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SOVIET NAVAL INFANTRY: A NEW CAPABILITY?

by

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Lieutenant Colonel, U. S. Marine Corps

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The long history of the Soviet Naval Infantry dates back to 1706 when the prescient Peter the Great created the Sea Regiment. From that time until the present, the course of its history has been an uneven one; its strength has changed from time to time as it expanded and shrank, both in importance and in numbers. At intervals only a token force, it burgeoned into the 600,000 man force of marine strenght during World War II. Its most recent reemphasis by the Kremlin leaders in 1964 is a matter for serious concern because it took place at a time when many considered the nuclear strategic weapon the only effective

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The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signed Donald K. Cliff

Date 15 april 1971

15 April 1971

This thesis directed and approved by
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION; THE NAVAL INFANTRY'S PLACE IN THE EAST-WEST STRUGGLE

During the past three decades the world has experienced a phenomenal technological and scientific revolution. The resulting changes in the technology of the means of conducting warfare have had significant effects on the capability of nations to impose their will on other peoples. Of greatest significance have been the development of the nuclear weapon and the modern delivery means which, where combined, have not only compressed the time from decision-to-attack-to-impact but have vastly increased man's ability thoroughly to destroy and, in turn, to be destroyed by armed combat. Many strategists argue that the very destructiveness of these modern weapons has hamstrung the major powers, seriously restricting their ability to insist on compliance to their demands.

The impact of these changes cannot be truly determined at this time in history; the numerous strategies propounded concerning the methods of conducting a future thermonuclear war have varied from massive retaliation, to flexible reponse, to the necessity for a first strike, thence to

nuclear sufficiency, and selective capability for a second strike response.

The destructiveness of intercontinental ballistic missiles and thermonuclear weapons has led the superpowers to be very cautious about confronting each other in warfare; great care has been exercised to keep conflicts localized. Contemporary wars have been accompanied by political awareness that the involvement of one superpower in a local or limited war has inevitably affected the national interests of the other. This situation has put a premium on being first to become committed in any conflict, since it is difficult for the other superpower to do anything more than provide indirect support for fear of creating a superpower confrontation. The amphibious capability of the United States has been the political tool in the past which has enabled the nation to be first on the scene in crisis situations bordering the seas.

Only time can tell whether or not the classical principles of warfare have any significance for nuclear warfare. It would appear that the principle of surprise has become paramount; however, if the opponent has a believable second strike capability, nuclear forms of attack may simply mean total devastation of the country that initiated the surprise attack. The destructive power of the strategic missile and the inadequacies of missile

detection and interception systems are such that rational men would hesitate to initiate any war that might conceivably end in nuclear holocaust.

The conventional aspect of general warfare involving superpowers is also fraught with the dangers of thermo-nuclear war. It is doubtful that a large scale conventional war could be fought between the superpowers without escalating into nuclear war. The near parity in nuclear strike forces would presumably bring about nearly even levels of destruction upon each participant; any victory would result in unacceptable levels of damage.

Committed as they are to inevitable struggle against capitalist societies and dedicated as they are in striving for hegemony in the Communist world, the Russian leaders will use all means of power at their disposal, including the economic, military, and political, to achieve their ends. The Soviets will use these means with determination to change the socialist-capitalist balance of power, although there is no evidence to support the belief that they will lack reasonable restraint in the use of nuclear weapons. Boasts of military power and economic and political strength have been used to frighten, intimidate, and otherwise impress various members of the world community, yet cautious use of military power beyond their rimlands has earmarked their behavior. During the past three decades the prudence which

has distinguished their conduct has obtained largely because they have had no significant amphibious force with which to challenge the United States capability for amphibious landings.

The general outlook of the Soviets, which stresses that history is moving in the direction of communism and that wars of liberation will occur from the "struggles of the masses" inspired by Communist influence, has enabled the Reds to follow a restrained course of military action. There can be no doubt of the ambitious expansionist goals of the Kremlin leaders, yet clearly a policy of "peaceful coexistence" better suits the world of nuclear superpowers. The Soviets, therefore, see their military strength as serving two basic purposes; first, defense of Mother Russia and her buffer satellites and second, support for the political expansion of communism, Soviet style. It becomes clear that it is in the best interests of the Russians to deter general war while forging new Soviet ties throughout the uncommitted or third world. An amphibious Naval Infantry force is certainly of great value in strengthening peaceful ties by show-of-the-flag visits and through the military strength that these visits represent in local conflict situations.

The traditional means of expansionism must be slightly modified to fit the mold of recent history; economic influence must be used to impress the peoples of underdeveloped

countries of the efficacy of the Soviets. Political means must be interpreted by the recipients of these attentions that the Communist system, as practiced by the Soviets, offers practical advantages superior to those which might accrue from normal economic evolution as a capitalistic state. Military force must be significant enough to impress the third world that the Soviets are capable in both strength and presence to intervene in behalf of the members of the Communist bloc and their close "friends."

If general warfare is to be averted, although military presence and capability are to be exploited, special forces other than the strategic missile force and the Red Army must be employed as tools for political and economic expansion. The Red Navy appears to present significant evidence through its impressive ship production of recent years and its naval exercises such as "Okean" that it can provide a respectable force for advancing Russian international ambitions. The Navy alone is not enough, however, since many situations require the presence of ground troops to achieve the desired goal.

Naval forces afloat have played an impressive role in historic as well as modern times, yet, in the eye of the beholder of contemporary warfare, forces landed in an area of tension present a problem entirely different from that presented by ships alone. The political utility inherent

in on-the-scene ground combat troops presents a political-military force that, be it considered a confrontation force or a force of interposition, vastly changes the options available to the opposing powers.

Probably the Russian leaders have realized this fact; the appearance on the scene of the Soviet Naval Infantry seems to support this view. Thus, this paper is directed to the recently reemphasized Soviet Naval Infantry, the Soviet strategy since World War II, and the strategy of employment of the Soviet Naval Infantry accompanied by an increased amphibious ship capability to provide the mobility necessary for any "marine" force.

CHAPTER II

THE NAVAL INFANTRY'S HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT THROUGH WORLD WAR II

The history of Russia as a significant sea power had its beginning with Peter the Great, 1672-1725, who is properly regarded as the founder of the present sea forces. From his early youth Peter was drawn to the sea for he clearly saw the implications of naval strength and coastal maritime commerce upon the future of Russia.[1]

In furtherance of his goal to develop the sea potential for Russia he became the first Czar to travel abroad when, in 1697, he visited countries of northern Europe; he returned to Russia with a newly acquired knowledge of ship-building techniques. He also brought with him maritime and military experts from the Netherlands whom he had persuaded to emigrate to Russia.[2]

During his lifetime the European world was often to witness Russian power as Peter sent forth his amphibious forces against the Turks, twice against the Persians, and 13 times against the Swedes. Four of the expeditions included over 200 vessels, while the rest were made up of forces consisting of from 9 to 156 vessels.

Peter's use of galleys in an age when the galley was primarily used as a floating prison proved an effective and

economical means of providing transportation for his amphibious combat power, although the galley was generally presumed to be of no value in combat after the time of the Spanish Armada of 1588.[3]

To achieve his expansionist goals, Peter, on 16 November 1705, created a permanent organization which he called the Sea Regiment. Originally this beginning of the Naval Infantry had ten 120-man companies, but it was reorganized in 1714 into five battalions of 500-600 men each. The battalions were assigned afloat as a significant part of the crew of the rowing fleet and also of the blue-water fleet, which Peter had established in 1710 to protect his galleys.[4]

The first appropriate designation for an amphibious commander was that of "General and Admiral," the rank assigned in 1708 to Feodor Apraksin, who led the Russian forces in amphibious assault and also commanded the attending ship-of-the-line fleet.[5]

The typical galley, which could carry 520 oarsmen and troops, was used most spectacularly in 1719 when Peter unleashed 26,000 amphibious troops to swarm ashore in Sweden where they wrought tremendous devastation on that long-time enemy.[6] The Czar finally was forced to accept terms of peace that were short of the defeat of Sweden, but he did so only because of the interposition of the

British fleet, which had twice established its presence and intent to intercede on behalf of the Swedes. He recognized that the British forces and the possible intervention of the French created a threat that made the risk of future warfare against Sweden unacceptable in 1721.[7] This interposition by the British in no significant way deterred the thinking of Peter as to the efficacy of his amphibious forces.

After Peter's death the Naval Infantry's importance waned although that force did participate in the Turkish War of 1769-1774; its members were held to be excellent fighters but too few in number, with only 1,760 men. In 1777 it was organized into two fleet divisions each of which contained four 848-man battalions; five years later the battalion size was increased by two companies to allow an overall battalion strength of 1,177 men.[8]

The year 1812 found the Naval Infantry with seven regiments which performed so well against Napoleon that they were assigned to the Army in 1813 for the pursuit of the French forces into Europe, becoming the 25th and 28th Infantry Divisions. The successful amphibious operations of the Navy against the Turks in the 1828-1829 war were conducted without the Naval Infantry. The latter's role was accomplished by naval units trained to engage in the landing operations with the Naval Infantry in the Baltic

during the months when sea operations were hindered by ice formations and naval personnel were shore-bound.

