

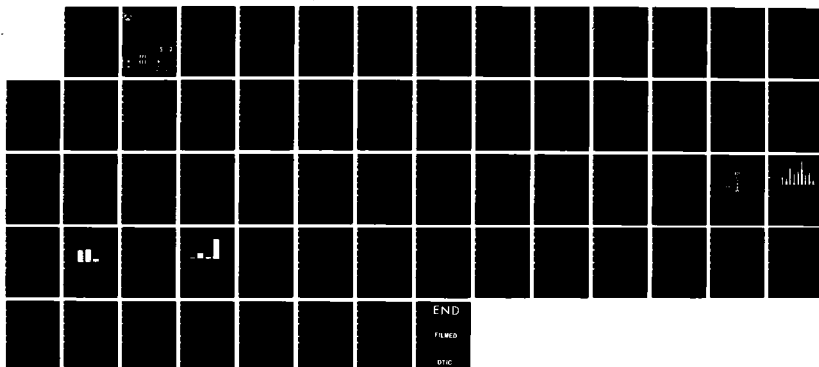
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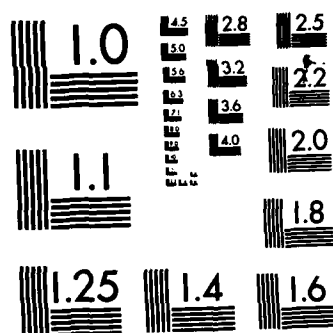
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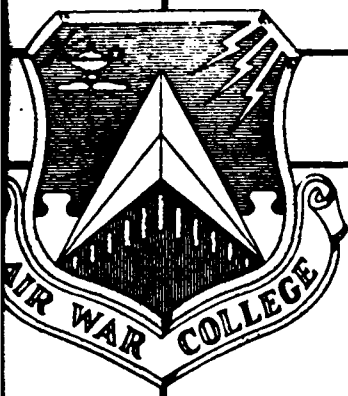
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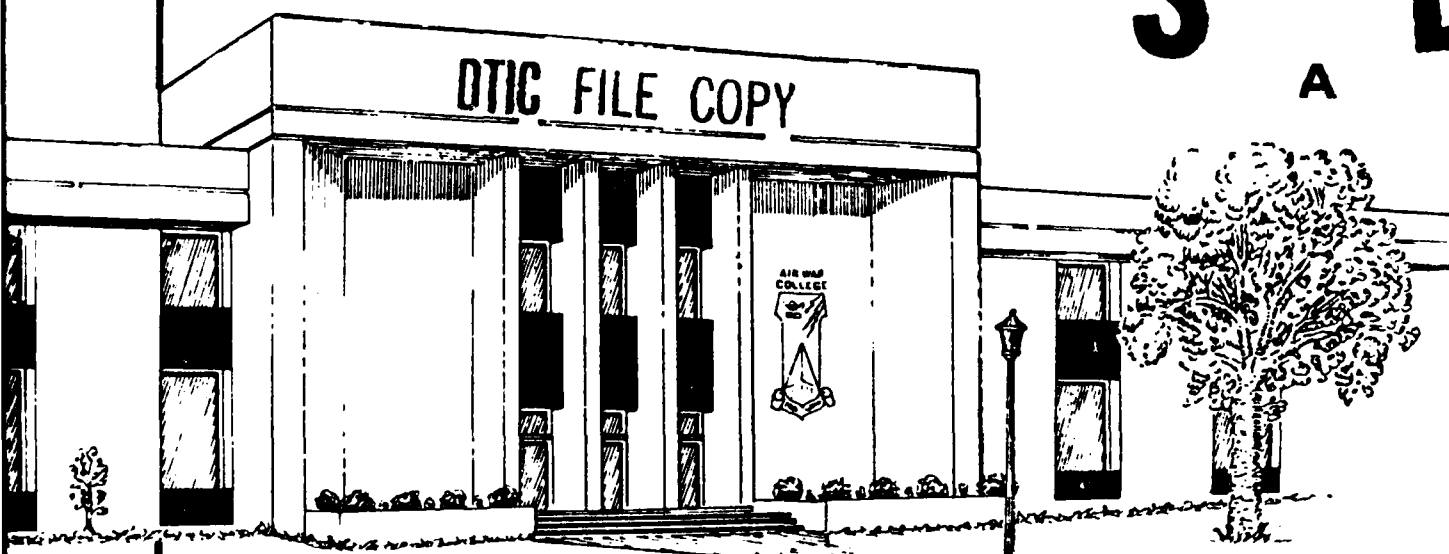
No. AU-AWC-85-164

THE SOVIETS - HOW MUCH DO WE KNOW?

By LIEUTENANT COLONEL WALTER R. PEACOCK, JR.

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

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AIR WAR COLLEGE
AIR UNIVERSITY

THE SOVIETS - HOW MUCH DO WE KNOW?

by

Walter R. Peacock, Jr.
Lieutenant Colonel, USAF

A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
IN
FULFILLMENT OF THE RESEARCH
REQUIREMENT

Research Advisor: Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth N. Brown, Jr.

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

April 1985

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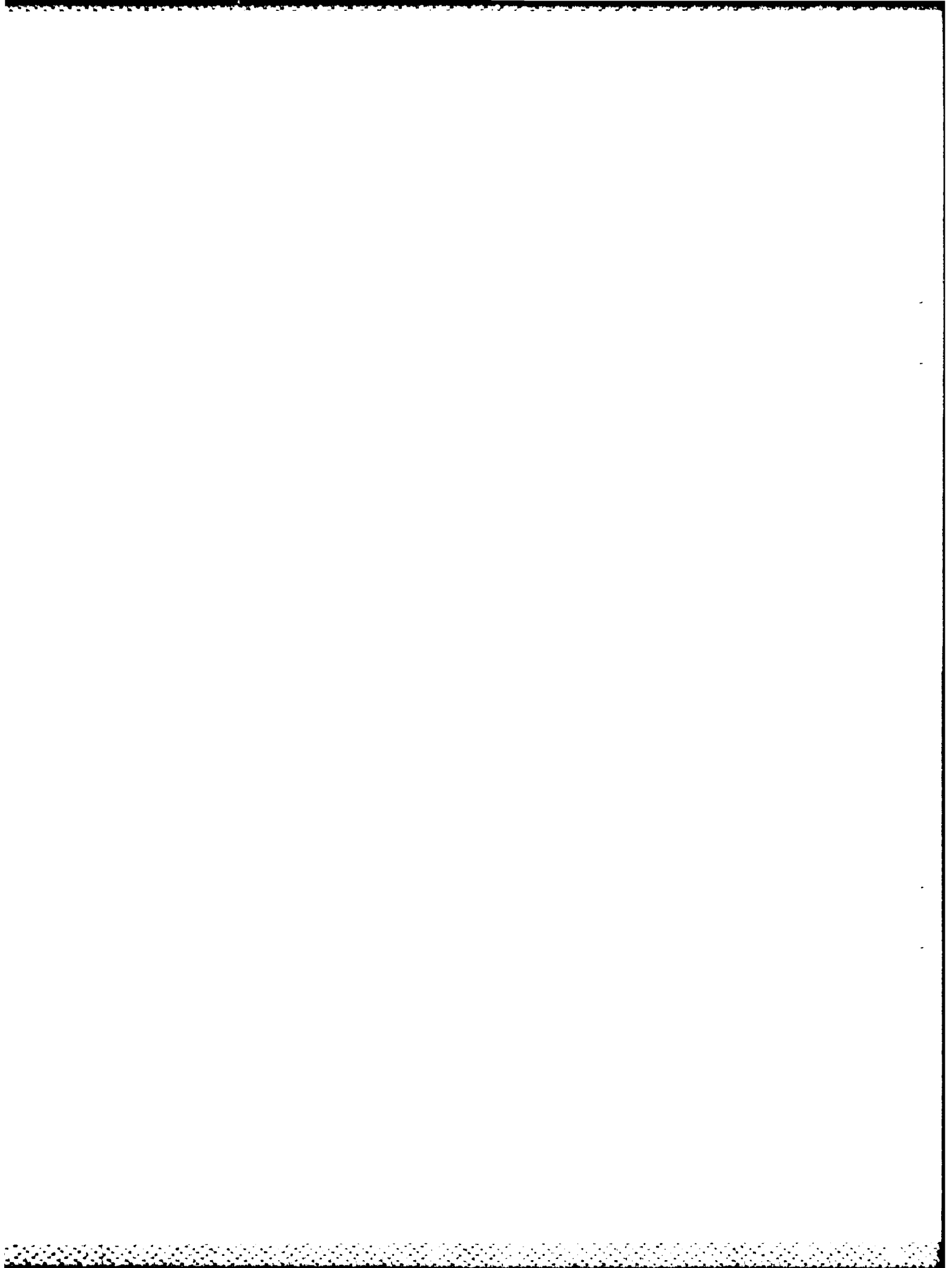


AIR WAR COLLEGE RESEARCH REPORT ABSTRACT

TITLE: The Soviets - How Much Do We Know?

