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THE CHANGING ROLE OF NAVAL FORCES:
THE RUSSIAN VIEW OF THE PERSIAN GULF WAR

BY

JAMES J. TRITTEN

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19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) <p>This report reviews Soviet commentary during the various stages of coalition military and maritime operations in the Persian Gulf. It then turns to the early analyses of the war and then finally subsequent more in-depth analyses. An overall assessment is then offered. The shift to a new defensive doctrine and the lessons of the Persian Gulf war have been reasons for the Soviet and now Russian navy to once again make a case for an increased role. Operation DESERT SHIELD demonstrated to the West that the Soviet Union did not view its own security from the sole perspective of military preparedness. The Persian Gulf war is not simply an episode but rather the model upon which future doctrine and organizational development will be built. The forces of choice for future Russian defensive missions will be the type of forces that the coalition successfully used in Operation DESERT STORM. The initial period of war will offer Russia the opportunity to contain crises without having to mobilize its full military potential. The role of the navy and air forces in certain theaters of strategic military operations will increase relative to that of the Russian ground forces. Perhaps the most significant lesson of the Soviet and Russian views on the Persian Gulf war is to once again remind us that their open-source discussions must be seen in the context of the larger debates that are ongoing.</p>								
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**THE CHANGING ROLE OF NAVAL FORCES: THE RUSSIAN
VIEW OF THE PERSIAN GULF WAR**

by
James John Tritten¹

The Soviet view of the maritime aspects of Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM must be interpreted in the context of the debate over military doctrine and reform that was ongoing in the USSR at the time. To fully understand this report, however, the reader should first review those debates or otherwise bring with him an understanding of the issues. The Soviet navy was the last service to be considered in the doctrine and reform debates and one of the first to benefit from the lessons of the Persian Gulf war.

It has been a major failing of certain members of the Western analytic community to search for the future of the Soviet navy primarily through an analysis of the Soviet naval literature. My own research over the years has caused me to conclude that a more proper way to view the navy is to first review what the political leadership has to say and then to look at the statements of the marshals and generals who are authorized spokesmen for the ministry of defense and the general staff. Only by setting the navy literature into the context of the views of seniors can one properly appreciate the naval literature as being advocacy or announcement of agreed-upon views.

Of course, to properly analyze future directions for the fleet, one must also include hardware, deployment, and exercise evidence. The author is convinced based upon his previous research, however, that there is a benefit from doing literature analysis in the absence of these other significant forms of evidence. When it comes to the views of the Soviet, and then the Russian, military on Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM, due to a host of economic, political, and other factors, it will be some time before we see any significant shifts in hardware, deployments, and exercises that we can attribute to the lessons of the Persian Gulf war.

This report will first review Soviet commentary during the various stages of coalition military and maritime operations in the Persian Gulf. It will then turn to the "quick-looks," or early analyses of the war and then finally subsequent more in-depth analyses. The latter will be broken down into analyses completed before and after the August 1991 coup. An overall assessment will then be offered.

1. The views expressed by the author are his alone and do not necessarily represent those of the U.S. government, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Navy.

Commentary on Operation DESERT SHIELD

Comments in the Soviet literature about the coalition response to defend Saudi Arabia generally involved political and foreign policy issues. As a Marxist-Leninist state, the Soviets searched for and found an economic basis for American intervention despite the other reasons that appeared more important to us.¹ There was also obvious concern for Soviet military advisors in the region and discussion on the viability of the economic blockade.

Enforcement of the blockade at sea was a topic of concern specifically by naval officers. Soviet Navy flag officers deployed in the Indian Ocean stressed that their mission included ensuring that Soviet shipping was protected, especially in the areas of the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea.² The interdiction of a Soviet merchant ship in the Red Sea in early January 1991 by coalition (U.S. and Spanish) naval forces was a topic of discussion by the Soviet Foreign Ministry and in the civilian literature.³ The interdiction apparently was not contested by the ship's captain nor Soviet fleet units deployed in the area.

As in the West, there were discussion of whether the appropriate intelligence services had received indications of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait before it actually took place. The Soviet General Staff Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) argued that they had two weeks warning of the invasion but that the Defense Ministry did not pass the information on to the nation's leaders.⁴ The Committee on State Security (KGB) also said that they had received advance notification.⁵

Marshal of the Soviet Union Sergey Fedorovich Akhromeyev, military advisor to the USSR president and former Chief of the USSR Armed Forces General Staff, was free with his opinions on the deterrent phase of coalition operations as well as the coming military combat operations. Akhromeyev expressed concern in early October 1990, that a large grouping of American armed forces was now deployed close to the southern border of the USSR.⁶ He implied that this constituted a threat to the Soviet Union. This theme would reappear later from official spokesmen inside the Soviet military and government.

A major analysis of Operation DESERT SHIELD was published in the January 1991 issue of the Soviet journal Foreign Military Review just as the air campaign portion of Operation DESERT STORM broke out.⁷ In this analysis, the author correctly enumerated that steps that had been taken by the American armed forces to respond in the Persian Gulf. The accounting is rather complete and included naval, marine corps, and maritime sealift forces.

Commentary on Planning for Operation DESERT STORM

Soviet press reports included predictions of how Persian Gulf combat operations might evolve. Some of these proved highly accurate of the eventual overall conduct of the air and air/ground portions of Operation DESERT STORM. None of the initial reports by civilian authors paid any significant attention to the role of maritime forces.⁸

On the other hand, a Soviet general officer wrote an article in early January 1990 in the Ministry of Defense newspaper Red Star that claimed the coalition hoped to capitalize on its overwhelming superiority in "aviation, naval forces, highly accurate weapons, and electronic warfare."⁹ This general officer went on to say that the American command would "give priority at the first stages of an armed conflict to the operations of aviation and the Navy."

Priority was defined in this Red Star article as: taking out Iraqi air defenses and command and control, establishing "domination" in the air and simultaneously destroying Iraqi aircraft, operational-tactical missile launchers, armored forces assault groups, and the military industrial complex. The means of accomplishing these tasks were predicted as aviation and TOMAHAWK sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs). According to the general, only following the accomplishment of these tasks, the Americans would then employ Army and Marine Corps ground forces offensively to liberate Kuwait.

The article on Operation DESERT SHIELD contained in the January 1991 Soviet Foreign Military Review also had a fairly accurate prediction of the scenario of the impending offensive combat-phase.¹⁰ This version also assumed that a ground forces offensive would be required to achieve the strategic objectives of the campaign.

Marshal Akhromeyev predicted in early January that Iraq would withdraw in the face of overwhelming coalition forces deployed to the region.¹¹ He later stated that if offensive combat operations were to begin, it would be extremely dangerous for the Soviet Union because it would be difficult to contain the contingency response.¹²

This issue of the war spreading occupied the attention of the few naval officers that discussed the impending conflict. One flag officer deployed in the Indian Ocean stated at the end of December 1990 that the purpose of his task force was: "to prevent aggressive actions against the USSR from the area of the Indian Ocean."¹³ He also said that in case of a "stronger war danger" in the Gulf, the task force might be reinforced by ships from the Soviet Mediterranean squadron and Pacific Fleet. This possibility had been previously refuted by the deputy commander of the Indian Ocean Squadron¹⁴

The use of the Soviet Navy as a defensive force against forward deployed American aircraft carrier battle groups (CVBGs) was the subject of a debate in the West in the late 1960s and 1970s. Two leading Western analysts of the Soviet Navy, Bob Herrick and Michael MccGwire, argued that the primary reason behind forward deployments of Soviet Navy anti-carrier forces was the deployment of American nuclear-capable CVBGs, primarily in the Mediterranean, within striking range of the USSR.