Russian forces conducted 84 amphibious landings from 1696 to 1830; after that the history of the Naval Infantry is vague from 1830 until the early 1900's. The Naval Infantry forces were lauded, however, for their performance in the defense of Sevastopol from 1853 to 1856.[9]

In road-poor Russia, waterways have had a significance that is at variance with Western military thinking; to the Western mind, rivers and oceans are conceived of as military barriers, while to the Russians they are important avenues of approach. Of the 70 rivers of the Eurasian continent of 1,000 kilometers or more length, 50 flow within the Soviet Union. Canals augment the natural river basins providing access to inland seas and major cities.[10]

During the Russian Civil War of 1917 both the White and Red Russians used Naval Infantry forces for attack in coastal and inland areas; they were normally used as shock troops in scenes of particular danger and in river operations, but they received little recognition.

The Red "Marine" river units played a major role in the contest between the Red forces and their many foes during the civil war. The crucial campaign for the control of the Volga line, so essential to the Reds, was won by them mainly through their superior techniques of riverine

operations. The White gunboats which seized many strategic points along the river, cutting off the flow of oil, wheat, and coal to the Communist heartland around Moscow, were ultimately defeated by a squadron of destroyers which used the Mariinsk Canal System to enter the upper Volga; the Whites had failed to control the river banks. The warships which had transferred to the river systems remained intact after the revolution to become the nucleus of the Red Navy.[11] The Soviet river strategy of the civil war was based on control of the river banks as much as upon control of the waterway itself. The Russian cavalry followed the river flotillas, and with fire support from them, cleared the banks of infantry and gun batteries.

Like the United States Marine Corps, which was largely eclipsed by the Army and Navy until World War I, the Russian Naval Infantry had little by way of accomplishment in modern warfare until World War II when it was credited with significant success in support of the Red Army; it eventually reached a force of nearly 600,000 fighting men during that war.[12]

The Russians claim at least 114 amphibious operations during World War II, over one-fourth of which were accomplished under the present Admiral of the Navy, Gorshkov. The World War II philosophy of employment of each naval force as a helper to the Red Army gives significant insight

into the role of the Naval Infantry of recent history: to protect the flanks of the Army and to make amphibious landings on the enemy's rear to relieve pressure on the Army.[13]

As in the civil war of 1917, the riverine tactics employed by the Naval Infantry forces in World War II were based upon historical precedent; the Naval Infantry accomplished significant results for the Soviets. The Polish campaign of 1939 saw the Poles' Pinsk Flotilla defeated by the same tactics employed in the civil war, only the forces were different: Soviet armor played the cavalry role and controlled the river banks, while the Polish forces were left with the choice of surrender or destruction by tank forces.

The importance of controlling the river banks was forcibly demonstrated to the Germans too when, in the spring of 1943, the German High Command assembled a flotilla of armored gunboats, troop transports, artillery monitors, and antiaircraft boats in occupied Poland to prevent a breakthrough of the Soviet Azov-Don Flotilla to the Dnieper River, Germany's main line of resistance of the Eastern Front. Soviet intelligence learned of the movement, and although German air superiority rendered the Soviet air power impotent, the Soviets were able to set up one of the greatest ambushes of modern times.[14] The German failure to maintain

river bank control of the various rivers and canals through which their forces had to pass permitted two Soviet guerrilla divisions to set up an ambush over a 12 mile stretch of the Pripet River. The ensuing battle destroyed 17 of the 23 German ships, ending the German attempts to send naval forces to the Dnieper.[15]

The riverine operations of World War II saw the development of new tactics to support standing doctrine such as that of the amphibious assault group (DSG). This group was basically a mechanized force of tank destroyers, Naval Infantry, and five-ton trucks carrying assault boats. The DSG task f(·ce generally entered the enemy's rear through a gap in the lines forced by the Red Army and attempted to reach the next river or canal before it could be fortified. Tank destroyers were used to protect the Naval Infantry from armored counterattacks as they crossed the river and proceeded to gain fords and shallows for the advance of its own armor.

The Soviets' 11 big river flotillas of World War II similarly used the Naval Infantry along with self-propelled artillery and combat engineers to support the movement of their armored riverboats which included ships with armament from 122 mm. guns and mortars and also included armed minesweepers, patrol boats, and tugs. The Danube Flotilla alone had over 200 craft of all sizes.[16]

One example of the many recitals of the glory of the Naval Infantry in World War II, written by Major General P. Mel'nikov, gives an insight into the versatility of that force:

> In Odessa, when the Hitlerians succeeded in penetrating our defense and a threat of air attacks was created, a landing of the Grigor'yevka region was conducted. On September 21, the 3d regiment of the marine infantry left Sevastopol on the cruisers "Krasnyy Krym," "Kransnyy Kavkas," destroyers "Bezuprechnyy," and "Boykiy." At the start of September 22, the ships reached Grigor'yevka and suddenly brought down intense fire upon the shore. Under its opening, the launches and cutters with the assault landing forces rushed in. By two o'clock in the day the company of junior lieutenant CHORPOY secured the landing of the other waves. The sailors captured the batteries and opened fire on the enemy with a swift attack. The airborne assault force of the marine infantry landed in the rear area of the opponent. The air force fleet delivered continuous attacks.
>
> The Fascists began to draw up forces, in order to drop landing forces to the sea. But by morning of the following day, the 157 and 421 rifle divisions came into the offensive. The following night the landing force was joined by the 1-m marine regiment of the 421 rifle division. In total the enemy soldiers were pushed back 5 km; they lost nearly 2,000 soldiers and officers. The Hitler batteries couldn't bring fire to bear on the city or port any longer.[17]

In the Russian tradition of glorifying military units which produced significant results in combat, the Naval Infantry achieved prominence in the news media after the violent World War II battles of Odessa and Sevastopol; the Germans referred to it then as "The Black Death" or "Black Cloud" for its heroic and savage defense of those ports.[18]

The force's fame was further enhanced when sailors of the Pacific Fleet and the Amur Flotilla were recalled to Moscow and organized into Naval Infantry brigades where they joined with Red Army units in the defense of the capital. In recognition of its gallantry and versatility, the decision to increase the Naval Infantry to form 25 separate "marine" brigades was announced in October of 1941.[19] It gained fame in the battles for the defense of Leningrad and Stalingrad, but its primary task was that of supporting the sea flanks of the Red Army by conducting amphibious landings in the enemy rear. It was traditionally employed with the Red Army in inland battles and in river crossing operations on the Dnieper, Don, Donau, and, later, the Amur. The river-crossing techniques which it employed were significant factors in the ability of the Red Army to keep pressure upon the Germans.

Although the amphibious landings of the Soviet Naval Infantry during World War II were never on the scale of United States Marine and Army operations, although it frequently had little or no real opposition during the assault phase, and although only four, by its own admission, were large scale, the force takes great pride in telling that of the 114 landings, 61 were prepared in less than 24 hours.[20]

The doctrine of the amphibious assault called for powerful artillery and air bombardment in addition to concealment measures, usually smoke screens, and emphasized that the participating marine forces obtain decisive results through swift action. The doctrine called for a division of each amphibious landing into the following stages: preparation, oversea movement, beachhead assault, landing, execution of the mission ashore, mopping up, and, in the event of defeat, withdrawal. The advisability of simultaneous sea and airborne landings was emphasized, although rarely was this tactic utilized.

The limited number of ships peculiarly suited for amphibious exercises denied the Soviets the opportunity to exploit many favorable situations wherein an amphibious landing could have been tactically of great benefit. Rear Admiral Stalbo recognized the importance of amphibious shipping and specially trained troops when he stated:

> In order to land forces in the war years, we had to resort to using warships, and poorly-suited ships and boats. However, even with these forces and equipment the fleets successfully penetrated the enemy's defense and landed forces, although they were limited with respect to personnel and as a rule without artillery and tanks. The lack of specialized landing ships often led to considerable losses of landing forces and made weather conditions of special significance.
>
> Our lack of large formations of naval infantry also considerably influenced the success of landing operations, especially in the first months of the war.[21]

In addition to employing air and naval gunfire against strong defenses, the Soviets often used daring tactics without normal fire support with excellent results. In the Kerch-Feodosiya landing operation, a cruiser, along with destroyers and submarine chasers with landing forces on board, having entered the port of Feodosiya, made fast under enemy fire and landed troops directly at the piers. Smokescreens covered the approach of the ships while aircraft, which had established an accustomed presence by flying low over the city on preceding nights, masked the sounds of the ships' engines. The landing at Frigoryevka was conducted under similar conditions with the notable addition of a landing by airborne forces in conjunction with the amphibious landing.[22] The landing at Feodosiya was beyond range of the normally based fighter aircraft; to solve this problem the planes were ferried to the Kerch peninsula from which they operated to support the amphibious landing.[23]

The Soviet doctrine of the era dictated that, when possible, assault troops embark while in a friendly port aboard the landing ship or craft from which they were to assault the enemy beaches. The doctrine may have been derived from a lack of experience in transferring troops into assault craft at sea, or the reason may be traced directly to a lack of specialized craft, which was certainly

the case. Whatever the true reason or reasons may be, no Soviet amphibious landing was made at a significant distance from the embarkation point of the assault troops.

