
Conference Report

'Alternative defense': a case study in Marshal Akhromeyev's maskirovka

by Our Special Correspondent

A June 3-5 conference on "Conventional Stability and Confidence-Building Defense Concepts," sponsored by the Evangelical Academy at Loccum in Lower Saxony, West Germany, proved to be a case study in how the Soviets use psycho-political and psycho-diplomatic warfare to manipulate and disorient the West.

Before an audience composed largely of pro-appeasement "peace researchers" from West Germany and other countries, Soviet representatives Dr. Sergei Rogov of the U.S.A.-Canada Institute (headed by Georgi Arbatov) in Moscow, and Dr. Alexander Kokeev of the Institute for World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), propagandized that the Soviets have reformed and want to further reform their military strategy, in favor of a doctrine that could be variously described as "structural non-attack capability," "non-offensive defense," or "reasonable sufficiency."

Rogov, formerly the number-two at the Soviet embassy in Washington, said that the Soviets now support such a doctrine as a step toward achieving a "joint security mechanism to manage the security needs of East and West" and "glasnost in the area of defense." Rogov said that the doctrine of Clausewitz, that war is the extension of politics by other means, is "dead, and it is time to bury it," and claimed that the Soviets had increasingly renounced the war-winning doctrines of Soviet Marshal V.D. Sokolovsky from the 1960s. Rogov said that he hoped such Soviet changes could create a "brave new world," a "utopia in this world."

All of this is an application of what is known in Russian as *maskirovka*, which could be rendered into English as "strategic deception" or "camouflage." The *maskirovka* divisions of Soviet military intelligence work out semantic-linguistic formulas, such as "reasonable sufficiency," "structural non-attack capability," and so on, and these are fed into sympathetic quarters in the West, who then carry on over a "break-through" in Soviet thinking on this or that.

The verbiage has a marginal relation to reality, since the Soviets are indeed restructuring their Armed Forces' capabilities. Since the early 1980s, the Soviets have massively *increased* their forces in Eastern Europe. The essence of the restructuring has been to move toward emphasis on special forces, smaller but more effectively deployed military units, weapons based on highly lethal post-nuclear technologies,

and on expanded use of disinformation operations, including those run through Western appeaser and "peace" circuits.

To make the psycho-political offensive yet more effective, the *maskirovka* specialists claim that the "new Soviet thinking" *originated in the West*, whether it be in the Pugwash Conference, the West German Social Democracy, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), or others. As Rogov stated June 3 in Loccum, "The Soviet Union did not invent the ideas of the interdependent world, sufficiency, a non-offensive doctrine."

Of course, the conclusion drawn at such meetings, is that the West should itself proceed further along the path of "alternative defense," by renouncing various weapons-systems, reducing the "enemy image" of the U.S.S.R. in Western thinking, changing the perception of the Soviet threat, etc. In Loccum, a delicatessen of such "alternative defense" proposals was on display, from at least 10 different "peace research" institutes, mainly in West Germany. The proposals are all based on ultra-utopian, cabinet-warfare ideas about altering "force structures" in the armies of East and West, to remove offensive attack capabilities.

The case of Marshal Akhromeyev

At the Loccum conference, two documents began circulating midway through the proceedings. One was entitled, "Doctrine for the Prevention of War and for the Preservation of Peace and of Socialism," authored by Soviet Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, chief of the general staff and first deputy defense minister. It had first appeared in the No. 12, 1987 edition of the magazine *Problems of Peace and Socialism*, published in Prague. The other was entitled, "The Military Doctrine of the Warsaw Pact—Doctrine for the Protection of Peace and Socialism," by Defense Minister Dmitri Yazov, which had appeared in *Pravda* on May 27, 1987.

Rogov repeatedly cited Akhromeyev and Yazov as the authors of the doctrinal transformation toward emphasis on "defense" and renunciation of Sokolovsky, stressing that their importance was increased by the fact that they were two of the most senior surviving veterans of World War II. Leave aside for the moment the fact that Rogov's citations were either selectively taken out of context or were outright misquotes or misinterpretations from the texts of the actual arti-

cles, or that anybody actually reading these texts will learn that the Soviets have a very special, self-serving notion of what "defense" means.

The presence of Akhromeyev at Loccum is itself sufficient to identify the nature of the Soviet deception.

