Marshal Ogarkov on the Modern Theater Operation

by
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INTRODUCTION

Since his appointment as Chief of the General Staff in 1977, Marshal N.V. Ogarkov has emerged as perhaps 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. However, the April 1985 publication by Voyenizdat of his new book, *History Teaches Vigilance*, (hereafter cited as *History*) propelled the enigmatic marshal once again to center stage. The 1985 *History* reveals 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. His modern theater operation may indeed reflect a revolutionized Soviet military science, and his own activities since September 1984 may mark its formal debut.

A 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.[3] According to Odom, the third revolution involves changes in Soviet doctrine generated by the so-called emerging technologies and the trend towards new, non-nuclear weapons.[4] Perhaps not coincidentally, 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. Gareyev argued that while Sokolovskiy's classic *Military Strategy* was generally valid for its time, "given the appearance of nuclear-missile weapons," many of its central propositions have become obsolete.[5] Ogarkov is not alone among the top Soviet military leadership in his military-strategic views,[6] but he clearly emerges at the vanguard of the new revolution in Soviet military affairs.

Having downgraded the military utility of nuclear weapons in the face of "Mutual Assured Destruction" (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."[7] How then does the former Chief of the Soviet General Staff propose to fight a future war?

THE INDEPENDENT CONVENTIONAL OPTION

There is growing evidence that in 1977, coincidentally with L.I. Brezhnev's address at Tula[8] 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. 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 counted "primarily on the use of nuclear weapons."[9] His 1982 book, *Always in Readiness to Defend the Fatherland* (hereafter cited as *Always*), again held that the imperialist circles depend, primarily in modern war, "on nuclear-missile weapons with their various modifications, including neutron weapons."[10]

Nevertheless, Ogarkov has consistently depicted the U.S. as moving toward a greater reliance on conventional options, especially in terms of the duration and scope of future military action. In 1979, he wrote that the U.S. entertained the possibility of protracted military action with the use of conventional weapons only.[11] In the 1982 *Always*, however, he pointed to a U.S. capability for waging a war with the use of conventional weapons only, in Europe and also "in the Near, Middle and Far East, and all sea and ocean theaters of military action."[12] In his 1985 *History*, Ogarkov repeated this scenario *verbatim*.[13] 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.[14] The 1985 book is significant because, for the first time since 1979, Ogarkov's description of U.S. doctrine does not include the recurrent charge that the U.S. is relying primarily on nuclear weapons in their various modifications.

A review of Soviet military writings since 1977 indicates that numerous Soviet military figures likewise depict the U.S. as consistently moving toward a protracted, general, conventional option.[15] In the 1985 update of his earlier book on U.S. and NATO military strategy, Gen.-Maj. R.G. Simonyan added the following types of wars to the inventory kept by Pentagon and NATO strategists: general conventional, conventional war in a theater of war, and conventional war in a theater of military action (TVD).[16] Col. V. Alekseyev included the same U.S./NATO conventional options in a *Red Star* article that appeared on the eve of the 27th Party Congress.[17] Throughout the 1980s, in fact, the most prominent Soviet military spokesmen have warned that the Western threat consists primarily in an all-conventional conflict in which major strategic operations are successfully conducted within one or more TVDs without recourse to nuclear weapons.[18]

Another form of evidence for the Soviet conventional option comes from discussions on the "specific features" of a future war, including the type of weaponry that will be employed. A 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. As early as 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."[19] 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 a 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."[20] His 1982 *Pravda* article urges "timely introduction of the necessary corrective measures into the accepted methods and forms of combat action,"[21] and in 1983 Ogarkov argued that "[i]nertia of thought, and a stubborn, mechanical, unthinking attachment to the old ways are dangerous in present-day conditions."[23] Later in 1983 he asserted 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."[23]

In his 1984 "May Day" interview, Ogarkov cited Chernenko on the need to "overcome all conservatism and stagnation,"[24] and his 1985 *History* continues the 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."[25] The opinion is apparently widespread that Ogarkov was demoted precisely because of his call for rapid incorporation of the latest technology into Soviet military theory and practice. A review of Soviet writings from 1977 to the present, however, reveals no evidence of a dispute between Ogarkov and the rest of the military leadership on this issue.[26]

Throughout his writings, Ogarkov has focused increasingly on the new conventional means. In 1978, he noted that scientific-technical progress had accelerated the improvement of conventional, classical means of combat, and had "sharply increased their combat capabilities."[27] 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 means created on the basis of the latest achievements in electronics and other technical sciences. In this context, he went on to state that improve automated systems of command and control, and "highly effective new conventional means of armed combat are being developed and introduced."[28]

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."[29] In his 1984 interview in *Red Star*, Ogarkov maintained that "the development of conventional means of destruction ... is making many kinds of weapons global."[30] 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.