Amphibious landing operations often had a considerable effect on the course of events in the coastal sectors; by the official Soviet estimates, the Navy landed about 330,000 men during World War II. They estimate that up to 2,000 naval ships, several thousand varied auxiliary landing craft, and about 10,000 airplanes participated in their coastal landings.[24]

The successor to Peter's Sea Regiment, the Naval Infantry, indeed has had a long and in some ways a distinguished history. The publicity centered around its activities of World War II emphasized its elite characteristics of daring, toughness, and resourcefulness in combat operations. The landing operations it conducted both on sea coasts and in river crossings were accomplished with verve; the tested strategy of taking and maintaining control over important rivers and their banks proved to be a significant contribution to the warfare of its country. It, like the United States Marine Corps, was greatly reduced in size after World War II; in fact so little is known of the Naval Infantry after that war that it may well have been abolished for a period of time. Whether abolished or reduced to such a low level that it was nearly in a caretaker status, that

powerful tool of modern diplomacy lay dormant and unrecognized for many years until it emerged in fledgling size in 1964.

CHAPTER III

THE NAVAL INFANTRY'S RELATION TO STRATEGIC DOCTRINE, PAST AND PRESENT

The military strategy of the Soviet Union has obviously been subjected to various influences throughout its development. Marxist ideology and doctrine were, of course, the foundations upon which Lenin built his Communist goals, goals based upon a military model of political relations derived from the Bolshevik conflict-image of the world. The present Soviet doctrine of strategy goes back into Russian history to the Czarist influence, which, though usually referred to by the Soviets with scorn, has been especially pronounced upon Soviet military strategy. The Czarist tenets of stress on the concentration of force in a decisive direction, emphasis upon a large standing army, and priority for offensive operations are all emphasized in contemporary Soviet doctrine. The most significant distinction between the strategies of the West and the Soviets is that between war and peace. Military action in the Soviets' military doctrine is a coordinated part of political strategy because they maintain that military and political strategy form a unified whole.

Clausewitz' dictum that war is a continuation of politics by other means fits well into the historical mold

of Marxist-Leninist thinking.[2] By doctrine the Soviets stress the offensive, but there are many instances in the past where the historic invasions of Russia have required the development of the defensive. Geography and climate have decided the methods and theories which have conditioned Soviet thinking to an emphasis upon land-oriented, continental warfare.

From the death of Lenin in 1924 until World War II, Soviet strategy vacillated as various power struggles within the Party's Central Committee raised first one group and then another to prominence. Trotsky and Frunze were influential in early years, although an acrimonious relationship between them developed over, among other things, their views of the course of future Soviet strategy. Trotsky, the War Commissar, viewed as folly Frunze's view of an offensive strategy in light of Russia's glaring weaknesses; he insisted that the function of the Red Army was to defend the state. Trotsky and Frunze both passed from the scene, Frunze under mysterious circumstances, and a triumvirate including Stalin rose to prominence in the Party. By 1926 Stalin had managed to remove the other two, Zinoviev and Kamenen, from positions of power; Voroshilov, who advocated the strategy of the offensive, was installed as head of the Red Army.[3]

Military Field Service Regulations of 1925 and 1929 stressed offensive strategy as the goal of the armed forces, with the Red Army the hub around which the war machine was to turn.[4] Tukhachevskii became outstanding among strategic thinkers by postulating various theses on the nature of future wars. First, a future war would have to be conducted on a vast scale involving mass armies; it would probably be a protracted struggle. Second, a strategy of the offensive was essential completely to defeat an enemy. Third, major capitalist countries would suffer defeat in such a conflict because acute internal class struggles would undoubtedly arise. Tukachevskii stressed both large land mass army forces and an elite tank corps to provide the mobility needed to conduct offensive operations; he was also a proponent of the firepower of field artillery.[5] His distinction was assured with the publication of the New Field Service Regulations of 1936 which set forth his strategic and doctrinal thinking.[6] The Stalinist purge of the Red High Command included Tukachevskii among its victims, yet when the Red Army went into action against the Japanese in 1938-1939 and later in World War II he, more than any one man of the preceding decade, had influenced its organization and strategic doctrine.[7]

Soviet military strategy after World War II may best be described as Stalinist strategy since that dictator was

preoccupied with his so-called "permanent factors of war." These "permanent factors," which Stalin deemed essential for achieving military victory, were as follows: first, stability of the home front; second, the morale of the army; third, the quantity and quality of the army's divisions; fourth, the quantity and quality of the military armament; and last, the organizing ability of the command personnel.[8]

The Stalin strategy of offense, based upon a war of attrition, was the logical strategy for a state possessing at the time qualitatively inferior, but quantitatively superior armed forces, facing a state--Germany--with the opposite features.[9] This strategy dominated Soviet strategic thinking as long as Stalin lived and was an adjunct to his theory of "socialism in one state"; it was the Russian duty to develop a position of strength in order better to support the coming world revolution. After the war, Russia was buttressed by the belt of satellite nations of eastern Europe. The Red Army remained the principal instrument of politics with the Red Navy assigned its customary role of protecting the Army's flanks.[10]

The strategy of Khrushchev, who followed Stalin, was largely centered around the technological advances of Soviet scientists. Originally the Navy was assumed to have lost its significance because of the United States atomic weapon capability; amphibious warfare was considered, if not

a thing of the past, at least so insignificant that it could probably be carried out within the bounds of Soviet intents by the Red Army. The pressures sustained by Khrushchev, brought on by the need for consumer products, led him into a sea strategy based upon the submarine, land-based naval aviation, and the "mosquito fleet." He chose to spend his military rubles on intercontinental missiles and air defense, to the financial detriment of the conventional forces.[11]

Admiral Gorshkov, who assumed command of the Soviet Navy in 1955, made remarkable progress in changing Khrushchev's opinion of the role to be played by surface ships; he was instrumental in the build-up of the Soviet fleet to its present prominence. The reason for the emphasis on the Navy was clearly stated in the second edition of Military Strategy in 1963: "The Navy's overall importance in a future war is determined by the new missions assigned it, especially combat with the enemy's navy, whether the latter is at sea or in port."[12] Clearly the Navy had progressed far from its previous prime mission of "support of the Red Army."

Such Soviet strategic thinkers as Major General N. Talenskii also made their thoughts come alive in the changing strategy of the Khrushchev era. Although his belief that military strategy should be divorced from the study of

social, political, or economic matters was never accepted, he made an important contribution to the doctrine of his time when he rejected the Stalinist views of wars of attrition and emphasized the adoption of surprise as a decisive factor of war.[13]

Marshal P. Rotmistrov soon afterwards postulated that if surprise was a decisive factor in military victory, its prevention was equally vital. A surprise attack could be frustrated if the enemy himself were surprised as he was preparing to attack. Rotmistrov insisted that this was not preventive but pre-emptive strategy. This new element soon became a viable doctrine of the Soviet strategy.[14]

Lieutenant General S. Krasilnikov of the General Staff in 1956 propounded the theories of Defense Minister Zhukov when he maintained that a future war would be global in nature and no longer confined to limited theaters as in the past. The first phase of such a conflict would be decisive. The significance of aircraft and submarines would sharply increase, and surprise, as well as its corollary, pre-emptive strikes, would be critical elements. He presented his assessments of the possible strategic operations in a future conflict: the first was a lightning war based on a single decisive blow; the second was a strategy based on deep strikes to the enemy's rear; the third was a combination of strikes aimed at the enemy's political, economic, and

administrative centers and strikes at his armed forces. Nuclear weapons would be vital in the first stage, conventional weapons in the latter stages. Krasilnikov favored the third operation, with its stress on war in stages.

