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**Marshal Ogarkov
On Modern War:
1977-1985**

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Mary C. FitzGerald

Naval Planning, Management, and Logistics Division

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ABSTRACT

A review of Marshal N. V. Ogarkov's writings from 1977-85 reveals that the former Chief of the Soviet General Staff has consistently augured that phenomenon which General William Odom recently dubbed the "third revolution" in Soviet military affairs. Far from signalling the slightest attenuation of his public views, Ogarkov's 1985 book indicates that he has in fact intensified his drive to galvanize awareness of the altered military utility of nuclear weapons, the qualitatively new combat characteristics of conventional means, and the need to adapt the forms and methods of combat action accordingly. His modern theater operation may indeed reflect a revolutionized Soviet military science, and his own activities since September 1984, its formal debut.



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Introduction

Since his appointment as Chief of the General Staff in 1977, Marshal N. V. Ogarkov has perhaps emerged as the most controversial of prominent Soviet military figures. Throughout his writings, Ogarkov has continued to contrast the stability of conventional conflict with the innate instability of nuclear warfare. Yet some Western analysts persist in depicting him as the last of the nuclear war-wagers,¹ and pit him against a more "conciliatory" politico-military leadership.² With the announcement of his transfer to other duties in early September 1984, the case was thought to be closed. But the April 1985 publication by Voenizdat of his new book--*History Teaches Vigilance*, hereafter cited as *History*--propelled the enigmatic marshal once again to center stage. The 1985 *History* indicates that the former Chief of the Soviet General Staff has firmly reinforced his recurrent message: the altered military utility of nuclear weapons and the qualitatively new combat characteristics of conventional means require that the forms and methods of combat action be adapted accordingly.³ His modern theater operation may indeed reflect a revolutionized Soviet military science, and his own activities since September 1984, its formal debut.

Not coincidentally, perhaps, a ground-breaking book by Col.-Gen. M. A. Gareyev, Deputy Chief of the General Staff, added clout to the Ogarkov position in January 1985. While Sokolovskiy's classic *Military Strategy* was generally valid for its time, wrote Gareyev, "given the appearance of nuclear-missile weapons," many of its central propositions have become obsolete.⁴ The present review of Ogarkov's writings

indicates that he has long been the prophet of a phenomenon that General William Odom recently dubbed the "third revolution" in Soviet military affairs.⁵ According to Odom, the new revolution involves changes in Soviet doctrine generated by the so-called emerging technologies and by the trend toward new, non-nuclear weapons.⁶ While other members of the top Soviet military leadership have provided evidence of a new Soviet strategy for modern war, Marshal Ogarkov clearly emerges as the vanguard of the new revolution in Soviet military affairs.

Military-Strategic Equilibrium

Over the years, the Soviet leadership has often viewed U.S. political-military strategic intentions as a central concern.⁷ Writing in 1981 in *Kommunist*, Marshal Ogarkov articulated a perennial concern of the Soviet military: The United States "is seeking to change in its own favor the approximate military balance prevailing at the present time...."⁸ The Soviets also charge that the United States seeks to acquire "military superiority" and a first-strike capability. Taken at face value, these themes have a palpable propaganda content. But Soviet military doctrine on the concepts in question indicates that over time they have acquired a quite specific military significance independent of their prominence in Soviet propaganda scripts.⁹

Throughout the 1970s, both the Soviet and American military acknowledged that while each side has certain areas of superiority, these balance out to yield an overall parity.¹⁰ The Soviet military leadership has been quite explicit in its affirmations that parity

exists between the United States and the USSR on all force levels,¹¹ and Marshal Ogarkov is no exception. Throughout his writings, he has consistently referred to the fact of parity: "the existing, approximate equilibrium in the correlation of the sides' military forces" (1978); "the existing, approximate equality in medium-range nuclear means in Europe" (1980); "parity between the United States and the USSR in the quantitative correlation of strategic arms" (1982); "the balance of forces on a regional, European, and global scale" (1983), and "the approximate equality in nuclear arms between the United States and the USSR" (1985).¹²

How do the Soviets define "military superiority"? Prior to the existence of parity, attained by the Soviets in the late 60s-early 70s, "superiority" was used either as an amorphous concept, or in the traditional sense of an overwhelming preponderance of nuclear might. With few exceptions, this ragged usage prevailed until L. I. Brezhnev's 1977 speech at Tula.

In his Tula address, Brezhnev affirmed that the USSR was not striving for superiority in armaments with the aim of delivering a first strike.¹³ "First strike" was understood in the Western sense, as a unilateral, damage-limiting capacity in all-out war, achieved through some constellation of offensive means and active and passive defensive means (ABM, counterforce against land and sea, civil defense).¹⁴ Soviet military thought had now concluded that neither side could achieve a unilateral damage-limiting capability; defense of the population against the inevitable retaliatory strike was unattainable, both technologically and financially.¹⁵

Marshal Ogarkov cited the no-superiority formula a month after Tula, and has consistently echoed it throughout his writings.¹⁶ Marshal Ustinov wrote in 1982 that "relying on military superiority is completely hopeless. And it is also senseless in conditions where available arms are more than enough to make biological life on earth impossible."¹⁷ In the same article, Ustinov also announced that "the Soviet Union does not count on victory in nuclear war. An understanding of the impossibility of gaining the upper hand in such a conflict is also an argument in favor of refusing to use nuclear weapons first."

As early as 1979, Marshal Ogarkov asserted that the Soviet Union would not use nuclear weapons first.¹⁸ Since Brezhnev himself sent the no-first-use pledge to the U.N. General Assembly a full three years later, Ogarkov not only anticipated his commander-in-chief but also demonstrated that the public views of military luminaries are not necessarily censored by the Politburo.¹⁹ [Note: N. Khrushchev made the same no-first-use pledge in a little-known *Pravda* article in July 1963.²⁰]

The Law of Unity and Struggle of Opposites

By denying the possibility of achieving a first-strike capability, defined as a unilateral damage-limiting capacity, Brezhnev had cut the line running from 1965 to 1976 on the possibility of developing a means of defense against nuclear weapons.²¹ In Marxist-Leninist terms, this possibility is determined by the dialectical law of unity and struggle of opposites, or the dialectic of arms development. This dialectic is

the process in which every means of attack generates a new means of defense, and every means of defense in turn generates a new means of attack.

Western analysts sometimes assert that the Soviets have never viewed offensive nuclear forces as absolute weapons.²² Neither have the Soviets viewed defensive weapons as absolute; it is the nature of the dialectic of arms development to be continuous. Since Tula, however, authoritative Soviet political, military, and other commentators have consistently reiterated the Brezhnev formula: neither side can achieve "military superiority"/first-strike capability because the dialectic of arms development will be tilted in the future in favor of weapons of attack.

Since 1978, Marshal Ogarkov has repeatedly discussed the operation of all three dialectical laws in military affairs. In light of the SDI, his views on this law--the process wherein every means of attack generates a means of defense, and every means of defense generates a new means of attack--are of more than theoretical interest. Ogarkov's writings have consistently echoed the Tula formula of the offense's edge over the defense. In his 1978 *Kommunist* article, he explained that

the history of wars convincingly testifies,...to the constant contradiction between the means of attack and defense. The appearance of new means of attack has always [inevitably] led to the creation of corresponding means of counteraction, and this in the final analysis has led to the development of new methods for conducting engagements, battles, and operations [and the war in general]. *This also applies fully to nuclear-missile weapons, whose rapid development stimulated military-scientific theory and*

*practice to actively develop means and methods of counteraction. The appearance of means of defense against weapons of mass destruction in turn prompted the improvement of nuclear-missile means of attack.*²³

The foregoing passage was repeated *verbatim* in Ogarkov's 1982 book--*Always in Readiness to Defend the Fatherland*, hereafter cited as *Always*--with the addition of the words in brackets.²⁴ But in the 1985 *History*, Ogarkov made several significant changes in his standard discussion of this dialectical law. First, the sentences italicized above did not appear in *History*. Second, he added a discussion that had never appeared before. World War I, he said, had led to a situation wherein the defense proved to be stronger than the offense. In the course of World War II, however, a new contradiction arose: the means of offense proved to be stronger than the means of defense. As a result, during the war and especially in the post-war period, "means of defense were developed at an accelerated rate...*whose skillful use at a certain stage balanced the means of offense and defense to some degree.*"²⁵

By excising the italicized sentences of 1978 and 1982, and replacing them with the notion of a "balance" in nuclear means of offense and defense in 1985, Ogarkov may be affirming that he sees no military utility in the further "improvement of nuclear-missile means of attack."²⁶ He may in fact be referring to a neutralization of nuclear weapons in general. This is supported by his 1985 removal of a sentence that had always appeared in his previous discussions of the law of unity and struggle of opposites: "This [the law] applies fully to nuclear-missile weapons,...."

Mutual Deterrence

Raymond L. Garthoff has noted that during the key formative period of Soviet arms control policy, "there were a number of very clear and explicit endorsements in *Military Thought* by influential Soviet military leaders of the concepts of mutual assured retaliation and mutual deterrence."²⁷ Garthoff has likewise clarified the connection between these concepts. Mutual deterrence in Soviet writings

is usually expressed in terms of assured retaliatory capability which would devastate the aggressor,.... This formula avoids identification with the specific content of the American concept of "mutual assured destruction," often expressed in terms of a countervalue capability for destroying a specified percentage of the opponent's industry and population. The American interpretation is much more limited than the Soviet recognition of mutual deterrence resting on *mutual capability for devastating retaliation unacceptable to a rational potential initiator of war*, without calculations of arbitrary industrial and population losses which theoretically would be acceptable costs.²⁸

G. Gerasimov subsequently wrote that "then, as now, both sides in the nuclear confrontation possessed an assured capability to inflict an annihilating retaliatory strike on the aggressor (*the Soviet formula*), or to inflict 'unacceptable damage' on the attacking party as long as the situation for 'mutual assured destruction' exists (*the American formula*)."²⁹

As already indicated, the cornerstone message of Tula was the unattainability of "military superiority"/first-strike capability by either of the sides. This formula, by Gerasimov's admission the Soviet

formula for "Mutual Assured Destruction" (M.A.D.), is repeated with consistency by the Soviet military leadership, and Marshal Ogarkov again is no exception.³⁰

In a 1983 *Izvestiya* article, Ogarkov stressed that "...what could be achieved by nuclear weapons 20-30 years ago is impossible for an aggressor now. An annihilating retaliatory strike awaits him!"³¹ Later that year, he published an article in *Red Star* that included his most concrete acknowledgement of M.A.D. to date: "Given the modern development and spread of nuclear arms in the world, a defender will always retain that quantity of nuclear means which are capable of inflicting 'unacceptable damage', as former U.S. Defense Secretary R. McNamara once put it, on an aggressor in a retaliatory strike.... In present-day conditions, therefore, only suicides can gamble on a nuclear first strike."³² Still later in 1983, Ogarkov announced at a Moscow press conference that "[i]n present-day conditions, given the availability to the sides of large stores of nuclear weapons and their diverse basing modes, and of highly-developed...systems of command and control, this [the possibility of a disarming strike on the USSR] is excluded. In all cases, retribution will follow inevitably. Therefore, only adventurists and suicides can gamble on such a nuclear strike."³³