Marshal Ogarkov has consistently rounded out his discussions of new weaponry by stressing its 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."[31] This theme has remained consistent in his writings.[32] 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 ...."[33] He also has taken pains to indicate that these changes "are occurring at the present time in the means of armed combat."[34] Finally, Ogarkov has long focused a special attention on "developing methods of combat action under conditions where the opponent uses precision [conventional] combat complexes, new means of reconnaissance and radioelectronic combat, and automated systems of guiding weapons and commanding troops."[35] The following section will demonstrate that the new conventional weaponry may have already transformed Soviet concepts of the modern theater operation.

THE MODERN THEATER OPERATION

In his 1984 *Red Star* interview, Ogarkov emphasized that the qualitative leap in the development of conventional weapons inevitably entails changes in the conduct of modern operations.[36] As a result, military actions could be conducted with conventional means in qualitatively new and incomparably more destructive forms than before. Writing in *Foreign Military Review* in June 1985, Gen.-Lt. I. Rudnev agreed that the new precision conventional arms have triggered the development of new concepts for conducting operations in both continental and maritime TVDs.[37] In fact, the major, officially-sanctioned military works of the 1980s already provide evidence of a new, all-conventional dimension in modern Soviet strategy for theater warfare.[38]

In 1978, Gen.-Lt. M.M. Kir'yan authored an entry in the *Soviet Military Encyclopedia* that stressed the role of nuclear weapons in the modern combat operation.[39] In his 1982 book on scientific-technical progress and the Soviet Armed Forces, however, Kir'yan wrote that strategic operations "can be conducted both with and without the use of nuclear weapons."[40] Though the 1978 encyclopedia entry focused on nuclear weapons, the same entry in the 1983 *Military Encyclopedic Dictionary*, edited by Ogarkov, contains no reference to the use of nuclear weapons in the modern operation.[41] The 1983 edition also includes a sentence in the entry on "Military Strategy" that was not included in the corresponding, 1979 entry: "Achieving the objectives of the operation is possible ... in the context of both conventional and nuclear weapons use."[42]

A review of Marshal Ogarkov's writings reveals that while he has discussed the modern theater operation on several occasions,[43] his 1985 *History* may well contain the first public description of the new, all-conventional dimension in Soviet theater strategy. The point of

departure for this interpretation is found in Figure 1, which compares Ogarkov's 1982 and 1985 versions of the modern theater operation.

Perhaps the most telling difference between Ogarkov's 1982 and 1985 theater operations is his treatment of the strategic nuclear forces. In 1982, Ogarkov told the reader that the supreme military leadership could substantially influence the achievement of the war's objectives with the help of the strategic nuclear forces. In 1985, however, Ogarkov apparently removed the strategic nuclear forces from the modern theater operation. At the same time, he expanded the role of the supreme military leadership to that of directly and decisively influencing the course and outcome of the war. Here it should be noted that this particular formula was last used in the second half of the 1960s to describe the impact of massive nuclear strikes on the course and outcome of a future war. Along with other Soviet military writers, however, Ogarkov himself may have already provided certain clues that could explain both the removal of the strategic nuclear forces from the theater operation and the resurrection of the course-and-outcome formula.

In his landmark 1981 *Kommunist* article, Ogarkov removed the Strategic Missile Troops from the normal 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."[44]

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."[45] 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. It should also be noted that in *Always*, Ogarkov made a statement unprecedented for Soviet military thought, explaining that Ground Troops "are, in essence, the basic branch of our Armed Forces."[46]

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, the strategic nuclear forces "are required" for the conduct of a strategic operation in a continental TVD.[47] The same entry in the 1983 *Military Encyclopedic Dictionary* (also edited by Ogarkov) reiterates that the strategic nuclear forces "are required" for the conduct of a strategic operation in a continental TVD.[47] In light of the foregoing, Ogarkov's 1985 removal of the word "strategic" from "strategic operation" may further indicate that his theater operation does not involve the strategic nuclear forces.