Marshal Zhukov reiterated the strategy of the critical nature of the initial period and the need to prepare for a war in stages, but he was removed from power in 1957. Then voices rejecting the strategy of ultimate weapons began to be heard. The combined arms or balanced forces strategy was often advanced during the period 1955-1957 by certain members of the military establishment.[15]

In late 1957 the Russian space achievements stunned the world; not only was Sputnik successful, but the first intercontinental ballistic missile was launched. Even if Soviet strategists were slow to adapt their thinking to the space/missile potential, Khrushchev took prompt advantage of the political aspects of the newly fledged strategic nuclear power which he possessed to threaten the West with dire consequences should his country be attacked. This form of nuclear deterrence formed the basis of Khrushchev's strategic thinking throughout his remaining years of leadership.[16]

In January 1960 Khrushchev unveiled his new military doctrine and announced the corresponding defense policy adjustments. This major doctrinal shift involved two basic

issues: the nature of any future war and the proper organizational structure of the Soviet armed forces of the nuclear age.[17] The Soviet premier maintained that if a future war broke out it would be global in nature, that nuclear weapons would be basic, and that massive, devastating nuclear strikes would be the principal method of combat. He stated that the initial hours or days would determine the course and outcome of the entire war. He further postulated that a limited war would inevitably escalate into a nuclear one. As to the organization of the armed forces, Khrushchev said that since long-range missiles would play the crucial role in such warfare, a new branch of the armed forces, the strategic missile force, had been created.[18] The conventional forces were to play a subordinate role in Mr. Khrushchev's strategy. The proper defense posture was that of deterrence with each side certain it could not survive the other's nuclear attack.

This cutback of conventional forces and emphasis upon nuclear deterrence appears to stem from ambitious political-economic programs which Khrushchev wanted implemented both on the domestic scene, with emphasis upon consumer goods and housing, and upon the international scene also. He launched economic aid programs to woo the less developed, or third world, countries of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, and he bragged about his ambitions to outstrip the

United States in industrial and consumer production, all within a few years.[19]

The third reduction of conventional forces by 1,200,000 men, when added to the two cutbacks of 1956 (600,000 and 1,200,000) precipitated attacks by First Deputy Minister of Defense Malinovskii and others.[20] Malinovskii stated that conventional forces and mass armies, as well as the smaller rocket-equipped forces, would be needed in any future war. The country would have to prepare itself for a long as well as a short war.[21]

The Cuban missile crisis in October 1962 followed Khrushchev's decision to emplace missiles in Cuba. The myth of the Soviet missile gap had been destroyed in early 1962; in addition, the Soviets had been unable to exploit their military and economic aid to the third world countries.[22] Khrushchev had apparently reasoned that he could, by his move in Cuba, cheaply offset the balance of missile power and at the same time silence the critics of his military and economic programs by his strategic move. When the gamble failed the embarrassment to the Soviet leader and his supporters was covered by loud pronouncements of the victory achieved by preventing an invasion of Cuba by the "Imperialists."

Marshal of the Soviet Union V. D. Sokolovsky (Ret.) and 14 other strategic writers produced the first edition

of Military Strategy[23] in 1962 in an attempt to strike a balance between the radical innovations in Soviet strategy brought about by Khrushchev and the more conservative proponents of combined arms strategy. Sokolovsky acknowledged the supremacy of the strategic missile force but stressed that the efforts of all branches were needed to achieve final victory over the enemy. The main goals of the wars of the future included the destruction of the enemy's economic, political, and social centers, and the destruction of his nuclear supplies and the bulk of his armed forces.[24]

In 1963 came the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and the ban on bombs in orbit in addition to the "hot line" between Moscow and Washington. Apparently, in view of this detente with Washington and to enable him to further his socio-economic goals at home, Khrushchev announced additional conventional force reductions.[25] As might be expected, the decision further to reduce the armed forces brought about more intense concern on the part of the military officers as to the future aspect of warfare and the role to be played by the conventional elements of the armed forces. The main issues involved not only the nature of the next war but the need of organizational structure of the Soviet forces as well. Of course these areas of interest were entirely predictable. A political interpretation of military power began increasingly to be developed.[26]

The issue of the possibility of a limited or local war involving Soviet forces began to be discussed in the military establishment; this was significant since it was in direct opposition to the postulations of Khrushchev that a future war would inevitably be global and nuclear in nature.[27] The impetus for consideration that local wars should be a recognized concern of the Soviets as a distinct possibility in future warfare came about through accusations of the Chinese Communist leaders, who claimed that the Russians were not supporting wars of liberation of rising third world Communist factions.[28]

Sokolovsky, in his second edition of Military Strategy, published in 1963, indicated that although the danger of escalation of local wars was high, it was not automatic and that Russia should be prepared to fight imperialist-inspired local wars. The threshold of escalation into nuclear war, according to the Sokolovsky authors was reached upon the introduction of tactical nuclear weapons.

Pressures of resistance to the Khrushchev strategy and organizational concept of the structuring of the armed forces were building throughout his tenure, but the strategic missile forces were considered to be of the greatest importance.[29] Peaceful coexistence and the role of the strategic missile force were the targets of the critics of Khrushchev until his ouster in October 1964.

To be sure, the Navy had acquired new missions during these years too. The shipbuilding program, however, mainly emphasized submarines with the ICBM capability and others which could attack the navies of the West, although the surface ship capability to protect Russian waters was in doubt. It is doubtful too that Khrushchev intended more than a defensive and interpositional role for his naval units other than the fleet ballistic missile submarines.

It is of interest to observe the manifestations of pressure exerted during the regime of Brezhnev and Kosygin by traditional military thinkers concerning the importance of conventional armed forces in any future war. There can be no proof of the true reasons for the ouster of Khrushchev; nevertheless, the fact is that his successors, incoming Party Chief Leonid Brezhnev and Prime Minister Alexev Kosygin declared their readiness to offer more support to the Soviet armed forces.[30] It is a safe conjecture that Khrushchev's de-emphasis upon the conventional structure made enemies in high places; undoubtedly Brezhnev and Kosygin could ill afford to assume their new duties without the support of the military faction.

The traditional Soviet thinkers had gradually come to accept the nuclear age as being of military significance, but they continued to stress the importance of conventional weapons and methods of combat in the nuclear age. The most

vocal spokesman for the traditionalist group was Chief Marshal of the Armored Forces, P. A. Rotmistrov, who maintained that past military experience was still important in contemporary military affairs and that the study of such experience maintains its significance in an age dominated by missiles.[31] As might be expected, Marshal Rotmistrov stated, in March 1964, that tanks would have a vital role to play in a future war because they possessed the greatest capacity to resist nuclear explosions and to lead tactical assault operations.[32]

Other senior leaders were equally vociferous in their statements for support of their own armed force or combat arm: the Air Force, the other branches of the Army and, of course, the Navy. These leaders were all in opposition to those of more modern ilk who stressed that only those branches equipped with long-range missiles could achieve the strategic goals of the next war; they were convinced the non-nuclear forces would play an important, if secondary, role in future armed conflicts. K. P. Kazakov, Chief Marshal of the Soviet Artillery Forces, nearly capitulated to the modernist thinkers when he acknowledged that the artillery was no longer the main strike force of the ground troops, that role having been taken over by the strategic missile force, yet he maintained the artillery was the best means of defeating an enemy in close battle. To emphasize the

need for artillery strength, he pointed out that the West was effectively using artillery in local and limited wars.[33] The latter statement indicates the trend of thinking in Soviet military circles, that the ground forces should possess a dual capability: to be able to follow a strategy of nuclear or non-nuclear warfare as politics might dictate.

Navy leaders were quick to move in their quest for more and varied roles in their national strategy. The Soviet Navy had, in the past, been a "faithful helper to the Red Army." The doctrinal changes of the early sixties began the serious transformation of the Navy into a political instrument capable of operating either independently or with other services. Chief of the General Staff of the Navy Vice Admiral N. D. Sergeev, boasted on Navy Day 1964 that the "Soviet Navy was now capable of assuming important strategic tasks, i.e., destroying enemy surface shipping and coastal targets anywhere in the world."[34]

The first edition of Sokolovsky's work Military Strategy, speaking of the capabilities of the navies of the West, stated, "Hence, the principal mission of our navy in a modern war will be combat with enemy naval forces at sea and at their bases." This statement was omitted in the 1968 edition and was replaced by ". . . the Navy will keep such important tasks as combatting the enemy's naval forces on the sea and at bases, and also disrupting his ocean and

sea transport."[35] Further comments concerning the striking power of submarines and aviation units equipped with nuclear rockets and torpedoes appeared in all editions, as did a stated requirement for a certain number of surface ships to safeguard the activities of submarines and to perform secondary missions such as protection of naval communication lanes and coordination with ground troops in operations carried out in coastal waters--a far cry from the days of "friendly helper of the Red Army."