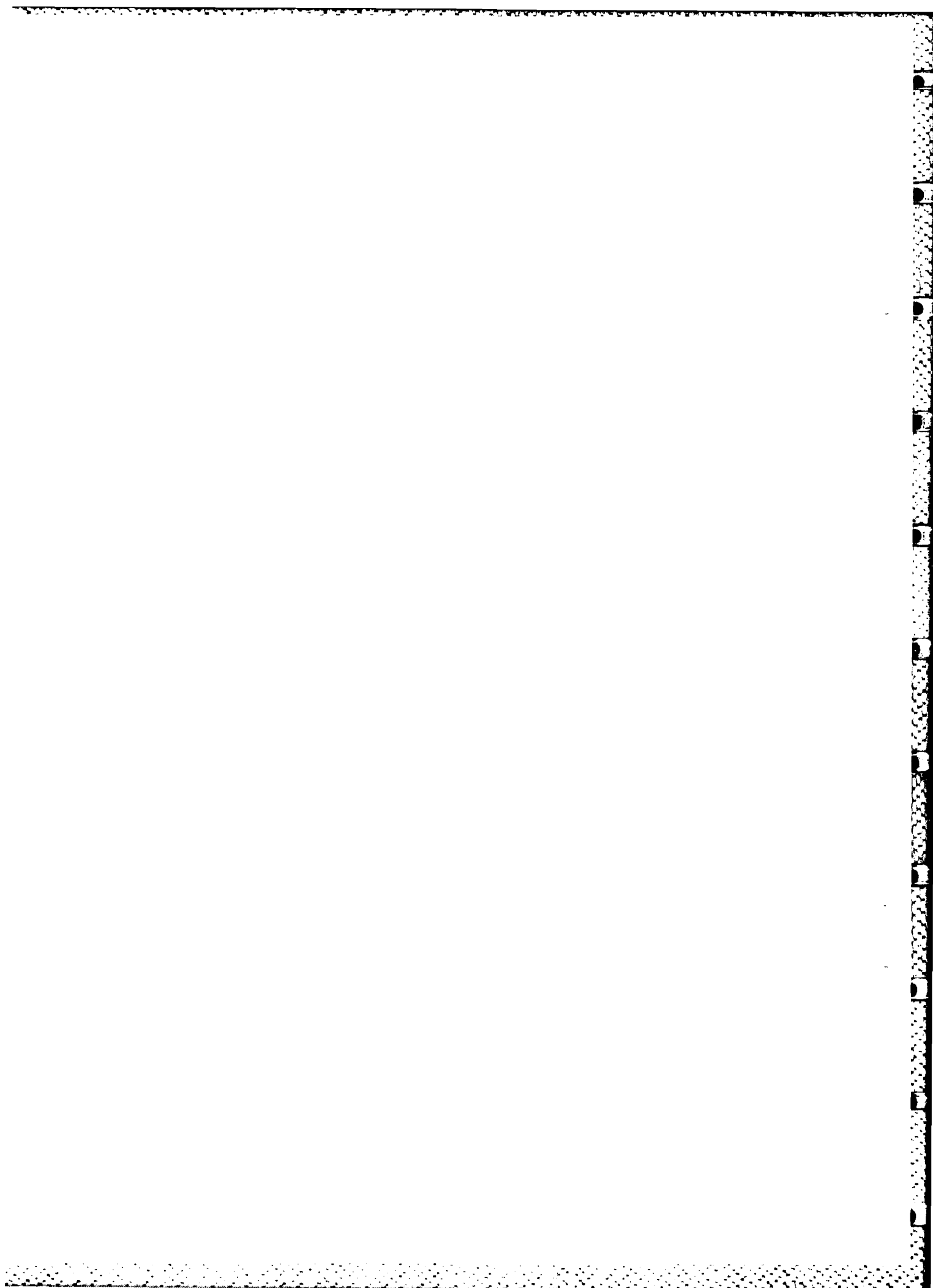
AUTHOR: Walter R. Peacock, Jr., Lieutenant Colonel, USAF

Initial discussion of both the historical and current reasons for knowing the United States' primary adversary, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), leads to further examination of the specific categories of knowledge the professional military officer should have regarding his enemy. History, society, economy, political system and geography are discussed along with the implications each has in contributing to the senior professional's required knowledge. Next, the results of a questionnaire on the Soviet system administered to the Air War College USAF students in the Class of 1985 leads to the conclusion that lieutenant colonels and colonels in the Air Force have only superficial knowledge of the USSR in the five categories of knowledge previously mentioned. General observations on the American educational system, media, and professional military education programs at Squadron Officer School, Air Command and Staff College, and Air War College point to a need to start the Soviet education process earlier in the individual's career, increase the exposure at all USAF professional military education schools and establish some type of additional mandatory training. Suggestions as to the specifics of implementing such a program are offered with the hope of providing a starting point for fixing the problem.



BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lieutenant Colonel Walter R. Peacock, Jr. (M.S. Logistics Management, Air Force Institute of Technology) has been deeply interested in the Soviets since his assignment to Kadena AB, Japan in 1980. Throughout his travels in the Western Pacific and close proximity to the Soviet far eastern forces, he gained an appreciation for the need to thoroughly understand one's enemy. As the Squadron Commander of the 33rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, he led his unit in conducting the search and rescue missions for the downed Korean Airlines flight 007 off the coast of Sakhalin Island in very close proximity to hostile Soviet aircraft and installations. Colonel Peacock served as an HH-43 flight examiner and instructor pilot in Thailand during the Vietnam conflict. He has also had assignments as a Strategic Air Command KC-135 pilot, Air Training Command T-37 instructor pilot and C-5 maintenance quality control officer. Colonel Peacock is a graduate of the Air War College Class of 1985.



Economy

The Russian economy has essentially stopped growing since the late 1970's and for all intents and purposes has become stagnant. (8:528) Consumer goods and food, as mentioned earlier, are frequently in short supply with heavy reliance on imports to meet demands. These shortages are appearing at the end of a 25-year period which saw a steady increase in standard of living for the ordinary citizen, and consequently their rising expectations are no longer being met. The results, of course, are corruption and the black market with only short-lived attempts by the government to curtail them. (8:530) The agricultural sector can best be described as a basket case, almost continually beset by problems inherent in centralized planning and control (inefficiency/rigidity) as well as geographic and climatic disadvantages. Lack of arable land and rainfall coupled with a short growing season due to polar proximity, and the inefficient state-collectivization system almost guarantees periodic failures. Small private land plots, allowed by the state, comprise only 4 percent of the total arable land yet produce nearly 25 percent of the total crop--an excellent example of just how bad the collectivization scheme is and just how much more productive a capitalistic system could be.

The non-military industrial sector suffers the same, almost "comic inefficiency" from centralized planning as does agriculture. (7:7) State-set quotas result in poor quality and

military subjects dominate with underlying goals of (1) "development of good citizens" and (2) providing "training in those subjects which best advance the economic and military interests of the state." (9:75) On the whole, the system seems to be adequate for the Soviets' needs, but does purposely avoid training in independent and innovative thought particularly in the political respect. Despite a relatively well educated populous, the Soviets are facing an unnerving national health care crisis with the life expectancy of the Soviet male falling from 67 years in 1964 to less than 62 years in 1980. It is believed that the primary cause is widespread alcoholism with poor health care close behind--a rather humiliating predicament for the world's second super power to be in. (8:528)