Comparisons of other encyclopedia entries likewise point to the diminishing role of the strategic nuclear forces in the modern theater operation. The 1979 edition of the *Soviet Military Encyclopedia* defined

FIGURE 1

COMPARISON OF OGARKOV'S 1982 AND 1985 THEATER OPERATIONS

1982	1985
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 carried out successively, with or even without short pauses between them, by each front (fleet).*	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, 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 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 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.**

**Always*, pp. 34-35.

***History*, p. 47.

"strategic arms" as "various types of *nuclear-missile weapons* ... designed for accomplishing strategic tasks in war."[49] The 1983 *Military Encylopedic Dictionary*, however, defines "strategic arms" as "various types of weapons ... designed for accomplishing strategic tasks in war."[50] The 1979 entry for "strategic forces" (a "foreign term" describing those systems earmarked for a general nuclear war) states that the U.S., Britain, and France devote primary attention to their strategic offensive forces, which they view as the most important component of their armed forces.[51] The 1983 entry, however, contains no such statement.[52]

In discussing the Marxist-Leninist dialectic of arms development in *History*, Ogarkov himself made a ground-breaking statement that may well bear on his removal of the strategic nuclear forces from the modern theater operation. Prior to 1985, Ogarkov's writings had consistently echoed the mainstream Soviet line on this dialectic: the ineluctable development of nuclear weapons has led to a situation wherein the struggle between the offense and the defense will be tilted in favor of offensive weapons.[53] 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 counter-action, 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 counter-action. The appearance of means of defense against weapons of mass destruction in turn prompted the improvement of nuclear-missile means of attack.*[54]

The foregoing passage was repeated *verbatim* in Ogarkov's 1982 *Always*, with the addition of the words in brackets.[55] In *History*, however, Ogarkov made several significant changes in his standard discussion of this dialectical law. First, the sentences that are 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 a 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."[56]

By excising the italicized sentences of 1978 and 1982, and replacing them with the notion of a "balance" in the 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."[57] This is supported by the fact that in the new book, he specifically excised 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 ...."

If Ogarkov's unprecedented "balance" in nuclear means of offense and defense points to a neutralization of nuclear weapons in general, then one must look elsewhere for the weapons that will give the supreme military leadership the capacity for directly and decisively influencing both the course and outcome of a future war. Throughout the 1980s, Ogarkov and other military thinkers have provided evidence of an all-conventional Soviet theater operation in their discussions of emerging military technologies, of the initial period of a future war, and of the factors influencing the course and outcome of a future war.

EMERGING MILITARY TECHNOLOGIES

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 there directs special attention to the new types of precision weapons and microcircuitry with which the other branches are increasingly being equipped.[58] 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."[59] General 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."[60] 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 decisive influence on the course and even the outcome of a future war.

Writing in *Foreign Military Review* in 1984, Col. F. Dmitriyev explained that in the U.S. and NATO, tactical and operational-tactical guided, non-nuclear weapons have been designated as "precision" weapons.[61] Throughout the 1980s, numerous Soviet military thinkers have equated the combat characteristics of these new precision means with those of nuclear and other mass-destruction weapons. In the 1984 *Red Star* interview, Marshal Ogarkov stated that the new developments in conventional weapons were making them as effective as weapons of mass destruction.[62] In *History*, he wrote that conventional weapons are approximating nuclear "in terms of their combat characteristics and effectiveness."[63] As early as 1980, in fact, Gen.-Maj. V. Makarevskiy noted that "foreign military specialists" planned to use the new conventional means to accomplish many combat tasks that were formerly assigned to tactical nuclear weapons.[64]