Naval aviation was invested with the capability of attacking enemy warships at sea at a distance "at which they will not be able to use their aircraft carriers, forces, and missiles for attacking targets in the socialist countries. In addition, naval aviation will be called upon to destroy enemy transportation at sea and at their bases."[36]

It is advisable to recall that Admiral Gorshkov, Chief of the Navy since 1955, was in charge of approximately 25 percent of the 114 Soviet amphibious operations during World War II. Perhaps it was at his insistence that the Navy adopted a new role, as was evidenced in the second edition of Military Strategy; perhaps, as many have claimed, Mr. Khrushchev saw the need for an amphibious force as a tool of international politics. The significance of the change cannot, even today, be proved beyond conjecture, yet the amphibious capability and the reemphasis on the Naval

Infantry became fact. This was the mission as stated by Sokolovsky: "Account must also be taken, in the development and organization of the navy, of the problem of assuring joint operations with ground forces and, primarily, the mission of bringing ashore amphibious landing forces."[37]

The organizational structure of the Navy, of course, by any manner of thinking, whether traditional or modern, clearly must form a part of the intended strategy of the nation, be it cold war, limited war, or general war. Many traditionalists saw limited war as a genuine reason for renewed emphasis upon conventional arms; some Soviet authorities stated that Soviet military doctrine had not given adequate attention to the study of such conflict. Perhaps the amphibious forces and the airborne forces were to become Soviet political tools for the cold and limited wars. The airborne forces, consisting of seven divisions, have sufficient airlift capabilities for the simultaneous drop of three divisions, a force to be reckoned with. This is rather convincing proof, when considered with the amphibious and blue water capability of the Navy, that the Soviets are moving toward a true capability for offensive operations beyond their rimland. The traditionalists appear to have made a strong case for their strategy. Thomas W. Wolfe states that Soviet naval policy in recent

years has tended to project non-nuclear naval power in distant areas and to make it more flexible.[38]

Considerable publicity was devoted in 1964 to the then recent reactivation of the Soviet marine forces. Estimates of their size have shown an increase since 1964 from the figure of 2,000-3,000 men to that of 12,000 to 15,000 during the period 1970 to 1971. There also were indications in the summer of 1969 that airborne landing operations accompanied by amphibious landings would assume a greater significance in a future war.[39]

The Moskva and her sister ship Leningrad stunned the West when they appeared in the late nineteen-sixties. As cruisers with large helicopter platforms, although with relatively small elevators leading to them, they were built ostensibly for antisubmarine uses, they nevertheless could provide a ship-mobile platform to carry troop helicopters with which assault waves of helicopter-borne naval infantrymen could land on a foreign shore.

The structure of the current forces presently reflects the demands imposed upon the Russians by the very nature of contemporary international politics. An awesome nuclear capability and the evidence of the combined arms capability of conventional forces can only lead to the conclusion that the Soviet leaders realize that they must be prepared to compromise in force structure, at least for the present

and that they must be prepared to perform on the world military scene. Local wars, limited in scope and goals, and the weapons they require are a contemporary fact; these limited wars are being fought at significant distances from the superpowers, and in the competition for economic and political influence any war in which one of the superpowers becomes involved is of immediate concern to the other.

The influence of the Chinese as competitors within the socialist camp has emphasized to the Kremlin leaders the necessity that they be capable of assisting in wars of liberation in support of the international Communist system; thus they can perceive a need for a flexible force structure to support a strategy of selective involvement lest they lose the hegemony they tenuously enjoy.

It is imperative to observe the actions of the Kremlin leaders and their official publications to obtain an insight into their prevailing thought. Although many Russian authors have emphasized the importance of the element of surprise in future warfare, the Soviets have watched the rational restraints imposed by United States leaders on their own use of nuclear weapons. The result has been to develop in the Soviets a degree of caution best explained by Marshal Sokolovsky and General Cherednichenko, who say that missiles and other new methods of warfare are "sharply increasing the possibility of

surprise attack," but that "surprise is not fatal."[40] These authors also state that "modern detection and warning systems insure the prompt delivery of devastating retaliatory blows, the reliable repulse of the enemy's surprise attack, and the frustration of his criminal intentions."[41] Finally, they emphasize that "the <u>retaliatory blow</u> is the primary element of the initial period of the thermonuclear world war."[42] (Emphasis added.) The authors discount the feasibility of an American first strike against them, and, if it were to happen, they view the Soviets as having a viable retaliatory capability after absorbing the first strike. A cautious appraisal of the Soviets' strategy indicates that they possess, in their view, a force which enables them to pursue a policy of strategic restraint with no advantage to be gained in the way of pursuing a policy of pre-emptive first nuclear strike.

CHAPTER IV

THE NAVAL INFANTRY, THEIR EQUIPMENT, TECHNIQUES AND PROCEDURES

"Paloondra," the battle cry of the Soviet Marines which translates to "Watch out below," burst upon the Soviet military world once again in the summer of 1964. The reemphasis of that Corps came about as a result of the order of the Minister of Defense, Marshal Malinovski.[1]

The Naval Infantry force, which had been a stepchild under the early Khrushchev regime, arrived on the Soviet scene of the sixties with photographs in the Kracnaja Zwezda of 24 July 1964 depicting this modern amphibious unit. The marines were pictured in their characteristic black uniform with striped vest but were now sporting a new black beret. In an accompanying series of articles they were extolled in the well-known bombastic Soviet style as possessing the discipline, toughness, and many-sidedness only found in a super-elite and proud military force.[2]

There has been much speculation throughout the world as to the reasons why the Russian leaders felt that their armed forces required additional emphasis to the extent of creating a larger amphibious force. Although conjecture is rampant on the subject, there are certain factors which may be relevant: first, the Kremlin leaders, particularly

Khrushchev, were impressed with the landings of the United States Marines in Lebanon in 1958. Not only did the Marine Corps represent an efficient, available political tool, but the Marines' presence could have been peacefully nullified only by the interposition of Soviet forces on the ground before their landing, a choice not open to Khrushchev, since he lacked such forces.[3] Second, the Cuban missile crisis demonstrated to the Kremlin the fact that all political action on the international scene could not be brought about by strategic missile forces. There was an obvious need for mobile and flexible units to be used in local conflicts and to provide a Soviet presence in politically unstable areas of the third world. Third, the venerable Admiral Gorshkov had enjoyed remarkable success in upgrading the Navy from its role of "friendly helper of the Red Army" into a separate force with world-wide missions. Perhaps it was Admiral Gorshkov who convinced the political leaders of the need for an amphibious capability. The reasons for the Naval Infantry's existence may not be clear, but its presence is crystal clear. The best estimates of Naval Infantry strength of 1964 indicated a force of approximately 2,000 marines while current force strength estimates vary from 12,000 to 15,000 men.[4] Marine units, organized into companies, battalions, and brigades are found in Soviet fleets and in the two river flotillas. The Naval Infantry

battalion is a force of approximately 400 men, while the brigade strength is estimated at just over 2,000.[5]

It is significant that the reemphasis on the Naval Infantry began with the transfer of motorized infantry from the Red Army. The tactics employed by the amphibious force are centered around the amphibious tank and the amphibious personnel carrier, the primary means of landing assault troops. Students of Soviet military forces have remarked that their articles on future amphibious operations invoke the readers' memories of American amphibious doctrine with little originality added.[6]

The effort to establish an elite and versatile force has resulted in a proud corps trained in airborne, helicopter, and amphibious assaults which have been practiced in joint operations with multi-national Warsaw Pact forces as well as with other branches of the Soviet military. The new model of the Soviet marine can best be exemplified by the mottoes printed on the walls of barracks and recreation rooms (Lenin Rooms), "Remember. The fundamental law of him who makes the assault is advance, advance, advance. There is your victory."[7] For the first time in modern history, units of Soviet troops are being schooled exclusively in offensive operations. To those who believe the Soviets are not concerned with offensive operations the words of Admiral Kasatonov are particularly illuminating:

> During the past years our marine force was transformed and trained into a fighting apparatus and with the help of which orders are being carried out in distant regions far from our own country; in areas which not long ago were considered as being under the supremacy of the imperialistic countries. We give the marines a hard and special training with our modern amphibious equipment and we can travel long distances in a relatively short time to intervene wherever necessary.[8]

The Soviet marines are certainly capable of conducting small-scale landing operations utilizing only their own troops, but the size of this relatively small but elite unit should not be misleading. It is of prime importance to recognize that the Soviet doctrine of large scale amphibious operations assigns one marine battalion to each Red Army division; therefore, each brigade of marines could be used to lead the assault of three divisions in an amphibious operation.[9] The entire corps of marines, if assembled for a massive operation, assuming the availability of shipping, could provide the assault waves for at least nine divisions--a rather significant amphibious potential to contemplate.