Soviet society then poses problems for us when we try to deal with it based on our experiences and our culture. It is one vastly different, with almost totally opposite values and ideals. Highly militaristic, tightly controlled by the state, demographically diverse and without personal freedom, the Russian society as a whole can be characterized as passive and fearful. Although standards of living are much lower than ours, the Soviets think they're living well, yet declining birth rates, lower life expectancy, alcoholism and poor health care are indicators contrary to their perceived well being. Our biggest problem when it comes to assessing Soviet motives is that of mirror-imaging--they look like us and subsequently we think they are like us--when, in fact they are grossly different in every respect. (7:3)

to the end of the Tsarist regime in 1917, and today causes concern about widespread loyalty to those mainly "Great Russians" in the Kremlin. (9:23) The attendant language problem is also a hinderance to the conscription-based military when it comes to training in technical skills (only 15 percent of draftees speak Russian). (10:31) The intense militarization of Soviet society starts early--in the first grade with military/patriotic training and continues throughout primary and secondary school. By the time young men are eligible for the draft, they have completed the equivalent of basic training--a possible reason for the active duty Army tour being only two years. After release from active duty, as most opt for after their initial tour, conscripts remain in the ready reserves subject to recall until age 50, thus giving the Soviets a huge potential military reserve if needed. The military education system is vast when compared to that of the West with their schools numbering 135 compared to our 10. (7:6) Their intermediate and senior service schools also outnumber US counterparts by 20 (24 vs 4) and are two to three times longer. (11:45-57) The Soviet public educational system is quite extensive but difficult to compare with the American system. Like virtually everything else in the USSR, it is totally controlled and dominated by the State and likewise serves as a form of ideological control. From nursery school up, the system puts heavy emphasis on the "collective" aspect of life which is in direct contrast to the "individual" emphasis in our system. (9:75) Mathematics, science, ideology, and

and congressional scrutiny. Dissent is not tolerated and recent revisions to Soviet criminal codes on "anti-Soviet agitation" have increased arrest rates to almost twice that of 1979. (7:6) Living conditions can be characterized as "frugal" by American standards although very few actually live in abject poverty. Housing (state owned) is in short supply and crowded, with two families often occupying one small apartment. Food and consumer goods are rarely abundant and when available, sell out quickly. Waiting long hours in line for necessities is a Soviet way of life, yet most feel that they are "living well" compared to past Soviet generations. (8:24-25) They know that those in the "decadent" west live better, but attribute this to a malady of the capitalist system, which according to the teachings of Marx, leads to its eventual demise. Black marketeering and corruption, conveniently ignored by the Government, make up the "second economy" which helps fill the gaps in the state-run system. (8:532)

The population itself is composed of over 100 ethnic groups with highly diverse cultures and languages and little tolerance for each other. The Great Russians (European) comprise just over 50 percent of the total population and are the dominant group. However, the increase in their birth rate has been nearly zero, and when compared to the increasing rates in some of the less developed republics, it will be easy to see that their total will fall below the 50 percent level in the near future. This problem of many nationalities is not new, it contributed

from constantly ailing consumer industries to the military sector. Hence the individual is made to feel the necessity for massive military power and does not question the state wisdom in it.

History also contains the origins of the current Soviet greed for Western technology. Peter the Great (1682-1725), in his attempts to modernize Russia and increase her power, imported western ideas and technology. Stalin (1941-1953) continued the tradition by seeking German military training and industrialization prior to World War II. We should therefore not be surprised at current efforts in illegal buying or stealing of western technology to enhance military power--it is the normal way of doing things in the USSR.

To recap, a knowledge of Russian history is vitally important to understanding the Soviet mindset; greatly distrustful of the outside world, obsessed with a need for absolute security and overwhelming military power, used to the absolute power of the state over the individual, proud of a rugged and difficult past and somewhat indifferent to the methods used to better the power of the state.

Society

The most striking thing about Soviet society is that as a closed society, it differs greatly from anything we as Americans could ever imagine. Personal freedoms as we know them, i.e., freedom of speech, press, etc., do not exist, thus freeing Soviet leadership from such things as public opinion, media criticism,

expansionistic conquer or be conquered philosophy. Nearly four hundred years of ruthless Mongol domination followed by Tsarist totalitarian rulership such as that under Ivan the Terrible (1547-1584), set the pattern for complete subjugation of the individual to the state. The devastation and tremendous loss of life in World War II again reinforced the fear and distrust of the outside world, and the importance of state security at the expense of all other national interests emerged to dominate Soviet thinking. The acquisition of buffer states to protect their borders along with the slow continuous build-up in military forces numbering 4.3 million at present, are insurance against never being defeated again on home soil. World War II also saw the development of a Soviet military doctrine which has changed very little over the last forty years. The development of the Operational Maneuver Group (OMG) and the emphasis placed on the offensive both stem from hard lessons learned in World War II. The most successful Soviet general of that era, Marshall Zhukov, serves as the role model for Soviet senior officers of today. The trauma and significance of World War II is something the Soviets will not let their people forget, and they constantly use it as a reminder of the dangers from the outside world--particularly from western imperialists. War monuments, memorials, annual commemorative events, and emphasis in the educational and propaganda systems keep both fear and national pride alive. This emphasis serves to legitimize the diversion of resources

important fact, because we cannot form our own foreign policy nor our own security policy without full consideration of all we can find out about the Soviet Union. These four characteristics are:

- . The obsession with security;
- . The all-encompassing state control over personal lives and its corollary, the total lack of any real personal individual freedom;
- . The inflexibility of decision making; and
- . The role of ideology. (7:4)

To understand that these four characteristics highlighted by Secretary Weinberger exist is simply not enough--we have to understand the reasons for their existence to gain an adequate appreciation of their magnitude and perseverance. The Secretary hit the mark dead center in his words, "All we can find out about the Soviet Union," and that is essentially what we should know-- "all that we can find out. . . ." (7:4)

History

It is frequently said of the Russians that they live in the present but think in the past, and when compared to our population they have had a much longer and more profound past to influence their thinking. A closer look for example, would reveal that they are the product of a long history of bloody invasions, despotism, suffering, and death on a grand scale. Completely surrounded by enemies and frequently overrun, the constant destruction and loss of life have generated the Russian paranoia over defense of the homeland and reinforced an

supports the development of the Soviet war machine. A knowledge of their political system is also important if we are to accurately assess true Soviet military power.

Just what kinds of things should we know about these subjects that would increase our understanding of the Soviet armed forces and Soviet power rivals with which we must contend during the rest of our careers? As you read on, ask yourself how much you are familiar with as a member of the profession at arms.

III. What We Should Know

Obviously we should have as much knowledge as possible on the immediate Soviet threat--their massive military forces and attendant equipment capabilities as well as their continued development and improvement programs. Real-time accurate and current intelligence as it is better known, has always been of immediate necessity, and there is probably no one who would dispute that fact. Consequently, I do not believe that we have a problem on this particular facet of our knowledge of the Soviets. It is what is behind their military forces that we have ignored such as their history, society, economy, political system, and geography--all of which, by the way, are easily obtainable from unclassified and readily available sources.

Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger recently stated the following in regard to the importance of knowledge of the Soviet Union:

There are four characteristics of the Soviet Union that in my view greatly affect their foreign and defense policy--and therefore ours. That is the critically

Regarding the study of military history, an Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC) cadet recently put the matter in proper perspective. He stated:

. . . history will act as a support in hard times. More important it will give the officer the intellectual breadth to realize who he is, how he got there and why his role is important. This realization will shore up his resolve in the face of not only the enemy but those in our society who do not see the value of our profession. It will combat doubt and provide support in adversity. Finally, it is a measure of our professionalism. (6:89)

Conversations with fellow students at the Air War College this year have reinforced my belief that as military professionals, we in the USAF know very little about Russian history, society, economy, their political system or their geography. How little we know and why we don't know are subjects to be discussed later. However, since we are likely as a group and as individuals to play an important role in influencing the force structure, force posture and future air doctrine and strategy for our service, we must be well versed in things Russian, and learn to look beyond hardware and air order of battle if we are to understand the mindset of our Soviet military counterparts. They have learned a great deal from their own unique history, which has been strongly influenced by a succession of military conflicts. Their society is the most militarized in the world today and an insight into how the military influences that society and benefits from it is critical to understanding Soviet military power. One must understand their economy and how it is managed and prioritized by the Party to grasp the source of strength that

Truman Administration." (3:6) He further states that the military services and Department of Defense are "badly oriented" in their ability to make contributions to defense policy in that the "domination of program management over purpose in the Pentagon" has relegated military strategy-making to a minor role. (3:3) What is an apparent preoccupation with the military hardware acquisition process has, according to Graham led to a decline in sound military strategy formulation, a key part of the national strategy process. The danger herein is two-fold; first in not having a strategy at all, and second, in the absence of our own military strategists, having civilians formulate it for us. According to Colonel John L. Martin, Chairman of the Department of Military Employment, Air War College (AWC)

. . . We face an additional handicap because of the subject of strategic formulation, particularly since World War II, has spread dramatically from the military into the civilian community. Nevertheless, that diffusion of strategic debate into academic and political arenas does not relieve us from professional responsibility to make our voice significant in the strategy formulation process, in fact, it makes it all the more important for us to do so. (4:1)

In short, to get back into the strategy formulation business, we first have to have the knowledge, and at present our knowledge is primarily centered on enemy hardware and order of battle, not on historical, economic, social and political factors that shape his thinking. (5:16)

A final reason for knowing the enemy, almost so obvious that it is often overlooked, is that as military professionals we are expected to be highly knowledgeable of our foes.

his knowledge into practice, will win his battles. He who knows them not, nor practices them, will surely be defeated." (2:6)

Despite this ancient axiom, there have been countless times when available intelligence was ignored and the ensuing results disastrous. Stalin refused to believe his most trusted generals that Hitler would turn against Russia, and as Operation Barbarosa began on June 22, 1941, the Nazis virtually eliminated the Soviet Air Force, caught by surprise on the ground. The "Great Patriotic War" as the Russians refer to it, was subsequently fought at a cost of 20 million of their countrymen's lives. The Japanese raid on Pearl Harbor was billed as an intelligence failure on the part of the United States, but was, in reality, even more of a failure for Japan in not predicting the American public outrage and tenacity which followed. Conversely, there are instances almost too numerous to mention where superb knowledge of the opponent paid off. An excellent example, recently dramatized on screen was General George S. Patton's first and highly successful engagement with Field Marshall Erwin Rommel's Afrika Corps. Patton was an excellent tank man to start with, but his careful study of Rommel's tactics was a superb force multiplier.