Writing in *Red Star* in early 1984, Gen.-Lt. M. Proskurin included

cruise missiles and reconnaissance-strike complexes among the precision conventional means, whose destructive power likewise approximated that of tactical nuclear weapons.[65] Later, in 1984, Gen.-Maj. F. Gontar' warned that the U.S. planned to develop precision ballistic and cruise missiles armed with conventional warheads, which approximated low-yield nuclear weapons in their destructive capacity.[66] Writing in *Red Star* in 1986, V. Kuznetsov asserted that the precision conventional means had the combat effectiveness of tactical nuclear weapons, and that they did not produce the same radioactive contamination of the ground.[67] Among others, Marshal Kulikov has also equated the combat effectiveness of precision conventional means with that of tactical nuclear weapons.[68]

Other Soviet military thinkers have described the new conventional means in terms of a potential *strategic* significance. Writing in *Red Star* in late 1982, Gen.-Maj. V. Makarevskiy noted that with the help of operational-tactical and cruise missiles, the new conventional means could have the same ranges as [unspecified] nuclear weapons.[69] With the help of long-range missiles, he reiterated in early 1984, the new precision munitions could cover the same distances as [unspecified] nuclear weapons.[70] Marshal Petrov argued in 1983 that the new conventional means could accomplish certain tasks that were formerly assigned to [unspecified] nuclear arms.[71] In a 1983 *Red Star* article that discussed the Air-Land Battle, Col. L. Semeyko was even more explicit concerning the potential strategic significance of the new conventional means. The U.S. planned to develop conventional armed forces, he warned, that were capable of directly threatening the territory of the Soviet Union. [72] In a 1984 *Red Star* article entitled "Modern Weapons and Tactics," Gen.-Maj. I. Vorob'yev explained that precision conventional means were changing the face of modern warfare, and could now be used against the entire depth of the opponent's combat dispositions.[73] In the month of the 27th Party Congress, Gen.-Maj. V. Makarevskiy stated in *Red Star* that precision conventional weapons could have a significant operational "and even strategic effect."[74]

Especially in the context of the Air-Land Battle and "Rogers Plan," numerous Soviet military writers have focused specifically on the enhanced combat potential of ballistic and cruise missiles that are conventionally armed.[75] In a 1983 *Red Star* article, Gen.-Lt. M. Proskurin referred to "Pershing-2s" and ground-, air-, and sea-launched cruise missiles armed with conventional warheads,[76] and repeated the reference in late 1985.[77] (It should be noted that, to date, the U.S. has neither "Pershing-2s" nor ground- and air-launched cruise missiles that are conventionally armed.) Gen.-Maj. F. Gontar' has written that the U.S. and NATO intend to use non-nuclear cruise and ballistic missiles against nuclear targets and nuclear-missile means of the USSR.[78] Writing in *Red Star* in 1985, Col. A. Drozhzhin added "Minutemen" missiles to the projected U.S. inventory of non-nuclear weapons in Europe.[79] Both Gen.-Lt. Proskurin[80] and Gen.-Maj. Marakevskiy[81] have alleged that the U.S. was planning to use existing and projected tactical and strategic aviation to deliver precision conventional munitions. In addition,

Makarevskiy has written that conventional medium-range missiles have ranges of up to 2,500 km.[82]

Writing in *Foreign Military Review* in June 1985, Gen.-Lt. I. Rudnev discussed the wide-scale equipping of the U.S. Navy with medium- and long-range cruise missiles armed with conventional warheads. According to Rudnev, this development involves certain changes in the organization and conduct of maritime operations because the new systems can hit surface objectives at distances of over 500 km, and coastal targets up to 1300 km away.[83] This development, he continued, will significantly enhance the Navy's ability to conduct effective, mobile, and active combat actions in sea and ocean theaters. The equipping of U.S. ships with the latest precision conventional means will substantially increase their air defense capabilities in combat with the opponent's aviation and cruise missiles.

Here it should be mentioned that when Marshal Ogarkov published his revised, 1985 description of the modern Soviet theater operations, Moscow had already deployed its first precision, enhanced-range, dual-capable missiles in Eastern Europe. As Dennis Gormley noted in the fall of 1985, improvements in missile accuracy and conventional warhead effectiveness of these SRBMs "foreshadow the capacity to furnish conventional solutions for nuclear problems."[84] As indicated above, Soviet military thinkers confirm that emerging conventional technologies now approach nuclear means in terms of their *strategic* potential.