The amphibious vehicles organic to the marine brigade include the backbone of the force, the water-jet propelled, totally amphibious PT-76 tank which is armed with one 3"/48 gun and a 7.62 mm. machine gun. There is also a PT-85 amphibious tank which is similar but has a 3.3" gun; it, like the PT-76, can attain speeds of 30 miles per hour on land.[10]

Troop mobility is primarily accomplished through the use of the Armored Personnel Carriers, the BTR-50 and the newer BTR-60. Each was developed from the PT-76 and is armored to withstand 20 mm. fire; each can carry, in addition to its driver, 14 fully armed troops and mounts either a 12.7 mm. machine gun or one 14.5 mm. Z-PU1 cannon. They are fully amphibious and are water-jet propelled when water borne but, of course, rely on their tank tracks for mobility over ground. Of lesser significance is the Amphibious Vehicle 6 x 6 (BAV) which appears to be a copy of the American DUKW and can carry three to four tons of cargo across the beach. A newer, and seldom seen vehicle, the Tracked Amphibious Vehicle K-61, features a stern-door loading ramp for troops and small vehicles or for guns up to about 4.8" caliber. The K-61, which may be the replacement for the smaller BTR series, has a capacity of approximately 32 troops or five tons of cargo.[11] The smaller Tracked Amphibious Vehicle GAZ-47 can carry small numbers of troops or approximately one ton of cargo. A vehicle similar in many ways to the American jeep is the Amphibious Vehicle GAZ-46 which features a propeller for use in water landings. Its payload is thought to be approximately 1,764 pounds.[12]

Naval amphibious shipping and small craft are, of course, important to the Naval Infantry; their shipbuilding programs and those of the other Warsaw Pact countries have

recently emphasized construction of amphibious craft. The most significant vessel of the purely amphibious fleet is the Alligator type which is similar to the 1179-class LST of the United States Navy. The Soviets have been building this type ship since 1964. The more numerous ships, the Polnocnyi class, are built in Poland.

The accompanying table shows the more important shipping and craft known to be present in the Soviet and Warsaw Pact countries.

AMPHIBIOUS VESSELS OF THE WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES

Name	Number			Speed	Armament	Capacity
	USSR	E.Germany	Poland			
Alligator	4			15 kts	2 x 5.7 cm.	?
Polnocnyi	40		16	15 kts	Rockets	8-10 tanks
M.P. 2	10			16 kts	4 x 25 mm.	6- 8 tanks
M.P. 4	25				4 x 25 mm.	6- 8 tanks
M.P. 6	10			14 kts	4 x 47 mm.	9-11 tanks
M.P. 8	15			15 kts	4 x 57 mm.	7- 9 tanks
M.P. 10	40			10 kts	?	4 tanks
Vydra	20			?	None	2 tanks
U.S. LCT(5)			10	8 kts	?	2 tanks
Robbe class		6		12 kts	45 mm. AA	8-12 tanks
Labo class		12		10 kts	25 mm.	2 tanks

Source: Jane's Fighting Ships 1970-71 (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970), passim.

Most of the Soviet landing vessels are stationed in the Blatic and the Black Seas; East German and Polish vessels are in the Baltic. The M.P. 4 and 6 craft are conversion vessels

used for amphibious operations but not well suited for that task. The foreword of the current edition of Jane's Fighting Ships credits the Soviets with 130 amphibious craft but there is no specific breakdown to indicate whether or not these are included in the preceding table since Russia is also credited with approximately 100 amphibious ships.[13]

Even if it is impossible to prove that the Alligator type ship can carry approximately 500 men as well as mechanized vehicles, it is a reasonable assumption. In addition to specialized shipping, the Soviets have shown themselves quite capable of adapting any ship to their amphibious requirements. Their greatly expanded merchant fleet and, of course, passenger ships of their merchant fleet would certainly be used to augment amphibious shipping when needed. The Soviet freighters well proved their capability to carry military cargo during the Cuban crisis and can be expected to do so again if necessary.

The Moskva class ship is credited by Jane's as being capable of transporting 20 to 30 Hormone A antisubmarine helicopters.[14] That class ship obviously could be used to transport troop-carrying helicopters in some number. A wartime complement of troop-carrying helicopters with the capacity of the CH-46, if so embarked, could carry a maximum of 750 troops in one lift, a significant capability.

Whether or not the Moskva class would be used in other than a primary antisubmarine role, that type of ship is probably well equipped to carry out the communications responsibilities of command in an amphibious operation.

Soviet land-based naval aviation consisting of approximately 850 aircraft can now provide long-range air cover only in relatively few areas of the Eurasian continent not contiguous to the motherland; however, within range, it is a significant threat to be reckoned with in the Mediterranean and the Baltic.

According to Soviet Sea Power, the Soviet surface fleet "now includes . . . 20 to 24 cruisers, 110-120 destroyers and frigates, 92 ocean-going escorts, about 150 missile armed patrol boats, plus approximately 400 other fast patrol boats, 270 coastal escorts, 250 or more landing ships and craft, and a large assortment of mine sweepers, support and auxiliary vessels."[15] The gunfire support capability of the Red Navy is generally considered to be at least equal to that of the United States Navy. The Soviets obviously have a naval force capable of supporting amphibious landings with naval gunfire on a relatively large, even if not massive, scale.

It is undoubtedly true that an excellent means of determining how an enemy intends to perform his combat role is to observe his training exercises. Unclassified accounts

of landing exercises conducted on Soviet operations Oder Neisse, Okean, and other similar naval training problems provide a scenario for future Soviet amphibious landings.[16]

The sequence of events that might be expected in an amphibious assault by the Red forces would certainly vary according to the geographical situation in relation to the land and water and, of course, the resistance anticipated. It might be expected that these procedures would be influenced by the Soviets' studies of United States amphibious doctrine as well as by their own experience. Pre D-day operations would include, as possible, frequent overflights by Soviet aircraft, not only to inflict damage and gain information, but also to establish the presence of their planes as being more or less normal. Operational camouflage consisting of smoke screens over various harbors and landing beaches, usually accompanied by shelling, would be designed to hide the true objective of their invasion force.[17]

D-day assaults would begin before dawn with troops, preferably loaded aboard landing craft directly without requiring a transfer at sea, advancing shoreward following an intense sea and air bombardment of the landing area.[18] Protected by the fleet firepower, the seaward approaches would have been cleared by minesweeps which, along with antisubmarine craft which would clear underwater obstacles,

would have provided safe passage for the landing craft to approach the beach.[19] Pioneers and frogmen would have already cleared the seaward side of the beach and established light signals to guide the landing forces. Amphibious tanks would plunge from landing craft and, firing while swimming through the sea, would lead the way for the amphibious personnel carriers to swarm upon the beach before disgorging their cargoes of marines.[20] Air cover would be continuous, since the Soviets have shown ample evidence that they believe air superiority in the amphibious objective area is essential to a successful amphibious campaign against a sophisticated enemy force.[21] After the landing of the waves of amphibious tanks and armored personnel carriers, the medium and heavy tanks of the Red Army would proceed across the sea floor using the snorkeling technique, closely followed by amphibious craft loaded with army infantrymen. A build-up of supplies would commence when the beachhead was secure enough to allow logistic support personnel to land and establish resupply points.

Additional marine landings in support of the amphibious assault would consist of helicopter-borne landings inland from the assault beach and airborne drops of marines and equipment inland who would link up with the amphibious assault force.[22] Airfields would be rapidly taken to allow air cargo aircraft to land supplies and equipment as early

as possible.[23] The transport shipping which would have proceeded to the amphibious objective area via widely spaced movement groups would, after unloading, retract and disperse to provide passive defense against a possible nuclear attack.

To sum up the scenario, the task of the Naval Infantry is to seize the beachhead and hold it until the army units have landed. As soon as the Army is established, the mission of the Naval Infantry is ended, and it could be withdrawn for other operations if not needed in another role in the amphibious objective area.[24]

Recent amphibious exercises conducted by the Soviets, showing the leading assault waves of amphibious tanks and amphibious personnel carriers manned by marines wearing protective clothing and masks, lend credence to the belief that they intend to precede an actual assault landing with a nuclear explosion or otherwise employ chemical or biological weapons.

In the nuclear environment, the landing forces could be expected to use the naval tactics of spreading forces; therefore, it is reasonable to expect simultaneous landings over a beach area consisting of several miles.

Future Soviet landings of the next decade could well be based upon the swift movement of assault waves utilizing hydrofoils and hovercraft.[25] The development and use of such vehicles have been perfected in many non-military

applications in the Soviet Union during the past few years. There are also numerous examples of STOL aircraft in the Soviet inventory, and Soviet technology has long experimented with VTOL planes which may be operational in the coming decade. Sokolovsky writes of the future importance of airplanes not requiring a landing field in warfare of the future.[26] The VTOL capability, if and when achieved, can fill the void in mobile, sea-based airpower that is apparent in today's Soviet fleet.

In addition to expanding his capability to include amphibious landings using modern techniques and equipment, the Red marine has also maintained his efficiency and his mission involving riverine operations. Even if the 11 flotillas of the "Great Patriotic War" are of the past, the Soviets have seen fit to maintain both the Danube and the Amur Flotillas as essential to counter the modern threat.

