landed his small plane in Red Square. This highly embarrassing affair paved the way for replacing Minister of Defense Marshal Sokolov with General Dimitri Yazov. The latter has been a particularly outspoken supporter of perestroika, glasnost and democratization as applied to the military.[6]
* General Mikhail Moiseev's December, 1988 appointment as Chief of the General Staff capped Gorbachev's efforts to make the military more favorably disposed

to his "new thinking." Moiseev, with his limited experience in strategic policymaking matters, was elevated as a "watchdog" over a General Staff that was divided over policy issues.[7] In tandem with Moiseev's elevation over more senior, experienced officers, Gorbachev announced his unilateral cuts in force structure and reassigned Moiseev's predecessor, Marshal Sergei Akhromeev.[8]

In late December, Moiseev chaired a General Staff conference which was characterized by a high level of criticism and self-criticism relative to the effective implementation of Gorbachev's programs.[9]

Since assuming his new position, Moiseev has been a major supporter of Gorbachev's reforms, criticizing the pace of progress in implementing perestroika and castigating resistance to change. He has also attacked the General Staff's "inefficient organizational structure and excessive centralization."[10]

In effect, the net result of Moiseev's elevation has been significantly increased pressure on the military to toe the perestroika line. What conclusions can be drawn concerning the military personnel changes that have occurred since Gorbachev came to power. The following seem relevant:[11]

* Gorbachev has embarked upon a deliberate policy to appoint his supporters to key positions in the military, with the hope that they will support perestroika no matter what the costs.
* The high-rate of turnovers indicates that the civilian leadership has decided to reassert its control over the military in a thoroughgoing manner. The General Staff, in particular, was to have its prerogatives circumscribed.
* The magnitude of the changes indicates that Gorbachev was dissatisfied with the military's implementation of perestroika both in terms of pace and scope.
* Gorbachev has probably concluded that, as more radical military reforms become inevitable, it will be necessary to rely on younger, more independent professionals, who are solidly behind restructuring.
* The extensive turnovers also minimize the danger that the defense establishment will challenge Gorbachev.

Given the extent of the military "purge," Gorbachev has lessened the military's opposition to perestroika. But this victory may be a temporary one. The reform program has, thus far, failed to achieve tangible, positive results, but has continued to generate a multitude of adverse consequences. As

a result, many of Gorbachev's staunchest military supporters are becoming increasingly negative about the long term prospects for perestroika.[12] But they face a dilemma: on the one hand, they owe Gorbachev their loyalty and support; on the other hand, they have an obligation to effectively defend the military's interests.

ENDNOTES

1. Unlike most of his predecessors, Gorbachev had few ties to the Soviet military when he became General Secretary. He was too young to have served in the military during World War II and was not conscripted in the post-war period. For a detailed discussion of Gorbachev's early career see Azrael, p. 15 and Archie Brown, "Gorbachev: New Man in the Kremlin," Problems of Communism, May-June 1985, pp. 1-23.

2. F. Stephen Larrabee, "Gorbachev and the Soviet Military," Foreign Affairs, Summer 1988, p. 1005.

3. As an ancillary move, Gorbachev has excluded the military from full Politburo status. By confining the senior military officer to candidate membership, he helped establish the primacy of the party. See Larrabee, p. 1007.

4. Azrael, p. 38.

5. Mark Kramer, "Soviet Military Policy," Current History, October 1989, p. 338. Dale R. Herspring, "The Soviet Military in the Aftermath of the 27th Party Congress," Orbis, Summer 1986, pp. 300-302. For additional information see the following sources: Elizabeth Teague, "Turnover in the Soviet Elite Under Gorbachev: Implications for Soviet Politics," Radio Liberty Research Bulletin, 8 July 1986, pp. 1-19. Sergei Zamascikov, Gorbachev and the Soviet Military, pp. 1-35. Robert Hutchinson, "Gorbachev Tightens Grip on Soviet High Command," Jane's Defense Weekly, 13 June 1987, pp. 1192-1194.

6. Alexander Rahr, "Why Yazov?" Radio Liberty Research Bulletin, 1 June 1987, p. 1. Stephen Foye, "Yazov Survives Contentious Confirmation Debate," Report on the USSR, 21 July 1989, p. 9 and Stephen Foye, "Defense Minister Yazov: Friend or Foe of Military Reforms?" Report on the USSR, 3 November 1989, pp. 15-18.

7. Stephen Foye, "New Soviet Chief of General Staff Speaks Out," Report on the USSR, 24 March 1989, p. 6.

8. For specific details on the reassignment of Marshal Akhromeev, in connection with his appointment as a "special advisor" to Gorbachev see Milan Hauner and Alexander Rahr, "New Chief of Soviet General Staff Appointed," Radio Liberty Research Bulletin, 16 December 1988, pp. 1-4. Hauner and Rahr argue persuasively that Akhromeev's reassignment, Moiseev's elevation, in conjunction with numerous other personnel changes, reflect Gorbachev's efforts to break the military's resistance to perestroika and to cause the General Staff to accept force structure and budget reductions.

9. Stephen Foye, "Chief of General Staff Responds to Critics of Military Reform," Report on the USSR, 1 September 1989, pp. 22-24.