Twice in 1984 and again in the 1985 *History*, Ogarkov was determined to make a point regarding unacceptable damage. In his 1984 interview in *Red Star*, he asserted that "with the quantity and diversity of nuclear-missile means achieved, it is already impossible to destroy them [the opponent's nuclear-missile means] with one strike. An annihilating

retaliatory strike on an aggressor with even a limited number of the nuclear warheads left to a defender, a strike inflicting unacceptable damage, is inevitable in present-day conditions.³⁴

In his 1984 post-transfer article in *Kommunist of the Armed Forces*, Ogarkov reiterated the above formulation for M.A.D.³⁵ But he clarified the phrase "a strike inflicting unacceptable damage" by specifying "a retaliation depriving the aggressor of the capability thereafter of not only conducting the war, but also any kind of serious operations...." This fine-tuning of unacceptable damage was repeated in the 1985 *History*.³⁶

A review of post-Tula Soviet literature reveals that the Soviet politico-military leadership has grown more explicit over time concerning the mutuality of a nuclear war's destructiveness.³⁷ Since 1981, Marshal Ogarkov has also expanded the consequences of nuclear war to include "all mankind" and "the whole of civilization." In his 1981 article in *Kommunist*, Ogarkov warned that "[i]n terms of ferocity and scale of potential destruction, it [a new world war] could be compared with no wars of the past. The very nature of modern weapons is such that, if they are put into action, the future of all mankind would be at stake."³⁸ In his 1982 *Always*, Ogarkov asserts that "[t]he use of nuclear weapons can wreak incalculable disaster on the peoples of the entire world," and also cites L. I. Brezhnev: "The very nature of modern weapons is such that, if they are put into action, the future of all mankind would be at stake."³⁹

In a 1983 article in *Red Star*, Ogarkov advised that in a future war, "the consequences simply cannot be foreseen. It could threaten disaster for the whole of civilization."⁴⁰ Once again, his post-transfer writings do not differ from their predecessors. In the 1984 article in *Kommunist of the Armed Forces*, Ogarkov asserted that world wars "were fraught with the threat of annihilation for the whole of world civilization."⁴¹ He also stressed that a world nuclear war would "threaten the total annihilation of human civilization."⁴² In the 1985 *History*, Ogarkov not only repeated the foregoing statements *verbatim* but also added that in the hands of the imperialists, nuclear-missile means "have created a real threat to the existence of all mankind."⁴³

Other members of the top military leadership have also expanded the consequences of nuclear war to emphasize the mutuality of a nuclear war's destructiveness. In a 1978 *Kommunist* article, Marshal Ustinov referred to nuclear war as "the most terrible danger for all of mankind."⁴⁴ In his 1982 *Always*, the late Defense Minister cited L. I. Brezhnev's assertion that if nuclear weapons were put into action, "the future of all mankind would be at stake."⁴⁵ In the same 1982 *Pravda* article in which he declared that victory in nuclear war is impossible, Ustinov maintained that in present-day conditions, "available arms are more than enough to make biological life on earth impossible."⁴⁶

In his 1985 *Kommunist* article, Marshal Sokolov wrote that a "[w]orld-wide conflict would mean the extinction of human civilization."⁴⁷ Writing in 1980, Marshal Akhromeyev asserted in *Red Star* that in the event of their use, nuclear weapons "could destroy

everything living on earth many times over."⁴⁸ In his 1985 *Izvestiya* article, the Chief of the General Staff maintained that a nuclear war would bring "incalculable diaster and suffering to all peoples of the world."⁴⁹ Writing in 1982 in *Red Star*, Marshal Kulikov held that the concentration of nuclear weapons in the center of the European continent was already sufficient for "repeated mutual destruction."⁵⁰

The Law of the Negation of the Negation

Since Stalin's death, the reverberating effects of the "nuclear revolution in military affairs" on the essence of modern war have saturated Soviet elite writings. Soviet analysts have often discussed the impact of nuclear weapons on military theory and practice in connection with the dialectical law of the negation of the negation. During the 1960s, two schools of thought in the USSR competed for the imprimatur on long-term Soviet military development. The first group (hereafter referred to as "Nicol'skyites" after one of its members), argued that nuclear war had reached its inner dialectical limits and "negated itself," that there were no prospects for defending against nuclear weapons, and that the ensuing universal destruction would therefore be so great as to make the concept of victory meaningless.⁵¹ Improvements in technology, and a continuous increase in the yield of nuclear weapons had led them to start negating themselves, and at the same time to negate war as a method of resolving this or that political problem.⁵²

Beginning in late 1965, however, the Nikol'skyites, along with their thesis of nuclear war's self-negation, retreated in the face of the opposing school. Gen.-Maj. Bochkarev, for one, stood solidly behind the development of nuclear force options. He denied that victory in all-out nuclear war was impossible, and that it would result in the destruction of civilization, particularly--and this was the theoretical marrow of his school--given the prospects for future technological development.⁵³ Like Bochkarev, Col. Rybkin charged that the Nikol'skyites not only ignored crucial factors that validated all-out war, but were also mistaken in their prognosis of future technological trends. In late 1965, he enunciated the school's position: "There is a possibility of developing and creating new means of waging war, which are capable of reliably parrying an opponent's nuclear strikes."⁵⁴

In short, nuclear war had not negated itself, the present balance of weapons systems was only a moment in the inner dialectic of the military-technological process, and a means of defense would be developed against nuclear weapons. While the Nikol'skyites did not become extinct--Nicol'skiy himself published a book in 1970 that still brandished the "self-negation of war" thesis--the opposing school appears to have been decisive in influencing Soviet force development programs: nuclear options remained important until the late 1970s.

But the post-Tula rehabilitation of the Nikol'skyites is one of the clearest indicators of the change wrought by Tula.⁵⁵ Nikol'skiy himself surfaced with a new publication and the same thesis. Nuclear war had reached its inner dialectical limits in the material-technological,

economic, and political senses, and had therefore negated itself. He went on to explain that "the approach of the material-technical limit of world wars can be characterized as the creation and possession by opposing states of military technology that can make war so destructive that it becomes practically impossible."⁵⁶ He then stressed that as regards nuclear, biological, and chemical, "*but not conventional*" weapons, they are already reaching this "material-technical level of destructive and lethal power at the present time."

In his 1984 post-transfer article in *Kommunist of the Armed Forces*, Ogarkov wrote that the Communist Party had concluded that there is no fatal inevitability of wars. "Of course the threat of war remains," he advised, "but it can be neutralized."⁵⁷ He explained further that the qualitatively new historical, socio-political, and military-technical preconditions and circumstances that characterize the modern world are creating conditions for "the elimination of wars as a socio-political phenomenon, and above all world wars, fraught with the threat of annihilation for the whole of world civilization."⁵⁸

Marshal Ogarkov's perception of the diminishing military utility of nuclear war can also be seen in his discussions of the negation of the negation, which have become more explicit over time. In the 1985 *History*, Ogarkov's discussion of the law of the negation of the negation in military affairs--e.g., the replacement of the cavalry by mechanized infantry---follows all of his previous discussions practically *verbatim*. But at the end of his discussion he introduces a passage that has never appeared before in his writings:

The law of the negation of the negation, the birth of the new and the extinction of the old, is of a universal nature. But this law is manifested, like all of the other laws of the dialectic, in different ways: in nature, involuntarily; in society and consequently in military affairs, as a tendency and necessarily through the activities of people. The leaps from old to new are also not standardized in terms of time. For the barley grain sown in the soil, the negation comes in the fruiting spikes of the new harvest after several months; while wars, appearing at the dawn of class society, have been blazing for a millenium and still have not died out. But this by no means indicates the eternity of wars, as bourgeois historians and politicians claim. No. They are also subject to the action of this dialectical law of development. And the law of the negation of the negation underscores precisely this thought: both in military theory and in the practical experience of military affairs, one must not absolutize.⁵⁹

As already indicated, the Nikol'skyites believed that war had negated itself primarily because a means of defense against nuclear weapons was impossible. In light of the startling changes Ogarkov made in his 1985 discussion of the means of defense and means of attack, his unprecedented statement in *History*, that war is also subject to the law of self-negation, assumes a potentially large significance. When viewed in the context of these discussions on evolving military technology, his position on the diminishing military utility of nuclear war becomes clear.

War as a Continuation/Instrument of Politics

Owing to Lenin's study of Clausewitz, the Soviets have long discussed war as both a "continuation" and "instrument" of politics. While there is often confusion in the West concerning the relationship

between these concepts, the Russian words are clearly discrete. As Robert Arnett has noted, the Soviets have repeatedly stressed that to view war as a continuation of politics in a nuclear age is not the same as to view it as a practical instrument of policy.⁶⁰ While the two concepts are linked, war as a continuation of politics differs concretely from war as an instrument of politics.

According to Gen.-Maj. A.S. Milovidov, "[c]onfusion is being allowed to occur between two different, though interconnected problems: the question of the social orientation of war and the question of the destructive consequences of nuclear war...."⁶¹ Writing in 1984, Col. A. Dmitriyev explained that the correct approach lies in distinguishing the question about the nature and essence of nuclear war from the question about its possible consequences and effectiveness as an instrument. A world nuclear war would be both a continuation of imperialism's aggressive politics and its instrument. But today one cannot fail to see, stressed Dmitriyev, that "such a war cannot be an effective instrument of aggressive policy. It will not produce the results expected by imperialism's strategists; rather, its consequences will be catastrophic for all people on earth. That is why nuclear war cannot be permitted."⁶²

In a 1984 book entitled *Marrist-Leninist Doctrine on War and the Army*, Gen.-Lt. D. A. Volkogonov cites Lenin as emphasizing that "...war is a reflection of that domestic politics which the given country pursues prior to war.... War is politics throughout; it is a continuation of the pursuit..., by classes, of the same goals by other

means."⁶³ Volkogonov then frames the sacred formulation for the present: "It must be said quite categorically that nuclear-missile war fully retains the general social essence of war within its genetic foundation. It is a continuation of politics by other, violent means."

The record of written evidence supports the primacy of post-Tula thought on the irrationality of nuclear war as an instrument of policy. But war in the nuclear era has also lost its rationality as a continuation of politics in the Leninist sense. K. U. Chernenko was one of the first to note this during a 1981 Lenin Day Address: "Never before have attempts to make use of weaponry to resolve disputes or conflicts carried such a threat to the whole of civilization, or even to life in our world. Hence the indisputable conclusion: it is criminal to look upon nuclear war as a rational, almost legitimate continuation of politics."⁶⁴

Prior to his transfer, Ogarkov appears to have subscribed to the prevailing line on this ideologically sensitive issue. In the 1982 *Always*, he wrote that a war unleashed by imperialism would be a "continuation of their aggressive politics,...."⁶⁵ In his 1984 post-transfer article in *Kommunist of the Armed Forces*, however, Ogarkov decided to cite the Chernenko statement *verbatim*.⁶⁶ He repeats it in the 1985 *History*, but with two differences. First, he does not attribute the statement to Chernenko as he did in 1984. But Ogarkov has also inserted an additional word into the original statement, so that it now reads: "...it is criminal to look upon nuclear war as a rational, almost legitimate *means* of continuing politics."⁶⁷ This may be an

attempt on Ogarkov's part to correct Chernenko, as it brings the statement closer to the more acceptable line: nuclear war has ceased to be a rational instrument or means for achieving political objectives.