A major study of Soviet naval diplomacy published in 1979 concluded that the lack of overwhelming response to previous American CVBG deployments, primarily in the Mediterranean, indicated that the Soviets were not serious about a defensive strike against these CVBGs. This study assumed that Soviet naval operational art and tactics would have required a much higher combat capability against the American CVBGs in order to predict mission accomplishment with a sizable degree of probability. Hence they concluded that the real motivation behind the forward deployments of Soviet warships was politically-motivated military presence and not defensively-motivated military counteraction.¹⁵

The situation in Operation DESERT SHIELD that resulted in the deployment of six American CVBGs in waters close to the southern border of the USSR was clearly different than previous deployments in the Mediterranean in support of Israel. On the one hand, during the 1990-1991 situation, the U.S. had also deployed major ground and air forces within striking distance of the southern borders of the USSR. These forces were far in excess of the naval forces deployed by the U.S. in the Mediterranean in the 1960s and 1970s. On the other hand, all of this massive DESERT SHIELD force was tied to a United Nations-mandated mission that had the support of the USSR. American actions by their significant military and naval presence in Southwest Asia were both limited by this U.N. mandate and the support of the American public for a limited military campaign against Saddam Hussein and not the USSR.

If the motivation of previous Soviet naval anti-carrier deployments was as a defensive measure, then the lack of Soviet military response to the massive American military, air, and naval presence in Southwest Asia in 1990-1991 might indicate that they had come to view national security as not necessarily requiring an automatic military response. The U.S., or other potential adversaries, might take military actions near to the borders of the USSR without a knee-jerk reaction by the marshals. On the other hand, economic conditions might also be an explanation for the lack of a military response to DESERT SHIELD.

If the previous Soviet naval anti-carrier deployments were primarily acts of naval diplomacy, then the lack of Soviet maritime response to the massive American naval presence in Southwest Asia might indicate that they were turning inward and truly abandoning overseas fraternal international missions. In the past, support of such political goals often led to confrontations at sea with the U.S. On the other hand, economic conditions

might also be an explanation for the lack of a politically-motivated military response in 1990-1991.

One of the more interesting topics for discussion in Soviet military science has been whether war takes on a life of its own once combat commences or if it remains subordinate to political directions. In an article published in Red Star just before the outbreak of the air campaign portion of Operation DESERT STORM, the military author reminded his reader that "a war, once started, develops according to its own laws and its own logic."¹⁶ The author only made this point in the context of the spreading of Persian Gulf combat operations to unintended areas rather than in the larger context often argued in the past by the marshals--the military should be free of political constraints when "unleashed" to perform their strategic missions after the failure of deterrence.

Commentary During the Air Campaign

The initial commentary on the outbreak of hostilities, the air campaign, by Soviet President Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev made specific reference to the need to "localize the conflict and prevent its dangerous escalation."¹⁷ Although this theme appeared in subsequent commentary by other government officials, military officers, and academics, no suggestion was made that the Soviet Union should increase its defensive combat capability as a reaction.¹⁸ On the contrary, the two Soviet Navy warships that were in the Persian Gulf were immediately removed from the region.¹⁹

The Soviets fully recognized that the air campaign included participation by U.S. naval aviation and TOMAHAWK SLCMs. One interview with an advisor at the Administration for Arms Limitation and Disarmament of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs included the comment that "cruise missiles are capable of fulfilling strategic missions."²⁰ This comment should be interpreted in the context of the on-going Strategic Arms Reductions Talks (START) in which the Soviets were attempting to include SLCMS in a treaty to reduce "strategic" nuclear forces.

On the other hand, commentary by a military officer indicated that U.S. TOMAHAWK SLCMs fired from missile-armed submarines destroyed "strategically important" targets.²¹ Perhaps even more interesting was his recognition that the trajectory for these missiles included the airspace of other nations. Until these attacks, Iraq could predict that the direction of SLCM attacks would come from the relatively narrow waters of the Persian Gulf. This issue must be seen in the context of the larger question of the direction of likely SLCM attack on the USSR in the context of a superpower war. Soviet literature has depicted such attacks routinely violating the airspace of neutral nations that were along her borders.²²

While the air campaign was on-going, there was relatively little discussion of naval surface forces. One newspaper account acknowledged that the Iraqi navy had been incapable of putting up serious resistance due to total superiority in the air and at sea.²³ This article also stated that the general mood of the Iraqi fleet was one of despair. Small warships were ordered to attempt to slip into Iranian territorial waters in order to preserve them. This tactic was used to preserve units of the Iraqi Air Force but with more success.

The bulk of the military commentary on the war during the air campaign was whether a ground campaign would be necessary or if the air war would be sufficient. Marshal of the Soviet Union Sergey F. Akhromeyev was one of the first to enter the fray with a definite prediction that he did not think that "an [Iraqi] army that has nine years of war experience can be paralyzed simply by air attacks."²⁴

There were a number of articles and media events in which spokesmen argued vehemently that, despite what the world was watching on their television screens, the air war would not lead to the accomplishment of the strategic objectives of the coalition.²⁵ One of these went so far as to say that [emphasis added]:²⁶

"there has never been an occasion yet when either air forces or missiles have determined the outcome of military actions. A navy will not determine it either. The main thing in such operations are the land troops."

Towards the start of the air/ground offensive, the Soviet military turned modest attention to the role that U.S. amphibious forces would play. General-Lieutenant I. Skuratov, chief of the Soviet Navy Shore Forces, wrote a rather in-depth, but short, article on the subject in Red Star on February 12, 1991.²⁷ Although one must see this article in the context of a chief of a combat arm of the Navy attempting to point out the importance of his own type of force, the Skuratov article did contain some important themes.

The historical surrogates used to discuss amphibious landings were the U.S. Marine Corps landing at Inchon, Korea in 1950; the British landing at Port Sa'id and Port Fu'ad, Egypt in 1956; and the British landing on East Falklands Island in 1982. Skuratov then labeled each of these landings as operational-strategic, operational, and operational-tactical due to the size of the landing force. In the article, however, Skuratov stressed the Inchon landing, clearly indicating that his assessment that the impending use of U.S. Marine Corps troops in an amphibious operation in the Persian Gulf would be at the operational-strategic level. Skuratov pointed out, correctly, that the Inchon landing "exerted a decisive influence on the outcome of the Korean War as

a whole," a very strong theme indicating the importance of both the landing operation and antilanding defenses.²⁸

Just prior to the commencement of the air/ground campaign, there were a number of articles that complemented earlier predictions on how the entire operation would unfold.²⁹ These articles all foretold an amphibious invasion from the Persian Gulf. Given the amount of coalition strategic, operational, and tactical disinformation regarding the planned employment of its ground and amphibious forces, it is hardly fair to fault the Soviets for being taken in.