INITIAL PERIOD OF A FUTURE WAR

The role of a war's "initial period" has changed over time in Soviet military thought. In the first half of the 1960s, the initial period of a future war consisted of massive nuclear strikes and was said to be decisive for the course and outcome of that war.[85] Coincidentally with the U.S. adoption of the Air-Land Battle, however, Soviet military writers began to link the importance of a future war's initial period with the combat characteristics of the new precision conventional means.

In his 1983 *Izvestiya* article, Marshal Ogarkov contended that because the aggressor could use new means and methods of armed combat in a future war, combat tasks would be accomplished differently at the outset of the war. This would, in turn, give rise to the special role and importance of the war's initial period in present-day conditions. The new, precision, conventional, "operational-tactical and *strategic* means" would predetermine the operations of the war's initial period which, as the experience of local wars shows, could have a "decisive importance."[86] In his 1984 *Red Star* interview, Ogarkov reiterated that the role and importance of the war's initial period was growing incomparably as a result of the combat characteristics of precision conventional means.[87]

Especially in the context of the Air-Land Battle, many prominent Soviet military figures have characterized the operations of the war's initial period as involving the new conventional means without recourse to nuclear weapons.[88] Like Ogarkov, they have also stressed the growing

role and importance of the initial period in present-day conditions. Writing in *Red Star* in January[89] and November [90] of 1984, Gen.-Lt. Proskurin explained that the essence of the Air-Land Battle consisted in achieving "decisive success" in the operations of the war's initial period. Also writing in 1984, Marshal Kulikov linked the achievement of "decisive success" in the initial period with both the Air-Land Battle and the "Rogers Plan."[91] Kulikov wrote elsewhere that the essence of the "Rogers Plan" consisted of combat action in the initial period that would inflict a "crushing defeat" on the opponent's armed forces *without using nuclear weapons*.[92] Among others, Gen.-Lt. Proskurin has reiterated this description of a future war's initial period.[93]

The writers mentioned above have not actually stated that, like the nuclear initial period of the early 1960s, the new, conventional initial period could decisively influence the course and outcome of a future war. However, in the context of conventional weapons use, the war's initial period has rarely if ever been described as a period of a "decisive success,"[94] or as an operational period that could inflict a "crushing defeat" on the opponent's armed forces. The customary Soviet formula for past (conventional) wars held that the initial period consisted of operations for achieving the war's "immediate" strategic objectives: defeating the troops of the first strategic echelon and creating conditions for a victorious termination of the war.[95] Yet, Soviet military writers who have discussed the Air-Land Battle consistently state that precision conventional means can be used to defeat the opponent's first, second, third, and rear echelons in the initial period of a future war.[96] While these writers may not have used the 1960s (nuclear) formula of decisive influence on the course and outcome of the war, they clearly envisioned an unprecedented role for the conventional initial period of a future war.

In November 1985, Gen.-Lt. A.I. Yevseyev published an article in the *Military-historical Journal* that discussed changes in the content and character of the war's initial period. After describing the initial period of the two world wars in terms of the customary Soviet formula, he then made a statement unprecedented for Soviet military thought. In contrast to past wars, he wrote, "the main content of the initial period in present-day conditions can be the delivery by the belligerants of nuclear strikes *or strikes with conventional means of destruction* ... for achieving the war's *main* objectives."[97] Elsewhere in the article he noted that because the new means of destruction facilitate the achievement of immediate strategic objectives at a vastly accelerated rate in comparison with World War II, the initial period of a future war will be much shorter. Consequently, military actions in the initial period will differ substantially in scope in comparison with past wars. This, he continues, need not apply only to a nuclear war; the Air-Land Battle envisages decisive actions to a depth that encompasses the territory of an entire country at once.[98]

Yevseyev's statement is unique because the initial period of a war has rarely if ever been seen as a time to achieve the war's main objectives. Yevseyev does revert to the customary formula when he states that the initial period can achieve the war's immediate objectives which, in past

wars, included defeating the troops of the first strategic echelon. Like Ogarkov and the others, however, Yevseyev states that the non-nuclear means earmarked for the Air-Land Battle can involve the territory of an entire country at once — that is, the opponent's first, second, third, and rear echelons simultaneously. As Ogarkov wrote in 1984, the enhanced range of precision conventional means facilitates the immediate involvement of an entire country in combat action, a phenomenon not possible in past wars.[99]

In light of the new combat characteristics of conventional means, the old immediate objective of defeating the first strategic echelon would seem to belong to history. If, on the other hand, the war's immediate objectives now include the simultaneous defeat of all echelons, then this could be termed a main objective as well. Yevseyev's own description supports the latter interpretation: the war's main objectives can now be achieved with either nuclear strikes or strikes by conventional weapons alone. Soviet military thought could not have acknowledged more explicitly the potential of conventional weapons to solve nuclear problems in a future war.