On a more modern note, in depth study of the Soviets is essential to the fomulation of long-term military strategy, something we on active duty are often accused of ignoring. Lt Gen Daniel O. Graham, in his article, "The Decline of US Strategic Thought," points out that "there has been no formulation of basic US national strategy since the waning years of the

THE SOVIETS - HOW MUCH DO WE KNOW?

I. Introduction

As basic as the principles of war are to a military professional is the time-honored and proven requirement to "know your enemy." As potential career senior officers, USAF active duty lieutenant colonels and colonels have only superficial knowledge of our number one superpower adversary, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. In support of this thesis, this paper will address four basic areas: (1) Why we should know our adversary, (2) What we should know in general terms about the Soviets, (3) How much we do know, (4) Why we don't know as much as we should, and finally (5) What should be done to improve our knowledge.

II. Why We Should Know (Our Adversary)

The realization that knowledge of the enemy is critical in warfare is certainly not a startling recent discovery. In about 500 B.C. Sun Tsu, in the Art of War, issued the following advice, which for all intents and purposes, is as good today as it was then.

If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle. (1:18)

Knowing, of course, is only one half of the equation to success. Applying that knowledge in an able and competent manner has to be accomplished for it to be of any value. (2:6) As Sun Tsu says, "He who knows these things and in fighting puts

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over-production of some items of great expense to others.

Secretary Weinberger gives the following example:

The state sets its quota for glass factories by the square meter. To meet the quota, the factories make the glass as thin as possible--and windows break all over the Soviet Union during harsh winters. By contrast, the state sets the quota for auto parts factories in metric tons. The factories produce too many tires--and no distributor caps. (7:7)

This inefficiency, however, does not carry over into the military industrial complex, as the Soviets funnel their best new materials, people and resources into defense production. Without this talent and material available to the non-military sector, it is easy to see why its productive capacity and technology level lag behind the rest of the industrialized world. This vast military industrial complex accounts for 13.5 percent of total Gross National Product (GNP) compared to 6-7 percent for the US, and has an annual growth rate of 2 to 4 percent. With the party making sure that the military gets what it wants, and no public opinion to worry about, the Soviets basically have carte blanche compared to our tedious and frustrating methods of obtaining new military hardware.

In essence, the Soviet economy can only really be stated as a strong military-industrial economy with its other sectors being weak, inefficient and characterized by frequent disruption and failure. The significance for us then, is in their heavy dependence on imports for consumer necessities along with their contrasting ability to easily outproduce us militarily. This

dichotomy could have implications in long-term strategy formulation for us and also points to why the Soviets must win quickly in a major conflict. Without life-sustaining imports they cannot afford a long, drawn-out war.

Political System

The Soviet government is an overtly complex, large bureaucracy of legislatures, ministries, and courts which in reality, have very little independent power. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), the real source of power, is organized on a parallel with the government hierarchy and through a system of dual-hatting of party and government members, basically assures its total influence over government and in promoting the "latest Kremlin interpretation of the gospel according to Marx and Lenin." (9:47) Party membership is a prerequisite for advancement in life in almost any important occupation, yet only 6 percent of the total population are members. Membership brings with it an elite status, especially for those at or near the top, and special privileges as well as enormous responsibilities. The climb to the top of the Party is a long arduous ordeal, often taking the greater part of a life time. When one finally makes it up there, the main objective is to stay in power, and anything which threatens that power is strongly dealt with. The result is an apparent fear of innovation and change and a great amount of inflexibility and rigidity. (7:7) The top organ of the Party is the Politburo, consisting of 16 members

allegedly elected by the Central Committee which, in turn, is allegedly elected by the Party Congress, the largest body of the organization. The powers of the Politburo, Central Committee, and Secretariat are, according to Soviet "mythology," supposed to flow from the Party Congress to the top, however, in reality the power flow is from the top down only. The actual scheme of things is that the Politburo and Secretariat acting somewhat like an "exclusive club" select and reject their own membership. (9:44) Members of the Central Committee (approx 400) are "elected" in the same manner, and the Party Congress, in reality, has no power, and serves only to legitimize through predictable unanimous approval, all policies, changes and plans generated by the Politburo and Central Committee. (9:46) The inner workings of the Politburo are not readily known, it is however, generally believed that this collective leadership arrives at most decisions through consensus. Once decisions are reached, the "Party Line" is disseminated and expected to be judiciously followed. Dissent is not tolerated and a vast network of secret police (KGB) serves to insure internal compliance with Party wishes. Although not as brutal as during Stalin's purges (20-25 million killed), the KGB still maintains a firm, repressive grip over the society as a whole, occasionally making examples of selected dissidents. Some portions of the Marxist-Leninist ideology which serve this system have shown signs of neglect in recent years with religion and small bits of Capitalism being openly tolerated. The truly

classless society has not evolved, workers don't control production and many other beneficial long-term promises of Communism have simply not come to fruition. However, its salient aim of world domination and intolerance of imperialist states still flourishes with its proof in Soviet willingness to use military power directly or through surrogates to further their objectives. (7:9)

Knowing the nuances of the Soviet political system helps us understand the impetus behind the ideology which threatens the demise of our democratic way of life. In addition to this threat, knowledge of the peculiarities of the government sheds light on the reasons for its repressive, inflexible and almost stagnant nature. Immense power concentrated in the hands of a few, whose motives may not be in the best interest of the nation or its people, coupled with a society powerless to affect change, translates to rough going when we attempt to apply pressure based on our beliefs and political system. Their system is one based solely on military power and state control while ours stresses diplomacy, individualism, economic freedom, and military power last. This incongruity of ideals is frustrating, and as impatient Americans we tend to change our diplomatic tact when results are not achieved quickly. The Soviets, on the other hand, see this as a weakness or lack of resolve which probably adds to the reinforcement of their inflexibility. Realizing this, we should understand that dealing with any Soviet venture is going to take a good deal of perseverance and patience.

Geography

Understanding Russian geography gives one an instant appreciation for the ruggedness of the Russian character. The tremendous expanse of territory, predominately at northern latitudes, gives new meaning to our concept of the word "cold." The climate is basically continental, characterized by extremes in both cold and heat but cold predominates. There are no mountain ranges in the North to block Arctic air, yet in the South and East there are mountain ranges (Caucasus, Tien Shan, Altay, Sayan, Yablonovy, Stanovy and Verkhoyansk ranges) which do block any warmer air that could come from the Pacific. This topographical arrangement contributes to a lack of rainfall which has a strong negative impact on an already politically inefficient agricultural system. The permafrost zone, an area where the ground remains permanently frozen year round, accounts for over 40 percent of the USSR land mass. Construction and land travel are greatly inhibited, making this huge area (Siberia) almost worthless even though it is known to contain large mineral deposits. The last geographical characteristic of the USSR is that its northern location means that it is land-locked by its frozen northern sea coast most of the year. Access to warm water ports to the south is controlled by Turkey (The Bosphorus), and northwestern outlets on the Baltic by Denmark and Germany. The only relatively uninhibited accesses left are Murmansk on the Kola peninsula and Vladivostok in the Far East. The extreme distance of the far eastern region from the

heartland along with the intervening Yablonovy and Stanovoy range tend to isolate it from the rest of the USSR, so the Soviets have undertaken a massive effort to make the area independent militarily and industrially. (9:2)

The significance of Russian geography is first of all its military disadvantages--it is a huge area to protect, its ports are either climatically controlled or subject to foreign control, and extreme distances coupled with the predominant cold make travel difficult. The lack of access to warm water ports has troubled the Russians for hundreds of years, and it is easy to see how their acquisition would greatly enhance sea-power projection capability.