10. Foye, "New Soviet Chief of General Staff Speaks Out," p. 6.

11. In addition to "purging" the military, Gorbachev has also cleaned out the civilian leadership. As a result of the 27th Party Congress, 41 percent of the full members of the Central Committee were replaced. This "restructuring" eliminated many Brezhnev appointees, who were viewed as unsympathetic to perestroika. With these changes Gorbachev probably felt he had made himself secure against a palace coup of the kind that toppled Khrushchev. See Dawn Mann, Alexander Rahr and Elizabeth Teague, "Gorbachev Cleans Out the Central Committee," Report on the USSR, 5 May 1989, pp. 8-10 and Alexander Rahr, "Restructuring of the Kremlin Leadership," Radio Liberty Research Bulletin, 5 October 1988, pp. 1-6.

12. Azrael, pp. 39-40.

CHAPTER V

NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY AND MILITARY DOCTRINE

In addition to placing supporters in key military positions, Gorbachev has taken other, equally important, steps to ensure the implementation of perestroika.[1] One of the most visible of these concerns the process of further reversing the General Staff's prerogatives and influence in the arms control and security policy arenas.[2] Much to the military's chagrin, Gorbachev has begun to rely on a new group of advisers in the Foreign Ministry and the International Department of the Central Committee for military and national security advice. The Institutes for the Study of the USA and Canada and for World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO) have also provided Gorbachev with independent civilian assessments. The "institutchiki" of these organizations have become the dominant defense policy experts and purveyors of new, sometimes radical, military proposals and ideas. In essence, these organizations are:[3]

> designed to ensure that nonmilitary views are institutionalized into the policy process and have given Gorbachev an independent source of information on defense and security matters. At the same time, Gorbachev has sought to

> enhance policy coordination and break down the rigid compartmentalization between the military and the other bureaucracies involved in national security affairs that existed under his predecessors. In sum, Gorbachev has sought to integrate the military more into the broader policy process, while at the same time strengthening the party's - and his personal - control over the process.

Needless to say, the General Staff is not happy with these new arrangements, which seriously undermine their autonomy and control of sensitive information.[4]

Gorbachev has also pressed ahead with another idea alluded to in the Tula Line: arms control is now seen as the main guarantor of Soviet security rather than a continuous, costly build-up of military capabilities. This fundamental change in policy is a likely outgrowth of Gorbachev's belief that arms control agreements will allow him to attack economic problems by shifting resources from the military to civilian sector.

The high command has generally supported Gorbachev's arms control policy, but has resisted certain specific aspects to include:

* Strategic Defense Initiative: The General Staff has taken a much tougher stand on SDI than Gorbachev, demanding that the U.S. stop all SDI-related efforts before negotiations on confidence building measures proceed.[5]

* On-Site Inspections: The military had continued to object to "intrusive verification measures," i.e., on site inspections. Gorbachev, however, did override the military on this issue, subsequent to INF experiences, and now the military's objections have become more muted.[6]

* Nuclear Test Moratorium: The military press continues to express reservations about any Moratorium.[7]

* Unilateral Force Reductions. The General Staff has adamantly voiced its opposition to any further unilateral force structure cuts.[8] In the high command's view, the 7 December 1988 announcement was like throwing a trump card away, when the Soviet Union was in a position to bargain some advantageous NATO force reductions.[9]

* In the future, equal Western reductions are absolutely essential.

From Gorbachev's perspective, the political impact of his unilateral offer was more important than any military advantage to be gained from waiting and agonizingly negotiating some mutual reductions.[10]

In addition to reductions in force structure, the defense establishment has reportedly had to accept significant budget

cuts. In 1989, appropriations were reduced by 14.2 percent and arms production was to be cut by 19.5 percent.[11] Future budget reductions are also likely. Specifically where these monies will come from and how they will be utilized is not totally clear, but diversion to the civilian sector is probable.

In tandem with the budget reductions, defense enterprises will be converted to civilian production: Reportedly the 40 percent of military industrial capacity currently allocated to civilian goods will be increased to 60 percent by 1995.[12]

The 27th Party Congress set the stage for these reductions by modifying Brezhnev's promise that the military would be given "whatever it needed to defend the homeland."[13] Under Gorbachev, the party has assured the General Staff that every effort will be made to ensure that the military "remains at a level that rules out the strategic superiority of the forces of imperialism."[14] Clearly, this new policy formulation eliminated the need for quid pro quo responses to NATO military increases and improvements. Now simply maintaining a posture capable of deterring any Western attack would suffice.[15]

The military's claim on resources was further undermined by Gorbachev and his reform-minded institutchiki when they modified military doctrine by switching from a requirement of parity to "sufficiency" (often expressed as "reasonable

sufficiency").[16] From the General Staff's perspective, the precise meaning and interpretation of these terms is still subject to interpretation.[17] Indeed the high command has taken several steps to preclude acceptance of Gorbachev's new sufficiency formulation:

* By sponsoring open-ended discussions and debates, the General Staff has tried to keep the Soviet decision-making cycle stalled at the agenda setting/option formulation stage, rather than allowing an orderly passage through decision selection to implementation.[18]
* The military has also consistently interpreted sufficiency in a manner that limits its impact on the armed forces to the maximum extent possible. As an example, for the General Staff, reasonable sufficiency clearly means that Soviet military forces must be able to "reliably rebuff" aggression if the West unleashes it.[19] Such a definition is neither passive nor devoid of an offensive element, but requires an ability to defeat the enemy and win the war. In the majority of cases, a counter-offensive concept is inherent in the definition of reasonable sufficiency espoused by the high command. The institutchiki's notion of