COURSE AND OUTCOME OF A FUTURE WAR

Over the years, changes in Soviet doctrine have often been revealed through changes in standard Soviet formulae. Critical among these in Soviet military thought is the course-and-outcome formula, or those factors that are said to influence the course and outcome of a future war. While the war's initial period (of nuclear strikes) was said to be decisive in the first half of the 1960s, massive nuclear strikes became decisive for the war's course and outcome in the second half of the 1960s.[100] Until Ogarkov's 1985 description of the theater operation, in fact, the only other factors to be termed decisive for the course and outcome of a war were the "permanently operating factors" of pre-nuclear warfare.

In *Always*, Ogarkov's description of the theater operation contained the following statement: "And with the creation of the strategic nuclear forces, the supreme military leadership has acquired a potential for substantially influencing the achievement of the war's strategic and military policy objectives."[101] In light of the fact that nuclear weapons were said to exert a decisive influence on the course and outcome of the war in the 1960s, Ogarkov clearly downgraded their influence in 1982. Elsewhere in the same book, however, he does rely on the course-and-outcome formula.

First, he asserts that the scientific-technical revolution is exerting an ever-growing influence on the development of military affairs and on the design of new methods and forms of conducting combat actions. Second, the pace of development of military technology and weaponry is accelerating, thus affecting the pace of development in 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,"[102] though it should be noted that operational-

strategic organs of command and control would not have stategic nuclear means at their disposal. In addition, Ogarkov refers ambiguously to new precision conventional means that can be "both *strategic* and operational-tactical,"[103] in his 1983 *Izvestiya* article.

Finally, in *History*, Ogarkov used the course-and-outcome formula to describe the modern theater operation: "Given this,[104] the supreme military leadership has acquired a potential for directly and decisively influencing the course and outcome of a war."[105] Ogarkov has clearly reduced the influence of the strategic nuclear forces in 1982, and removes them altogether from the theater operation in 1985, although in 1985, the supreme military leadership controls weapons which, like the massive nuclear strikes of the 1960s, can directly and decisively influence the course and outcome of the war. Perhaps the final key to Ogarkov's cryptic formula lies in another formula that has involved the course and outcome of a future war. As early as 1979, Gen.-Maj. R.G. Simonyan wrote that the course and outcome of a war on the European continent would depend on the course and outcome of combat actions in the Central European TVD.[106] There is no reason to believe that the situation is any different today, and every reason to believe that in this context, at least, the new, precision, conventional, *strategic* means could directly and decisively influence the course and outcome of a future war.

Throughout his writings, Marshal Ogarkov has focused on both the diminishing military utility of nuclear weapons[107] and the enhanced combat characteristics of precision conventional means. At the same time, numerous Soviet military thinkers have acknowledged that the new weapons:

1) approximate the effectiveness of nuclear and other mass-destruction weapons with less collateral damage;
2) have ranges of up to 2,500 km;
3) are strategic means with a strategic effect; and
4) can be used to achieve the war's immediate and main objectives, including a simultaneous and crushing defeat of the opponent's first, second, third, and rear echelons in a non-nuclear initial period.

As early as 1981, *Foreign Military Review* noted that during the "Autumn Forge-80" maneuvers, the NATO troops succeeded in accomplishing all of the tasks of a strategic operation "without resorting to the use of nuclear weapons."[108] Less than a year later, Gen.-Lt. M.M. Kir'yan wrote that the U.S. does not exclude the conduct of combat action using conventional weapons alone. "In this context," he continued, "Soviet military thought has developed the methods for conducting military action both with and without the use of nuclear weapons."[109] In short, Marshal Ogarkov's modern theater operation stems directly from mainstream Soviet doctrine. 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."[110] The Soviets have already deployed precision, dual-capable systems in the Central European TVD, where the outcome of combat action will determine the outcome of a war on the European continent.