Commentary During and "Quick-Looks" After the Air/Ground Campaign

The air/ground portion of Operation DESERT STORM barely lasted long enough for the Soviets to react and publish commentary. Soviet Defense Minister, Marshal Dmitriy Timofeyevich Yazov gave a radio interview on February 26 in which he said that "as soon as ground operations began they made Saddam's [Hussein] defeat inevitable."³⁰ This statement seemingly makes it appear that Yazov was sympathetic in the debate whether a ground offensive was required to the side that felt that it was still required for total victory.

One day after the completion of the air/ground portion of Operations DESERT STORM, Marshal Yazov took the stand at the Soviet Supreme Soviet for his confirmation hearings as Minister of Defense. During the brief hearings, Yazov had to specifically address the value of air defense troops in light of the recent events in the Persian Gulf. Yazov acknowledged the role of the air offensive operation, including the role played by aircraft carriers, and stated that this would require "a review of attitude to both tactical air defense and the country's air defense network."³¹

The Soviet Navy was one of the first to publish a more in-depth account of the war through its initial stages.³² Until this article, most commentary had referred to combat operations as an air/ground campaign, probably in deference to the U.S. Army's AIRLAND battle doctrine. In the February 1991 issue of the Soviet Navy's journal Naval Digest, Captain 1st Rank K. Kzheb referred to Operation DESERT STORM as an "air-land-sea" campaign, a term that the U.S. Navy was just beginning to use to underscore the importance of maritime forces in joint warfare. Captain Kzheb did a thorough job of adding in the missing maritime elements to the picture that had been painted by primarily ground and air forces officers who had dominated the literature to date. His article was signed to press before the start of the air/ground campaign, hence its value is somewhat limited.

Kzheb did provide initial indications of themes that would come to dominate the post-campaign analyses: (1) the failure of the coalition to achieve certain important strategic objectives

with an air operation alone, (2) the importance of the initial stage of the campaign, and (3) the value of smart airborne and missile munitions and electronic warfare. Captain Kzheb added one that generally would not be found except in naval journals: (4) the coalition did not have to deploy a majority of their naval forces in order to conduct their operational-strategic level campaign.

The post-campaign discussion of the value of the air campaign was even more heated than the debate that occurred over this issue before the start of the air/ground campaign. Extreme positions were taken by junior air force officers, including: "Soviet military doctrine and the entire model of military building were obsolete," and "huge amounts of armored vehicles, tanks and artillery pieces were absolutely useless."³³ More senior air force officers, such as General-Lieutenant of Aviation A. Malyukov, chief of Air Force Main Staff, were less threatening to the ground forces but still voiced their optimism in the omnipotence of airpower: "there was no 'Air-Land Battle.' Why? ...this is the first time we have witnessed a war where the aviation took care almost entirely of all the main tasks."³⁴ More subdued versions of the same position were taken by a civilian academics who specialize in military affairs.³⁵

During March 1991, the first substantive analysis of the entire campaign appears in the Soviet press. Marshal of the Soviet Union Sergey F. Akhromeyev provided an interview to the Moscow news magazine New Times.³⁶ Akhromeyev attributed Iraq's defeat, in part, due to the lack of naval forces integrated into a national air defense system.

The Navy published a "quick-look" in their March 1991 issue of Naval Digest but failed to pick up on Akhromeyev's theme on the value of naval forces.³⁷ This article did, however, provide a quantitative assessment of the degree of destruction of command and control, missile capability, facilities for weapons of mass destruction, energy producing facilities, etc. The similarity of the categories of targets to numerous open-source discussions of strategic nuclear targets lead one to speculate that analyses must be on-going to compare the results of a conventional strategic bombing offensive to planned nuclear strikes.

Another Navy initial analysis appeared in the April 23, 1991 issue of Red Star.³⁸ Rear Admiral A. Pauk, chief of a Main Navy Staff directorate, and Captain 1st Rank V. Karandeyev stressed: (1) thorough integration of naval aviation and TOMAHAWK SLCMs in the air offensive, (2) participation of naval forces in the AIRLAND battle (3) the multi-threat axis posed Iraq by the presence of coalition maritime forces, and (4) the time consuming [and unchallenged] buildup of maritime forces in Southwest Asia. They documented the participation of maritime forces in joint operations and the value of the high technology weapons. Pauk and Karandeyev concluded that the war "convincingly confirmed the role of naval forces in modern warfare."

In April 1991, Naval Digest published an exhaustive analysis of the strategic deployment of U.S. military forces during the Gulf war.³⁹ The article reminds one of the type that are frequently written about the Soviet merchant marine, being a military asset. It focused more on the strengths of the strategic sealift program rather than the weaknesses that adorned the pages of American maritime literature. In both cases, Soviet and American authors were using the events of the war to highlight points that they would like to make about the need to improve sealift programs associated with the merchant marine.

Non-naval originated initial lessons learned from the Persian Gulf wars tended to reduce the importance of fleet units other than naval aviation and SLCMs.⁴⁰ As time went on, questions were raised about the real accuracy of American high-technology weapons.⁴¹

Commentary by the Russian Federation Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev in an April 1991 New Times article recognized the vital importance of host nation support to the outcome of the campaign. Kozyrev suggested that without it, the DESERT STORM would have been "seriously hindered."⁴² Kozyrev did not raise the presence of American seapower as an alternative mechanism to stage an operational-strategic combat operations and one must assume that he was aware of their presence.

Indications of an debate over the "quick-look" lessons of the Persian Gulf war were given by Gorbachev in an April 11, 1991 interview broadcast on Japanese television.⁴³ Responding to a rather general question about post-war international relations, Gorbachev stated that it was not true that the global military balance had been overturned by Operation DESERT STORM. This would have aligned himself with those who said that the USSR did not need to rearm in order to counter the obvious advantages displayed by the coalition.

Andrey Kozyrev told a New Times audience in April 1991 that American weaponry demonstrated in the Persian Gulf war "does not represent any threat to the USSR."⁴⁴ The Russian Federation Foreign Minister clearly stated that rather than rebuilding their arsenal to match the West, a minimal nuclear deterrent posture was all that was needed to make sure "that no one will make any encroachments on the Soviet borders."

Political commentary in mid-March 1991 by President Gorbachev following the war included the suggestion that: "in the event of the emergence of a threat to shipping in the Persian Gulf region naval forces should be set up under the UN flag."⁴⁵ The United Nations Military Committee was recommended as having a role in future crisis situations.

Substantive and Subsequent Post-Campaign Analyses

Most of the "quick-look" lessons learned either lacked depth or analyzed the contributions of one service or combat arm. More comprehensive analyses were to come. The first major analysis of the war that took a more comprehensive and in-depth look at the Persian Gulf war was the report of a roundtable discussion of general and flag officers published in the May 1991 issue of the journal of the USSR General Staff Academy, Military Thought.⁴⁶ Participants in the roundtable included a number of authors of previous "quick-looks;" General-Lieutenant S. Bogdanov, chief of the USSR Armed Forces General Staff Operational-Strategic Research Center; General-Lieutenant of Aviation A. Malyukov, chief of Air Force Main Staff; and Rear Admiral A.A. Pauk, chief of a Main Navy Staff directorate.

General Malyukov was not quite so outspoken this time in his advocacy of airpower but he could not help but compare the success of coalition air efforts with the theories of Italian General Giulio Douhet. Another participant, General-Colonel of Aviation I.M. Maltsev, chief of the Air Defense Forces Main Staff, was perhaps even more of an advocate for airpower, including naval air, when he claimed that coalition aviation groupings were capable of performing "strategic missions." Maltsev pointed out the need for strong air defense forces to oppose the massive strikes of aircraft that will come at the beginning of any future war. Both airpower advocates, however, deferred to the role of the ground forces by adherence to the General Staff party line that one branch of the armed forces is incapable of deciding the course and outcome of war.