> structuring a force simply to stop an attack and reestablish Soviet borders is not generally accepted by the high command.[20]

Another aspect of Gorbachev's new military strategy, closely tied to reasonable sufficiency, involves the stress on the "defensive nature" of Soviet military doctrine. According to the General Secretary's civilian advisers, Soviet forces will be kept at a level necessary solely for defensive purposes.[21] Additionally, Soviet armed forces are to be structured and deployed in a fashion to eliminate the capacity for surprise attack.[22] From Gorbachev's perspective, this new emphasis on defense will tend to pacify the West and make it more difficult for the U.S. to bleed the Soviet Union white by engaging it in continuous arms buildups.

The General Staff's reaction to the General Secretary's new defensive doctrine has been predictable. While some have expressed their support, for example General M.A. Gareyev, it would appear most officers continue to adhere to the primacy of the offensive. This commitment to an offensive strategy can be explained by both Soviet military tradition and the adjudged NATO threat.[23] Defensive operations are merely a component of the more important offensive effort. The defense, a temporary phase, buys time for the transition to the counterattack and

offensive actions. For the high command, victory in war is achieved primarily by offensive operations.[24]

Several other contentious modifications to Soviet military doctrine need to be mentioned: Gorbachev has stressed anew the view that, given the lethality of modern nuclear weapons, nuclear war is unthinkable and unwinnable. As a result, political efforts are the only means for resolving conflicts. Further, force no longer can or must be an instrument of foreign policy. Military doctrine, in this context, has as its primary task the prevention of both nuclear and conventional war.[25] This emphasis on prevention dictates that socio-political considerations take precedence over military-technical matters.[26]

As with the other doctrinal changes, the majority of the General Staff has reacted to these revisions with skepticism and resistance. Debate rather than sanctification and implementation are the watchwords.[27] Indeed, many senior officers have continued to call for improvements in both nuclear and conventional capabilities. This would necessitate higher levels of funding precisely at a time when Gorbachev is seeking to reduce military costs.[28] Additionally, while acknowledging that political means can make significant contributions to national security (through arms negotiations

and treaties), the high command has emphasized that a lack of balance between political and military tools can have negative repercussions on state security.[29]

The whole series of interrelated doctrinal changes that have just been discussed are a consequence of the Soviet Union's severe economic problems and Gorbachev's desire to retain superpower status for the Soviet Union. There is general agreement between the reformers and the military concerning the seriousness of the economic crisis and the importance of the new emerging military technologies.[30] Gorbachev's modifications to military doctrine are meant to shift the competition between NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO) from military to political means, so as to gain time to improve the Soviet economy. Both the military and party generally accept the need for such a shift but the General Staff views it as a temporary expedient while the party sees it as a chance for "permanently altering the relationship between military and political means of providing security."[31]

The continued disagreements over doctrinal changes have strained the relationship between reform-minded members of the party and the defense establishment. It is clear that the party has had the final say in most cases, but the military continues to resist implementation through extended debate and

an unwillingness to change its assessment of the NATO threat. The fact that perestroika has unleashed increased economic and ethnic problems and has achieved few tangible improvements seems to justify the military's skepticism and calls for a more cautious, careful approach as regards reforms.[32]

The General Staff understands that others in the Central Committee and Politburo share these concerns and conclusions about perestroika. Gorbachev's position will become even more tenuous if positive results are not soon achieved and if the opposition coalesces. In such a scenario, the military's "vote" might become decisive.

ENDNOTES

1. As these various changes are discussed, it is important to remember that one of the main goals of perestroika is to improve the Soviet Union's technological competitiveness in relation to the West. If restructuring is successful, the USSR will remain a multifaceted superpower. If it fails, the Soviet Union will become a second-rate power. For additional details see Philip A. Peterson and Notra Trulock III, "A 'New' Soviet Military Doctrine: Origins and Implications," Strategic Review, Summer, 1988, pp. 9-24.

2. As noted earlier (page 16), Brezhnev had begun this reversal process in the mid-1970's after allowing the military to expand its authority in these areas for some 10 years.

3. Larrabee, p. 1011.

4. For some 50 years, the military had a monopoly in regard to analyzing the threat and developing significant portions of Soviet military doctrine. While the civilian

leadership decided the size of the defense budget, the General Staff determined size and structure of the armed forces and was the single source of military recommendations and analyses for the Politburo. Under Gorbachev, however, civilian defense specialists are beginning to challenge the military's autonomy and monopoly. While the significance of the rise of the institutchiki should not be overemphasized, it is clear that the defense establishment objects to their interference in military matters. For additional data on the institutchiki see Condoleezza Rice, "The Party, the Military and Decision Authority in the Soviet Union," World Politics, October 1987, pp. 55-56 and Jeffrey W. Legro, "Soviet Crisis Decision-Making and the Gorbachev Reforms," Survival, July/August 1989, pp. 339-359.