And this Ogarkov also states, explicitly for the first time, in both of his post-transfer publications. The passages are almost identical in both the 1984⁶⁸ and 1985⁶⁹ works:

The appearance in 1945 and rapid subsequent development of nuclear weapons, with their unbelievable destructive force, have posed anew the question of the expediency of war as a means of achieving political objectives. [The grim reality of our day is that, in contrast with the past, the very correlation of these most important categories of 'war' and 'politics' has changed.] Only having ultimately lost all reason can one try to find such arguments, and define such an objective, that would justify the unleashing of a world nuclear war, thereby threatening human civilization with its total annihilation.

In light of the change that Ogarkov made in 1985 regarding the Chernenko statement, it is interesting that a similar alteration occurred in the foregoing passage: the sentence bracketed above did not appear in the 1985 *History*.

While Ogarkov did not specifically pronounce on whether or not war was an instrument of policy prior to his transfer, his writings include numerous statements on the diminishing military utility of nuclear weapons. In a 1983 article in *Izvestiya*, he wrote that in the 1950s, nuclear weapons became the decisive means of armed combat. But quantitative changes in the arsenals stockpiled in the world had led to qualitative changes: "that which could be achieved with nuclear weapons 20-30 years ago has become impossible for an aggressor today."⁷⁰ Later

in 1983, he reiterated that about 20 years ago, the United States could to some degree still count on the possibility of a disarming strike on the USSR. Today, however, "this is an illusion pure and simple."⁷¹ The quantitative changes of recent years are changing the qualitative aspect of the phenomenon. In present-day conditions, therefore, "only suicides gamble on a first nuclear strike."

In his *Red Star* interview in May 1984, Ogarkov expanded on the "paradox" of present-day conditions: "On the one hand, it would seem that a process is occurring of steadily increasing the ability of the nuclear powers to destroy an opponent; and on the other hand--just as steadily and, I would say, even more sharply--an aggressor's potential for delivering a so-called 'disarming strike' on his principal opponent is being reduced."⁷² Ogarkov reiterated the "paradox" in his post-transfer writings.⁷³ Moreover, his recurrent discussions on another dialectical law, that of passage from quantitative to qualitative changes, contain further indications of the declining military utility of nuclear weapons.

The Law of Passage From Quantitative to Qualitative Change

In his 1978 *Kommunist* article, Ogarkov noted that in present-day conditions, the rapid quantitative growth of nuclear-missile weapons has led to "a break in previous views on the methods of conducting engagements, operations, and armed combat in general." He connects this "break" with the creation of the strategic nuclear forces, which for the first time in the entire history of wars permits the strategic

leadership to "immediately deliver a powerful retaliatory strike on an aggressor in any area of the world."⁷⁴

The 1982 *Always* essentially repeats the 1978 discussion, although the impact of nuclear weapons on military theory and practice is perceived as more pervasive. In the mid-50s, he writes, when nuclear weapons were few and their primary delivery vehicles were aircraft, they were viewed only as a means of sharply increasing the firepower of troops. The new weapons were therefore adapted to existing forms and methods of military action (above all strategic), and the troops retained their leading role in the accomplishment of combat tasks directly on the field of battle. The rapid quantitative growth of nuclear weapons and creation of intercontinental delivery means led subsequently to "a fundamental reassessment of the role of these weapons, to a break in previous views on the...importance of each branch of the Armed Forces in war, and on the methods for conducting engagements, operations, and war in general."⁷⁵

In his 1985 *History*, Ogarkov introduces a periodization for nuclear weapons development that differs significantly not only from its predecessor, but also from prevailing Soviet practice. The period 1945-1953 is traditionally viewed as the period during which the Soviet Union modernized its military technology and methods of conducting strategic action in light of the U.S. possession of nuclear weapons. The period after 1954 is associated with the incorporation of nuclear weapons and missiles into the Soviet Armed Forces, and with the appearance of new branches of the Armed Forces and troop-arms.⁷⁶

But in 1985, Ogarkov writes that "throughout the 1950s and 1960s," nuclear weapons were few and viewed only as a means of supplementing the firepower of troops. Here it should be recalled that the 1960s belonged to Sokolovskiy. "In the 1970s and 1980s," however, the rapid quantitative growth of nuclear weapons and the development of long-range, precision delivery means had led to "a fundamental reassessment of the role of these weapons, and to a break in previous views on their place and importance in war, on the methods of conducting engagements and operations, *and even on the possibility of waging war at all with the use of nuclear weapons.*"⁷⁷ Soviet military thought has perhaps not offered a stronger statement on the diminishing military utility of nuclear weapons.

Limited Nuclear War

In Soviet military thought, one of the "specific features" of a future war is its escalation potential. Since L. I. Brezhnev's address at the 26th Party Congress in early 1981, Soviet political and military elites have consistently stressed the impossibility of keeping a nuclear war limited.⁷⁸ Raymond Garthoff has explained that

[a]part from probably reflecting a genuine Soviet concern over escalation, this authoritative public declaratory stance clearly has been directed at dissuading U.S. leaders from contemplating limited nuclear warfare as an option, rather than at pursuing such an option themselves. The Soviet leaders have been quite prepared to forego the option of threatening a Eurostrategic war as a price for reducing Western interest in such an option.⁷⁹

Among Soviet military men, Marshal Ogarkov has used some of the strongest language possible to express the inadmissibility of a limited nuclear war. In his 1982 *Always*, he discussed the Pentagon's plans to wage a limited nuclear war in Europe: "One can, of course, reason theoretically in this manner. But any sober-minded person can understand, without any particular difficulty, that to realize this in practice--that is, to confine nuclear war within some kind of limited framework--is impossible."⁸⁰ Ogarkov then cites Brezhnev to the effect that no matter where a nuclear war breaks out, "it would inevitably and inescapably assume a worldwide character."⁸¹ In his 1982 article in *Izvestiya*, Ogarkov repeated that "to confine nuclear war within some kind of limited framework in fantasy in practice."⁸²

Ogarkov used a variation of the "impossible in practice" formula in his May 1983 article in *Izvestiya*: If the imperialists succeed in unleashing a new war, "it will be impossible to confine military action within some kind of limited framework,.... The war would inevitably encompass the entire territories of the the belligerent states, and it would be difficult to distinguish the front from the rear."⁸³ His 1985 *History* reiterates that "once begun, it is impossible in practice to confine a nuclear war within some kind of limited framework."⁸⁴

Throughout his writings, Ogarkov has also relied on other formulas to depict the impossibility of keeping a nuclear war limited. In his 1984 *Red Star* article, he insisted that the calculation of the transatlantic strategists on the possibility of waging a so-called limited nuclear war "now has no basis whatsoever. It is fantasy: any

so-called limited use of nuclear means will lead inevitably to the immediate use of the entire nuclear arsenal of the sides. Such is the grim logic of war."⁸⁵ The last formula was repeated in both of Ogarkov's post-transfer publications.⁸⁶ In the 1985 *History*, Ogarkov added some further fine-tuning: "As for the hopes of the transatlantic strategists for waging a limited nuclear war, they now have no basis whatsoever, and are intended for simpletons.... However limited the use of nuclear means, it will inevitably lead to the immediate use of the entire arsenal of the sides."⁸⁷

In contrast to his strong language regarding the escalation potential of limited nuclear war, Ogarkov has consistently depicted conventional war as more stable. In his 1979 encyclopedia entry, he advised that "Soviet military strategy assumes that a world war may be started and conducted for a certain period of time with conventional weapons alone. But the expansion of military action could lead to its escalation to a general nuclear war, waged primarily with strategic nuclear weapons."⁸⁸ Compared with "impossible" to limit and "inevitable" use of the entire nuclear arsenal, the verbiage applied to the escalation potential of conventional warfare is bland indeed: "could" lead to escalation implies that it also might not. The 1985 *History* reiterates his position: a war begun with the use of conventional weapons "could escalate" to a war with the use of nuclear weapons.⁸⁹

In 1985, Ogarkov wrote that in the opinion of the Pentagon, the possession by the United States of powerful strategic nuclear forces, as

well as the creation of the so-called Eurostrategic nuclear forces, allegedly enhance its potential for achieving political and military objectives in a limited nuclear war in the European theater of war without its escalating into a world war: "Hoping for this is of course sheer fantasy," he declared. *"Any attempt to put nuclear weapons into action will inevitably end in a catastrophe that can call into question the fate of life itself on the whole earth."*⁹⁰

In his 1983 book, Marshal Ustinov wrote unequivocally that "[t]here can be no kind of 'limited' nuclear war at all."⁹¹ From the very outset, he continued, such a war would cause untold destruction and would, moreover, "inevitably and ineluctably assume a world-wide character." Thus the calculations of those who hope to limit a nuclear conflagration to the European continent "are not so much cynical as illusory." In his answers to a TASS correspondent in 1984, Ustinov insisted that a nuclear attack on the USSR and its allies "will ineluctably lead to a swift and inevitable retaliatory strike on both the territory where the missiles are located, and the territories from which the commands for their use are issued. There must be no doubt about this."⁹²

In May 1983, Marshal Akhromeyev asserted that "a so-called limited war is impossible. If it breaks out, it will be a general war, with all of the ensuing consequences."⁹³ Later in 1983 his message was even more explicit. He warned that in present-day conditions, given the possession by both sides of many thousands of nuclear warheads, "a limited war is impossible. If a nuclear war breaks out, it will

inevitably become a general war...."⁹⁴ Writing in *Izvestiya* in 1985, he stated unequivocally that in present-day conditions, military conflicts cannot be limited by territory. It will be impossible to direct the conflagration of a war into a narrow channel. "And this applies especially to nuclear war," he stressed. "If the imperialists unleash it, it will inevitably assume a general and global character."⁹⁵

Writing in *Red Star* in early 1984, however, Marshal Kulikov made a statement that could be interpreted as unorthodox for the post-1981 period. As already indicated, Soviet doctrine since 1981 has held that it is impossible to keep a nuclear war limited. Among others, Ogarkov has continued to contrast the stability of conventional conflict with the innate instability of nuclear warfare. But in February 1984 Kulikov wrote that "with whatever means a new world war begins, it will inevitably end in a nuclear catastrophe."⁹⁶ While Kulikov reprinted his article in the June 1984 issue of *Soviet Military Review* (Russian version), neither he nor others have since echoed this anomalous statement.⁹⁷

Having downgraded the military utility of nuclear weapons in the face of M.A.D., Ogarkov then consistently describes limited nuclear options as impossible in practice, and leading inevitably to "a catastrophe that can call into question the fate of life itself on the whole earth."⁹⁸ How then does the former Chief of the Soviet General Staff propose to fight a future war?