However, we should not underestimate the Soviets because of these unavoidable disadvantages. In past times they used the cold much to their advantage. Marshall Kutuzov retreated to Moscow, all the while drawing Napoleon deeper into Russia beyond the means to sustain his army. "General Winter" then took over and Napoleon's army was nearly frozen to death. The stamina of the Russian people throughout the 900-day siege of Leningrad by the Nazis is an excellent example of their adaptation to the bitter conditions, as most were without heat or enough to eat. Despite the loss of almost one million people, they prevailed and Leningrad was saved. Thus, the other significant point about the geographic features is the tremendous part they play in shaping the Russian character. Tenacious, especially in defense of his homeland and able to endure a

rugged and extremely cold country and extremely proud of that ability. One might wonder how well we would do in combat under similar conditions.

To recap--we must understand that our Soviet military counterpart is the product of his environment--one which differs radically from our own. His mindset and resulting combat decisions are colored by a history, society, economy, political structure and geographic environment that is totally alien to that which we have experienced. It is a simplistic approach to spend the majority of our time studying his military hardware without devoting equal time to the factors which shape the "how" and "why" of the possible employment of his military.

In a recent Air University Review article, "An Insider's Warning to the West," the authors, Lt Col Varhall and Maj Currie, state the following regarding the importance of knowing these factors:

Too often we overlook differences in philosophy that underlie others' decisions. If our adversary does not react to situations or adhere to the same strategic concepts as we would, we either assume that he is in need of education or we are surprised by his "ingenuity." Recognizing differences in fighting philosophy can be a great asset to military strategists and tacticians; when they go unrecognized, serious consequences can result.
(12:104)

To recognize the above mentioned "differences in philosophy" we have to know some rather basic facts regarding the Soviet Union. Just how much we, as Air Force members of the Air War College Class of 1985 know regarding these basics will be covered next.

IV. How Much We Do Know

In order to get a representative sample of how much we do know about the Russians, a questionnaire covering a wide variety of subjects (history, society, economy, political system and geography to be exact) was given to the USAF active duty and Reserve members of the Air War College (AWC) Class of 1985.

(Appendix 1) Members were asked to take the questionnaire without the aid of reference materials and within a 35-minute time limit. Individual questions were formulated to measure specific bits of knowledge about the characteristics or events in the five categories mentioned above that influence, or have in the past, influenced Soviet mindset. To one who has a very limited knowledge of the USSR, some questions may appear to be trivial, but to those who do understand the Soviet system, each has its own significance in highlighting a peculiarity or fact contributing to things Russian. To keep the interest level up, a few military questions were also included, all of which should be familiar to the military professional. Following the 55 questions, five additional survey-type questions were included in order to gain the subjective opinions of class members on (1) the adequacy of their knowledge level of the USSR, (2) how they gained their knowledge, (3) whether or not the AWC Soviet studies program was adequate, (4) when during a career, studies should be emphasized, and (5) suggestions for better education of career officers. The results of these five questions will be covered in a later section.

Of the 160 questionnaires distributed, 100 were returned thus yielding a 63 percent return rate. It should be noted that those surveys returned represent a sampling of 51 Air Force specialty codes and are probably representative of a good cross-section of lieutenant colonels and colonels throughout the USAF. The mean score was 53.5 percent, with 72 percent the high and 26 percent the low. The most frequently occurring score (mode) was 64 percent, achieved 11 times. If one used, as in most cases, a score of 65 percent or above as passing, only 14 out of the 100 who returned their surveys would have been successful. That only 14 percent of those USAF AWC students who are supposedly among the up and coming in the near future leadership of the Air Force, have adequate knowledge of the Soviets is quite disturbing. Furthermore, the survey was administered well after completion of the Soviet studies portion of the curriculum and well into the final half of the total academic program. The immediate conclusion that one may come to is that the AWC curriculum needs changing, however, as will be covered later in analysis of the five opinion questions, this is not the apparent cause of the problem.

The following list highlights specific examples of information which the questionnaire evaluates as well as the percentage of those who gave incorrect responses. The question number (for reference to Appendix 1) is also provided.

- 49 percent didn't know how much of the world's surface is covered by the USSR. (#12)

- 60 percent didn't know how many ethnic groups make up the Soviet population. (#14)
- 43 percent didn't know what percentage of the population were party members. (#15)
- 46 percent couldn't name three Russian Rivers. (#16)
- 41 percent couldn't name five major Soviet cities. (#17)
- 60 percent couldn't name five countries which invaded Russia. (#21)
- 77 percent couldn't estimate the extent of death caused by Stalin's purges. (#28)
- 65 percent didn't know the personnel strength of the KGB. (#26)
- 38 percent didn't know where the largest tank battle in history took place. (#30)
- 75 percent couldn't estimate the active duty strength of Soviet Armed Forces. (#33)
- 80 percent didn't know which of the Soviet fleets was largest. (#39)
- 49 percent didn't know the size of Soviet defense expenditures in relation to Gross National Product. (#54)

For the remainder of the percentage of miss on each question refer to Appendix 1. The bottom line of the survey results is that the thesis of this paper is correct, i.e., we don't know much at all about the Soviets. The next section will attempt to explain why.

V. Why We Don't Know More

The answers to why we don't know are probably best explained by the responses to questions 56-59 of the questionnaire, but first a few general observations on our public and professional military education (PME) programs need to be made.

When we look at the civilian education we received in the United States prior to entering the Air Force, it is readily apparent why we have to play catch-up today in studying the basics of the Soviet system. High school and college history were western-oriented with very little on the Russians. The American and French revolutions certainly gained more recognition in the historical sense, and from the language point of view, Spanish, French and German got the emphasis. In the late 1950's, the Soviets were simply not the threat they are today, yet a close look at our public schools today would probably reveal the same lack of emphasis. Media coverage has only recently (6-12 months) started to focus on the Soviet Union and typically covers nothing but sensational events. In-depth accounts on life and conditions in the USSR are few and far between, even when taking state censorship into account.

In looking at our two Air Force PME schools prior to the Air War College, Soviet studies make up only a small percentage of the total curriculum. Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) for example, has a total of 859 contact hours (lecture/seminar), only 15½ hours of which are core or mandatory Soviet subjects. An additional six hours in Soviet electives may be taken if the student so desires, but even these, when added to the core requirements, only equal slightly less than three percent of the total. Squadron Officer School (SOS) is slightly better with ten out of 250 hours of contact time equalling four percent of the total. The SOS program is much more

accelerated, taking place over eight weeks vs ten months for ACSC, so in reality the higher percentage doesn't mean that much.

The AWC Soviet program has 42 core hours and an optional 80 hours of available electives out of a total of 1600 which, when combined, equal 8 percent of the total curriculum. When considering the previous cumulative exposure (SOS and ACSC) this low percentage could be easily justified, however, one must take into account the average five to six year lapse between PME schools. A lot can be forgotten in five years.

Survey Questions 56-59

The responses to question number 56 regarding personal knowledge level of the USSR (Figure 1) were relatively predictable in view of the previous discussion on public education and PME. Most (75 percent) felt that they did not know enough, and since the questionnaire was administered under conditions of anonymity, there is no reason to doubt the validity of the responses. Whether or not the questionnaire was an "intimidator" flavoring the negative response (b) percentage is hard to say. If it was, it is hard to imagine it affecting 75 percent of the respondents.