The navy's contributions were presented by Admiral Pauk. In this forum, he stressed: (1) the operation of ad hoc coalition forces under a unified plan in nontraditional areas, (2) the contribution of naval forces to the air operation, (3) high technology weapons and surveillance systems, (4) the role that strategic sealift played in facilitating Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM, (5) the naval blockade, and (6) the threat to land up to two Marine Expeditionary Brigades (MEBs). Pauk concluded that "naval forces are acquiring a leading role in local conflicts as the most versatile and mobile branch of the armed forces capable of accomplishing a wide range of missions at sea, on land and in the air." It is one thing to point out that a given combat arm is increasing in importance, and quite another to state that it is more important than another service. Pauk did not say that navies were more important than anyone else.

The General Staff position was more balanced and did not include significant attention to the contribution of naval forces. General Bogdanov pointed out that Western cruise missiles lacked sufficient damage. General-Major A. Ya. Gulko, deputy chief of a General Staff main directorate, concluded the roundtable with the assessment that:

"in itself, the offensive air operation and subsequent systemic operations by multinational forces' aircraft were unable to lead to achievement of the political and military-strategic goals set in this reason. Their main purpose was to undermine Iraq's military-economic potential and inflict damage on it which would ensure successful development of ground engagements with minimum losses for coalition armed forces."

One of the next most important public statements on the war was by Army General Mikhail Alekseyevich Moiseyev, Chief of the General Staff, at a Ministry of Defense scientific conference on June 6, 1991. Moiseyev delivered the main report at this conference which concerned itself with the lessons learned from the Persian Gulf war. He told the press, after delivering his report, that the lessons of the war should not be used as "'a pretext' for making immediate changes in the military reform in the Soviet Armed Forces."⁴⁷ He then added:

"the changed balance of military and political forces in the world, the changes that have happened and continue to take place in the country's domestic and foreign policy and new approaches towards the defense efficiency and security of our state" [require a need to alter military doctrine, strategy, operational art, and tactics]

Moiseyev's remarks are important because they acknowledge that the 1990 draft Soviet military doctrine and reform plans would have to be revised. They are also important because they acknowledge that there had been an altering of the military balance, specifically repudiated by Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev in his April 11, 1991 interview broadcast on Japanese television. Such a substantive difference of opinion would indicate either a rift between the Chief of the General Staff and the Soviet president or that Gorbachev had altered his views.

An excellent substantive overview was published in Foreign Military Review in their July 1991 issue.⁴⁸ On the whole, this article pays little attention to naval forces except in the context of their contribution to the air campaign. The authors appeared to suggest that the air power and high technology weapons were decisive. When writing about the military equipment of air forces, they noted that "air forces of the anti-Iraq coalition played a decisive role in destroying Iraq's military-economic potential, inflicting unacceptable damage on the Iraqi Army, and creating conditions for its rapid defeat during the course of the air-land operation." This generally parallels the position

of the General Staff at the roundtable published in the May edition of Military Thought. On the other hand, when discussing the military equipment employed by navies, they stated (emphasis added):

"On the whole, the new weapons employed by the United States and its allies in the Persian Gulf zone made it possible to inflict serious damage on the armed forces and military-industrial potential of Iraq and for all practical purposes decided the outcome of the war."

The authors of this article may have been speaking from the perspective of the West, but the U.S. had yet to issue a definitive statement making such a grandiose claim.

A substantive analysis of the war was published by a senior researcher at the U.S.A. and Canada Institute in the August issue of their journal USA: Economics, Politics, Ideology.⁴⁹ Sergey Mikhaylovich Rogov provided an interesting overview of the war, including its military-strategic implications. In the pre-Gorbachev era, such articles were rare, unimportant, and generally ignored. Articles today on military issues by academics like Sergey M. Rogov are important and cannot be ignored. Indeed, General-Colonel Pavel Sergeyevich Grachev, the new Russian Defense Minister, told a conference at the General Staff Academy in May 1992, that such outsiders will be involved in the process of setting up the Russian armed forces.⁵⁰

In his article, Rogov sided with those who were arguing that the war demonstrated the value to modern high technology weapons. Rogov went so far as to state that airpower was decisive and that "combat operations developed almost exactly in line with the classic plan of General Douhet." He claimed that the ground offensive was not a factor in deciding the outcome of the war.

His analysis allowed Rogov to conclude that "given the present technological level, **attack systems are superior to defense systems**" [emphasis in the original]. He then tied this to the current Soviet debate over a defensive doctrine and concluded that the "war in the Persian Gulf proved that the inability of the defensive side to organize a counterstrike dooms it to defeat." Rogov did not, however, state that this counterstrike needed to be with ground forces. Indeed, one might conclude that his article implies that they would be of high technology air forces!

In addition to these initial substantive analyses, the individual services and combat arms continued to produce lessons learned that tended to highlight the importance of their own branch or branches. For example, the July 1991 issue of Foreign Military Review also contained an assessment of preparing avia-

tion forces for Operation DESERT STORM.⁵¹ This article played particularly close attention to the integration of naval aviation into the air campaign. The importance of the navy and the TOMAHAWK SLCM was the subject of another article in the same issue.⁵²

General-Lieutenant I. Skuratov, chief of the Soviet Navy Shore Forces, wrote another analysis of the Gulf war in the June 1991 issue of Naval Digest that tended to highlight the importance of his own combat arm as a defense against TOMAHAWK SLCMs.⁵³ Skuratov proposed building a "new operational antiship missile system equal in range to Tomahawk missile capabilities." Subsequent articles appeared in later issues of the main navy journal highlighting the need for new maritime weapons systems that would be able to operate in the new military-technological environment caused by the scientific-technical revolution demonstrated in the Persian Gulf.⁵⁴

In the Summer of 1991, when the U.S. was considering renewing combat operations against Iraq because of its failure to live up to the terms of the cease fire, the Soviets took note that the lead elements for such strikes would consist of aviation units and TOMAHAWK SLCMs.⁵⁵

The first consolidated U.S. lessons learned from the Persian Gulf war appeared in July 1991.⁵⁶ Assuming that this report was purchased by the Soviet Ministry of Defense, and other Soviet researchers, it would have been available in translation for their use no later than August 1991.

After the publication of the initial series of substantive analyses, we began to see deliberate uses of the lessons of the Persian Gulf to make points in commentary on other related issues. For example, Army General Makhmut Akhmetovich Gareyev, a serious military intellectual, wrote a major contribution in the debate over military reform in the August 1991 issue the General Staff Academy's journal Military Thought.⁵⁷ In a section of the article dealing with the nature of a defensive doctrine, Gareyev made a case against a passive-only form of defense using the recent war in the Persian Gulf as his proof.

In another article in the same issue, another general officer offered his contributions on the military reform debate with explicit comments favoring the use of aircraft and other high technology weapons in lieu of ground forces. General-Major Ye. G. Korotchenko went as far as saying (emphasis in the original):⁵⁸

"the experience of military operations in the Persian Gulf zone showed that in the very near future the delivery of a surprise first strike and numerous subsequent massive missile, air-space and electronic strikes in combination with strikes by naval forces may decide the outcome of war without the inva-

sion of enemy territory by ground force groupings."

