

# Moscow's new 'defensive' doctrine hides post-nuclear offensive posture

by Konstantin George

Moscow has gone out of its way throughout 1988 to convince the West that it has adopted a new "defensive" military doctrine. This campaign hit a climactic phase around Gorbachov's United Nations "troop reduction" address and the lie peddled by his entourage that Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev had "retired" as Chief of the General Staff on account of "ill health." The "troop reductions" are worse than a fraud; they are a crucial component of a crash plan by the Soviet Military Command to bring the entire Soviet armed forces to full war readiness in the next two years, and are part and parcel of Moscow's *real* new doctrine, a deadly new *offensive* doctrine.

On Dec. 15, Radio Moscow announced Akhromeyev's removal as Chief of the General Staff, in the following words: "A new Chief of the General Staff has been appointed. He is General Colonel Mikhail Moiseyev. He took over from Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, who was relieved of his post in connection with his receiving a new assignment." Once again, the West had fallen victim to carefully staged Russian *maskirovka* (deception). Akhromeyev has not been "retired" and clearly suffers from no "ill health."

In fact the formulations are identical with those of Sept. 6, 1984 when Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov was "relieved of his post" as Chief of the General Staff, which, as the world was soon to learn, gave him a huge promotion—to directing the Soviet Union's wartime theater command structure.

As with the content of Gorbachov's U.N. speech, the appointment of Moiseyev as the new Chief of the General Staff, is another big step in the consolidation of Russia's new offensive doctrine. Here we shall rip off the "defensive" doctrine veil so meticulously crafted by Moscow over the past year, since the signing of the infamous INF Treaty, removing most of the effective U.S. nuclear presence in Europe, and reveal the true post-INF story: Moscow's shift to a new offensive doctrine, emphasizing elite airborne, air assault, and spetsnaz (special national) forces.

## Spetsnaz-centered offensive doctrine

To summarize the matter. The highly publicized new Soviet "defensive military doctrine" is a cover for the refine-

ment and improvement of the traditional Soviet military offensive doctrine, featuring the use of spetsnaz and airborne forces at the center of the new offensive posture, based on post-nuclear, "emerging technologies" weapons. The new offensive doctrine is designed to secure by means of full-scale deployment of these elite forces and post-nuclear new technology weapons, the destruction of the enemy's rear area nuclear forces, aircraft and logistics, to score decisive victory at the "outset of war."

The existence of the new offensive doctrine was confirmed publicly in a Radio Moscow interview, July 29, 1988 with General G.V. Batenin, a military adviser to the Central Committee, on loan from the General Staff. In the interview, Batenin revealed that during the past two years "most of our military exercises involve repelling submarine, airborne, and commando attacks."

Batenin specified that such exercises have been most heavily concentrated in the Leningrad Military District, which includes the Kola Peninsula and the Northern Fleet, and the Far Eastern M.D., which includes the Pacific Fleet.

Batenin's revelations are important on two counts. First, it marks a clear admission that, since 1986, the main weight of Soviet military exercises has shifted to *offensive* operations by elite spetsnaz and airborne units staging "airborne and commando attacks" which "defenders" have tried to repel. Beyond the Leningrad and Far East M.D.s named as where such exercises have been most heavily concentrated, the same pattern has been in evidence among all the Soviet "Groups of Forces" stationed in Eastern Europe, and in the Odessa and Baltic M.D.s as well.

Secondly, all such exercises are, by their airborne and commando nature, relatively small numerically, and thus are below the troop numbers requiring Western observers and public announcement.

The new Soviet airborne and spetsnaz centered offensive doctrine forms the "secret" behind what has appeared to the West as the "stunning" military personnel shifts during 1987 and 1988. During this two-year time frame, those generals who have been most extensively involved in reshaping the Soviet armed forces in conformity with the dictates of the

new doctrine, have been the ones propelled and in some cases catapulted into the highest command positions of the military.

Batenin's revelations concerning the crucial role the Far East M.D. has played in rehearsing "airborne and commando attacks," explain why a 49-year-old General Colonel, Mikhail Moiseyev, who has spent the last five years in the Far East M.D., at the center of the airborne and commando "experiments" consolidating the new doctrine, has been catapulted from Far East M.D. commander to Chief of the Soviet General Staff. The same principle holds true for the incredible rise of General Dmitri Yazov, 18 months earlier, from Far East commander, to deputy defense minister, to Defense Minister, May 30, 1987.