The Conventional High-Tech Option

A growing body of evidence indicates that in 1977, coincidentally with Tula and Ogarkov's elevation to Chief of the General Staff, the Soviets adopted an independent conventional war option as a long-term development goal. One form of evidence comes from Soviet writers themselves, who often exploit "U.S. doctrine" as a foil for present and projected Soviet doctrine.⁹⁹ According to Marshal Ogarkov, U.S. plans for a future war have included both nuclear and conventional scenarios. In a 1981 article in *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, he charged that international imperialism was "counting primarily on the use of nuclear weapons."¹⁰⁰ In his 1982 *Always*, he again held that the imperialist circles count primarily in modern war "on nuclear-missile weapons with their various modifications, including neutron weapons."¹⁰¹

Nevertheless, Ogarkov has consistently depicted the United States as moving towards a greater reliance on conventional options, especially in terms of the duration and scope of future combat action. In 1979, he wrote that the United States entertained the possibility of protracted military action with the use of only conventional weapons.¹⁰² But in the 1982 *Always*, he pointed to a U.S. capability for waging a war with the use of only conventional weapons not only in Europe, but also "in the Near, Middle, and Far East, and all sea and ocean theaters of military action."¹⁰³ In the 1985 *History*, Ogarkov repeated this scenario *verbatim*.¹⁰⁴ He also introduced a new U.S. capability to wage a *protracted* conventional war in any area of the world that posed a threat to its vital interests.¹⁰⁵ The 1985 *History* is significant

because, for the first time since 1979, Ogarkov's description of U.S. doctrine does not include the recurrent charge that the United States is relying primarily on nuclear weapons in their various modifications.

Marshals Ustinov and Kulikov have explicitly echoed Ogarkov's perception of an increasing U.S. reliance on conventional weapons and options. Writing in *Red Star* in 1981, Ustinov accused the United States of formulating a new military strategy for conducting "a protracted, non-nuclear conflict with the socialist countries."¹⁰⁶ One month later, he alleged that the United States was prepared to simultaneously conduct "two large, protracted, 'non-nuclear wars', in Europe and the Near East, and to participate in small conflicts in any other area of the globe."¹⁰⁷ In his 1982 book, Ustinov wrote that "...Washington envisages the possibility of a 'protracted conventional war' in various areas of the world."¹⁰⁸ Marshal Kulikov wrote in his 1981 book that the Pentagon's new military strategy required that the United States be prepared to simultaneously fight "two large, protracted 'non-nuclear wars', in Europe and the Near East, and also to participate in small conflicts in any other area of the globe."¹⁰⁹ Writing in *Red Star* in February 1984, Kulikov asserted that the United States was developing plans "to fight a war in Europe with the use of only conventional means of destruction."¹¹⁰ In the same article, however, Kulikov made his unorthodox statement that "with whatever means a new world war begins, it will inevitably end in a nuclear catastrophe."

Emerging Technologies

Another form of evidence for the Soviet conventional option comes from their doctrinal discussions on the "specific features" of a future war, one of which is the type of weaponry that will be employed. As noted earlier, General William Odom's "third revolution" in Soviet military affairs involves changes in Soviet doctrine generated by the so-called emerging technologies and by the trend toward new, non-nuclear weapons. The present review of Ogarkov's writings indicates that since 1971, the former Chief of the General Staff has been actively lobbying for a timely incorporation of the latest technology into Soviet military theory and practice. In his 1971 article in *Red Star*, Ogarkov was already noting that "the fundamentally new types of weapons and combat technology, combined with certain other means, have now become the decisive means for conducting armed combat."¹¹¹ After specifying both nuclear-missile weapons and other new combat technology, Ogarkov stressed "how important it is to notice in good time the shoots of what is new,...and to persistently introduce them into the practice of military affairs."

In his 1981 *Kommunist* article, Ogarkov contended that "[m]ilitary art has no right to lag behind the combat potential of the means of armed combat, particularly at the present stage when, on the basis of scientific-technical progress, the main weapons systems change practically every 10-12 years."¹¹² His 1982 *Pravda* article urges "timely introduction of the necessary corrective measures into the accepted methods and forms of combat action."¹¹³ In 1983 Ogarkov stressed that

"[i]nertia of thought, and a stubborn, mechanical, unthinking attachment to the old ways are dangerous in present-day conditions."¹¹⁴ Later in 1983 he reiterated that the emergence of "new means of armed combat requires the improvement of existing forms of combat action...", and that "bold experiments and solutions are necessary, even if this means discarding obsolete traditions, views, and propositions."¹¹⁵

In his 1984 *Red Star* interview, Ogarkov cited Chernenko on the need to "overcome all conservatism and stagnation,"¹¹⁶ and the 1985 *History* continues this theme. In the matter of modernizing military theory and practice, he writes, "stagnation and a delayed re-structuring of views...are fraught with the most severe consequences."¹¹⁷ The opinion is apparently widespread that Ogarkov was demoted precisely because of his call for new technology. The present study reveals no evidence of a dispute on this issue within the Soviet military.

While the top military leaders have not focused as consistently as Ogarkov on the need to incorporate new technology, there is evidence that Ustinov, Akhromeyev, Gorshkov, and Chernavin share his perspective. In his 1982 book, Ustinov emphasized "the qualitative changes occurring in...military affairs as a whole."¹¹⁸ The rapid development of science and technology was creating new tasks in the technical equipping of the army and navy. This condition in turn required the development of new forms and methods of combat action, the continual improvement of the organizational structure and system for preparing the Armed Forces, and the development of military-scientific thought. Much has already been accomplished in this sphere, he assured his readers, but even more

remains to be done: modern war requires not only available, but also projected military technology.¹¹⁹ Ustinov stressed further that "serious qualitative changes are also occurring in tactics."¹²⁰

In early 1984, Marshal Akhromeyev published an article in the *Military-historical Journal* that included the following, Ogarkov-like statement: "We must remember that changes in the nature of war are now occurring even more quickly, which means that our reaction to these changes, to the requirements of Soviet military art, and to the development of the Armed Forces must be more effective."¹²¹ In May of 1985, he continued the theme when he stressed the importance of avoiding "a gap between the new theoretical premises of Soviet military art, and the practical preparation of troops, naval forces, and military cadres."¹²² Writing in 1980, Fleet Admiral Gorshkov admitted in the *Naval Digest* that the introduction of new weapons and technology had always caused many technical and organizational problems. He noted that the greatest difficulty had been, and would continue to be, overcoming what he termed "the psychological barrier."¹²³ As early as 1979, Admiral V. N. Chernavin articulated one of his recurrent themes: doctrinal tenets would become obsolete and thereby impede progress if the latest technical advances were ignored."¹²⁴

In June 1983, Ustinov and Ogarkov appeared to support divergent positions at a party-military conference on combat readiness and training. On the one hand, Ustinov warned that "strict objectivity" must be maintained above all in the sphere of research work. In this regard the condemned "strained interpretations and haste" when

implementing views that had not been sufficiently debated and tested in practice.¹²⁵ Ogarkov, on the other hand, stressed the need to uproot the "bureaucratism and seniority"¹²⁶ that operated against the further improvement of combat readiness and training. Marshal Petrov then reiterated the Ogarkov position.

Throughout his writings, Ogarkov has emphasized the latest gains of science and technology, and has focused specifically on the new conventional means as well as weapons based on new physical principles. His references to the latter date from at least 1978, when he advised that aggressive Western circles were intensively developing weapons based on new physical principles.¹²⁷ In his 1979 encyclopedia entry, he criticized the West for developing combat means based on new physical principles.¹²⁸ In 1983 he stated that the United States "is creating space strike systems for military purposes and weapons complexes based on new physical principles."¹²⁹

In a 1983 article in *Red Star*, Ogarkov indicated that weapons based on new physical principles can be used in non-nuclear wars: "the present level of science and technology is facilitating the creation of means of armed combat that are capable even in a non-nuclear war of rapidly destroying all life over enormous areas, especially when one considers the types of weapons based on new physical principles that the future clearly holds."¹³⁰ In the May 1984 article in *Red Star*, he advised that the appearance of weapons based on new physical principles cannot help but change established notions of the methods and forms of armed combat, "and even of a state's armed might."¹³¹ Ogarkov is

perhaps unique in consistently numbering these weapons among the new high-tech means earmarked for a conventional land war. But in this article, Ogarkov for the first time placed these weapons in a category separate from the new conventional means, and referred to "the appearance in the near future of even more destructive, earlier unknown types of weapons,...." Their creation is a reality "of the near future," he stressed, "and not to reckon with this right now would be a serious mistake." In the 1985 *History* he again refers to the U.S. development of weapons of mass destruction based on new physical principles.¹³²

While no member of the top military leadership has discussed the more exotic of the new technologies with the consistency of Ogarkov, several have referred to either laser weapons or weapons based on new physical principles. In 1983, Marshal Ustinov pointed to laser and beam weapons in the plans of U.S. strategists.¹³³ In his 1985 *Kommunist* article, Marshal Sokolov referred to U.S. research "connected with the development of arms based on new physical principles."¹³⁴ Later in 1985, Sokolov pointed to anti-missile means "based on other physical principles (lasers, directed-energy beams, and so on)."¹³⁵

In his recent *Pravda* article on "Star Wars," Marshal Akhromeyev equated the anti-missile defense weapons based on other physical principles with land- and space-based laser, beam, and other types of weapons.¹³⁶ Marshal Kulikov referred to the U.S. development of laser weapons in a 1984 article in *Izvestiya*,¹³⁷ and again in a 1985 article.¹³⁸ Writing in late 1985, Marshal Petrov listed the following

types of "space strike arms": anti-missile, anti-satellite, or other means based on traditional or other physical principles.¹³⁹

Marshal Tolubko noted the U.S. development of laser weapons as early as 1977,¹⁴⁰ and in 1983 pointed to a "third generation" of weapons, the first being atomic and the second being hydrogen.¹⁴¹

General of the Army Shabanov likewise mentioned the U.S. development of laser weapons in a *Red Star* article in 1981.¹⁴² In his much-publicized *Pravda* article of 16 January 1986, M.S. Gorbachev referred to "non-nuclear arms based on new physical principles, which approximate nuclear or other mass-destruction means in their destructive capabilities."¹⁴³ This is the same formula used by Ogarkov and others to describe the new high-tech means earmarked for a conventional land war.