5. George G. Weickhardt, "The Military Consensus Behind Soviet Arms Control Proposals," Arms Control Today, September 1987, p. 21.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Marshal Akhromeev's reassignment was a clear indication of the depth of the military's opposition to unilateral force structure cuts.

9. For a detailed discussion of Gorbachev's 7 December 1988 speech to the UN General Assembly see Douglas Clarke, "Gorbachev's Proposed Restructuring of the Soviet Armed Forces," Radio Free Europe Background Report, 9 December 1988, pp. 1-4 and Christopher Donnelly, "British Expert's Reaction," London Times (London), 8 December 1988, pp. 1-2.

10. Donnelly, p. 1.

11. Philip Hanson, "Economic Reform and the Defense Sector," Report on the USSR, 28 April 1989, pp. 9-11.

12. The military has opposed the budget reductions and conversions on two grounds: the threat has not diminished and conversions will not result in any measurable cost savings or economic improvements in the near-term (3-5 years). For additional details see Herspring, "Soviet Military and Change,"

p. 327 and John Tedstrom, "Is the Contribution of the Defense Complex to Civilian Production Growing?" Report on the USSR, 16 June 1989, pp. 1-3.

13. Larrabee, p. 1016.

14. Ibid.

15. The May, 1987 Warsaw Pact Political Consultative Meeting was also used to announce additional doctrinal changes to include the emphasis on defense and the prevention of future wars. See Leon Goure, "A 'New" Soviet Military Doctrine: Reality or Mirage?" Strategic Review, Summer 1988, pp. 25-33.

16. For an excellent discussion of reasonable sufficiency and defensive doctrine see Jeffrey W. Legro, "The Military Meaning of the New Soviet Doctrine," Parameters, December 1989, pp. 80-92.

17. For an analysis of the debates surrounding the changes to Soviet military doctrine see Raymond L. Garthoff, "New Thinking in Soviet Military Doctrine," Washington Quarterly, Summer 1988, pp. 131-159 and Andrew C. Goldberg, "The Present Turbulence in Soviet Military Doctrine," Washington Quarterly, Summer 1988, pp. 159-170.

18. Phillips and Sands, p. 166.

19. Steven P. Adragna, "Doctrine and Strategy," Orbis, Spring 1989, p. 165.

20. Conversation with COL M. H. Crutcher, USAWC Advance Course Instructor, Carlisle, 2 February 1990.

21. The institutchiki have used the World War II Battle of Kursk to justify many of the tenets of the new defensive doctrine.

22. Larrabee, p. 1023.

23. Richard Ned Lebow, "The Soviet Offensive in Europe: The Schlieffen Plan Revisited," International Security, Spring 1985, p. 52. (While Lebow's article is from 1985, it still remains a relevant analysis.)

24. Larrabee, p. 1023.

25. Adragna, p. 165.

26. The military has objected to efforts by the institutchiki to increase their influence over the military-technical element of doctrine. Traditionally, this element had been the exclusive domain of the professional officer corps. See Warner, p. 13 and William E. Odom, "Soviet Military Doctrine," Foreign Affairs, Winter 1988, pp. 114-134.

27. Adragna, pp. 166-167 and Alexander Rahr, "Gorbachev Battles with Opposition," Report on the USSR, 3 February 1989, pp. 1-3.

28. Adragna, pp. 171-173.

29. Peterson and Trulock III, p. 20.

30. For a detailed discussion of the nature of the relationship between the Soviet's declining economy and new military technology see Russell Bova, "The Soviet Military and Economic Reform," Soviet Studies, July 1988, pp. 385-405.

31. Peterson and Trulock III, p. 21.

32. Goure, p. 26.

CHAPTER VI

GLASNOST AND DEMOKRATIZATSIYA

It was obvious to Gorbachev and his supporters that perestroika alone would not ensure that the competitive posture, vis-a-vis the West, would improve enough to ensure superpower status. Other initiatives, aimed at improving economic efficiency and opening the way to the acceptance of change, would have to be part of the perestroika effort. As a result, glasnost (openness) and demokratizatsiya (democra- tization) have become the twin pillars of perestroika.

Gorbachev's January 1987 speech to the Central Committee plenum launched the democratization campaign within the military. Initial efforts were halting and limited in scope, but were quickly accelerated by the Mathias Rust affair of May 1987. This blatant breakdown of military security led to public criticism of the armed forces, particularly from Boris Eltsin. According to Eltsin, "rudeness, boorishness, and intimidation" were rampart within the officer corps and had fostered "toadies, bootlickers, sycophants and window dressers."[1] Eltsin also severely castigated the military for complacency smugness and lack of initiative, which ultimately degraded overall security.[2]

Eltsin's attack was followed almost immediately by a spate of articles in the military and non-military press calling for greater creativity, independence, and initiative from members of the armed forces, along with efforts to eliminate humiliation, hazing, degrading treatment and unwarranted punishment.[3] Generals Yazov, Moiseev and Lizichev (Chief of the Main Political Administration - MPA) were initially supportive of these criticisms, adding their own concerns about alcoholism and drunkenness.

Open censure of the armed forces continued to escalate throughout 1987 and early 1988 with a focus on poor readiness, inadequate training, lack of technical proficiency, and unnecessary regimentation.