The two surviving river flotillas have significant political and military missions. The Danube Flotilla operates from the river's delta and has the capability of operations as far as Belgrade with its three powerful river brigades of artillery, amphibious warfare troops, and mine-laying vessels. The two battalions of naval infantrymen with organic PT-76 tanks have an impressive capability in the event of future operations against either Rumania or Yugoslavia and have in support more than 100 modern river

craft with significant firepower. They could be expected to make a parallel advance of armored units along the river bank, with infantry landings from assault boats at key points along the river. Protection provided by the Soviet Air Force or naval aviation would provide supremacy over the air power of either nation.[27]

The Amur Flotilla, the larger of the two, is organized into two divisions, based at Blagoveshchensk and Khavarovsk. The former division is situated to strike at Manchuria along the Surgari while the latter operates along the Amur and Ussuri. The backbone of the Amur Flotilla is the 150-ton armored gunboat, although artillery boats, minesweeps, picketboats, speedboats, and assault craft are provided in significant numbers. Naval Infantry forces have operated with the Amur Flotilla on many occasions; however, they are normally assigned to Pacific Fleet forces.[28]

The Naval Infantry of today is an elite force, well trained in the art of amphibious warfare and equipped with weapons and amphibious vehicles that are well suited to the mission of amphibious landings. When transported by the specialized ships of the amphibious fleet, supplemented by merchant shipping, it is capable of spearheading an assault by masses of Red Army troops against a hostile shore. The Red Navy is capable of providing adequate gunfire support for shore bombardment in support of an amphibious landing.

The shore based naval aviation, until it can acquire a shipboard mobility, is the prime limiting factor that makes the Russian threat of amphibious landings believable only for seacoasts near the Eurasian continent. The Naval Infantry and the Russian amphibious fleet mobility are significant enough to cause concern for Western diplomats in future crisis situations. The threat is tangible to the extent that they now present a viable military force to be reckoned with near the Eurasian continent.

CHAPTER V

THE NAVAL INFANTRY'S EMPLOYMENT: ITS PAST AS PROLOGUE

Soviet strategy from Stalin's time to Brezhnev's and Kosygin's regime has demonstrated an ambitious yet cautious approach to involvement in military operations in areas distant from the motherland. Soviet risk-taking propensities in past crisis situations have not been high. Jan F. Triska, upon completion of a study of Soviet reactions in recent years, reported in 1966: "Soviet crisis behavior was found to be conservative rather than radical, cautious rather than aggressive, deliberate rather than impulsive, and rational rather than non-rational."[1]

There can be conjecture concerning the Soviet motives for a strategy of cautious moves in the international arena, yet there can be no doubt that during the years covered by the Triska study, the Russians lacked one vital and flexible tool of diplomatic coercion, the amphibious force.

The inclination of the Kremlin leaders to conduct their international affairs in a so cautious a manner could be traced to the multitude of complex problems with which they had to cope on the world scene. The "threat" of the United States and NATO forces remains uppermost in the Soviet mind. The competition with the Chinese for hegemony in the

international Communist world is active and often bitter. Domestic economic problems pose a serious concern to the leaders of the Party in their continuing struggle for political control. In addition to these issues are those involved in the economic and political cold war, a war which the Red leaders feel compelled to wage to further the ends of the Moscow brand of communism. Their inferior position in the world's balance of power has, in the past, been obvious enough to the Soviets to compel rational and even cautious behavior in their dealings with the West.

The future can be expected to mirror the past to a certain extent; certainly the Soviets will continue to invoke the age-old criterion of military and often, political, decision-making: the weighing of risk against expected gain. The recently acquired amphibious forces provide a new range of options which are available for their decision-makers in crisis situations of the future.

Stalin's rhetoric bespoke a responsibility for the global spread of communism; his actions, however, emphasized only the continental responsibilities. Khrushchev and his successors have actively supported the spread of communism through economic and military logistical aid. In later years Soviet doctrine has included the aspect of military intervention to assist various friendly regimes in fostering world communism.

A significant change in doctrine appeared in the second edition of Military Strategy (1963) which expanded the definition of future wars by adding, in addition to general war, so-called "Imperialist Wars" wherein the imperialists, for the purpose of suppression of national liberation movements and to gain and retain colonies, conduct predatory warfare.[2]

The recognition of local wars as possible wars of the future indicates an important change in Soviet strategy that overshadows the significance of the inclusion of imperialistic wars. The expanded comment by Sokolovsky in the second edition concerning national-liberation wars, civil wars, and other popular wars credits both the imperialist and national liberation wars as being small in size and local in nature.[3] (Emphasis added.) It is of interest to note that through the early Khrushchev years all military preparation and all official doctrine recognized only general war as possible and thermonuclear war as probable.

A comparison of the second and third editions of Military Strategy brings into sharp focus the change in strategy from 1963 to 1968. The former, in commenting on the duty of the Soviets to support the "sacred struggles of oppressed peoples and their wars of liberation against imperialism" states, "This duty the Soviet Union discharges consistently and steadily by helping the peoples in their

struggle with imperialism not only ideologically and politically but materially as well."[4] Obviously, the concern expressed in the second edition relates directly to the cautious approach to crisis situations; the assistance provided usually consisted of diatribes against "imperialism" and material aid short of troop involvement. The third edition goes far beyond the statement of ideological, political, and material support by including succinctly: "The USSR will render, when it is necessary, military support as well to people subject to imperialist aggression."[5] The time frame when the latter comment appeared (1968) was four years after the reemphasis on the Naval Infantry began and was subsequent to the development, albeit embryonic, of the amphibious capability of the Navy.

At last the Soviets were publicly propounding to the world that they would get involved in limited wars through the use of troops. More importantly, they now possessed the capability to do so. Although primary emphasis upon strategic offensive and defensive warfare rests upon the strategic missile force, Sokolovsky advocates the need for the preparation of the armed forces for local wars:

> Simultaneously with preparing for a decisive battle with the aggressor during a world war, the armed forces of the socialist camp must also be prepared for small-scale local wars which might be unleashed by the imperialists. The experience of such wars which have arisen during the postwar period shows that they are conducted by ways and

> means which differ from those used in world wars. Therefore, Soviet military strategy calls for the study of the means for conducting such wars in order to prevent them from developing into a world war and to bring quick victory over the enemy.[6]

Not only has Sokolovsky alerted the armed forces to the need for different ways and means of conducting future local wars, but he has also emphasized an important concept: he believes local wars can be limited. The implication inherent in a belief that involvement in local wars does not inevitably lead to world war is a significant change in thinking. When earlier Soviet doctrine stated the inevitability of such warfare escalating to general war, the Kremlin leaders were not inclined to get involved in any war leading to distant involvement of their troops. Strategic thinking has progressed to the point where they now espouse the concept of participation in limited war.

The leader who considers involvement in a limited war when he believes it to lead to direct general war is beset with entirely different risk factors when his concept changes, so that he no longer necessarily believes that limited war involvement is bound to bring about general war.

One can but wonder whether the cautious behavior reported by Triska would have been greatly different during the period 1945 to 1963 had the Soviet conception of warfare included the doctrine that local wars did not inevitably expand to general warfare.

To take advantage of the change in strategic doctrine and to be able to apply military power as a form of coercion in local wars, the Soviets needed a capability to reach beyond their rimlands. They copied the example of the amphibious forces of the United States as the tool of coercive diplomacy by 1968, and the world was told of the new capability through widely publicized landing exercises.[7]

Every important current Soviet article dealing with their global responsibilities in fostering world communism explicitly recognizes the importance of maintaining a national capability to intervene in crisis situations throughout the world. The task of providing transport, fire support, and logistical resupply of troops used to implement the stated policies of assistance to wars of liberation would surely fall to the naval forces.

To convince the world that the doctrinal promise of support is at least a reasonable capability, the Soviets must possess a viable and recognized force-in-being. The realistic capability provided by the amphibious forces also contains certain hazards involving future wars. The ability to project military power beyond their rimlands will produce new pressures upon the Soviets to intervene at the behest of Communist national groups which may not be to the direct benefit of Russia. Thomas Wolfe recognizes these hazards when he states:

> . . . a Soviet Union advertised as the strategic equal of the United States and possessing an improved capacity to intervene in local situations would probably find itself under new pressures to come to the help of clients in other continents, where previously Moscow was excused from becoming directly engaged because it obviously lacked the means to do so.[8]

The Kremlin leadership will now be forced to evaluate each crisis situation in the light of national interest in addition to the previous criterion of the support of international communism. In a dichotomous situation wherein the national interests are relatively minor and the risks high, they can be expected to withhold the use of amphibious power.

The Soviet leaders are quite likely to find more imaginative uses for their amphibious and naval capability than just using them to get involved in hot wars that may entail higher risks than they are willing to run. In recent years they have been the recipient of the attentions of United States naval power which thwarted their expansionist efforts in Greece, in Lebanon, and in Cuba. In 1958 Khrushchev threatened to counter the intervention in Lebanon by United States and British forces by the deployment of Soviet "volunteers." But the three battalion landing teams of Marines of the Sixth Fleet and their air support which were immediately available off-shore effectively countered his bluff. It was obvious that he had no way to get Soviet troops to the critical area, at any acceptable level of risk, in time to do good for his side.[9] The Soviets

may be accused of much, but no one would suggest they are incapable of learning such an obvious lesson.