General Korotchenko's comments above included an endnote to the journal U.S. News and World Report, but one should interpret that as an attempt to allow him to make a controversial point with the aid of a Western surrogate. This is a standard practice in the Soviet literature. Korotchenko spends the remainder of the article essentially justifying this conclusion. Of note, also, is the use of the new term "air-space and electronic strikes."

Post-Coup Lessons Learned

With the coup attempt in the Soviet Union, came a new cast of characters involved with the most serious aspects of the debate over military doctrine and reform. Army General Vladimir Nikolayevich Lobov, having been the Chief of Staff of the Warsaw Pact Joint Armed Forces and then head of the Frunze Military Academy, was appointed as Chief of the General Staff after the August 1991 coup attempt. General Lobov was no stranger to the debate over military doctrine and strategy and is a first rate academic in his own right, but his banishment to the Frunze Academy indicated a lack of support from his seniors.

In one of his first interviews, while serving in this new position, in Izvestiya, published on September 2, 1991, Lobov used the opportunity to argue for improved quality of armed forces hardware due to the lessons learned from the Gulf war.⁵⁹ Lobov specifically stated that the Persian Gulf war should not be looked on as "merely an episode," implying that he sided with those who viewed the war as the basis for the development of military doctrine and organizational development of the Soviet armed forces. We should not forget that Lobov's appointment was preceded by that of the former Commander-in-Chief (CinC) of the Air Force, Marshal of Aviation Yevgeny Ivanovich Shaposhnikov, to the post of USSR Defense Minister. Shaposhnikov was viewed as a supporter of a shift in emphasis to air power.

On August 31, 1991, General-Colonel of Aviation Pëtr Stepanovich Deynekin was appointed to the position of CinC of the Soviet Air Force.⁶⁰ On September 5, 1991, he told a news interviewer that Operation Desert Storm confirmed that a "tank fleet of 40,000 vehicles in our country is pointless in modern warfare since the tanks would be burned by helicopters within hours."⁶¹ Such a statement by the head of a service was unheard of in earlier days. Support for the position that airpower should dominate the new military doctrine and reform received added emphasis from additional articles that appeared from time to time.⁶²

The ground forces were not about to take this frontal assault lying down. In an November 28, 1991 interview in Red Star,

the chief of the Ground Forces Main Staff responded that although "in the Persian Gulf the situation was such that aircraft played the leading role...this in no way belittles the significance of ground forces' military actions in the attainment of the ultimate goal."⁶³

In what appears to be a new post-coup summary report of the lessons learned from the Gulf War, two general officers and a colonel wrote a major article in the last USSR issue of the General Staff Academy's journal Military Thought.⁶⁴ The article is replete with nuances that make it necessary to understand what debates were ongoing at the time for which "lessons" of Operation DESERT STORM were used to support certain positions in that debate.

In this final USSR Military Thought issue article on the Persian Gulf lessons, the authors did compare the use of conventional weapons to the use of weapons of mass destruction. Although they acknowledged the importance of the offensive air operation, they did not agree that air forces made the "decisive contribution" toward winning victory in the Persian Gulf. The authors further stated that "only the defeat of the Iraqi Armed Forces main grouping as a result of the land operation by multinational troops forces Saddam's [Hussein] leadership to decide on an unconditional cease fire. The air bombardment did not lead to the Army's defeat."

This article also acknowledged that "conventional weapons were used during the war which are capable of acquiring a strategic character with massive employment." In conclusion, the authors concluded that the "military lessons of the Persian Gulf armed conflict are unique," thereby siding themselves against General Lobov, who had said that it was not "merely an episode." Lobov, incidentally, was fired as Chief of the General Staff on December 7, 1991, five days before the last issue of the USSR Military Thought was signed to press.

In one of the rare commentaries on the Persian Gulf war by the Navy CinC, Admiral of the Fleet Vladimir Nikolayevich Chernavin in early January 1992 finally took a stand on these issues. Chernavin stated in an interview (emphasis added):⁶⁵

"The war in the Persian Gulf convincingly showed the significance of the maritime sector: Iraq was blockaded from the sea, the air force and navy carried out the main, basic strikes from the sea, they effectively decided the outcome of the hostilities, and only when the resistance of the Iraqi Army had been finally crushed, did the ground troops move forward. This example graphically demonstrates that war today is different, it does not resemble previous ones, which began with soldiers crossing a border and

starting to conquer territory and destroy the enemy."

Setting the Lessons into the Context of the Debate Over Military Doctrine

At an October 1991 Vienna seminar on military doctrine with representatives from 38 members of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), General-Colonel Frants Markovskiy, first deputy head of a main directorate of the General Staff of the USSR Armed Forces told his audience that there were specific organizational changes to the Soviet armed forces that demonstrated a shift to a defensive doctrine based upon reasonable sufficiency.⁶⁶ He included: unilateral reductions in forces, the withdrawal of forces from foreign territory, the scrapping of short and medium-range nuclear missiles, the internal reorganization of divisions making them less offensive, the elimination of "spearhead tank forces," and the creation of a new coastal defense service in the navy (emphasis added).

General-Colonel Bronislav Omelichev, first deputy chief of the General Staff of the USSR Armed Forces, told the same audience that the Soviet armed forces would be reorganized into four services: the Strategic Deterrent Forces (SDF) [*strategicheskkiye sily sderzhivaniya*], an air force, a navy, and ground defense forces.⁶⁷ This order is interesting because it places the air force and the navy ahead of the ground forces.

On October 23, 1991, the Ministry of Defense published a major interview with the Chief of the General Staff.⁶⁸ In this interview, Lobov stated that the armed forces would be restructured into four services, the SDF, ground defense forces, air forces, and the navy. In using this hierarchy, the Chief of the General Staff appeared to indicate that ground forces should retain their usual place ahead of the air force and navy but after strategic nuclear forces.

In his parallel October 1991 Military Thought article, signed to press on November 11, 1991, Lobov gave a very different listing of the armed forces.⁶⁹ The first service listed in this article was the ground defense forces. The second service was the navy, usually listed fifth in precedence. The SDF came third with air and air defense forces fourth and fifth. This ranking of services altered the leading role accorded to nuclear forces since the creation of the Strategic Rocket Forces under General Secretary Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev in 1959 and perhaps indicated more support for the ground forces than was otherwise being received from then-USSR Minister of Defense Air Marshal Shaposhnikov. Lobov defined the SDF as the existing Strategic Rocket Forces, the strategic nuclear forces of the air force (Long-Range Aviation), and the strategic nuclear forces of the navy.

In a Military History Journal article signed to press in late November 1991, Chief of the USSR General Staff, General Lobov, again proposed organizational changes in the armed forces.⁷⁰ In another renumbering of the forces, ground defense forces remained listed first, but then came the air force, third the navy, and last was the new SDF. The air defense troops (PVO) were absorbed into the ground defense troops.

Soviet military doctrine was being again reformulated in November-December 1991, this time in conjunction with efforts to create a Union of Sovereign States and the aborted attempt to sign a new Union Treaty.⁷¹ With the assumption of a continued Union, the Soviet Ministry of Defense rapidly developed a new military doctrine that did not envisage the USSR coming under simultaneous or even sequential attack from several directions.⁷² It called for mobile ground defense forces based in peacetime upon corps and brigades rather than offensive ground forces based upon fronts.