During this period, the General Staff's reaction to criticism was generally one of resignation and begrudging acceptance. There was an initial acknowledgement of the need to emphasize quality and efficiency over continued arms buildups. Additionally, it was recognized that many of the negative comments were, in fact, true. Lastly, there was the hope, among some middle-ranking officers, that glasnost and democratization would actually improve performance and capabilities: the elimination of stagnation through the application of new scientific-technical concepts was a universally supportable goal.[4]

By mid-1988, however, criticisms had become so widespread that the General Staff began to try to limit the impact of glasnost and democratization within the armed forces.[5] Several specific events triggered the high command's change of heart. First, the Soviet press began to encourage soldiers to challenge their superiors. Even the staunchest Gorbachev supporter, General Yazov, felt it was unwise to invite criticism from the mass of young conscripts, who comprise the majority of Soviet servicemen and who were not party members.[6] Censure of superiors was also deemed dangerous, given the deleterious impact on morale and discipline.[7] General Lizichev summed up the General Staff's increasing concerns by noting that glasnost had focused too much attention on negative phenomena.[8]

A second event that caused the high command to rail against some of the "extreme" aspects of glasnost and democratization was a November, 1988 article by a consistent supporter of Gorbachev's programs, Colonel Alexsandr Savinkin; it called for the armed forces to be restructured along the lines of a small, volunteer professional army supported by territorial militia organizations.[9] The counterattack against the idea of eliminating the conscript system was led by General Moiseev, who argued that a volunteer army would generate higher

costs and would increase social injustice and inequities. According to the Chief of Staff, the current system is an effective vehicle for social integration. Yazov also criticized Savinkin's proposal by noting that conversion to a professional army would leave the state with inadequate reserves and would "undermine the morale and spirit of the armed forces."[10] Additionally, the Defense Minister argued that military preparedness would be lowered and technical capabilities reduced.

Recently, the debate between the high command and reformers over how Soviet forces should be raised and organized has abated, with the General Staff tenuously holding the upper hand. Clearly, recent ethnic and nationalities problems have undermined the credibility of relying on territorial militias for ensuring national security.[11]

While the military may have temporarily won the "conscript skirmish", it lost the battle over the draft law and college deferments. In mid-1988, the non-military press began to highlight the extent to which military service disrupts higher education and, thus, the training of scientists and engineers. The reformers had concluded that the drafting of college students was significantly slowing economic recovery and the effectiveness of perestroika.[12]

The debate on this hotly contested issue continued to mid-1989, with the military arguing that any change in the current draft/deferment laws would have a negative impact on technical competence in the armed forces and would seriously undermine the principles of equality and social justice.

This issue was decided in favor of the reformers. On 11 July 1989, the Supreme Soviet passed a decree mandating the deactivation of some 176,000 former university students from military service.* This decree followed closely on the heels of a law which opened up additional deferment options for college students.[13]

This victory encouraged the reformers to become even more confrontational as regards perceived inefficiencies and inequities in the Soviet armed forces. Press items began to directly attack the MPA and General Staff, accusing both of deliberately sabotaging perestroika through excessive "abstract reasoning" rather than effective, enthusiastic implementation.[14]

The General Staff has not backed down in the face of these frontal assaults. It has proved itself particularly adept at

* While Gorbachev apparently did not take a public position, his supporters carried the day on this particular issue.

tying recent ethnic and nationalities problems to the "excesses" of glasnost and democratization, going so far as to suggest that uncontrolled social change was beginning to threaten the very existence of the state.[15] It has also effectively played upon party fears by creating an analogy between Gorbachev's 500,000 man cut and the significant problems generated by Khrushchev's personnel reductions.

The increasingly vitriolic nature of the debate between the military and institutchiki reformers over glasnost and democratization finally caused the party to step in. By late July, 1989, the Central Committee began to warn against presenting too negative a picture of the armed forces. It also criticized the use of unreliable information concerning the military and one-sided, inaccurate analyses which undermine the authority and prestige of the armed forces. In addition, the Central Committee took the opportunity to denigrate the reformers' idea of a professional/volunteer army. To ensure that a more balanced, objective picture of military service was presented in the future, the Central Committee sanctioned (via resolution) putting military journalists into the editorial offices of key newspapers. These officers were to provide oversight of military-related articles.[16]

As a result of the Central Committee decision, the non-military press has begun to present a more idyllic picture of the armed forces. From its perspective, the General Staff views the resolution as a vindication of its concerns and as a mechanism to circumscribe the impact of glasnost and democratization.[17] From Gorbachev's perspective, he has shown the military that they are not immune from criticism and that they will be held accountable for the effective use of resources, both materiel and manpower. Having accomplished this, Gorbachev could accept limitations on the public criticism of the military.

For the present, the General Staff and reformers have settled into an uneasy truce over how and to what degree the twin pillars of perestroika will be applied to the military.

The high command will continue to resist the more radical suggestions of the reformers (i.e. criticism of superiors or elimination of conscription), while seeking to define glasnost and democratization in a manner which enhances morale, discipline, effectiveness and efficiency. They would prefer to see changes implemented in a gradual, controlled fashion. Given the present turmoil in the republics and Eastern Europe, it is possible that they will be able to convince key elements within the party that such a cautious, incremental approach is wise and warranted.