Throughout his writings, Ogarkov has focused increasingly on the new conventional means. In 1978, he stressed that scientific-technical progress had accelerated the improvement of conventional, classical means of combat, and had "sharply increased their combat capabilities."¹⁴⁴ In an *Izvestiya* article in 1983, he explained that existing strategic as well as operational and tactical means of armed combat were being improved, and new ones created on the basis of the latest achievements of electronics and other technical sciences. In this context, he went on to state that improved automated systems of command and control, and "highly effective new conventional means of armed combat are being developed and introduced."¹⁴⁵

In a 1983 article in *Red Star*, Ogarkov equated the new conventional means of warfare with "precision weapons, reconnaissance-strike

complexes, and weapons based on new physical principles."¹⁴⁶ In his 1984 interview in *Red Star*, Ogarkov maintained that "the development of conventional means of destruction...is making many kinds of weapons global," and causing a sharp increase "in the destructive potential of conventional weapons, making them almost as effective as weapons of mass destruction."¹⁴⁷ His 1985 *History* continues this theme. The United States, he says, is conducting wide-scale research into making "conventional weapons approach nuclear in terms of their combat characteristics and effectiveness."¹⁴⁸

Over the years, several top Soviet military leaders have also referred to the new conventional means being developed by the West. In a 1983 *Pravda* article, Marshal Ustinov noted that the United States was creating "new conventional weapons systems: reconnaissance-strike complexes with great precision and range."¹⁴⁹ Writing in *Kommunist* in 1985, Defense Minister Sokolov stated that "[t]he United States intends to sharply increase the effectiveness of conventional means of destruction in the upcoming years. An intensive development and equipping of the armed forces with automated, precision weapons systems is being conducted to this end."¹⁵⁰ In a 1985 *Red Star* article, Marshal Akhromeyev noted that "the United States is proceeding with work to develop new precision, conventional arms."¹⁵¹

In order to achieve superiority over the USSR in the sphere of conventional arms, wrote Marshal Kulikov in 1984, NATO is systematically equipping its troops with "a new generation of conventional weapons, and above all long-range precision weapons, modern means of air defense and

radioelectronic combat, and projected command-and-control and communications systems."¹⁵² In a 1985 article, he stated that the fraternal countries of the Warsaw Pact were devoting great attention to developing new methods of combat action for conditions in which the opponent used nuclear weapons and "new precision, conventional weapons systems (reconnaissance-strike complexes,...etc.), new means of intelligence and radioelectronic combat, and automated command-and-control systems for weapons and troops."¹⁵³

Writing in 1984 in *Kommunist of the Armed Forces*, Marshal Petrov also charged that the United States and NATO were developing "a new generation of conventional weapons at a rapid pace."¹⁵⁴ The imperialists were equipping their armies with precision weapons systems, including long-range reconnaissance-strike complexes, and new means of command-and-control, air defense, and radioelectronic combat. As a result, he continued, "the criteria for effectiveness of combat means are changing. Taking this into account, the command of the U.S. armed forces is developing new concepts for the conduct of war. And we must not ignore all of this in the training of our troops." In a 1985 article in the *Military-historical Journal*, Petrov again referred to the U.S. development of "long-range precision weapons and qualitatively new electronic systems for increasing the destructive capabilities of conventional weapons."¹⁵⁵ Writing in the *Naval Digest* in 1985, Admiral Gorshkov noted that local wars have demonstrated that the element of surprise could be achieved by a number of factors, including "the use of precision conventional weapons with great destructive force."¹⁵⁶

In his 1983 *Izvestiya* article, Ogarkov referred to the new, highly effective conventional means of armed combat,¹⁵⁷ and expanded on this theme in his May 1984 article in *Red Star*.¹⁵⁸ The rapid changes in the development of conventional weapons, he stressed, were making many weapons global and almost as effective as weapons of mass destruction. The ever-expanding range of conventional means was facilitating the immediate involvement of an entire country in combat action, a phenomenon not possible in past wars. As a result, the zones of possible combat action were sharply expanding, as were the role and importance of the war's "initial period" and its first operations. Ogarkov continued the theme in his 1985 book when he wrote that conventional weapons are approaching nuclear "in terms of their combat characteristics and effectiveness."¹⁵⁹

Ogarkov has not been alone among Soviet military writers in extolling the qualitatively improved combat capabilities of conventional weapons. Writing in *Red Star* in early 1984, Marshal Kulikov asserted that "these new conventional means approximate tactical nuclear weapons in their destructive force."¹⁶⁰ But later in 1984, he clearly echoed Ogarkov when he asserted that "conventional weapons approximate [unspecified] nuclear weapons in their effectiveness and combat use."¹⁶¹ Marshal Petrov argued in 1983 that the new conventional means can accomplish certain tasks that were previously performed "only by [unspecified] nuclear arms."¹⁶²

As early as 1980, General-Major V. Makarevskiy asserted that the new conventional means could be used to accomplish "many combat tasks

which, until recently, were entrusted only to tactical nuclear weapons."¹⁶³ Among others, General-Major R. Simonyan stressed that the new conventional means can accomplish certain tasks that were previously performed "only by [unspecified] nuclear arms."¹⁶⁴ Col. Semeyko wrote in 1984 that the destructive capacity of conventional weapons "is already frequently comparable to the potential of [unspecified] nuclear weapons."¹⁶⁵

Marshal Ogarkov has consistently rounded out his discussions of new weaponry by stressing its revolutionary impact on military theory and practice. As early as 1977, he wrote that incorporation of the latest weapons and technology by the troops and naval forces "invariably entails changes in military art: in strategy, operational art and tactics, and the forms and methods of combat action."¹⁶⁶ This theme has remained consistent in his writings.¹⁶⁷ Ogarkov has been careful throughout to stress that the fundamental changes occurring in military theory and practice are the result of two phenomena, the creation of nuclear weapons and "the upgrading of other types of weapons and technology,...."¹⁶⁸ He also takes pains to indicate that these changes "are occurring at the present time in the means of armed combat."¹⁶⁹ Finally, Ogarkov has long focused a special attention on "developing methods of combat action under conditions where the opponent uses precision combat complexes, new means of reconnaissance and radioelectronic combat, and automated systems of guiding weapons and commanding troops."¹⁷⁰

Ogarkov has also resurrected the influence of the "initial period" and linked it directly with the new conventional means. In 1983, he stressed the need to analyze and take into account "the new means and methods of armed combat that might be used by the aggressor."¹⁷¹ He advised that the methods of accomplishing tasks could be different, especially at the beginning of the war, and that this was the source of "[t]he special role and importance of the war's initial period...." The operations of the war's initial period, he emphasized, "can be of decisive importance, as the experience of local [conventional] wars shows." In his 1984 interview in *Red Star*, Ogarkov explained that the qualitative leap in the development of conventional weapons was creating the possibility of conducting combat action with these means in qualitatively new ways: "As a result,...the role and importance of the war's initial period and its first operations are growing incomparably."¹⁷² While the influence of nuclear weapons has progressively diminished, use of the new conventional means would imbue the initial period with an influence similar to that which it once exerted in the late-60s context of massive nuclear strikes. In the context of conventional weapons use, the initial period of the war has rarely if ever been described as decisive in Soviet military thought. The significance of this particular theme becomes clear in his 1985 discussion of the modern theater operations, as the following section will demonstrate.

The Modern Theater Operation

In his 1981 article in *Kommunist*, Marshal Ogarkov introduced the basic form of military action in the present. After explaining that the front operation had served as the basic form of military action in World War II, he advised that now the situation was different:

The command of fronts has acquired means of destruction (missiles, missile-armed aviation, and other things), whose combat potential significantly exceeds the framework of front operations. Troop maneuverability has grown sharply, and the methods for accomplishing many strategic and operational tasks by tactical and operational formations of branches of the armed forces have changed. As a result, the old forms for employing tactical and operational formations have in many respects already ceased to correspond to the new conditions. Because of this, it is necessary to view the basic operation of a possible future war as apparently no longer the front operation, but a form of military action on a wider scale: the strategic operation in a theater of military action.¹⁷³

In 1981, the means of destruction at the disposal of the command of fronts have a combat potential that exceeds the framework of front operations. They are nonetheless not characterized as being nuclear, which indicates that the command of fronts would direct a conventional strategic operation in a theater of military action (TVD).

This is borne out by Ogarkov's expanded discussion in the 1982 *Always*.¹⁷⁴ The 1981 passage is retained intact, but several new features are revealed. First, the combat capabilities of troops have been improved. Ogarkov adds troop mobility to maneuverability, and states that the periods for concentrating strike groupings have been reduced.

Second, Ogarkov adds the following element to the 1981 discussion: "And with the creation of the strategic nuclear forces, the supreme military leadership has acquired a potential for substantially influencing the attainment of the war's strategic and military-policy objectives." The supreme military leadership will apparently direct a nuclear strategic operation in a TVD. Finally, Ogarkov informs us that in the course of a future war, "two or more front operations can be conducted by each front (fleet), with or even without short pauses between them."

In light of his own descriptions, it is likely that Ogarkov's command of fronts is the new theater high command that was discussed in the latter half of the 1970s, and that it would direct a conventional operation in a TVD. In 1982 he states clearly that the strategic nuclear forces are under the control of the supreme military leadership. The overall implication is that both the conventional and the nuclear strategic operation in a TVD were then the basic forms of military action in the present.

A comparison of Ogarkov's 1979 entry in the *Soviet Military Encyclopedia* with an anonymous entry in the 1983 *Military Encyclopedic Dictionary* (edited by Ogarkov) seems to confirm this hypothesis:¹⁷⁵

1979: "...the war will comprise an integrated system of interconnected...*strategic operations, including operations in a continental TVD....* The following can be carried out in the framework of a strategic operation in a continental TVD: ...*the delivery of nuclear-missile and*

air strikes as well. Other types of strategic operations can also be carried out...."176

1983: "...the war can comprise an integrated system of interconnected strategic operations, including operations in continental and ocean TVDs.... ...IN THE CONTEXT OF BOTH CONVENTIONAL AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS USE...."177

As indicated above, the 1983 entry clearly mentions both conventional and nuclear strategic operations in a TVD. Moreover, while Ogarkov in 1979 had stressed the strategic operation in a continental TVD, but added that other types of strategic operations could be conducted, the 1983 entry specified strategic operations in both continental and ocean TVDs, but avoided even mentioning other types of strategic operations.

But in the 1985 *History*, Ogarkov's description of the basic form of military action in the present contains certain features that clearly distinguish it from its predecessors, as shown by the comparison on the following page. As already indicated, Ogarkov's 1982 version of the strategic operation in a TVD included the following statement: "And with the creation of the strategic nuclear forces, the supreme military leadership has acquired a potential for substantially influencing the attainment of the war's strategic and military-policy objectives."181

At the present time there can be at the disposal of a command of fronts means of destruction (missile-armed aviation, aviation with a great radius of action, and other things), the combat potential of which already significantly exceeds the framework of front operations. Troop mobility and maneuverability have grown sharply; the periods for concentrating strike groupings have been reduced; the conditions and methods for accomplishing operational and strategic tasks by tactical and operational formations of the branches of the armed forces have changed. And with the creation of the strategic nuclear forces, the supreme military leadership has acquired a potential for substantially influencing the attainment of the war's strategic and military-policy objectives. As a result, the old forms for employing tactical and operational formations of branches of the armed forces have in many respects already ceased to correspond to present-day conditions.