The new airborne-centered offensive doctrine is also the reason that within a month of Yazov becoming Defense Minister, three generals who had been at the center of developing and expanding Soviet airborne-spetsnaz capabilities since the 1960s, General M.I. Sorokin, General D.S. Sukhorukov, and General I.M. Tretyak, became deputy defense ministers.

The Leningrad M.D., also correctly singled out by Batenin, produced a crop of generals, expert in conducting airborne spetsnaz operations, who have become, together with Afghanistan war veterans, the new command team for the Soviet forces stationed in Eastern Europe.

## The new doctrine

The new Soviet offensive doctrine was evaluated in a presentation at an *EIR* seminar on electromagnetic weapons in London, June 24, 1988 by Lt. Gen. Gerard C. Berkhof (ret.) Royal Netherlands Land Army:

The doctrine is aimed at:

- achieving surprise by the manipulation of political tension and other maskirovka measures.

- conducting deep operations by air assault brigades, spetsnaz companies of the armies . . . and assisting the operations of the ground forces by amphibious landings.

- conducting the operational/strategic air operation by attacking important military targets in NATO's rear area using missiles, the spetsnaz brigades of the fronts, and the naval spetsnaz brigades of the fleets, and aircraft attacking through air corridors.

- By simultaneous operations at the front and the rear, the Soviet military hoped that the military and political integrity of NATO would be destroyed before nuclear weapons were used. The air operation, subsequent attacks with non-nuclear missiles, spetsnaz brigades, and aircraft against NATO's nuclear forces, command and control systems, and air defenses, figured prominently in this concept.

The new doctrine is linked to Moscow's ongoing crash efforts to develop and deploy new technology weapons,

referred to by Marshal Akhromeyev and other Soviet military leaders as "conventional weapons" which "approximate nuclear weapons in power, range, and accuracy."

With the firepower revolution effected by such weapons and the offensive "mobility revolution" attained by the extraordinary emphasis on airborne/spetsnaz operations, numerical reductions in the Armed Forces, as Gorbachov has now announced, are not only possible, but actually necessary, to bring the *entire* armed forces to the level of total war readiness required to score victory at the *outset* of war.

Thus, Gorbachov's "reductions" are not "disarmament," but an integral part of a final phase pre-war plan. By cutting low readiness troops, energy can be devoted to bringing all other units up to 100% war readiness. Correspondingly, eliminating thousands of obsolete, worthless tanks, towed artillery and hundreds of aircraft, increases war fighting capabilities.

## Preparing military options

Gorbachov's disclosure of a war mobilization plan was not the only ominous military note to sound out of Moscow in the closing months of 1988. Starting in September with the failure of the grain harvest, items showing advanced preparations for outward aggression began to mount.

- Starting in September, confirmation that the most sweeping reorganization of the Soviet wartime theater commands and the Warsaw Pact command since Ogarkov's September 1984 creation of the theater commands, was under way, and has continued with Akhromeyev's transfer and Moiseyev's promotion.

- The huge September "Autumn '88" maneuvers, commanded by Yazov, attended by all Warsaw Pact Defense Ministers, opposite Romania, in the Soviet republics of Moldavia and the Ukraine. These were the largest maneuvers to date embodying the new doctrine. They featured large-scale airborne, spetsnaz, and amphibious landing operations, all a clear rehearsal for a lightning strike to occupy Romania as a stepping stone to later operations in Yugoslavia.

- The 1988 Transcaucasus military build up, ominously poised on the borders of Iran and Turkey. In May, a former commander of Soviet forces in Afghanistan, Lt. Gen. I.N. Rodionov, assumed command of the Transcaucasus M.D., and in November, Gen. Col. M.A. Tyagunov, previously 1st deputy commander in chief of the Southwest Theater of War, and fresh from a pivotal role in the "Autumn '88" maneuvers, joined High Command South in Baku.

- The threat in the Far East, targeting Japan and South Korea, is growing. During 1988, after a two year lapse—the two years in which the Far East pioneered the doctrinal shift and brought its airborne/spetsnaz and amphibious forces to instant readiness for operations against Japan—the Far East High Command was ominously upgraded to its wartime function, when the vacant post of 1st deputy commander in chief was filled, by Gen. Lt. A. Kleimenov.