ENDNOTES

1. Boris Eltsin, Krasnaya Zvezda (Moscow), 17 June 1987, quoted in George G. Weickhardt, "Democratization and Glasnost in the Soviet Armed Forces," Report on the USSR, 19 May 1987, p. 11.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p. 12.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., p. 13.

7. Concerns about morale and discipline became a central tenet in the General Staff's unfolding counterattack against glasnost and democratization.

8. Weickhardt, p. 14.

9. From the perspective of the reformers, the change to a small professional force made sense in relation to demographic trends and NATO's perception of the Soviet threat. For additional details see Alexander Alexiev, "Is There a Professional Army in the Soviet Future?" Report on the USSR, 6 January 1989, pp. 9-12 and Stephen Foye, "The Soviet Military Leader Seige," Report on the USSR, 24 February 1989, p. 8.

10. Stephen Foye, "Debate Continues on the Fundamental Restructuring of the Soviet Armed Forces," Report on the USSR, 14 April 1989, p. 13.

11. Ibid., p. 16.

12. Stephen Foye, "New Developments in Military Restructuring," Radio Liberty Research Bulletin, 9 November 1988, pp. 1-2.

13. While the General Staff has implemented these new laws, the military press has continued to stress their negative impact on preparedness and social equality. The deactivated individuals had been important as junior commanders and trainers. Additionally, the claim is being made that the armed forces is now manned increasingly by young people from rural, less educated working class backgrounds. In effect, the educated are becoming a class of elitists separated from the realities of national defense. For additional details see Stephen Foye, "Students and the Soviet Military," Report on the USSR, 29 September 1989, pp. 7-11.

14. Foye, "Soviet Military Under Seige," p. 9.

15. Kipp, p. 10. See also Viktor Yasmann, "Gorbachev's Formula for the Second Stage of Perestroika: Full Ahead but Keep Right," Report on the USSR, 10 March 1989, pp. 19-22. (Subsequent to the final drafting of this paper, numerous other, more current assessments of Soviet ethnic problems have appeared. Two of the best are: S. Frederick Starr, "The Disintegration of the Soviet Union," Wall Street Journal, 6 February 1990, p. A18 and Linda Feldmann, "Soviet Hot Spots," The Christian Science Monitor, 1 February 1990, p. 10.)

16. Stephen Foye, "Central Committee Calls for Limits on Criticism of the Soviet Military," Report on the USSR, 28 July 1989, p. 2.

17. One of the earliest expressions of the military's new "oversight" prerogatives will probably be attempts to curb the negativism associated with the armed forces' role in Afghanistan.

CHAPTER VII

PERESTROIKA AND DEVELOPMENTS IN THE WARSAW TREATY ORGANIZATION

At the present time, relatively little concrete data is available concerning the General Staff's reaction to the perestroika-related turmoil in Eastern Europe and the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO). As a result, documented conclusions are difficult to make. However, given the linkage between Soviet national security interests and the WTO, some brief comments and reasoned speculations concerning General Staff views are warranted.

The speed of political and military disintegration in Eastern Europe has most certainly caused increasing concern in the Soviet military; additionally, the uncontrolled events have, most likely, exacerbated the already tense situation with Gorbachev and his supporters. In the span of 12-15 months, the General Staff has watched its buffer against NATO largely disappear and a significant portion of its forward deployed combat power (in terms of East European armed forces) evaporate; the reliability of WTO forces is, at best, highly

suspect. All of these changes have occurred, in the military's view, without an appreciable decrease in the NATO threat.

Shortly after Gorbachev's December, 1988, UN General Assembly speech, all East European governments, except Romania, announced their own unilateral cuts in military force structures and budgets.[1] While the true significance of these WTO reductions is not clear, the Soviet General Staff has reacted warily.[2] It is likely that the Soviet military wishes to prevent further unilateral East European actions and to carefully control future events in the WTO, until NATO's position and willingness to undertake reciprocal reductions is better understood. Additionally, the General Staff is probably studying longer-range structural changes in the WTO (for example, conversion to a political alliance). They do not want precipitous actions on the part of the East Europeans to foreclose any options, until their analysis and recommendations are finalized.

The Soviet General Staff has probably found another East European emulation of Soviet perestroika disturbing: the WTO governments have announced that they plan to shift traditional military resources and plant facilities to the consumer sector. The overall goal is to reduce the burdens associated with large standing military forces and defense expenditures.[3]

The aforementioned events probably confirmed the General Staff's preconceived notions about the overall negative impact of perestroika. These views were certainly reinforced by the East Europeans' next action: East Germany, Czecho- slovakia, Hungary, and Poland have requested that Soviet forces stationed in their countries be removed as soon as possible -- preferably by the end of 1990 but hopefully not later than the close of 1991. Gorbachev has agreed to discuss such removals in principle, but timetables will be subjected to further negotiations.

While not opposing such discussions, the Soviet military is likely to resist the notion of quick withdrawals. The depth of their opposition probably varies according to each country's contribution to the WTO and its strategic (geographic) location. For example, Czechoslovakia's position, the historical dagger pointed at the heart of the Soviet Union, makes it a more sensitive issue for the high command then say Hungary. East Germany, for other equally important reasons, is also critical from the Soviet military's perspective.[4]

Again, much of the General Staff's sensitivity on the issue of reducing/removing Soviet forces from Eastern Europe is conditioned by their perception of the NATO threat. If developments in the Western alliance measurably reduce this

threat, the high command's ability to resist drawdowns in Eastern Europe will be significantly undermined. The General Staff, in such circumstances, would be reduced to haggling over timetables.