Because of this, it is necessary to view the basic operation of a modern war as apparently no longer the front operation, but a form of military action on a greater scale: the strategic operation in a theater of military action. In the course of such an operation, two or more front operations can be conducted successively, with or even without short pauses between them, by each front (fleet).¹⁷⁸

At present, the combat capabilities of troops, aviation, and the fleet, the long range of their weapons, and their maneuverability have grown sharply. The periods for concentrating strike groupings and replenishing materiel have been reduced, and the conditions and methods for accomplishing operational and strategic tasks by the tactical and operational formations of branches of the armed forces have changed. Given this,¹⁷⁹ the supreme military leadership has acquired a potential for directly and decisively influencing the course and outcome of a war. As a result, the old forms for employing tactical and operational formations have in many respects already ceased to correspond to present-day conditions. Because of this, it is necessary to view the basic operation as apparently no longer the front operation, and not even an operation by a group of fronts, but a form of military action on a more modern, improved, and greater scale: the operation in a theater of military action. In the course of such an operation, two or more front (fleet) operations can be conducted successively by each front (fleet), with or even without short pauses between them.¹⁸⁰

In the last half of the 1960s, nuclear weapons were said to "directly and decisively" influence both the course and the outcome of a war. Substantial influence on the achievement of the war's objectives is clearly a come-down from direct and decisive influence on both the course and ultimate outcome of a war.

But in 1985, the analogous statement reads as follows: "*Given this*, the supreme military leadership has acquired a potential for directly and decisively influencing the course and outcome of the war."¹⁸² Several points regarding Ogarkov's unprecedented usage of the course-and-outcome formula should here be noted. First, Ogarkov stated in his 1982 *Always* that it was with the creation of the strategic nuclear forces that the supreme military leadership had acquired its potential for substantially influencing the achievement of the war's objectives. But in 1985, the strategic nuclear forces have been removed, and yet the supreme military leadership's influence has escalated to that of "directly and decisively influencing the course and outcome of the war." The 1982 *Always* told us that the supreme military leadership would direct a nuclear strategic operation in a TVD. But what kind of operation does it direct now that the strategic nuclear forces have been excised?

From the 1985 passage, we learn that the supreme military leadership will direct an operation on "a more modern, improved, and greater scale" than either the front operation or the operation by a group of fronts. But the type of weaponry at its disposal remains ambiguous. The only visible antecedents to "*Given this*" (the supreme

military leadership has acquired a potential, etc.) are the improved combat capabilities of troops armed with long-range weapons. But in the past, the formula of direct and decisive influence on the course and outcome of a war was reserved for only the "permanently operating factors" of pre-nuclear warfare, and massive nuclear strikes in the 1960s. The antecedents to "Given this" are not the "permanently operating factors." Do the strategic nuclear forces therefore still play a role?

"Strategic Nuclear Forces"

In his landmark 1981 *Kommunist* article, Ogarkov formally introduced an innovation in the rank ordering of the branches of the Soviet Armed Forces: "The first element of the combat might of the Soviet Armed Forces is the strategic nuclear forces, which serve as the basic factor for deterring the aggressor, and have the capability to immediately deliver an annihilating retaliatory strike if strategic nuclear weapons are used against the Soviet Union and the other countries of the socialist community."¹⁸³

In a 1983 article in *Red Star*, Ogarkov described the components of the strategic nuclear forces as follows: "Our strategic nuclear forces...consist of tactical and operational formations of the Strategic Missile Troops, the Navy, and the Air Force."¹⁸⁴ Ogarkov has subsequently repeated these formulas,¹⁸⁵ and has also attributed the possession of strategic nuclear forces to the U.S.¹⁸⁶ In *History* he not only refers to the strategic nuclear forces of the U.S. but also

introduces a Russian acronym for these forces: "S.Ya.S."¹⁸⁷ At the very least, one could infer from this that the strategic nuclear forces will be around on a regular basis. It should be noted, however, that this appellation is never followed by the words "of the Armed Forces," the standard Soviet formula for designating a branch of the Soviet Armed Forces.

Of the top military leadership, only Sokolov and Shabanov have echoed Ogarkov's innovation. Writing in *Izvestiya* in 1983¹⁸⁸ and *Red Star* in 1984,¹⁸⁹ Sokolov likewise displaced the Strategic Missile Troops by the strategic nuclear forces. Shabanov reiterated that lineup in an article in *Ekonomicheskaya gazeta* in early 1985,¹⁹⁰ and echoed Ogarkov's use of an acronym in a later *Izvestiya* article.¹⁹¹

It should also be noted that in his 1982 *Always*, Ogarkov made a statement unprecedented for Soviet military thought: the Ground Troops "are, in essence, the basic branch of our Armed Forces."¹⁹² Then-General Petrov was the only member of the top military leadership to repeat this statement.¹⁹³ But in a 1982 article in *Red Star*, General of the Army Yepishev placed the Ground Troops before the Strategic Missile Troops, thus upsetting the accepted rank ordering of the branches.¹⁹⁴

In his 1979 entry on the "strategic operation" in the *Soviet Military Encyclopedia* (edited by Ogarkov), M. I. Cherednichenko wrote that "in the context of nuclear weapons use," a strategic operation "requires" the strategic nuclear forces.¹⁹⁵ But in 1985 Ogarkov has removed them from the basic form of military action in the present (and removed the word "strategic" from "strategic operation in a TVD"). It

is possible that the new role of the strategic nuclear forces may be found in an option that Ogarkov has attributed to U.S. doctrine in 1985: "...the U.S. is developing its strategic nuclear forces (S.Ya.S.) to the maximum for waging a general nuclear war, and for achieving the war's basic objectives by waging (at least in its first stage) a so-called 'limited' nuclear war in Europe, *using its S.Ya.S. only as a potential threat.*"¹⁹⁶ This is the first time that Ogarkov has not only specifically assigned the role of intra-war deterrence ("potential threat") to the strategic nuclear forces, but also stated that this was their only role.

Ogarkov wrote in his 1982 *Always* that even with the full magnitude of the strategic nuclear forces at its disposal, the supreme military leadership had acquired only "a potential for substantially influencing the achievement of the war's strategic and military-policy objectives."¹⁹⁷ If the full magnitude of the strategic nuclear forces could only substantially influence the achievement of the war's objectives, can the strategic nuclear forces used only as a "potential threat" give the supreme military leadership the potential for "directly and decisively influencing the course and outcome of a war"?¹⁹⁸ An intra-war deterrent could perhaps exert a decisive influence on the outcome of a war, but it is difficult to imagine how its influence could be either direct or applicable to the course of a war. One would logically look to the weapons actually being employed for a direct influence on the course of a war.

The present review of Ogarkov's writings reveals that he has been progressively moving in the direction of the cryptic 1985 formula. As already indicated, Ogarkov downgraded the influence of the strategic nuclear forces in 1982 when he stated that with their creation, "the supreme military leadership acquired a potential for influencing the attainment of the war's strategic and military-policy objectives."¹⁹⁹ But in the same book he did use the course-and-outcome formula without clarifying whether or not the weapons under discussion are nuclear. First, he asserts that the scientific-technical revolution is exerting an ever-growing influence on the development of military affairs, and on the designing of new methods and forms of conducting combat actions. Second, the pace of development of military technology and weaponry is accelerating, which in turn affects the pace of development of military affairs as a whole. Third, "the importance of strategic means of waging war, which are now capable of *directly influencing its course and outcome*, is growing, and so is the importance of operational-strategic organs of command and control."²⁰⁰ [NOTE: Operational-strategic organs of command and control would not have strategic nuclear means at their disposal.] If these "strategic means" are indeed non-nuclear, then to what is Ogarkov referring?

Ogarkov has not mentioned nuclear weapons in the arms inventories of the other branches since his 1981 introduction of the strategic nuclear forces as the "first element" of the USSR's combat might, a practice not generally followed by all Soviet writers. While this is also true of his 1983 article in *Red Star*, Ogarkov here directs special

attention to the new types of precision [conventional] weapons and microcircuitry with which the other branches are increasingly being equipped.²⁰¹ Again in 1983 he writes that "the creation of non-nuclear means of armed combat with great destructive force...is sharply changing the nature of war, the methods of unleashing it, and its possible consequences."²⁰² Could the new, precision, non-nuclear means have the potential for directly influencing the course and outcome of the war? In light of his recurrent discussions of the significantly qualitative improvements in range, destructiveness, and effectiveness of the new conventional means, Ogarkov may well be saying that conventional weapons outfitted with smart technology are capable of exerting a direct and even decisive influence on the course and outcome of a future war.

According to Ogarkov, the basic form of military action in the present now appears to be an exclusively conventional theater operation, with the strategic nuclear forces used only as an intra-war deterrent. As *Red Star* put it in 1984: "Modern conceptions of a non-nuclear war envisage reconciling the attainment of strategic results using conventional weapons with the readiness to repel a nuclear attack."²⁰³ Ogarkov may in fact be projecting an independent kind of warfare, conducted in continental and maritime theaters that do not include the territories of the superpowers.

Strategic Wartime Leadership

As indicated above, both the 1981 and 1982 versions of Ogarkov's strategic operation in a TVD included a command of fronts, which had at

its disposal a diverse arsenal of long-range means whose combat potential "exceeded the framework of a front operation."²⁰⁴ In 1985 the long range of combat means remains, but the command of fronts has vanished. At the same time, Ogarkov changed his historical data in 1985. Whereas in 1982 he stated that the World War II operation by a group of fronts had come under the leadership of the Supreme High Command, in 1985 he stated that the same operation had come under the leadership of the *representatives of the STAVKA* of the Supreme High Command. Do these changes indicate a new development in Soviet strategic wartime leadership?

During the last half of the 1970s, Soviet discussions of front commands in World War II indicated that they had been less than successful owing to Stalin's reluctance to delegate authority, especially regarding the use of strategic reserves. But numerous writers implied that front commands could indeed be effective if mistakes were not repeated. These discussions likewise stressed a need to organize the system of strategic wartime leadership well in advance of war, and to structure it precisely in accordance with the nature and scope of possible military operations.²⁰⁵

In April 1985, coincidentally with the publication of Ogarkov's book, the newspaper *Sovetskaya Rossiya* published an interesting article on the activities of the Stavka in World War II.²⁰⁶ In it the writer drew on the memoirs of prominent Stavka members for answers to certain questions, including one that referred to the "institution" of Stavka representatives at the fronts. According to Zhukov's memoirs, the

Stavka representatives did not command the fronts; this function remained in the hands of the commanders. But their delegated authority was "great," and thus they could "influence the course of battles in their areas, correct the mistakes of front and army commanders in time, and assist them concretely in procuring material-technical means from the center."

According to Shtemenko's memoirs, however, several front commanders later complained that the permanent presence of Stavka representatives created difficulties for them in commanding the troops. "But on the whole," wrote Shtemenko, "we think that the activity of the Stavka representatives justified itself. The situation required the presence at the fronts of figures who would possess the experience and power needed to quickly resolve the most important problems, which frequently exceeded the limits of a front commander's competence." One could safely assume that the problems of modern war, even in a non-nuclear context, would likewise exceed the limits of a front commander's competence, and would require the presence of experienced and powerful figures.

Since the publication of Ogarkov's 1985 *History*, other members of the Soviet military leadership have likewise focused on the Stavka representatives rather than the high commands. In April 1985, Gorshkov hailed the representatives for their specific contributions to strategic wartime leadership.²⁰⁷ In May 1985, General Ivanovskiy wrote that the Stavka representatives had been responsible for "coordinating the activities of the fronts."²⁰⁸ In July 1985, Marshal Petrov wrote that

the most important operations had been worked out by the General Staff and the "command of fronts."²⁰⁹ He then listed the battles of Moscow, Stalingrad, and Kursk, all of which came under the direct leadership of the most celebrated Stavka representatives. In July 1985, Col.-Gen. M. A. Gareyev wrote that in World War II, "the maximum proximity of command-and-control organs with the troops was achieved.

