

Scott, Harriet Fast, and William F. Scott. *Soviet Military Doctrine: Continuity, Formulation, and Dissemination*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988.

Perestroika and *glasnost* have become firmly entrenched as part of the world's vocabulary, and the impact of these policies has permeated all levels of Soviet society — and the Armed Forces are no exception.

The purpose of *Soviet Military Doctrine (SMD)* is to document the development of military doctrine — or *voyenna doktrina* — and its impact upon the Soviet Armed Forces from its revolutionary roots in 1917 to the era of “new thinking.” The authors have written extensively on the Armed Forces of the U.S.S.R. and the Soviet art of war; therefore, they bring a wealth of experience to the fore in this work. What is most interesting about *SMD* is that it draws on Soviet sources, running the gamut from such official books as *Soviet Armed Forces*, to speeches by a plethora of Party functionaries, generals and admirals, which are published in journals in addition to Party and military organs such as *Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star)*, *Soviet Military Review*, and *Voyenny Vestnik (Military Thought)*.

SMD is divided into two parts: the first, Continuity and Change, describes the historical underpinnings of military doctrine; and the second, Formulation and Dissemination, outlines the process by which *doktrina* is formulated and subsequently promulgated. In part one, the Scotts break doctrine into six developmental periods, from the Civil War to Industrialization (1917-1928), through the “revolution in military affairs” (1954-1960) to the “new” military doctrine of the present (1960 -). In particular, it was M.V. Frunze, a Civil War hero and Chief of Staff of the Red Army, who envisioned that a future war would involve the entire resources of a nation; therefore an overall plan must be in place for the conduct of war and strict coordination when the war is in progress. Frunze stipulated that military doctrine had two parts: political and technical. More importantly, once war started, military doctrine is replaced by military strategy or operational art to direct the war. Doctrine is sanctioned by the Party and assures unity of views and efforts directed at “raising the military might of the Soviet government and achieving victory in war.”

SMD concentrates on the post-World War II era, when the “revolution in military affairs” took place, which was a direct result of the advent of nuclear weapons. The need to assess the implications of these devices spearheaded this revolution, culminating in the creation of the Strategic Rocket Forces and the formation of a new military doctrine, the basic outline of which Party Secretary Nikita Khrushchev revealed in January 1960. As the Scotts point out, the main thrust of the military-political aspect of doctrine has remained virtually unchanged since then, although its military-technical dimensions have become much more sophisticated.

In the 1980s, Soviet leaders asserted that *voyenna doktrina* had always had only a defensive character; however, prominent generals have stated

since the 1960s that it bears an offensive character. Indeed, Lenin declared that “socialist states wage and will wage only defensive wars. However, these wars are defensive in their *political goals* and not in the methods of waging.” (emphasis added)

One of the important constants of Soviet military doctrine is that, unlike similar discussions in the West that concentrate on relatively narrow spheres of society, Soviet doctrine influences all aspects of life in the U.S.S.R., whether the military-technical education of Soviet youth, the location of new industries, or scientific exchanges with the non-communist world. In fact, Soviet generals and admirals frequently appear on Soviet radio and television, and are more a part of society than their counterparts in the West — particularly so in Canada — despite an apparent loss of the power and influence which the Soviet Armed Forces have been able to wield so effectively for so long. Soviet military doctrine is concerned with the very existence of war, its aims and nature, the weapons that will be used, and how they will be employed. Moreover, it is that aspect of Soviet planning that prepares the Armed Forces *and the nation* for war, identifies who the enemy is, and how the war is to be fought — from a strategic viewpoint. In the U.S.S.R. military doctrine directly involves all significant spheres of state activity. More importantly, while there certainly can be discussion prior to a final decision, once doctrine is determined by the Party leadership, its fundamental concepts are not subject to open debate.

Dissemination is another important aspect of *voyenna doktrina*. The authors aptly describe the role of the press through newspapers, journals and other official organs, as well as radio and television. These media ensure that SMD permeates all strata of Soviet society. Moreover, official organs such as *Pravda*, *Voyennaya Mysl'* (*Military Thought*) and others have no true equivalent in Canada. *Canadian Defence Quarterly* for example, is neither an organ of the Ministry of Defence, nor is it heavily supported by the state. The Main Political Administration of the Soviet Army and Navy ensures that such organs follow the dictates of the Communist Party.

Gorbachev has openly acknowledged in *Pravda* that the country found itself in a “state of severe crisis” at the start of this decade. In order to invigorate the Soviet economy, restructuring, withdrawals and reductions will continue to be vigorously pursued, but only to an extent that the result is in their favor and commensurate with their security interests. As the Scotts show, while there is little new in the latest Soviet venture to persuade the West that the threat is diminishing and that the West can relax its defence effort, Gorbachev appears to be succeeding.

While the authors' conclusions do not break any particularly fresh ground, *Soviet Military Doctrine* is very readable, carefully documented, and objective. Its publication (1988) arrived on the heels of a Warsaw Pact meeting in May 1987 when the “new” doctrine was revealed. Thus, SMD is an excellent and timely work, and should be read by any serious student of the U.S.S.R.

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