The 1985 *EIR Special Report*, "Global Showdown," had exposed Akhromeyev as a key member of the team put into place by Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, to implement the "Ogarkov Plan" for Soviet global military hegemony, or victory, by the early 1990s. Now, important corroborating information about Akhromeyev has come out in the No. 4, 1988 edition of *International Defense Review* monthly, published in Switzerland. Author Peter Weiss exposes Akhromeyev as one of the main coordinators of the Soviet military's *maskirovka* operations, who, while working with Marshal Ogarkov between 1974 and 1979, headed the Main Directorate for Deception and Disinformation of the Soviet general staff, which was established by Ogarkov.

Writes Weiss: "In East European military circles, Akhromeyev is seen as one of the most capable pupils of his predecessor Ogarkov and as the most convinced devotee of the latter's military doctrine. Just like Ogarkov, he gives the greatest emphasis to operations of combined weapons which are to be carried out with intense firepower in the strategic theaters of the offensive (acronym TVD, in Russian), and to a centralized deployment of troops. Like Ogarkov, he is of the view, that in future war will not be decided by nuclear weapons, but by conventional offensives carried out with the most modern weapons technology. The use of nuclear battlefield weapons would lead to an escalation devastating for both sides. Under the direction of Akhromeyev, the Soviet General Staff has already developed capacities by which the Soviet Union can win a war even without nuclear weapons—think of the gigantic increase of Soviet air and naval forces in the beginning of the 1980s.

"Akhromeyev is also an expert for *psycho-political conduct of war*, which he integrates into military planning. This can be seen in various articles of the Marshal published in the Soviet press. In a May 8, 1986 article appearing in the government daily *Izvestia*, Akhromeyev gave as an example: 'The main lesson from the Second World War, that one must fight against war before it begins, is today especially useful. Historical experience teaches, that for the protection of peace, it is essential to create a unified active movement against the aggressive forces of imperialism.' Like for other high-ranking Soviet military strategists, who have spoken in a similar sense, so for Akhromeyev, subversive activities and *disinformation through front-organizations operating with peace slogans*, are an essential part of the peaceful defense doctrine of the Soviet Union [emphasis added]."

Weiss identifies Akhromeyev's basic concept, that "counteractions are the main form of action of the military forces," and then quotes from the latter's article in *Problems of Peace and Socialism*, that this "does not at all reduce, but

rather increases requirements for alertness and combat-readiness of the united strike forces and their capability to detect preparations by an aggressor for an attack in time and to deliver an *annihilating blow* to him under any conditions [emphasis added]." Further, Weiss stresses, in the view of "disarmament expert Akhromeyev," it would be wrong to (again quoting the marshal) "interpret sufficient defense capabilities as a unilateral disarmament, or as a unilateral slowing-down of our defense efforts."

'Initiatives' from the West

The case of Akhromeyev also shows precisely how the *maskirovka* operations utilize Western assets, as a "play-back" of Soviet operations into the West. In November 1983, Akhromeyev had a meeting with Egon Bahr, expert on security policy for the West German Social Democrats (SPD) and international security policy adviser to then-SPD chairman Willy Brandt. They discussed the creation of nuclear-free zones, and a new notion of "defensive defense." From all available evidence, that was the launching-point for this now-popular term.

Soon thereafter, the "defensive defense" propaganda began to form the basis for proposals "from the West." SPD official Horst Ehmke first floated the notion publicly in January 1984, and by May 1984, the so-called Von Bülow Commission of the SPD had been formed, which developed the details of the concept. This was, from the outset, a project patronized both by the Soviets and the U.S. Eastern Establishment. SPDer von Bülow collaborated, in formulating the work, with both Akhromeyev and Gen. Col. Nikolai Chervov, and received funding from the New York Council on Foreign Relations, which was then launching its "NATO in the 1990s" project.

From 1984-87, proposals for "alternative defense" were elaborated by the "Conventional Strategy Task Force" of the Pugwash Conference, by the "Stability-Oriented Security and Defense Policy" research group of the Max Planck Institute in Starnberg, West Germany, and others. During 1986 and 1987, Gorbachov both commissioned a special report from the Starnberg group, and then ostentatiously "endorsed" it. By May 1987, the Soviet Committee for Security and Cooperation in Europe sponsored the first international conference on the theme of "non-provocative defense." Around this time, Arbatov's U.S.A.-Canada Institute formed an "alternative defense research group." Several East-West conferences on this theme took place during the late 1987-early 1988 period.

In April-May of this year came the visits to Moscow of SPD leaders Egon Bahr, Willy Brandt, and current SPD chairman Hans-Jochen Vogel. Vogel, during his Moscow stay, met with Akhromeyev, among others.

The propaganda is due to hit a spectacular level at a big conference June 21-22 in East Berlin, sponsored by the East German government, on the theme, "nuclear-free zones."