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## Documentation

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# What the U.S.S.R.'s military leaders are saying about war and warfare

by Rachel Douglas, Soviet Sector Editor

In late June and early July, a parade of Soviet generals and marshals marched across the pages of the military daily *Red Star* and the Communist Party press, with a single message: the U.S.S.R. has committed resources to ready itself for "the possible war which the imperialists are preparing against the countries of socialism."

The official news agency TASS narrowed this generalization by the Soviet military's top political officer, General Yepishev, with a July 15 commentary that recent statements by United States Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger "can only be qualified as a call to war." This was Moscow's response to Weinberger's public pronouncements and to leaks from his department confirm that his policy is a "first strike" doctrine without in-depth warfighting capabilities behind it.

Moscow will do anything, politically and militarily, to prevent NATO from acquiring the ability to inflict a first strike, with the installation of Pershing II missiles in Europe or otherwise. Already, the Soviets are channeling **funds** into a quantitative and qualitative arms buildup, in response to American policy and the realignment of political forces in Europe.

The last time the Soviet military so openly enunciated strategic doctrine and motivated the arms budget as Yepishev and others are doing now, was in early 1978. After that, with Brezhnev's May 1978 trip to West Germany to sign a 25-year economic cooperation treaty with Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and the immediately subsequent formation of the European Monetary System by Schmidt and then French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Moscow had a Europe-centered war-avoidance policy. The Bonn-Paris-Moscow triangle was a strategic stabilizer, despite the dangerous Carter administration.

Now Giscard is out of office, Schmidt is under fire, Britain's Lord Carrington is chairing European foreign policy, and the Soviet marshals have their uniforms on again. Particularly since the election of Socialist François Mitterrand as president of France in May, the Soviet leadership has shifted into a military-strategic mode of *functioning*.

On July 16, the Russian-language service of TASS

issued advance copy from a forthcoming article in the party journal *Kommunist*, by Chief of Staff Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov. The Soviet armed forces have to be advanced, he said, because of American policy, and the priority would be development of the strategic nuclear forces.

Ogarkov wrote that war between the superpowers would involve all continents, with "the whole of mankind . . . at stake," as Soviet weapons could strike accurately against targets located anywhere on the globe. Although he described Soviet doctrine as defensive, Ogarkov warned that, if it came to conflict, the doctrine provided for "vigorous and up-to-date offensive actions."

A participant in the negotiations for the two SALT treaties, Ogarkov is widely considered the high-ranking military officer nearest to Brezhnev's détente policy and less close than some other military men to the theory of "peaceful coexistence." In this *Kommunist* article, however, the Soviet Chief of Staff says that war between the great powers will be "the decisive clash of two antagonistic systems."

### Strengthen strategic arsenal

Col. Gen. Engineer V. Shabanov, the Soviet Deputy Defense Minister for Armaments, presented the case for a buildup in the June 26 issue of *Red Star*:

"It must be stressed most clearly: our party and its Central Committee and the Soviet government are compelled to earmark the funds necessary for the improvement of armaments and military equipment, in order to maintain the high combat readiness of the army and navy and to safeguard the security of the socialist fatherland and our allies. . . . Those Western circles which hope to achieve military superiority over the Soviet Union should always remember the potential of our socialist country. . . . The economy, science and technology in our country are now at such a high level,' Marshal of the Soviet Union D. F. Ustinov . . . points out, 'that we are capable of creating within a very short time any type of weapon on which the enemies of peace might like to gamble.' . . .

“Our efforts . . . are directed toward a continued scientific quest. The interests of the motherland’s defense require efficient utilization of the results of scientific and technical progress, to create promising models of weapons and combat hardware. As a system of scientifically substantiated views on questions of the development of arms and combat hardware, our unified military-technical policy serves us well in maintaining the technical equipment of the armed forces at the level of modern requirements.”