Representatives of the Stavka of the VGK [Supreme High Command] traveled to the fronts."²¹⁰ Does the revival of interest in the Stavka representatives indicate a revival of this institution in Soviet military practice?

In light of the Soviet determination to prepare in peacetime the strategic organs of wartime leadership, the parallels between the wartime activities of Marshals Zhukov and Vasilevskiy, the leading Stavka representatives, and the peacetime post-transfer activities of Marshal Ogarkov should not go unremarked. Upon the outbreak of war in 1941, the Chief of the General Staff, Marshal G. K. Zhukov, was quickly dispatched to assess the situation in the Southwestern Front, and Marshal A. M. Vasilevskiy assumed the position of Chief of the General Staff. Zhukov continued to represent the Stavka at the fronts in his new capacity as Deputy Supreme High Commander of the Soviet Armed Forces, and Chief of the General Staff Vasilevskiy became the Stavka's permanent representative with the troops.

In light of the acknowledged deficiencies of Soviet front commands in World War II, it would seem that concentration of authority and proximity of command and control would constitute a successful

command. The front commands lacked a concentrated authority, and while it was all-authority, the Stavka lacked proximity of command and control. Despite the bifurcated authority at the fronts, however, Shtemenko's assessment of the Stavka representatives was positive, and by 1944 the Stavka representatives exercised both strategic leadership and command and control. Marshal Vasilevskiy in particular was able to combine concentration of authority and proximity of command and control: Chief of the General Staff and the Stavka's permanent representative at the fronts, in 1945 he served also as the Commander-in-Chief of the Far Eastern High Command. Both Zhukov and Vasilevskiy later returned to Moscow to become the minister of defense.

Especially in light of the foregoing, the disappearance of the command of fronts from Ogarkov's modern theater operation may be revealing. Remember that in 1985 he also altered his historical data: while in 1982 he wrote that the World War II operation by a group of fronts was directed by the Supreme High Command, in 1985 he stated that the same operation was directed by representatives of the Stavka of the Supreme High Command. In both 1981 and 1982, Ogarkov described the strategic operation in a TVD as being of greater scale than a front operation. But in 1985, the theater operation is described as being of a more modern, improved, and greater scale than both the front operation and the operation by a group of fronts. Surely the complexities of such a large-scale operation would exceed the limits of a front commander's competence, and require both concentration of authority and proximity of command-and-control as best exemplified by Marshal Vasilevskiy. The

present review of Soviet literature indicates that Marshal Ogarkov may well be fulfilling such a function in a peacetime context.

The New Revolution in Soviet Military Affairs

While they have not specifically postulated the basic form of military action in the present, many Soviet military writers have discussed Ogarkov's modern conceptions of a non-nuclear war, either directly or in terms of a perceived Western threat. In a 1985 article in *Literaturnaya gazeta*, Gorshkov wrote that the U.S. was re-arming its submarines on a wide scale with long-range strategic Tomahawk cruise missiles armed with both nuclear and conventional warheads.²¹¹ Col.-Gen. Mikhalkin wrote in 1984 that the Missile and Ground Troops were being equipped with precision tactical and battlefield missile complexes armed with both conventional and nuclear warheads.²¹² Writing in mid-1985, Gen.-Lt. I. Rudnev noted that the prospects in the United States for developing new precision conventional arms involved new concepts in both continental and maritime theaters of military action, and he referred specifically to medium- and long-range precision guided cruise missiles that are conventionally armed.²¹³

Petersen and Hines wrote in 1983 that the Soviets had already expanded and adjusted the structure of their armed forces "to accommodate operational concepts that support the conventional offensive," and that "the extent of these structural changes suggests that this latest phase in the evolution of Soviet strategy is already quite mature."²¹⁴ The 1985 edition of *Soviet Military Power* confirms

that, if armed with conventional warheads, "highly accurate cruise missiles could pose a significant non-nuclear threat to U.S. and NATO airfields and nuclear weapons in a non-nuclear conflict."²¹⁵ Expected improvements in guidance and control, warhead capabilities, and accuracies will give the combined-arms commanders "enhanced non-nuclear targeting options and more flexible, reliable, and survivable SRBMs." Lt. Col. Kerry L. Hines published an article in late 1985 on the conventional deep-strike mission of Soviet SRBMs.²¹⁶ Finally, General William Odom has written specifically that the stimuli for Ogarkov's 1982 multi-front operation in a TVD were the new conventional technologies, and that "the trend in the West toward new, non-nuclear weapons has been underway for more than a decade."²¹⁷

Marshal Ogarkov is among the numerous Soviet military figures who have linked the U.S. Air-Land Battle with a large-scale use of the latest conventional, precision means of armed combat.²¹⁸ In his 1984 article in *Izvestiya*, Marshal Kulikov likewise wrote that the essence of the Air-Land Battle was the use of the new precision conventional means for delivering deep strikes.²¹⁹ Gen.-Maj. Slobodenko wrote in 1984 that the United States already possessed some of the new smart weapons needed for the Air-Land Battle, and that others would become available in two or three years.²²⁰ General Odom has explained that while tactical nuclear weapons could be incorporated in the Air-Land Battle, the Soviet concept of echelonment was designed precisely to diminish the vulnerability of forces to nuclear attacks. But the smart conventional technologies promise to be more efficient for such deep attacks, and

"create opportunities for ground force counterattacks to tactical, and possibly even operational depths."²²¹

Western analysts have nonetheless popularized the contention that Marshal Ogarkov was demoted owing precisely to his public call for a rapid incorporation of the emerging technologies into Soviet military theory and practice. The present study demonstrates that the top Soviet military leaders emerge as adherents rather than dissidents in relation to the former Chief of the Soviet General Staff. In January 1986, on the eve of the 27th Party Congress, Col. V. Alekseyev published an article in *Red Star* that reads like an ode to what some have dubbed "the Ogarkov Doctrine."²²² *Red Star* not only cited this article favorably, but also reiterated its basic premises a scant two weeks later.²²³

Raymond Garthoff has written that what constitutes strategic stability is a matter on which both sides have often changed their positions, depending on military-technological and relative force developments.²²⁴ But over the years, Marshal Ogarkov has only intensified his unchanging message: the altered military utility of nuclear weapons and significantly qualitative improvements in conventional means are changing the forms and methods of combat action and the nature of war as a whole. While Ogarkov's writings have been prophetic in this regard, they are not unique. In early 1985, Chief of the General Staff Akhromeyev wrote that "the inevitability of a retaliatory nuclear strike and its catastrophic consequences" have convinced the probable opponent to concentrate on developing conventional weapons that are characterized by greater effectiveness in

yield, range, and accuracy. Soviet military science has not ignored these trends, he continues, and "takes them into account in the training and command and control of troops."²²⁵ Col.-Gen. M. A. Gareyev wrote in his 1985 book that "the upgrading and stockpiling of nuclear-missile weapons have reached the point where their mass use in war could issue in catastrophic consequences for both sides." Under these conditions, the West counts on fighting "a relatively long war with conventional weapons, and above all new types of precision weapons."²²⁶ In present-day conditions, he wrote elsewhere, military science itself "must more actively determine the most important directions for the development of weapons and technology...."²²⁷

In his 1985 discussion of the law of unity and struggle of opposites, Marshal Ogarkov added another passage that had never appeared in his earlier treatments of this law. In it he stressed that in present-day conditions, "when an active replacement of one generation of weapons with another is taking place," it is extremely important that military cadres examine all aspects of the development in military affairs from all sides, not just one.²²⁸ When considered in the context of his ever-increasing focus on the new conventional means, this other generation of weapons most probably refers to conventional weapons outfitted with the emerging technologies.

In his 1982 *Always*, Ogarkov used even more provocative language to describe the new developments in military affairs: "A profound and revolutionary--in the full sense of the word--*perevorot* ["revolution," "turn-about," "upheaval"] in military affairs is occurring in our

time...."²²⁹ He connected this revolution with the creation of nuclear weapons, the rapid development of electronics, the development of weapons based on new physical principles, and the far-ranging qualitative upgrading of conventional means of armed combat. In the 1985 *History*, he stresses that this "profound and revolutionary--in the full sense of the word--perevorot is continuing in our time...."²³⁰ Here it is connected with the further development and qualitative upgrading of nuclear weapons, the rapid development of electronics, and also with the significantly qualitative upgrading of conventional means and methods of armed combat. And these in turn are exerting an influence primarily on the development and improvement of the forms and methods of combat action, the organizational structure of troops and naval forces, and the improvement of command-and-control systems and organs.

Few members of the top military leadership have used the strong verbiage used by Ogarkov to describe current developments in Soviet military affairs. In 1984, Marshal Kulikov wrote simply that "the introduction of new weapons generates changes even in the methods of conducting combat actions and operations."²³¹ While Gorshkov referred to "the qualitative leap in the development of the material base,"²³² he refrained from further comment, choosing not to specify whether nuclear or conventional weapons were involved. But other Soviet military figures have cited their Western counterparts as stating that the improved conventional means "have brought military technology to the threshold of a real revolution in the sphere of conventional arms."²³³

Marshal Ogarkov thus emerges as the most vocal proponent of General Odom's "third revolution" in Soviet military affairs. Indeed, in both his 1982 and 1985 books, Ogarkov has connected the "revolutionary...*perevorot*" in military affairs with the qualitative upgrading of conventional arms. In his 1985 article in the *Military-historical Journal*, Col.-Gen. M.A. Gareyev clearly echoes Ogarkov when he writes that "[w]e may now speak of a turning point in the development of military science...."²³⁴ This he connects "especially with the appearance in NATO countries of new types of precision conventional weapons." In view of this, he continues, it is necessary to "re-think" the fundamental military-strategic problems of defending the socialist Fatherland. And in view of this, writes Ogarkov in his 1985 *History*, a delayed "re-structuring of views" is fraught with the most severe consequences.²³⁵

In his 1984 *Red Star* interview and again in his post-transfer article in *Kommunist of the Armed Forces*, Ogarkov wrote that one need not be a military man to understand that the further expansion of nuclear arsenals is senseless.²³⁶ In the 1985 *History*, he reiterated that the nuclear weapons stockpiled in the world today "are indeed absurd from a military point of view."²³⁷ In this context, it is extremely significant that the following statements were both made in 1985:

"Subsequently, in the 1970s and 1980s, the rapid quantitative growth of nuclear weapons...led...to a break in previous views on their role and importance in war,...and even on the possibility of waging war at all with the use of nuclear weapons" (Marshal Ogarkov).²³⁸

"There is even greater irony in seeing military force developers, through their efforts to make nuclear weapons practical for tactical and operational use, become proponents of more limited and controlled use *and perhaps even nonuse of nuclear weapons*" (General Odom).²³⁹

Indeed, one need not be a military man to see here the convergence of U.S.-Soviet military thought on the diminishing military utility of nuclear weapons.

