
Soviet Military Buildup

Ogarkov takes charge of 'secret' maneuvers

by Konstantin George

Two singular developments involving the Soviet military leadership occurred during the first week in June, both of which placed renewed emphasis on the U.S.S.R.'s unremitting drive to perfect and complete all training and hardware preparations necessary to launch and win a war against the United States and NATO by 1988.

The first was noted during the combined maneuvers of the Soviet and Czech armed forces on Czechoslovak soil, near the West German border, from May 25 to May 30. Well-informed West German defense sources have confirmed, and noted with alarm, that these maneuvers were commanded not by the Commander of the Soviet forces stationed in Czechoslovakia, General Yermakov, but by the Commander in Chief for all wartime operations against the United States and NATO, Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov.

The official Warsaw Pact statement marking the end of the maneuvers mentioned a military gathering on May 30, with the following revealing phrase: "Among those present were the Commander of the Central Group of Forces [as the Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia are called], General Yermakov. . . ." Also present were Czech Defense Minister Vaclavik and Soviet Warsaw Pact representative Gen. Ivan Voloshin.

It was clear from these formulations, to West German specialists in such maneuvers, accustomed to reading between the lines of Soviet military bulletins, that if these gentlemen were "among those present," then others—unnamed—were also there, and that one of them was indeed the commander of the maneuvers. That commander was none other than Marshal Ogarkov.

Since assuming his wartime post in September 1984, Marshal Ogarkov has been shuttling among the Soviet Armies in East Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, and the Second Echelon Soviet invasion troops, based in Byelorussia, the Baltic area, and the other Military Districts of the western Soviet Union. Contrary to reports in the Western news media that his transfer from the post of Chief of the General Staff to his current position was a "demotion," he has instead overseen a far-reaching transformation of the Soviet armed forces (see *EIR*, March 5, "Soviet military creates a wartime High Command").

The maneuvers in Czechoslovakia not only had no offi-

cially named commander, but also, no name. They were begun with no visible preparations, or signs that something was about to begin. This will be the case with the majority of Soviet and Warsaw Pact maneuvers that will be held throughout the coming summer and fall, and in the next two years as well. It's all part of what is required to perfect the art of mounting, by 1988, a surprise strike from a standing start, against the United States, and a surprise ground, air, and amphibious attack on Western Europe.

The placing of the Czech maneuvers under control of Marshal Ogarkov, the wartime Commander in Chief, was not a "one-time only" move. Observers expect that Ogarkov will personally direct each of the key upcoming maneuvers in Eastern Europe and the western Soviet Union.

The offensive strategic build-up

The second remarkable development concerned Ogarkov's protégé and successor as Chief of the General Staff, Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, who wrote a lengthy article for *Pravda* of June 3, announcing that the Soviet Union will increase its strategic offensive weapons (land- and sea-based ICBMs). Akhromeyev lied that the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative was a violation of the 1972 ABM Treaty, and declared that if the United States persists with the SDI, not only can there be no "reductions" in nuclear arms, but this will lead to "an increase in strategic offensive weapons."

Akhromeyev piously denied Russian violations of the ABM Treaty and ongoing Russian efforts to develop a breakthrough in ABM technologies. He denied the function of the Krasnoyarsk phased array ABM radar facility, by saying that Krasnoyarsk "is intended for the observation of objects in space. . . . It has no relation whatsoever to a missile attack early warning system." As if a missile, after launch, does not become "an object in space"!

The Soviet announcement that it will increase strategic weaponry, follows the U.S. Congress's vote to unilaterally slash 50 MX missiles from its missile modernization program. To promote further cuts on the American side, and to buttress the position of such modern-day Neville Chamberlains as U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz and West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, General Akhromeyev extended an offer for the most sizable "deep cuts" missile reduction yet, if "only" the United States would agree to abandon the SDI.

"The Soviet Union has already suggested that strategic offensive arms be reduced by a quarter," he wrote. "It is possible to make even deeper cuts in the case of the non-militarization of space. There is no other way to resolve this question."

Defense sources in Europe were struck by this formulation. Not only was it in contrast to the non-quantified standard "deep cuts" phrase; it was also significant that the authoritative Soviet military, writing in the Communist Party daily *Pravda*, was upstaging and updating what "the Soviet Union has already suggested."