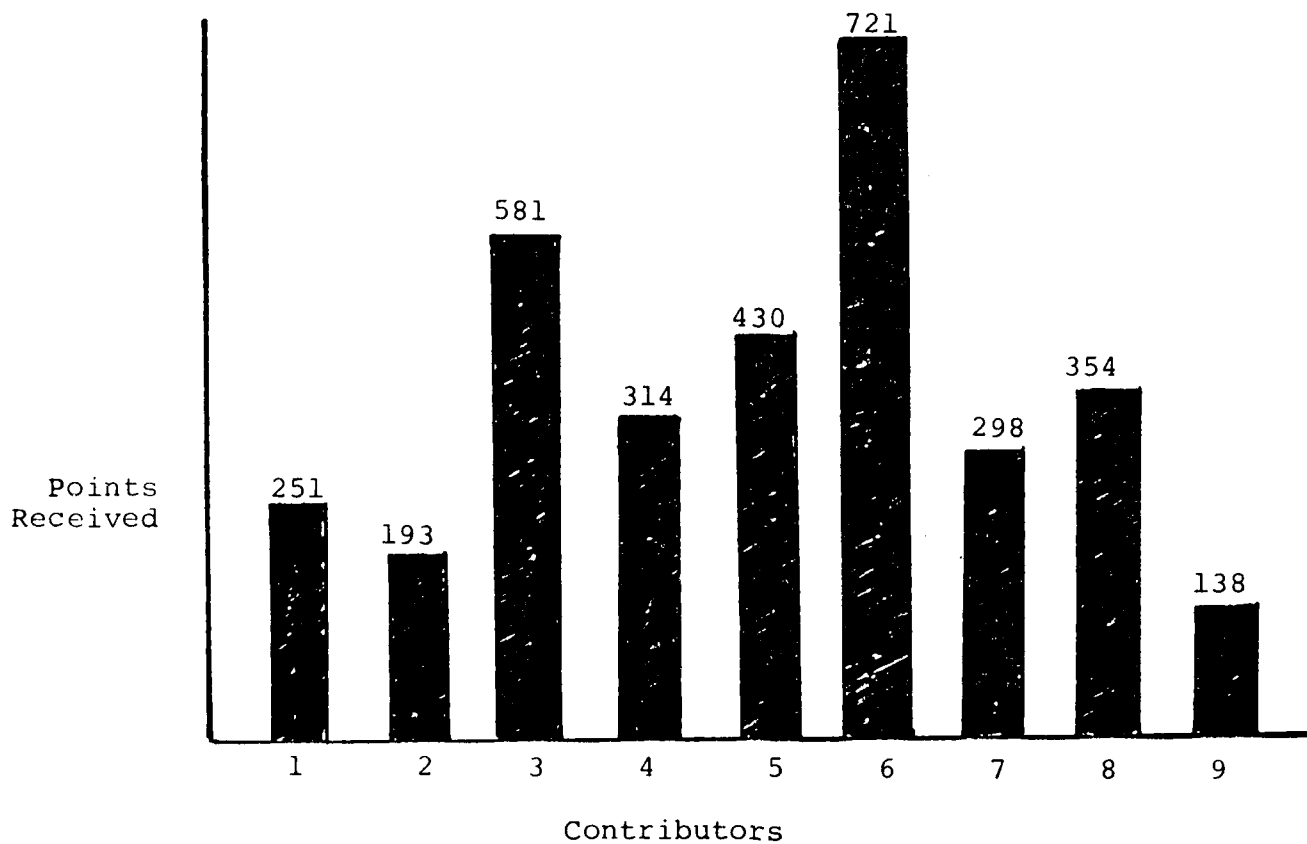
Question 57 (Figure 2) asked for a rank ordering of nine categories of "contributors" to knowledge of the Soviet Union. By totaling the priority numbers in each category for all surveys, a good idea of how the class on the whole felt about the ranking was obtained. Air War College stood out



5. Do you feel your level of knowledge and understanding of the Soviet Union is sufficient given your current grade and experience?

- a. Yes
- b. No

FIGURE 1



57. Please rank order each of the following factors in contributing to your level of knowledge on the Soviet Union.

	Lowest Contributor		Highest Contributor						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Undergraduate program									
2. Master's Program									
3. Professional Reading (AU Review, AF Magazine, Aviation Week, etc.)									
4. Squadron Officer School									
5. Air Command and Staff College									
6. Air War College									
7. Specialized USAF Training (Job Related)									
8. Media (TV, newspaper)									
9. Other - explain below									

FIGURE 2

1. The first Russian TSAR was _____ 56
a. Nicolas c. Catherine the Great
☒ b. Ivan the Great d. Genghis Khan
2. Who was best known as the father of modern Russia? 46
☒ a. Peter the Great c. Ivan the Great
b. Nicolas II d. Stalin
3. Who originated the secret police? 71
a. Alexander III c. Stalin
b. Nicolas II ☒ d. Ivan the Terrible
4. _____ sent Lenin back to Russia from exile in 1917. 51
a. The Swiss Parliament c. The Bolsheviks
☒ b. The German General Staff d. Nicolas II
5. The TSAR deposed and killed during the Russian Revolution was _____ 27
a. Peter the Great ☒ c. Nicolas II
b. Alexander II d. Ivan the Terrible
6. The provisional government initially set up in the early stages of the 1917 Revolution was _____ 40
☒ a. democratic c. ruled by the communist party
b. a dictatorship d. none of the above
7. After the TSAR had abdicated in 1917, a provisional government was established and headed by _____ 61
a. Lenin c. Trotsky
b. The Bolsheviks ☒ d. Kerensky
8. In World War II the siege of Leningrad lasted _____ days at a cost of _____ Russian lives. 37
a. 500/50,000 ☒ c. 900/1 million
b. 300/20,000 d. 700/100,000

TO: Box # _____

1. The attached questionnaire is part of a student research effort being accomplished for the Air War College Soviet Military Studies Division. In order to improve our curriculum it is necessary to sample your knowledge of the USSR as well as your opinions on how much you feel you should know as military professionals.
2. The USSR is a large and complex country which baffles even those who profess to be experts. Some of us are quite knowledgeable on Soviet weapons systems and order of battle, however, we should also be somewhat familiar with the country, its people and its history if we are to play a future role in formulating national and military strategies. The question then becomes, how much do we as senior USAF officers know about our Soviet power rivals at or about the 20-year point in our career? We have attempted to design a questionnaire on basic subjects of the USSR that might be familiar to a casual student of the Soviet Union. Results of the questionnaire will be held in the strictest confidence as it is not important how each of you does, but rather how well the class does on the whole. Your response to questions 55 - 60 will assist us in making improvements not only in our curriculum but possibly to SOS and ACSC as well.
3. We ask that you use no reference materials and that you complete questions 1 - 55 without interruption in not more than 35 minutes.
4. Please return the questionnaires to the student evaluation drop box in the lounge NLT COB 14 Feb '85. Thanks for your help.

Walter R. Peacock Jr
WALTER R. PEACOCK, JR.
Lt Col, USAF
AWC Class of 1985

1 Atch
Questionnaire

entire career. Also significant was that most felt that the greatest contributors to what knowledge they had, in order of priority, were: (1) AWC, (2) professional reading, (3) ACSC, (4) media and (5) SOS. Suggestions for improvement from respondents clustered around three general ideas: (1) Start the education process earlier in the career, (2) increase PME exposure and (3) establish some type of mandatory training. Suggestions for ways to implement these ideas include strengthening existing PME programs, with emphasis at SOS and ACSC primarily and at AWC until the entire program comes on speed. ROTC, OTS and Academy training could be increased and a mandatory correspondence or base-administered course could be structured to fill the gap between SOS and ACSC. Since respondents indicated that professional reading was a strong contributor to their knowledge it could also serve as a vehicle in providing more on the basics of the USSR. These suggestions are by no means all that can be done, but should serve as a starting point for a close look at how to solve the problem.

one superpower rival, the USSR, carefully studying his military hardware and order of battle. In this process however, we have ignored certain other more uninteresting aspects of Russia that are key to the formulation of military strategy and have, in a way, helped ourselves out of the strategy formulation business. As military professionals, it behooves us to know all that we can about the Soviets, not only in terms of military capabilities, but also in terms of their entire system. Knowledge of Soviet history, society, economy political system and geography is equally important when it comes to influencing our force structure, posture, doctrine and strategy.

The results of a questionnaire to ascertain knowledge level on the Soviet system among AWC USAF members indicate only superficial knowledge at best. Only 14 out of 100 respondents demonstrated adequate understanding of the USSR. Reasons for this poor performance probably go back to our public education system and lack of media coverage in the earlier years of our lives. On a more recent note, our PME schools devote relatively low percentages of their curriculums to Soviet studies (SOS = 4 percent, ACSC = 3 percent, AWC = 8 percent), and coupled with the five to six year gaps between PME, do not provide a great deal of continuity on things Russian. Questionnaire results also indicate that 75 percent of the respondents felt their knowledge of the USSR was inadequate and that emphasis on Soviet studies should be stressed throughout an

Increased exposure through the professional reading medium should also be relatively easy to accomplish. More articles on the basics of the Soviet system could be presented in publications such as the Air University Review, Airman, and Air Force Magazine (with publisher approval, of course). Hopefully, with an increased emphasis earlier on, a stimulus to develop a good professional reading program would be provided, and with the proper types of readily available articles, the interest level could be kept up over an entire career. This is not to say that professional reading sources are presently doing an inadequate job, (as the survey indicated they are the number three contributor to knowledge of the Soviets) but that simply more articles on the basics of Russia could occasionally be included.

Unfortunately, to go into any further depth in recommended courses of action is beyond the purview of this research effort. The primary objective was simply to point out the need to know something other than the hardware end of the USSR, ascertain how much we do know, and then determine the reasons for our level of knowledge. Hopefully, the few ideas suggested for possible corrective action will serve as a starting point for an indepth look at solving the problem.