Another significant problem associated with any sizable withdrawal of Soviet forces from Eastern Europe would be related to their disposition once returned to the Soviet Union. To avoid morale and discipline problems, the General Staff would seek "resettlement" guarantees from Gorbachev.

Polycentric developments in Eastern Europe have probably led the General Staff to conclude the following:

* Non-Soviet Warsaw Pact (NSWP) countries will utilize Gorbachev's concepts of defensive defense and reasonable sufficiency to disavow any future offensive actions against NATO. Their forces will only be used to maintain or restore national borders.
* East European forces will be reoriented away from NATO, to provide for better all-around national defense.
* Given already announced and likely future reductions, NSWP forces will have reduced operational capabilities, particularly for offensive operations.
* By 1995, at the latest, most if not all, Soviet forces will have been withdrawn from Eastern Europe.

* It is likely that NSWP countries will expect to be treated as equals within the WTO structure, for as long as it continues to exist.

* Contingent upon developments in the West, the WTO will evolve from a military to a political alliance.

What conditions will the General Staff attempt to "impose" on Gorbachev for accepting these developments in the WTO? Most likely, they will "demand" that the process of change in Eastern Europe be more cautious, controlled and geared to the perceived NATO threat. The party may be hard pressed to meet such conditions as its control over events in Eastern Europe is, at best, highly problematical.

ENDNOTES

1. Douglas Clarke, "Warsaw Pact Arms Cuts in Europe," Radio Free Europe Research Report, 24 February 1989, pp. 1-2. See also Appendix 1 for a table which itemizes the reductions. The table was extracted from Clarke's 24 February 1989 article. In addition, Clarke notes that then Romanian President Ceausescu claimed that he cut force structure and budget by 5 percent in 1987, resulting in reductions of 10,000 men, 250 tanks, 130 artillery pieces and 26 combat aircraft.

2. Douglas Clarke, "A Second Look at Warsaw Pact Arms Cuts," Radio Free Europe Research Report, 1 February 1989, pp. 1-2.

3. Vladimir Sobell, "Perestroika and the Warsaw Pact Military Burden," Radio Free Europe Research Report, 7 June 1988, pp. 2-3.

4. "Budapest and Moscow Discussing Troop Pullout," New York Times, 2 February 1990, p. A10.

CHAPTER VIII

PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

Based upon the foregoing analysis, how will the relationship between Gorbachev and the military develop in the future?

In the near-term, the relationship is likely to remain tense, argumentative and conflict prone. The programs and policies initiated by the General Secretary, in the aggregate, have not been well-received by the high command. More specifically:

* The civilian leadership's reassertion of its primacy in the socio-political aspects of military doctrine and its growing "interference" in the military-technical domain have been viewed negatively by the military.
* The rise of civilian "military-think tanks" and the growing influence of institutchiki have been unwelcome developments. In the military view, these "gadflies" have been given unwarranted access to sensitive information and have provided questionable threat assessments to the political leadership. They have also been the origin of suspect changes in doctrine, to include the notions of "defensive defense" and

"reasonable sufficiency." The military professionals believe such reformist concepts must be subjected to scrutiny and debate before being legitimized and implemented.

* Unilateral troop cuts, budget reductions and a shift in resource allocation away from the military to the civilian sector have caused consternation and resistance. Implementation of these policies, before achieving arms control agreements with the West, is viewed as undermining Soviet national security. Additionally, the military is concerned about the effective resettlement and absorption of the soldiers who are returned to the civilian sector. They do not believe that Gorbachev has a plan to assimilate them and worry about the inevitable morale and discipline problems that will arise when these soldiers encounter employment and housing difficulties.

* The political upheaval in Eastern Europe and the disintegration of the WTO are also disturbing the Soviet military. As regards announced East European force structure and budget reductions, the high command recognizes that these steps will stretch out military preparation times even further.

In addition, force generation problems, already a weak linchpin in most of the NSWP countries, will be further exacerbated. Lastly, announced cuts and likely future reductions will slow some modernization efforts and postpone or terminate others. The Soviet military is simply not happy with these developments, particularly since they do not detect a significant diminution of the NATO threat.

* The salient and most significant result of the application of glasnost and democratization to the Soviet military has been the deterioration of morale and discipline in the armed forces. This negative trend has been reinforced by modifications to the draft laws and the deactivation of 176,000 students. Recent ethnic disturbances and growing nationalities problems are particularly unsettling for the military. They tear at the very fabric of the modern Soviet state, threatening the security and territorial gains made during the past 70 years.

Directly related to the foregoing problems is the military's near- and mid-term concern about Gorbachev's actual plan to improve the economic performance and competitiveness of the Soviet Union.

