

Air Force Intelligence experts aren't buying Gorbachov's glasnost

by William Jones

Although the Liberal Establishment is still shouting its hosannahs over President Mikhail Gorbachov's "reforms," there is evidence of a growing concern within the intelligence community over the nature and possible consequences of these reforms for the Soviet Union and the rest of the world. This concern provided a backdrop to the occasional outbursts of enthusiasm and admiration over Gorbachov's endeavor, expressed at the Air Force Intelligence Conference on Soviet Affairs, held Oct. 19-22 in Arlington, Virginia. The conference, entitled "The Soviet Union—Toward the 21st Century: Political-Military Affairs in the Gorbachov Era," brought together Kremlinologists from academia and the intelligence community, to address a predominantly military audience.

In spite of the different viewpoints expressed by various speakers, this observer was struck by the fact that much of the analysis of Soviet military posture elaborated over the years in *EIR*, and particularly by its contributing editor Lyndon LaRouche, is now becoming an integral part of the analysis of the intelligence community, in particular with regard to the role of the circles associated with Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov. When Ogarkov was transferred from the post of Chief of the General Staff to take charge of the newly created Western Theater of War, many Sovietologists claimed that he had been "demoted and disgraced." In July 1985, *EIR*'s Special Report, "Global Showdown: The Russian Imperial War Plan for 1988," showed that the Ogarkov Doctrine provided the underpinnings of Soviet military policy, and that Ogarkov's "demotion" was simply an attempt to mask his real significance.

Several speakers warned against disregarding the continued influence of Ogarkov. In one forum dealing with "Perestroika and the Soviet Military Leadership," an analyst from the Strategic Air Command, Linda Urrutia, explained how the Soviet military since 1947 had experienced changes in roughly 10-year intervals. From 1967 to 1977, it was Marshal Andrei Grechko pushing for modernization. From 1977 to 1987, including the momentous reorganization into theater commands in 1984, was the Ogarkov period.

Urrutia cited unconfirmed reports, that Ogarkov is the first deputy commander of the Strategic Nuclear Forces, and in this capacity, as probable nuclear release authority, he would not be subordinate to Chief of Staff Marshal Sergei

Akhromeyev. Urrutia thought that Ogarkov was probably reporting directly to the Soviet Defense Council, the highest military body in the Soviet Union, or to Gorbachov personally. One speaker commented, "If any changes were to be made in the Soviet nuclear triad, then Ogarkov would be the ideal person to lead it." Panel chairman Richard Woff, from the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst, United Kingdom, observed that Ogarkov will continue to have commanding authority in the redefinition of Soviet doctrine, in the forthcoming new edition of the *Soviet Military Encyclopedia* and elsewhere.

In a forum entitled "Civil-Military Relations Under Gorbachov," State Department analyst Dale Herspring commented, "Ogarkov changed the way the Soviets look at things." Herspring suggested that it was in fact the Soviet military who were most likely formulating Soviet arms control proposals. "Why, Akhromeyev is probably the author of the INF agreement," said Herspring.

There were occasional expressions of approval for the Gorbachov reforms. Some speakers tried to portray a dichotomy between Gorbachov and the Soviet High Command; Robert Blackwell from the CIA commented that the Soviet military "probably gets its way less now than ever before. . . . I wouldn't overemphasize the consensus of the military on the INF and on-site inspection. They were probably pushed into it."

It was also apparent that Soviet-U.S. military exchanges have had some of the psychological effect desired by Moscow in reducing the "enemy image" of the Soviets. One Air Force colonel waxed euphoric about how Defense Minister Dmitri Yazov "really cares about his men," adding that even the more formal Akhromeyev, after his recent tour of the United States, "bubbled over, in his way." Despite signs of such wishful thinking, the conference was characterized by an atmosphere of caution and sobriety with regard to any major changes in Soviet offensive posture.

Moscow's spetsnaz capability

The panel on the Soviet special forces commando teams, the spetsnaz, although it presented many items of interest, left much to be desired in terms of an analysis of the spetsnaz capability in a situation of irregular warfare. The major dis-

cussion was the capability of spetsnaz when deployed with other diversionary units in a war theater, e. g., Afghanistan. Sergei Zamascikov from the RAND Corporation discussed the historical development of Special Operations, which began during the Russian Civil War. Long-time Deputy Chief Mansurov of the GRU (military intelligence) service began his career conducting operations behind enemy lines during the Finnish Winter War and later outside Leningrad. He was in charge of operations during the Spanish Civil War.