VII. Summary

The requirement to know one's enemy is critical to success in war and has been realized as such since the beginning of time. Knowing this, we have focused on our number

Other miscellaneous suggestions worthy of note included:

- (1) Establishment of a mandatory correspondence course on Russia.
- (2) Mandatory training at a Soviet awareness school.
- (3) Yearly mandatory training at base level.
- (4) On-going seminars at the work place.
- (5) Field trips to the USSR for senior officers.

From this list of suggestions there are three central ideas for improving our Soviet knowledge, (1) start as early as possible (AFROTC, OTS, and USAFA), (2) increase the exposure in PME, and (3) establish some type of mandatory training. This education process could essentially be a building block approach starting with the more rudimentary subjects (history, geography, ideology, etc.) progressing toward the more complex subjects by the ACSC point. By the time AWC is reached, one should theoretically have a basic understanding of the Soviet system, hence the study of military strategy would not be encumbered by having a lack of familiarity with the primary opponent. Since this type of approach would be a long term permanent fix taking a significant time to implement, the interim solution would have to be a dedicated effort to strengthen the SOS, ACSC and AWC curriculums immediately. Work could then begin on building entry level programs at ROTC, OTS, and USAFA as well as formulating some kind of mandatory course to be administered either by correspondence or at base-level. The timing of this course should occur between SOS and ACSC and would hopefully serve as a lead-in for higher level learning at the AWC level.

the USAF simply cannot go. For example, the public education system and the media are pretty much out of reach, so we are basically left with what can be changed in our own USAF community.

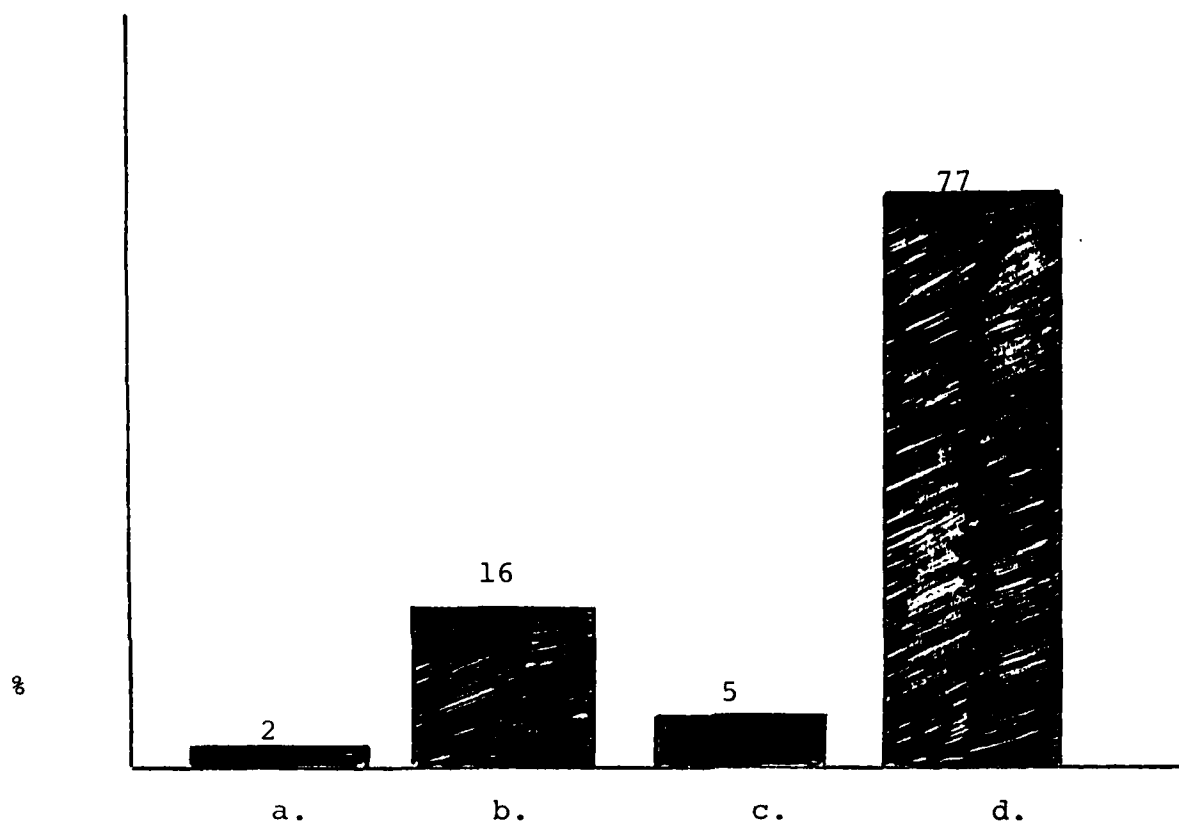
The responses to question number 60 regarding recommended ways of improving knowledge on the USSR tracked with the results of the rank-order question (#57) in many respects. For example, ACSC and SOS were ranked low, subsequently PME was the most frequently recommended area of improvement. Question number 59 regarding the time frame of emphasis on Soviet studies was directly mirrored by recommendations emphasizing coverage throughout an entire career. In fact, the majority (over 80 percent) of all recommendations were positive, constructive ideas with only a few recommending deletions or status quo of existing USAF PME programs. The most frequently occurring recommendations in order of priority were:

- (1) Increase exposure during PME.
- (2) Start the education process earlier (Reserve Officer Training Corps, Officer Training School, Air Force Academy) (ROTC, OTS, USAFA).
- (3) Increase exposure in professional military publications.
- (4) Continue emphasis throughout career.
- (5) Increase emphasis on Project Warrior.
- (6) Expand the Soviet Awareness Briefing Team Program.

our lives with a lack of emphasis in public education and continue, until only recently, with low coverage by the media. Our three PME schools, especially SOS and ACSC, devote only a small portion of their curriculum to the Soviets (SOS = 4 percent) (ACSC = 3 percent) (AWC = 8 percent) and with the time lapses between schools leave little for AWC to build on. Air War College was thought by survey respondents to contribute the most to their Soviet knowledge followed by professional reading, ACSC, media and SOS. The AWC Soviet studies program was initially judged to be "about right" but the almost equal number who responded "too little too late" tends to dilute the strength of the "about right" response. In reality, this gives one the impression that the underlying response was somewhere in between the two and equates to AWC needing some improvement. Last but not least, 75 percent felt that Soviet studies should be stressed throughout one's entire career. The question of what to do about this problem was the subject of the last question (#60) of the questionnaire and likewise will serve as the topic of the next section.

VI. What Should Be Done?

The recommendations in this section should by no means be taken as the only way to deal with solving the problem. It is simply hoped that they will spur further thought. It is obvious, however, when looking at questionnaire results along with the responses to questions 55-60 that something certainly must be done. There are finite limits though, beyond which



59. When do you believe emphasis on Soviet studies should be stressed?

- a. 1 - 5 years service
- b. 6 - 10 years service

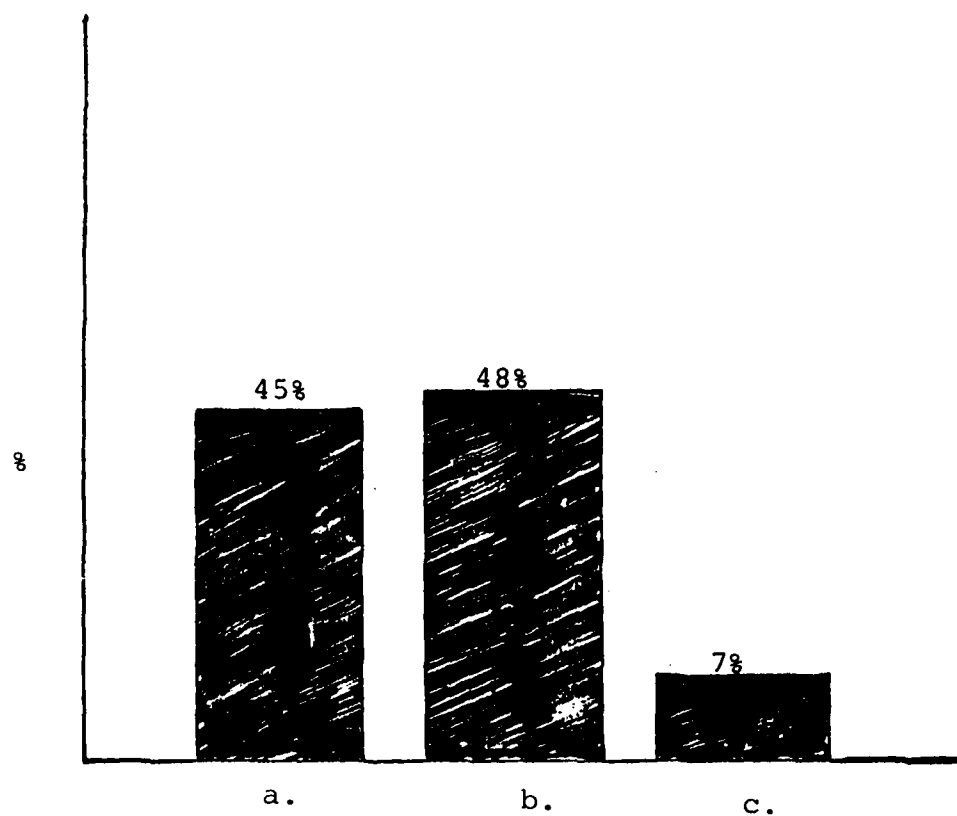
- c. 11 - 20 years service
- d. throughout entire career