Apparently, the entire military did not agree with the doctrinal directions that the Ministry of Defense were being forced to take. The final two 1991 issues of the General Staff's journal Military Thought, signed to press on December 12 before it was fully apparent that the Soviet Union was going to cease to exist, included a series of articles that directly challenged any wholesale shift to a defensive military doctrine that relied on defensive military operations as their primary form of combat. The following extracts provide the flavor of many of the more outspoken articles.

"The declaration only of defense and only or retaliatory operations in Soviet military doctrine probably will not accomplish the tasks either of educating the people or of deterring aggression against the USSR."⁷³ "A defense incapable of creating necessary conditions for launching a decisive offensive will not fulfill its mission and will not lead to success in defending the homeland."⁷⁴ "In no case should doctrine stereotype of 'castrate' military art."⁷⁵ "One should proclaim the right to repel aggression using all kinds, forms and methods of military operations."⁷⁶ "It is not precluded that future military operations will extend to the opposing side's full territory."⁷⁷

Trends in warfare were carefully developed with conclusions including that further cuts in the military would require **preemptive strikes** in order to successfully perform a defensive operation.⁷⁸ Although these articles did appear and the journal Military Thought has generally been predictive of trends in the Soviet military, these articles appear to represent the last efforts of the Soviet military to state their case for a strong defense under what were now totally unrealistic pre-coup sociopolitical conditions.

In early 1992, Marshal Shaposhnikov, in his new capacity as Commander of the Commonwealth Armed Forces, stated that a new military doctrine for the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) would remain defensive, although some of its provisions would have to be changed.⁷⁹ The military's preferred position was that combat operations cannot be oriented toward passive defense. One major article published immediately upon the demise of the USSR stated that "with the outbreak of aggression, all restrictions in the choice of the forms and methods of military operations should be lifted."⁸⁰

Numerous other articles have followed, indicating that the basic thrust of the strategic defense, being either operationally defensive or offensive, remains a major subject of debate.⁸¹ One possible way to interpret these remarks is that for programming purposes, the military might have to accept that it will plan only for defensive operations, but, if war were to actually occur, during the execution of plans, no such restrictions need apply.

One multi-authored article advocating a new doctrine was especially critical of politicians who had not yet internalized the lessons of Operation DESERT STORM and only thought of a ground forces invasion with frontal military operations in border and coastal areas.⁸² The military authors of this article advocated, instead, forces necessary to defend against the more likely air invasion as seen in Operation DESERT STORM. They promoted a concept of active combat ready forces designed to support nuclear deterrence and to repel an air attack with active forces. Mobilized reserve general purpose forces sufficient for the conduct of full-scale military operations in all spheres if there were a threat of a land campaign.

A Deputy Director of the Institute of the U.S.A. and Canada gave an important interview in mid-March just prior to his being officially named (on April 3, 1992) as one of the two new Russian Deputy Defense Ministers.⁸³ Andrey Afanasyevich Kokoshin stated that security for Russia was best obtained by a combination of restructured high-technology branches of the armed forces which would be backed up by "centrally based rapid deployment forces, which can be thrown in the shortest possible time into any region of the CIS to repulse external aggression, to end conflict on favorable terms acceptable to us." He added that their mission would be to rapidly curb the escalation of the conflict.

The Russian Supreme Soviet passed a resolution on April 1, 1992 that gave the priorities for the establishment of an independent military policy for the Russian Federation. Appended to this declaration was an appended statement from the Presidium that provided additional details. Included were the following concepts: (1) formation of a Russian military establishment on the basis of a sufficient level of defense, (2) sufficiency in strategic nuclear forces is to also include the minimal cost, (3) the basic factor in deterring large-scale and local wars against Russia and other CIS states should be forces possessing high-

accuracy weapons and means of delivery, (4) the prompt neutralization and localization of local conflicts shall be accomplished by highly mobile general purpose forces, and (5) the need for a collective defense system.⁸⁴

General-Colonel Pavel Sergeevich Grachev, also about to be announced as a Russian Deputy Defense Minister (on April 3), gave an interview published on April 1, 1992 in which he outlined his view of emerging Russian military doctrine.⁸⁵ It included emphasis on rapidly deployable forces, which he defined as airborne troops and marines, to meet any external threat. He added that ground forces with powerful tank components were no longer required by Russia.

In early May, Colonel-General Viktor Nikolayevich Samsonov, Chief of the CIS General Staff, gave an interview that indicated that the general purpose forces of the Russian Army would be based upon the concept of mobile defense without the formation of forward-based strategic echelons.⁸⁶ President Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin added in an interview that a mobile Russian Army "should be capable of reacting instantly to any critical situation."⁸⁷

At the mid-May 1992 parliamentary hearings over the new law to create Russian armed forces, one General Staff officer explained that the armed forces would "abandon continuous defense along the entire perimeter of the state borders."⁸⁸ Furthermore, he stated that "infantrymen" must "stop thinking about a future large-scale war requiring districts and fronts."

After the CIS Tashkent summit in May 1992, Russian Acting Defense Minister, General-Colonel Pavel S. Grachev, said that Russia would create "rapid reaction force" would be sent to whatever sectors where defenses are under threat. Ground forces "located on the defense perimeter will be significantly reduced, and several fully manned divisions will remain in each military district. So a strategic reserve will be established in case of hostilities."⁸⁹

Russian Defense Minister Grachev also stated that the Russian armed forces would include a "new type of armed forces-rapid deployment troops."⁹⁰ These apparently would be based upon the paratroops and marines -- "forces capable of operating independently in any area that poses an external threat to the country's security."⁹¹ Other forces mentioned include "airborne assault combined units, military transport and Army aviation, and mobile support services,"⁹² and "motorized rifle formations, equipped with light armaments, who can be transported by military transport aircraft or MI-26 helicopters."⁹³ Deputy Defense Minister Andrey A. Kokoshin added at the end of May that the new Russian armed forces "should be like the surgeon's scalpel, compared to the mallet or sledgehammer of the past."⁹⁴

Grachev proposed a three stage restructuring of the armed forces.⁹⁵ During the first stage (1992), the headquarters and administrative structures would be reformed. Legal and juridical

foundations for the armed forces would be created. During the second stage (1992-1994) combined and other units would be reformed and created. The armed forces would be cut to 2.1 million service personnel by 1995. Mixed systems of conscript and professional manning and alternative service would be introduced. The third stage (1995-1999) would consist of the reorganization of the branches of service and their reduction in size to 1.5 million.

At the end of May, 1992, a four-day conference was held at the Academy of the General Staff on the "Military Security of Russia."⁹⁶ Acting Russian Minister of Defense Grachev's concluding speech apparently contained criticism of previous views of nuclear weapons and the "strictly defensive" nature of military doctrine.⁹⁷ Grachev stated that in the event of aggression, Russia has the right to choose those means of combat which it deems most effective in the existing situation.

Reports of the discussions at that conference seemed to indicate that the evolving Russian military would be "made up of troops and forces on permanent readiness capable of acting effectively in local conflicts, rapid reaction forces, and strategic reserves."⁹⁸ Grachev told the conference that a concept for the organizational development of the Russian armed forces would be submitted to Russian President Boris N. Yeltsin by September 1, 1992.