### **The Euromissile doctrine**

On June 30, military analyst Lev Semeiko took to the pages of *Red Star* for a review of the strategic importance of NATO’s emplacement of Pershing II and cruise missiles in Europe by 1983. Calling them first-strike weapons, Semeiko promised Soviet countermeasures. Semeiko wrote:

“It is a matter not only of the quantitative but also the qualitative aspect of the question. For it is a question of an increase in the might of the strategic potential aimed at the most densely populated and industrially developed part of the Soviet Union. . . . Another aspect is also important. Carter’s Directive 59 must not be forgotten—the Reagan administration has by no means abandoned it. And the directive envisages maximally extensive strikes at military and administrative installations. In their attempts to ensure effective strikes at them, American strategists place particular hope on reducing the time the Euromissiles take to reach their targets. Whereas this totals roughly 30 minutes for strategic missiles and less than 15 minutes for submarine-launched missiles, for the Pershing II missiles . . . it will be only 4 to 6 minutes. Moreover, Washington takes into account the fact that the U.S.S.R. has no analogous strategic potential near the American continent. . . .

“If you add to this the Euromissiles’ great accuracy, their military importance becomes even more obvious—they would constitute a qualitatively distinct and essentially new strategic potential. In these conditions, it is thought in the United States, American strategic superiority would be reborn. . . . Of course such calculations are totally unrealistic, considering the inevitable Soviet countermeasures. As a result of the new turn in the arms race, the world has drawn considerably nearer to the brink of a nuclear catastrophe. . . .

“In strategy they see . . . a chance of gaining an opportunity to launch a surprise, disarming strike. It is not fortuitous that the number of new American missiles—572—was calculated so scrupulously. ‘This number reflects the military assessment of what is necessary for a counterforce strike at Warsaw Pact military installations,’ the American journal *Fortune* frankly admitted. But these calculations have no prospects. As Comrade

L. I. Brezhnev stated in his speech in Tbilisi [May 22, 1981], ‘We will not be able to let the deployment on European soil of new American nuclear missiles aimed at the U.S.S.R. and our allies pass without consequences. In this case, we will be forced to think about additional defense measures. If required, we will find most impressive means for protecting our vital interests.’ This most important provision of Soviet policy indicates how utterly unrealistic are Washington’s and NATO’s strategic schemes.”

An article in an April issue of *Kommunist* shows even more precisely why the Euromissiles, with their reduced flight time, cannot be tolerated by the Soviet command. The current Russian answer to an attempted counterforce strike is as follows:

“What is meant by a limited ‘counterforce strike’? . . . If it refers to a launch of several rockets against military targets of the enemy, this idea is no less absurd than the threat of a suicidal massive strike. A step like that, after all, would obviously mean the unleashing of a ‘central’ thermonuclear conflict and, moreover, would give the other side the initiative, permitting him to use his remaining, practically untouched strategic arsenal. If the Washington planners intend a coordinated missile strike at the entire complex of land-based strategic targets, then this consequently means firing several thousand nuclear warheads at the other country’s territory. In this case, the aggressor should have no doubts, that the answer to such a, so to speak, ‘selective’ strike would be full, annihilating retaliation, possibly not waiting for the ‘counterforce’ attack to reach its targets.”

### **TASS on Weinberger**

From its Washington bureau, TASS on July 15 filed a dispatch on Weinberger’s speech at the National Defense Institute at Fort McNair the previous day. It said, in part:

“Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger yesterday gave an inflammatory speech, which can be qualified only as a call to war. . . . He said that there existed many opportunities for direct confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States and that there was no guarantee that the existing nuclear balance could avert a major conventional war. The United States, the Pentagon chief said, should recognize that this war might be found in many theatres of operations, or, in other words, on a global scale. . . .

“Caspar Weinberger said he did not accept the argument that the very talk of the possibility of a nuclear conflict made it more probable. But his speech . . . and Washington’s concrete militarist actions indicate that Washington does not rule out the possibility of such a conflict and is conditioning American public opinion for it.”