A full resumé of Mansurov's career—particularly its early years—has not yet been made public, perhaps, surmised Zamascikov, in order to guard trade secrets. The Finns had successfully used special operations against the Soviets during the Winter War, and the Soviets were quick to learn from that experience. But the regular deployment of such operations did not come, said Zamascikov, until 1942, after which they were institutionalized.

Gordon McCormick from RAND Corporation presented a paper on "Soviet Special Operations in Sweden," which more directly indicated the possible function of spetsnaz in the period immediately preceding the outbreak of hostilities. McCormick detailed how 125 Swedish pilots had been visited at their homes by Russians posing as Polish art-sellers, most likely for the sake of profiling their living conditions. Swedish military authorities had considered this an intelligence surveillance in order to set these pilots up for assassination immediately before a Soviet attack. This would represent a capability to sabotage the very deployment of a country's military forces. He indicated that many East Europeans had suddenly started showing up outside military installations.

McCormick pointed out that 1987 was also the year with the greatest number of submarine incidents reported. The purpose of the operations was to target the mobilization system, so that mobilization doesn't begin. This gave rise during the discussion period to the question of the possibility of the Soviets deploying spetsnaz operatives long before the outbreak of hostilities, to be in place to conduct assassinations and sabotage immediately prior to an attack.

'Reasonable sufficiency'?

There was also a great deal of skepticism expressed concerning the Soviets' claim to have switched to a new doctrine of "reasonable sufficiency" or "defensive defense." Benjamin Lambeth of the RAND Corporation referred to one Soviet official, who asserted that the Soviet policy has been defensive since 1918!

The Soviet concept of "defense," many speakers documented, subsumes not only the notion of a counter-offensive, but also preemption. Lambeth quoted Gen. Ivan Tretyak, the chief of Soviet Air Defense, who said that "the Soviets must be well-versed in the art of attack." Jamie McConnell, from the Center for Naval Analyses, summarized how Gen. Col. Makhmut Gareyev conceives of active defensive moves lead-

ing to "a counteroffensive, which then turns into a general offensive." Edward Warner III from RAND commented that the "Soviets are better prepared to launch blitzkrieg operations today than ever before."

A panel on Soviet theater forces allowed analyst Notra Trulock to demonstrate the Soviets' intention to achieve improved numerical superiority ratios through their "defensive defense" reorganization, and their "reevaluation of defense as an opportunity to preempt the attacker's preparations for an offensive." Sally Stoecker of RAND gave quotations from Soviet military journals, whose description of "active defense" is indistinguishable from their words on the offensive. These writings contrast with reports on the "new doctrine," written by Soviet spokesmen for Western consumption, she remarked.

In a forum on the Soviet machine-building sector, some of the more far-ranging aspects of *perestroika* were brought to light. The Soviet defense industries, which comprise nine separate ministries, are characterized by higher efficiencies and greater productivity than the civilian ministries. John Gore of the Defense Intelligence Agency noted that Gorbachov, in pursuing his modernization program, was looking for help from 1) Eastern Europe, 2) the West, 3) a reallocation of internal civilian resources, and 4) the defense industry. He noted that there was evidence that Gorbachov was attempting to utilize capacity in the defense industries for civilian production, preferably without infringing on present production quotas for the defense industry itself.

James Steiner from the CIA noted that the Soviets, through an extensive acquisition process in the West, often incorporate weapons into their systems, while they're still at the experimental stage in the West. The Soviets, said Steiner, have done well in integrating their firing systems, but they are having problems with guidance systems. They have become extremely high-tech in their metals-processing industry, but remain behind in computers and control techniques. Gorbachov has attacked Soviet science for being too slow, and is presently shaking up the Soviet Academy of Sciences to accelerate the development of scientific research. Gorbachov's reform program involves six components: 1) the modernization of industry; 2) economic reforms; 3) the establishment of Interbranch Scientific-Technological Complexes, which would develop and bring on line new technologies to be disseminated over numerous branches of industry; 4) reforming the Academy of Science; and 5) gaining access to foreign technology, especially computers and electronics.

In at least one panel, the fact that Soviet economic difficulties make the U.S.S.R. more dangerous, not less, was introduced. Edward Luttwak of the Center for Strategic and International Studies remarked that reports of Soviet "pessimism" regarding the industrial base of its military, and other capabilities, had sinister overtones. "The strong country doesn't make war," he said, "but the failing one, before its winning capability melts."