The use of United States amphibious and other naval forces in Lebanon was an example of interposition at the request of a foreign government to counter the threat posed by an outside power. The attempt by the United Arab Republic to take over Jordan and Lebanon brought prompt appeals from the governments of those countries to Britain and America for assistance. The overthrow of the pro-British government of Iraq by a Nasser-connected Arab nationalist faction further compounded the international tension in the area. The readiness and ability of the naval expeditionary force of the Sixth Fleet permitted the Marines to land and secure Beirut airport without a shot being fired; the British airborne brigade flew to beleagured Jordan and landed at Amman. Reinforcements in the form of United States Army airborne reinforcements reached Lebanon within five days.[10] The Soviets might conceivably have been able to land airborne troops before the arrival of the United States Army, but they had no capability to interpose their forces ashore before the landing of the Marines, hence their golden opportunity was lost.

If in 1958 the Soviet Union had also had an amphibious force consisting of but two Alligator class ships with

1,000 Naval Infantry aboard, afloat in the Mediterranean within reach of Lebanon, the options of President Eisenhower would have been greatly curtailed. The Nasser rebels who controlled the Moslem quarter of Beirut might have invited the Russians to land before the disembarkation of the United States Marines. Had the Naval Infantry landed before the Marines, would President Eisenhower have accepted even a marginal risk of direct confrontation with troops of the Soviet Union? Even had the President hesitated, while he used a significant amount of time in making a decision to employ the Marines, the Lebanese rebels might well have been able to overthrow the pro-Western government in the interim.

The Soviets now have a capability of interposing their Naval Infantry in international waters in many areas of the world. This capability will require considerations from United States decision makers when determining what use will be made of their amphibious fleet in areas of, and adjacent to, the Eurasian continent. The fact that Soviet merchant ships frequent the harbor at Haiphong has been instrumental in protecting that port from United States strikes despite a very substantial military advantage to be gained from the destruction of its facilities.[11]

The use of military force in the strategic concept of interposition is worthy of additional comment. The use of

a relatively small force of Naval Infantry interposed between the United States forces and their goal would greatly limit the American choices of action. The economy of force factor is significant, since with a small force preempting the landing of Marines, the Soviets convey a commitment of much greater force in the event that a violent confrontation occurs. The Soviets gain the option of withdrawing or of remaining in the event the United States does not seek direct confrontation. If the Americans persist in a landing involving a direct confrontation, they do so only upon evaluating the increased risk the Soviets represent versus the gains to be achieved. The interposition forces cause the risk factor to be significantly greater than if they were not present due, not only to the military might of the Naval Infantry, but also to the very real threat of commitment which could precipitate a much larger conflict. The decision to proceed would, in the eyes of the world, put the onus of warfare upon the United States, and thus her last opportunity to withdraw with dignity might be lost.

A United States decision to continue a direct landing and thereby place Marines in confrontation, or at least juxtaposition, with the Naval Infantry would indicate that the risk was indeed perceived to be worth the goal. The Soviets would either be forced to attempt to defeat the Marines, and thereby expand the war potential, or they

could seek military stalemate through offering to negotiate the issues. A less likely possibility is that the Soviet forces would have represented a bluff that would be withdrawn upon direct confrontation.[12] The fact that a credible force of Naval Infantry landed before the Marines is the factor of key significance in the example of the strategy of interposition.

Future warfare may well find that the second major power on the scene with air mobile amphibious forces may, in certain instances, be able to nullify the actions of the interposing force with a by-pass strategy. The Soviets, using transport helicopters operating from the antisubmarine ship Moskva or her sister ship Leningrad could employ this strategy where definite geographical limits could be delineated to the United States as the goal of the former's forces. The need for recognizable limits is manifest if war is to remain local and limited. The purpose of the by-pass strategy would be to place forces at a key point or points, by circumventing the interposer's forces, shifting the responsibility of provoking a wider conflict.

In areas where United States Marines had landed across the beach prior to the arrival of the Soviet amphibious force, the air mobile Naval Infantry might be projected significantly beyond the Marines to gain control of strategically important objectives without direct

confrontation with the United States forces. The Marines would be left with control of the beach area but the onus for forcing the Naval Infantry from strategic objectives would be placed upon the original interposer, the United States.

The decision to employ armed force against the forces of the by-pass strategy would be left to the original interposer, and the tables would have been effectively turned. The "last clear chance" clearly intended to be a choice of the Soviets, would have been circumvented, and to the United States would go the "last clear chance" in the eyes of the world to avert violent warfare and retract her forces with dignity.

The result of the by-pass strategy could be that of dividing the country into two sections with the original interposing force retaining control of the seaward portion, while the by-pass forces would retain control of the areas they had seized. A stalemate of this type would result in a loss to the interposer who would have had a reasonable expectation that his interposing action would have successfully deprived the enemy of influence without combat. To the by-pass forces the stalemate would represent a gain, since by arriving second on the scene they could not otherwise have expected to achieve any of the fruits of

interposition without a direct, and probably violent, confrontation.

The reemergence of the Naval Infantry and the amphibious capability of the Red Navy, while far short of the combat potential of the United States Marine Corps and Navy, nevertheless can provide, in certain situations, a neutralizing effect upon the uses to which the amphibious forces of the United States can be assigned in cold or limited wars. The limitation is directed much less to the strength of the forces than to the commitment which each represents. Now that the Soviets are convinced of the possibility that wars can be localized and are prepared to interject Naval Infantry in certain crisis situations important to them, the danger to the United States and the Soviet Union of nuclear warfare has escalated, unless strategies of employment and counter-employment are developed to thwart the interpositions of armed forces in the future.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

The Soviets' conception of strategic theory has evolved from a view that any war in which they might become engaged with non-Communist powers would result in a general war, probably prosecuted by thermonuclear means, to the more recently accepted doctrine wherein local and limited wars are considered possible. The evolution of this concept is not new to strategists of the world; it was a practice in Korea, and thus far in Israel and Vietnam, that major powers participating in an active or supporting role in these wars did not thereby become engaged in general war with a major power. The Soviets have learned this strategic fact through observation of those forces which have manipulated their local and limited war strategies on center stage of the world scene. In order successfully to prosecute their desired goal of neutralizing the effect of United States amphibious power they have observed and emulated those forces to the extent that they are now capable of limited intervention in seacoast areas adjacent to the Eurasian continent.

The successful use of amphibious forces requires that they embody significant capabilities of strength and mobility to wield a psychological impact upon the world.

The viewer to be influenced must perceive a highly mobile force which is ready and able to project combat power ashore near the seacoasts of its area of operations. The force must be strong enough so that it cannot be handily defeated and large enough to convince all that it represents a Russian commitment that promises massive support if needed. The force must be highly mobile in order for it to be first to arrive at the scene of crisis; the Naval Infantry, transported and supported by the Red Navy, can be an effective political tool in such a role of interposition.

The landing of the Naval Infantry by the Red fleet in a role of interposition would significantly limit the options available to the decision makers of an opposing United States force. The interposition of the Naval Infantry between United States military forces and their perceived goal greatly increases the risk factor to the American force; this must then be weighed against the expected gain from a confrontation with the Soviets.

The interposition of the Naval Infantry in a crisis situation cannot be conducted without accruing certain risks to the Soviets. They must recognize that the decision of the United States leaders to pursue their goal in spite of the presence of the Naval Infantry, although irrevocable from the standpoint of the "last clear chance," would force

the Soviets to fight, to seek a stalemate, or, less likely, to withdraw.

The preferred use of the Red amphibious force would undoubtedly be that of achieving, through interposition, a peaceful means to settle a crisis situation in a satisfactory manner. The acceptance of the strategy of local and limited wars does not automatically indicate the imprudent use of their amphibious forces. The certain use of the Naval Infantry in show-of-the-flag situations with the peaceful intent of favorably influencing third-world powers will undoubtedly continue to receive emphasis, yet the Soviets' readiness to resort to armed violence cannot be underestimated.

The future will provide the setting for the unfolding of the Soviets' strategy intended for their Naval Infantry and amphibious ships. The present clearly warns the Western powers that the relatively small Soviet capability to conduct amphibious warfare presents a real problem to strategic planners of today. If the planning of the options now available to the United States for a future situation where the Red forces have interposed themselves between the United States Marines and the latter's perceived goal is careful and wise, the result may well be the capability of the United States to negate, with a minimum risk, the interposed Naval Infantry.

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11. Leo Heiman, "River Flotillas of the USSR," Military Review, August 1970, p. 46.

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21. Monks, p. 57-58.

22. Ibid.

23. Not used as footnote. See footnote 12, supra.

24. Wolfe, Soviet Strategy at the Crossroads, p. 52-53.

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