Strategic Missions

The traditional major strategic goals and strategic missions of the Soviet armed forces in armed conflict were openly discussed in the military literature for many years. Some literature evidence indicates that these traditional strategic missions were revised in accordance with the 1987 Warsaw Pact defensive military doctrine.⁹⁹ The major changes in these new strategic missions were to increase the priority given to the repelling of an enemy aerospace attack, similar to the threat seen during Operation DESERT STORM, and to cast strategic operations in terms of defense rather than offense.

One could, however, still read offensive combat operations at the operational- and tactical-levels of warfare under such a defensive strategy. For example, an offensive naval operation (*operatsii*) to seek out and destroy enemy missile and other submarines as well as surface forces operating close to home waters is entirely consistent with a defensive military doctrine and strategy.

Some offensive combat operations conducted in support of repelling enemy aerospace attack might, however, be inconsistent with a defensive military doctrine and strategy. An example would be first-strikes against enemy nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) deployed in the open oceans. Although

such actions were traditionally justified as defensive, in that they would limit damage to the homeland in the event the war entered the nuclear phase, under the new concepts of defensive military doctrine, they would be illogical. The problem, of course, is that as long as the Russian military has an aggressive research and development (R&D) program designed to field forces are capable of actually performing such actions, the other side must take that into account regardless of stated intentions.

The inclusion of naval forces interdicting the sealines of communication (SLOCs) as a subset of the suppression of military-economic potential is another strategic mission that can be viewed differently by either side. In a short war, the interdiction of mid-Atlantic/Pacific SLOCs might not matter to the outcome -- hence substantial resources should not necessarily be developed for this mission. SLOC interdiction has traditionally been thought as being more relevant during a long war. On the other hand, a SLOC interdiction capability could, if properly employed during the initial stages of a war, preclude an enemy from the option of a long war -- hence serve to meet the new political goals of ending wars quickly.¹⁰⁰

With the types of changes to military doctrine that have been discussed since the August 1991 coup, it is clear that the strategic missions of the armed forces will change as well. Former Chief of the General Staff General Vladimir N. Lobov said this in October 1991 article in Military Thought.¹⁰¹ Lobov did not define the new strategic missions for the armed forces but, rather, suggested that they might include "disrupting and repelling an aggressor's attack, holding territory, and gaining time to concentrate necessary forces." These themes will also need to be watched as the Russian and other republics finalize their emerging military doctrines and strategies.

Perhaps the most significant changes in strategic missions for Russia and the other republics will involve the ground forces. For a USSR entangled in the Warsaw Pact and forward deployed to Eastern Europe, it was proper to cast ground forces strategic operations in terms of groups of fronts; on par with the most demanding operations undertaken during the Great Patriotic War. Even General Lobov's October 1991 Military Thought article contained references to repulsing an invasion by a:

"complex system of interconnected strategic defensive operations in continental and maritime theaters of military operations, within the scope of which front, fleet, air, air defense, airborne, amphibious landing, antilanding and other operations may be conducted."

With the new, less demanding, goals of military doctrine and in the absence of a significant external threat from ground

forces, there will be no need to plan for or to field active or maintain a rapidly mobilization capability for ground forces capable of strategic military operations (*voyennyye deystviya*).

The criteria for successful completion of military strategic missions has undergone significant revision under the new defensive doctrine. Formerly, total defeat of the enemy's armed forces in an armed conflict was demanded as the military's contribution to the overall war effort. Under a defensive doctrine, the revised military requirement is to defeat the invading force and simultaneously to prevent vertical and horizontal escalation or the escalation of the conflict over time.

One relatively new concept for Russian military doctrine is to consider separate or subordinate military doctrines or military strategies for different geographic portions of one nation or an alliance. For example, in an October 1991 article in Military Thought, a general officer argued that the situation in the European portion of the USSR was significantly different than that in the East or in the South.¹⁰² In another article in this same journal, another general officer suggested that the balance of forces should be created for each individual theater of military operations (TVD) rather than as a whole.¹⁰³

The most significant development of this concept was published by the civilian vice president of the Institute of National Security and Strategic Studies in the ministry of defense's daily newspaper Red Star in March 1992.¹⁰⁴ In this article, A. Savelyev agrees that military doctrine should be "geared toward geographic sectors of probable threat," and that military tasks should "be optimized according to the particular sector."

In the Western TVD, Savelyev concludes that Russia should assume that the "enemy" will have technical superiority. The best option for defense against this enemy is "'islands of resistance' deep inside our own territory." Savelyev views the main objective in this theater as "stopping combat operations at the earliest possible stage" by means of "tactical counterstrikes." The structure of armed forces in this theater should not be "in strategic terms, be regarded as offensive."

In the Eastern and Southern TVDs, Savelyev concludes that Russia will have technical superiority over the assumed enemy. The best option for defense in these sectors is "forward-based" with main defense forces deployed in peacetime in the "Russian heartland." If the threat of an attack arises, they would be rapidly deployed to "forward positions" and their main task would be to "prevent the enemy penetrating deep inside our territory and to 'repulse' it if this is not achieved during the initial stages of the war."

If Savelyev's concepts are accepted as a part of Russian military doctrine, then they would have major implications for the navy. In the Western TVD, the fleet would appear to be relegated to an extremely defensive posture. The Southern TVD

would include significantly reduced in size fleet units in the Black and Caspian seas with little opposition. The Eastern TVD does not appear to be one that Savelyev associates with the U.S. despite years of rhetoric by the U.S. Navy with its Maritime Strategy.

Doctrinal discussion must also consider the pace of war. The expected pace will have profound implications for the maritime services. Generally, if a war is to be short, then navies are thought to be unable to exert their full influence. In both the U.S. and Russia, it appears that for planning purposes, all wars will be short. Similarly, if the political guidance is to contain a crisis as soon as possible, then navies may not be able to do more than sortie from their bases and take up initial station close to home waters.

New Roles and Missions for the Navy

In November 1991, Admiral of the Fleet Vladimir Nikolayevich Chernavin, CinC of the Soviet Navy published what appears to be the long-awaited definitive article providing the Navy's position on its future.¹⁰⁵ Chernavin's article was not an announcement of the fleet's future but merely the Navy's position--after all the Union itself was up for grabs at the time that this article was signed to press. With the demise of the Soviet Union, this article should be seen as the most optimistic case for a future Russian Navy and also the worst case threat to the West; i.e. it is not likely that a Russian fleet would be as strong as that proposed by Chernavin for the whole USSR. Chernavin's November 1991 view of the future is also the least likely threat to the West since it implied resources that are not likely to be provided to the fleet.

Chernavin's Soviet Navy of the future was cast in terms of a defensive military doctrine that did not accept the lack of an external threat from the U.S. It used mission terms like averting war, repelling aggression, safeguarding the maritime flanks, depriving the enemy of the opportunity of conducting offensive operations, and creating the conditions for the restoration of peace.¹⁰⁶ Training goals were similarly defensive-sounding.

The Navy CinC stated that naval strategic nuclear forces should continue to operate in the future, but in reduced numbers. Chernavin appeared to announce that no new SSBNs would be built or put into service in the next ten years. The retention of existing SSBNs is a critical decision since we should have assumed that future Soviet general purpose forces would continue to be optimized to protect SSBNs in bastions. This position remains at the center for the Russian Navy because if it is validated it provides some justification for Western antisubmarine warfare submarines, such as the *SEAWOLF* or *CENTURION*, designed to hunt these SSBNs in Russian coastal waters.