The military generally acknowledges the accuracy of the General Secretary's dire assessment of current economic situation. It is also accepted that economic improvements are necessary to retain real superpower status (and to lay the foundation for producing high technology weapons). If Gorbachev's grand economic scheme is successful, the Soviet military will be, in the longer run, more efficient, effective and stronger, vis-a-vis NATO. However, after four years of perestroika and concomitant military sacrifices, no significant economic benefits have been achieved. The military increasingly believes that the plan, if one really exists, is not well-structured, delineated or defined. It is a loose conglomeration of disjointed ideas and concepts, which are following events rather than controlling them.

The military has concluded that it should not be asked to make additional sacrifices until control is reestablished and the plan validated and implemented in an orderly, incremental manner.

For his part, Gorbachev has shown himself astute enough politically to understand the precariousness of his present position. Given the opposition that has already surfaced against his programs, he must also understand that it is important for the Soviet military to support his efforts or,

at the least, to remain neutral as he struggles with slow progress on the economic front. As a result, he will surely make every effort to court and woo the high command's favor and support. This will probably preclude any additional unilateral force structure cuts. His requirements for military acquiescence or support will also translate into a tougher stance for "fair reciprocity" on future arms control negotiation with the U.S. and NATO.

It is likely that glasnost and democratization, as applied to the military, will become less onerous and intrusive. Press criticism, particularly that which undermines morale and discipline, will likely be further curtailed. Additional discussions of converting to a smaller, volunteer army, a militia or a territorial force are likely to be restricted to limited circulation military publications.

To appease the General Staff, Gorbachev will attempt to draw a firmer line regarding ethnic and nationalities problems. A combination of veiled threats, limited concessions, and force (if necessary, as a last resort) will be utilized to defuse separatist efforts.

The General Secretary can also be expected to develop a more comprehensive set of guidelines as regards polycentric developments in the WTO and COMECON. For the near-term, the

NSWP countries will probably not have the option of severing their ties to these two organizations, but they may be able to negotiate removal of Soviet forces from their territories. They will be able to demand that the organizations be restructured and that they be given a greater voice in the decision-making process. In addition, repositioning of forces away from NATO, so as to better protect national boundaries, is likely. Gorbachev will also permit additional military force and budget reductions; limited experimentation with free market mechanisms and a reduction of centralized planning will also be tolerated, if the effort is slow and methodical.

Lastly, as a subset of trying to woo the Soviet military, Gorbachev is likely to increase his consultations and discussions with the General Staff, before implementing policies which impact on the armed forces. While he may not change his mind on fundamental issues, such an approach would at least appear to be "more democratic."

In addition to the foregoing conciliatory steps, Gorbachev will continue to exercise a potent "weapon" against the military -- he will manipulate the nomenklatura system and party oversight organs (for example, the KGB) to ensure that any military opposition to perestroika is effectively neutralized. Certainly his supporters in the General Staff

will continue to benefit from his patronage, while those who resist his programs will be retired or reassigned.

Ultimately, the General Secretary needs to buy additional time ("peredyshka") for perestroika to bear fruit. In the face of increasing opposition, he is likely to adopt a proven Leninist tactic -- "two steps forward, one step back." The question remains whether this stratagem and a more conciliatory, flexible stance vis-a-vis the military will give Gorbachev the time he needs.

Given the nature and scope of the turmoil in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, it is risky to speculate about Gorbachev's ability to retain power. Disclaimers aside, I believe he is likely to be replaced in the next 12-24 months, by a coalition of more conservative party elements. The military, while rarely a "kingmaker" in Soviet succession politics, would support a conservative coalition, committed to a cautious, well-planned economic reform program. The support would be more steadfast if such a political group also adopted a tougher approach in dealing with ethnic/nationalities problems and the turmoil in Eastern Europe. Lastly, such an alliance would be more firmly cemented if future arms control negotiations with the West were based on a more restricted definition of reciprocity and a "realistic" portrayal of the U.S./NATO threat.

At this juncture, only the dialectic process, as it unfolds in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, will determine the accuracy of this prognostication. Even if Gorbachev is replaced by a conservative coalition, any notion of returning to the past is likely to be seen as too dangerous/costly: the economic, political and social forces unleashed by Gorbachev's programs can not, at this junction, be put back into the bottle, unless the party is willing to accept the likelihood of civil war.

APPENDIX 1

(Data current as of February 1989)

Announced Warsaw Pact Arms Cuts in Europe
(by the end of 1990)

	Men	Tanks	Guns	Planes	Spending
USSR	240,000	10,000	8,500	800	14.2%
GDR	10,000	600	-	50	10.0%
CSSR	12,000	850	-	51	15.0%
Poland	(15,000)	(99)	-	(20)	4.0%
Hungary	9,300*	251	430	9	17.0%
Bulgaria	10,000	200	200	-	12.0%
Romania	-	-	-	-	-
Total	296,300	12,000	9,130	930	13.6%** (average)

*The actual figure seems to be 7,200. See below.
**This figure is taken directly from Soviet sources. It is not a numerical average of the other figures.

This table does not reflect the whole story. Bulgaria, for example has also said that it would do away with five "naval units." Hungary seems to be giving with one hand and taking back with the other, hence the asterisk following the 9,300 troop reduction. More than 2,000 of these are professionals (officers and warrant officers) rather than conscripts, and they will be transferred from the disbanded units to other jobs in the Army. Thus, it appears that the net reduction in personnel will be 7,200 rather than the 9,300 as claimed.

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