Conclusion

The present study has demonstrated that in his writings, Marshal N.V. Ogarkov comes down solidly against nuclear war as a viable instrument for achieving Soviet national security objectives. But in this regard he fits squarely into the mainstream of post-Tula Soviet military thought. In short, the essence of the Tula line was a downgrading of all nuclear options. When the Soviets accepted M.A.D. as a present-day reality, the Soviet debate on the viability of nuclear war as an instrument of policy was resolved by a consensus: nuclear war is so unpromising and dangerous that it remains an instrument of policy only in theory, an instrument of policy that cannot be used. A growing body of evidence thus indicates that in 1977, coincidentally with Tula and Ogarkov's elevation to Chief of the General Staff, Moscow designated an independent conventional war option as its long-term military development goal.

Like Ogarkov, other Soviet writers have themselves provided evidence of the conventional option, especially in their perceptions of

the Western threat. By their own admission, Soviet military science is being adapted to accommodate operational concepts based on a large-scale incorporation of smart, non-nuclear weapons. At the same time, Western analysts are documenting more and more changes in Soviet strategy, operational art, force structure, and weapons modernization that point clearly to an independent, conventional, high-tech option. The new conventional mission for Soviet SRBMs is only one example of the growing reliance on enhanced *non*-nuclear options, especially as described in Marshal Ogarkov's modern theater operation.

While he emerges as the vanguard of the new revolution in Soviet military affairs, Marshal Ogarkov has thus not diverged from mainstream Soviet thought. If Soviet military doctrine in the person of Marshal Ogarkov has been sending a message to U.S. military planners, it may be this: in present-day conditions, an independent conventional option should replace a reliance on nuclear options. Indeed one need not be a military man to see that, coupled with an assured nuclear deterrent capability, a strong conventional posture is now the best guarantee that the United States would achieve its primary national security objectives.

FOOTNOTES

1. For example, see Dan L. Strode and Rebecca V Strode, "Diplomacy and Defense in Soviet National Security Policy," *International Security*, Vol. 8, No. 2, Fall 1983, p. 92.
2. For example, see George C. Weickhardt, "Ustinov vs. Ogarkov," *Problems of Communism*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 1, January-February, 1985, p. 78.
3. See the following by MSU N. V. Ogarkov: "A Reliable Defense to Peace," *Krasnaya zvezda* (hereafter cited as *KZ*), September 23, 1983, p. 2; "A Reliable Bulwark of Socialism and Peace," *KZ* February 23, 1983, pp. 1-2; "Defense of Socialism: The Experience of History and the Present," *KZ*, May 9, 1984, pp. 2-3; "Faithful to Lenin's Precepts," *Izvestiya* (hereafter cited as *IZ*), February 24, 1980; "In the Name of Peace and Progress," *IZ*, May 9, 1983, pp. 1-2; *Istoriya uchit bditel'nosti* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1985); "Military Science and the Defense of the Socialist Fatherland," *Kommunist* (hereafter cited as *K*), No. 7, 1978, pp. 110-121; "Military Strategy," in *Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya* (hereafter cited as *SVE*), February 22, 1981, pp. 80-91; "On Guard Over the Gains of October," *KZ*, November 4, 1982, p. 3; "Creativity of a Military Leader," *Pravda* (hereafter cited as *PR*), October 2, 1982, p. 3; "The Great Feat of the Soviet People," *IZ*, May 9, 1978, pp. 1 and 3; "The Lessons of History," *KZ*, May 9, 1981, p. 2; "The Myth of the 'Soviet Military Threat' and Reality," *PR*, August 2, 1979, pp. 4-5; "The Unfading Glory of Soviet Weapons," *Kommunist voruzhennykh sil* (hereafter cited as *KVS*), No. 21, 1984, pp. 16-25; "The Victory and the Present," *IZ*, May 9, 1983, pp. 1-2; *Vsegda v gotovnosti k zashchite otechestva* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1982); "With a High Measure of Responsibility," *KZ*, January 21, 1979, p. 2.
4. Col.-Gen M. A. Gareyev, *M. V. Frunze—voyennyi teoretik* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1985), p. 239, see also pp. 240-241. See the discussion in James M. McConnell, "The Irrelevance Today of Sokolovskiy's Book *Military Strategy*," *Defense Analysis*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 1985, pp. 243-254.
5. William E. Odom, "Soviet Force Posture: Dilemmas and Directions," *Problems of Communism*, July-August, 1985, pp. 6-14.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 7-9.
7. Raymond L. Garthoff, "Mutual Deterrence and Strategic Arms Limitation in Soviet Policy," *Strategic Review*, Vol. X, No. 4, Fall 1982, p. 46.

8. MSU N. V. Ogarkov, "On Guard Over Peaceful Labor," *K*, No. 10, 1981, p. 82.
9. Mary C. FitzGerald, *Changing Soviet Doctrine on Nuclear War* (forthcoming, Academic International Press).
10. Garthoff, "Deterrence and Arms Limitation," *op. cit.*, p. 45.
11. For example, see MSU D. F. Ustinov, "Averting the Threat of Nuclear War," *PR*, July 12, 1982, p. 4; MSU S. Akhromeyev, "The Superiority of Soviet Military Science and Soviet Military Art as One of the Most Important Factors of Victory in the Great Patriotic War," *K*, No. 3, 1985, p. 62; MSU S. Akhromeyev, "Washington's Assertions and the Actual Facts," *PR*, October 19, 1985, p. 4; MSU V. Petrov, "For Mutual Restraint," *PR*, December 28, 1985, p. 4; Army General Yu. P. Maksimov, "In Constant Combat [Readiness]," *Sovetskiy voyn*, No. 21, 1985, p. 2.
12. See the following by MSU N. V. Ogarkov: "The Great Feat of the Soviet People," *IZ*, May 9, 1978, p. 3; "In the Interests of Raising Combat Readiness," *KVS*, No. 14, 1980, p. 26; *Vsegda v gotovnosti k zashchite otechestva* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1982), p. 15; "A Reliable Defense to Peace," *KZ*, September 23, 1983, p. 2; *Istoriya uchit bditel'nosti* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1985), p. 88.
13. L. I. Brezhnev, Speech, *PR*, January 19, 1977, p. 2.
14. For example, see MSU D. F. Ustinov, "Guardian of Peaceful Labor and Stronghold of Universal Peace," *K*, No. 3, 1977, pp. 17-18; Gen-Maj. R. Simonyan, "On the Risk of Confrontation," *PR*, June 14, 1977, p. 4. See also discussion in James M. McConnell, "Shifts in Soviet Views on the Proper Focus of Military Development," *World Politics*, Vol. 37, No. 3, April 1985, pp. 330-331.
15. M. V. Igolkin, "History and Compromises," *Voprosy filosofii* (hereafter cited as *VF*), No. 8, 1983, p. 117.
16. See the following by MSU N. V. Ogarkov: *Sovetskaya Rossiya* (hereafter cited as *SR*), February 23, 1977, p. 2; "Military Strategy," *SVE*, Vol. 7 (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1979), p. 564; "Socialism is Able to Defend Itself," *KZ*, February 23, 1979, p. 3; *Vsegda, op. cit.*, pp. 56-57; "The Unfading Glory of Soviet Weapons," *KVS*, No. 21, 1984, p. 24.
17. MSU D. F. Ustinov, "Averting the Threat of Nuclear War," *PR*, July 12, 1982, p. 4.
18. MSU N. V. Ogarkov, "Military Strategy," *SVE*, Vol. 7 (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1979), p. 564.

19. L. I. Brezhnev, "To the Second Special Session of the U.N. General Assembly," *PR*, June 16, 1982, p. 1.
20. N. S. Khrushchev, "A Meeting of Soviet-Hungarian Friendship," *PR*, July 20, 1963, p. 5.
21. See the discussion in FitzGerald, *Changing Soviet Doctrine*, *op. cit.*
22. David B. Rivkin, Jr., "What Does Moscow Think?" *Foreign Policy*, No. 59, Summer 1985, p. 99.
23. MSU N. V. Ogarkov, "Military Science and the Defense of the Socialist Fatherland," *K*, No. 7, 1978, p. 117.
24. Ogarkov, *Vsegda*, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
25. Ogarkov, *Istoriya*, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
26. I am indebted to Raymond L. Garthoff for this point.
27. Garthoff, "Deterrence and Arms Limitation," *op. cit.*, p. 43.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
29. G. Gerasimov, "Current Problems of World Policy," *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnyye otnosheniya* (hereafter cited as *MEMO*), No. 7, 1983, p. 99.
30. For example, see MSU S. F. Akhromeyev, "Washington's Assertions and the Actual Facts," *PR*, October 19, 1985, p. 4.
31. MSU N. V. Ogarkov, "The Victory and the Present Day," *IZ*, May 9, 1983, p. 3.
32. Ogarkov, "Reliable Defense," *op. cit.*, p. 2.
33. Cited in "Press Conference in Moscow," *PR*, December 6, 1983, p. 4.
34. MSU N. V. Ogarkov, "The Defense of Socialism: The Experience of History and the Present Day," *KZ*, May 9, 1984, p. 3.
35. Ogarkov, "Unfading Glory," *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26.
36. Ogarkov, *Istoriya*, *op. cit.*, p. 89.
37. See FitzGerald, *Changing Soviet Doctrine*, *op. cit.*
38. Ogarkov, "On Guard," *op. cit.*, p. 85.

39. Ogarkov, *Vsegda, op. cit.*, p. 26.
40. Ogarkov, "Reliable Defense," *op. cit.*, p. 2.
41. Ogarkov, "Unfading Glory," *op. cit.*, p. 26.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
43. Ogarkov, *Istoriya, op. cit.*, pp. 90, 88, and 91.
44. MSU D. F. Ustinov, "Six Heroic Decades," *K*, No. 2, 1978, p. 26.
45. MSU D. F. Ustinov, *Sluzhim rodine, delu kommunizma* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1982), p. 58.
46. MSU D. F. Ustinov, "Averting the Threat of a Nuclear War," *PR*, July 12, 1982, p. 4.
47. MSU S. L. Sokolov, "The Great Victory," *K*, No. 6, 1985, p. 65.
48. MSU S. F. Akhromeyev, "Military Detente--The Demand of the Times," *KZ*, December 2, 1980, p. 3.
49. MSU S. F. Akhromeyev, "The Great Victory and Its Lessons," *IZ*, May 7, 1985, p. 2.
50. MSU V. G. Kulikov, "On Guard Over Peace and Socialism," *KZ*, May 14, 1982, p. 3.
51. For example, see N. M. Nikol'skiy, *Osnovnoi vopros sovremennosti: problema unichtozheniya voyn* (Moscow, 1964).
52. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
53. Gen.-Maj. K. Bochkarev, "The Question of the Sociological Aspect of the Struggle Against the Forces of Aggression and War," *Voyennaya mysl'*, No. 9, 1968, pp. 10-11.
54. Col. Ye Rybkin, "On the Essence of World Nuclear-missile War," *KVS*, No. 17, 1965, p. 55.
55. McConnell, "Shifts in Soviet Views," *op. cit.*, pp. 331-333.
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