FIGURE 4

to why we don't know enough about the Soviets. As can be seen in Figure 3, the responses to the a. and b. choices were almost equal. The apparent wide split in opinion over the two responses is a little misleading in that the b. response, "about right" is not the total opposite of a., "too little too late." The c. response "too much" is the opposite of a., and with only seven respondents to it, does not carry any significance. The consensus opinion then would probably lie in between something less than "about right" and not quite so severe as "too little too late." In short, I believe there is a hidden response which says AWC is close to being right and maybe needs just a little more on the Russians.

Question number 59 (Figure 4) shows strong support (75 percent) for study emphasis throughout an entire career, which is a good indicator of the relative importance most of the respondents are giving the subject. When comparing this question with the response to the prior question, the implication could be that we realize at this late point in our career that we haven't learned much, and the AWC program is not quite sufficient to get us to the level of knowledge required. Had we obtained some rather basic knowledge earlier in our careers, the AWC program as it stands, would be adequate for the job.

Simply stated, our knowledge of the Russians is not adequate as evidenced by the questionnaire results (low average score) and a 75 percent concurrence by AWC USAF Class of 1985 members. Reasons for this level of knowledge start early in



58. Soviet studies at the Air War College are:

- a. too little too late
- b. about right
- c. too much

FIGURE 3

predominately as the number one contributor followed by professional reading then by ACSC, media, SOS and specialized training. The AWC dominance over SOS and ACSC is understandable due to recency, and the fact the professional reading is also above ACSC and SOS is encouraging, at least indicating that there is an interest in the matter. It may also be that professional reading scored higher because of the relatively low portion Soviet studies have in the ACSC and SOS curriculums. One would have to wonder what the outcome would be if the survey had been administered two years after completion of AWC. In all probability, the degree of AWC dominance would be lower, but the fact that its curriculum contains more than ACSC and SOS would probably keep it above them. Both professional reading and media would probably stay about the same since they are basically continuing categories and not single-event oriented as are PME schools. One final reason for the importance given professional reading and media and possibly for the lack of it given to ACSC and SOS, is that they are a balancing mechanism--a means to gain what was not gained in our PME system.

The remaining categories, undergraduate and master's programs, specialized training and other reflect the relative lack of emphasis given Soviet subjects in our civilian education systems along with very limited special training among the various USAF career fields--no surprises here.

Question number 58 (Figure 3), when coupled with the responses to question 59 provides a little more to the answer

28. Stalin's purges were the cause of _____ deaths. 77
a. 5-9 million c. 15-19 million
b. 10-14 million ☒ d. 20-25 million
29. The greatest natural obstacle to development of Siberia is _____. 47
a. extreme distances ☒ c. permafrost
b. lack of infrastructure d. lack of raw materials
30. The largest tank battle in history took place in World War II at the Russian city of _____. 38
a. Leningrad c. Smolensk
☒ b. Kursk d. Moscow
31. The first Russian aircraft was built in _____.
☒ a. 1884 c. 1911 92
b. 1904 d. 1918
32. In 1937, Stalin's purge eliminated _____% of Russian Air Force officers. 58
a. 25 ☒ c. 75
b. 50 d. 90
33. Active duty strength of the Soviet Armed Forces today is _____. 75
a. 3.2 million c. 5.5 million
☒ b. 4.3 million d. 8.3 million
34. Soviet annual spending on civil defense approximates _____. 50
a. 5 million c. 1.2 billion
b. 35 million ☒ d. 2.3 billion
35. Soviet military conscripts remain in the active reserves until age _____. 51
a. 40 ☒ c. 50
b. 45 d. 65
36. The supreme decision making body on military matters is the _____. 70
☒ a. Defense Council c. Main Military Council
b. General Staff d. Central Committee

37. Soviet Professional Military Schools are _____ comparable US professional military colleges. 37
- a. of equal duration to
 - b. more numerous but shorter than
 - ☒ c. 2 to 3 times longer than
 - d. less numerous but longer than
38. The _____ is widely considered by Western standards as the "backbone" of the Soviet military. 23
- ☒ a. Officer Corps
 - b. NCO Corps
 - c. General Staff
 - d. Komsomol
39. The Soviet Navy consists of _____ fleets with the _____ fleet as the largest. 80
- a. 3, Pacific
 - ☒ b. 4, Pacific
 - c. 2, Mediterranean
 - d. 4, Northern
40. The commander in chief of the Soviet Navy is Admiral _____. 22
- a. Gorbachov
 - b. Malinovsky
 - ☒ c. Gorshkov
 - d. Kirov
41. The recent Soviet massive naval build-up was started as a result of _____. 30
- a. The increasing Soviet international sea trade
 - ☒ b. The successful US blockade of Cuba
 - c. Khrushchev's emphasis on military power
 - d. The U.S. SLBM threat
42. Soviet beliefs concerning war are that _____. 21
- a. War is an extension of politics
 - b. Nuclear war is a no-win situation for both sides
 - c. War is an inherent step preceding final achievement of Marxism
 - ☒ d. a + c
43. Since World War II, Soviet warfighting strategy has centered on _____. 21
- ☒ a. the primacy of the offensive
 - b. decentralized command and control
 - c. concentration of mass
 - d. active defense

44. The Soviets believe that _____ is the principle means of achieving surprise. 48
- a. speed
 - ☒ (b) deception
 - c. combined arms
 - d. mobility
45. The Soviets intend to maintain the tempo of the offensive once war begins, through (the) _____ 38
- a. operational maneuver group (OMG)
 - b. broad frontal attacks
 - ☒ (c) echeloning of forces
 - d. use of SPETSNAZ
46. The Soviets believe if war breaks out in Europe it must be won quickly if it is to be won at all. 9
- ☒ (a) True
 - b. False
47. The main goal of Soviet theater tactical forces is to protect the homeland at all costs, actively defending any attempts of aggression on Soviet owned or controlled soil. 47
- a. True
 - ☒ (b) False
48. Russia today has a rising vice declining infant mortality rate. 44
- ☒ (a) True
 - b. False
49. Georgian architects designed and built the Kremlin. 63
- a. True
 - ☒ (b) False
50. Seventy-five percent of Soviet air force officers are communist party members. 62
- a. True
 - ☒ (b) False

51. There are _____ Republics in the USSR. 41

- a. 5
b. 10
c. 15
d. 20

52. There are _____ time zones in the USSR. 76

- a. 4
b. 6
c. 9
d. 12

53. Soviet defense expenditures average a real growth rate of _____% a year. 90

- a. 2 - 4
b. 5 - 7
c. 8 - 10
d. 11 - 14

54. Soviet defense expenditures approximate _____% of GNP.

- a. 6.5
b. 13.5
c. 20.5
d. 40

55. Moscow lies at approximately the same latitude as _____

- a. Edmonton Alberta
b. Bangor ME
c. Raleigh NC
d. New York City

56. Do you feel your level of knowledge and understanding of the Soviet Union is sufficient given your current grade and experience?

- a. Yes
b. No

57. Please rank order each of the following factors in contributing to your level of knowledge on the Soviet Union.

Lowest Contributor						Highest Contributor		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Undergraduate program								
Master's Program								
Professional Reading								
(AU Review, AF Magazine, Aviation Week, etc.)								
Squadron Officer School								
Air Command and Staff College								

(continued on next page)

Air War College _____
Specialized USAF Training _____
(Job Related) _____
Media (TV, newspaper) _____
Other - explain below _____

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- a. 1 - 5 years service
- b. 6 - 10 years service
- c. 11 - 20 years service
- d. throughout entire career

60. How do you believe US professional military officers could be better educated on the USSR? (Write answer below)

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GLOSSARY

ACSC	Air Command and Staff College
AFROTC	Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps
AWC	Air War College
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
GNP	Gross National Product
KGB	Committee for State Security (Secret Police)
OTS	Officer Training School
PME	Professional Military Education
USAFA	United States Air Force Academy
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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