THE NEW REVOLUTION IN SOVIET MILITARY AFFAIRS

The present study has indicated that, 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. Methods of conducting military action with automated, precision-guided conventional weapons are also being improved. Soviet military science has not ignored these trends, he continued, and "takes them into account in the training and command and control of troops."[111]

Col.-Gen. M.A. Gareyev wrote also in 1985 that "the upgrading and stockpiling of nuclear-missile weapons have reached a 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."[112] 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 ...."[113]

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."[114] Along with Dennis Gormley,[115] Lt. Col. Kerry L. Hines published an article in late 1985 on the "conventional deep-strike mission" of Soviet SRBMs.[116] The 1986 edition of *Soviet Military Power* confirms that with conventional warheads and guidance systems, Soviet long-range cruise missiles "would pose a significant non-nuclear threat to U.S. and Eurasian airfields and nuclear weapons."[117] Advances in warhead capabilities, accuracy, and reliability are likewise expected in the Soviet SRBM force. Combined-arms commanders would then have "enhanced non-nuclear targeting options, and more flexible and survivable SRBMs."[118] The new generation of Soviet SRINF missiles can likewise be employed effectively with conventional warheads, which will give the Soviets "a formidable conventional deep-strike system."[119]

In his 1985 discussion of the law of unity and struggle of opposites, Marshal Ogarkov added a passage that had never appeared in his earlier treatments of this law. In it he emphasized 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.[120] 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 *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 ...."[121] 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 *History*, he contended that this "profound and revolutionary — in the full sense of the word — *perevorot* is continuing in our time ...."[122] Here he connected it 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. These factors are, in turn, 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."[123] While Gorshkov referred to the "qualitative leap in the development of the material base,"[124] he refrained from further comment, choosing not to specify whether nuclear or conventional weapons were involved. Other Soviet military figures, however, 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."[125]

Marshal Ogarkov thus emerges as the most vocal proponent of the new 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 nuclear *and* 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 ...."[126] This he connects "especially with the appearance in NATO countries of new types of precision conventional weapons." In view of this, it is necessary to re-think the fundamental military-strategic problems of defending the socialist Fatherland. To continue the chain of events, Ogarkov warns, in *History*, that delayed "re-structuring of views" is fraught with the most severe consequences.[127]

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.[128] In *History*, he reiterated that the nuclear weapons stockpiled in the world today "are indeed absurd from a military point of view."[129] In this light it is extremely significant that the following statements were both made in 1985:

> Subsequently, in the 70s and 80s, 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.*[130]

> 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.*[131]

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

CONCLUSION

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 reached 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 indicates that in 1977, coincidental with 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 provided evidence of the conventional option, especially in their perceptions of the Western threat and, specifically, of the Air-Land Battle and "Rogers Plan." 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 a conventional high-tech option. The conventional deep-strike mission for Soviet SRBMs is a clear example of the growing reliance on enhanced *non*-nuclear options, especially as described in Marshal Ogarkov's modern theater operation.

Footnotes

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2. For example, see George C. Weickhardt, "Ustinov vs. Ogarkov," *Problems of Communism* (January-February, 1985), p. 78.
3. William E. Odom, "Soviet Force Posture: Dilemmas and Directions," *Problems of Communism* (July-August, 1985), pp. 6-14.
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5. Col.-Gen. M.A. Gareyev, *M.V. Frunze--voyennyi teoretik* (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1985), p. 239; see also pp. 240-241.
6. Mary C. FitzGerald, *The New Revolution in Soviet Military Affairs* (forthcoming, Pergamon-Brassey's International Defense Publishers, Inc.).
7. MSU N.V. Ogarkov, *History Teaches Vigilance (Istoriya uchit bditel'nosti)* (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1985), p. 68.
8. L.I. Brezhnev, Speech, *Pravda*, January 19, 1977, p. 2.
9. MSU N.V. Ogarkov, "On Guard Over Peaceful Labor," *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, February 22, 1981, p. 1.
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23. MSU N.V. Ogarkov, "A Reliable Defense to Peace," *KZ*, September 23, 1983, p. 2.
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43. For example, see Ogarkov, "On Guard," *Kommunist,* p. 86.
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