Chernavin's future general purpose forces were given the principal mission of "ensuring the physical preservation and sound functioning of the naval strategic nuclear system under any condition." Secondary missions were to defend the maritime frontiers and to inflict "defeat on enemy naval strike groups and impeding the execution of broad-scale operations [and assist in] defensive operations in the continental theaters." Chernavin appeared to announce that the future building programs ruled out large surface or amphibious ships. Instead, primary attention was to be given to submarines and aircraft-carrying cruisers.

The civilian rejoinder to Chernavin, by Konstantin Eduardovich Sorokin, was also published in November 1991.¹⁰⁷ It stressed coastal defense of SSBN bastions with diesel submarines, short-range land-based aircraft, existing air-capable ships, and mines. Other forces in reserve would have the mission of operations in remote ocean areas, protection of own maritime forces, evacuating citizens, and participation in United Nations actions. Sorokin specifically ruled out the mission of strategic antisubmarine warfare against foreign SSBNs. Sorokin's recommendations may be viewed as a worst case for the future Russian Navy and a best case for the West, unless one believes that economic conditions make even these suggestions optimistic.

With the demise of the USSR, naval building programs once again came under active discussion. A January 1991 Moscow News roundtable with senior Navy officers revealed great deal of disagreement over a defensive doctrine that would lead to a fleet of only small coastal combatants.¹⁰⁸ One participant revealed that recommendations coming from the General Staff's Center for Strategic Studies was "nothing short of a death sentence to the Navy." Other discussions in the Navy's journal Naval Digest revealed that the bureaucracy might at least be considering elimination of some of the more controversial and costly programs, such as strategic antisubmarine warfare against enemy SSBNs.¹⁰⁹

Questions of new naval building programs, however, were eclipsed by political discussions over who owned the existing fleet. The world witnessed a public battle over possession of the former Soviet Navy that had not yet been resolved by the writing of this report. What seemed likely, by early June 1992, was that the former Soviet Navy would be divided and that the bulk of the ocean-going fleet would belong to Russia.

In a move to perhaps gain influence with the uniformed armed forces, Andrey A. Kokoshin's Red Star interview published in mid-March 1992 just prior to his being named a Deputy Minister of Defense of Russia indicated his support for more than a coastal defense fleet.¹¹⁰

"We need not only coastal defense naval forces, collaborating with aviation and land forces, but some proportion of the strategic

missile carriers deployed on combat patrol in the Barents Sea and Sea of Okhotsk regions. Submarine forces are also needed to ensure security of navigation in waters of the world's oceans which are important for Russia's national interests."

Kokoshin followed this up with an interview stating that "A navy is essential for Russia...we have legitimate interests on the high seas."¹¹¹ Following this statement, however, was a carefully worded paragraph that discussed the need for maximizing the military benefit of any new shipbuilding. Preceding the strong navy statement was one pointing out that when the former USSR challenged the naval might of the West, it was very burdensome and dangerous to the Soviet navy.

Conclusions

The Soviet Navy has, for some time, been attempting to argue their case to marshals, generals, and civilian leaders who do not have a good appreciation for the value of maritime forces. The writings of the late Admiral of the Fleet of the Soviet Union Sergey Georgiyevich Gorshkov were examples of such attempts. More recently, we have seen the Soviet Navy correlate the size of World War II carrier task forces with Soviet frontal aviation air armies in order to make the comparison¹¹² and the loss of one or two German transports, carrying troops and equipment, equivalent to "carrying out an army-level or even a front-level operation."¹¹³

When the armed forces of the USSR shift reliance to nuclear weapons, combat elements of the Navy and Air Force suffered.¹¹⁴ The shift to a new defensive doctrine, the reduction in the reliance in nuclear weapons, and the lessons of the Persian Gulf war are all reasons for the navy to once again make its case anew. The Persian Gulf war is not simply an episode but rather the model upon which future doctrine and organizational development must be built.

Operation DESERT SHIELD demonstrated to the West that the Soviet Union did not view its own security from the sole perspective of military preparedness. Despite the significant presence of the U.S. Navy, including its nuclear-weapons capable aircraft carriers, close to the southern borders the Soviet Navy was not only not beefed up, but it was withdrawn from the area when hostilities began.

The Soviet Union, and now Russia, seem to accept that the U.S. has shifted its strategic focus from a Cold War-oriented confrontation with the possibility of direct military interaction to a new regional focus in which the superpowers might not be engaged. The threat to Russia, in such an international security

environment, is that the U.S. may become involved in states which directly border Russia or the CIS. Such an involvement cannot be ignored by Russia since the consequences of armed conflict on her borders cannot be fully foreseen.

The primary external military planning scenario for Russia, therefore, is at the operational-strategic-level of warfare in a contingency response by the West. The political goal of such a crisis would be to contain this crisis horizontally, vertically, and over time. If diplomatic and other efforts fail, the Russian military would be expected to keep the conflict from spreading across its borders.

Planning need not be conducted for simultaneous nor strategic-level attacks on Russia from all sectors--planning can be different in different TVDs. Planning for defensive military operations in Europe need not resemble those along Russia's southern borders. Strategic warning of an operational-level crisis can be counted on and sequential operations are all that need be planned.

The forces of choice for such a mission will be the type of forces that the coalition successfully used in Operation DESERT STORM. The initial period of war will offer Russia the opportunity to contain the crisis without having to mobilize its full military potential. The role of the navy and air forces in certain theaters of strategic military operations, therefore, will increase relative to that of the Russian ground forces. If the mobile standing forces are unable to contain the conflict, then reserve components of the armed forces will be mobilized in order to complete the defense of the homeland.

Since the U.S. would have to transport equipment and supplies by sea to any overseas contingency response, Russia will not program its response to allow a "free ride" to the theater of the crisis as Saddam Hussein permitted coalition forces in the Persian Gulf war. The size of this force need not be exceptionally large, and naval forces will allow the Russians the option of interdiction of the sea-lines of communications during a local and short war.

The concept of having mobile air and naval forces respond first to a military threat and larger ground forces only later are evidence of a considerable shift in thinking in the Russian military. Such military operational art is the norm in naval warfare where surface fleets will probably not engage until after the initial actions by air and subsurface forces.

The shift to a real defensive doctrine should lead the Russian military to study naval warfare in order to consider the similarities between war at sea and maneuver warfare ashore. Indeed, the final USSR issue of Military Thought analysis on the Persian Gulf war included a discussion of the need to "establish defensive force groupings within limits of one's own territory in short time periods."¹¹⁵ There is a considerable similarity in

the formation of naval task groups which establish a working "sea control" over certain areas of the oceans for limited periods of time.

Perhaps the most significant lesson of the Soviet and Russian views on the Persian Gulf war is to once again remind us that their open-source discussions must be seen in the context of the larger debates that are ongoing. The navy has not been the most important Soviet armed service and should have not provided the primary evidence of Soviet military intentions. If the navy becomes more important under Russia, however, we will need to revisit that assumption and perhaps pay less attention to the ground forces marshals and generals that have dominated Soviet military thinking during the past decades.

Notes

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