

active armies (20 divisions) stationed in East Germany, known as the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany (GSFG), where he directed a five-year program of modernizing and heavily strengthening the offensive power of the GSFG (especially in armor, missiles, and aircraft/helicopters), and brought in a new stable of "blitzkrieg" generals as army and major-unit commanders (see *EIR* July 17, Aug. 7, and Oct. 30). In the same month, December 1980, Gen. Vladimir Govorov, until then commander of the Moscow Military District, was named commander of the Far East High Command at Chita, and Gen. Ivan Tretyak was named commander of the Far East Military District, whose areas of responsibility include the Vladivostok region, the Kuriles, and Sakhalin Island. The previous commander of the Far East High Command at Chita,

## Who is Marshal Sergei Sokolov?

Marshal Sergei L. Sokolov, now reported to be Commander of the Eastern Theater of War, and so, the counterpart to Soviet Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, Commander of the Western Theater of War, is a tank officer with eight years of actual combat experience. Appropriately enough, his combat experience began in the Far East, in 1938, where as a young tank officer (Bttn.Ex.O), he participated in the Soviet armored counterattacks which smashed the Japanese in heavy border fighting in which tens of thousands were killed. He next appeared as a tank officer in the 1939 Soviet invasion of Finland, and served most of the war as a tank officer on the Karelian Front, 1941-1944.

The Commander of the Karelian Front was Marshal K. A. Meretskov, whose son, until September 1984, was commander of the North Caucasus Military District, being named deputy to Warsaw Pact Commander Kulikov in the function of Soviet liaison to the East German armed forces. In 1945, Meretskov commanded the First Manchurian Front and co-led the August 1945 blitzkrieg which overran Manchuria within weeks. Most tank officers and units were transferred with their commander from the Karelian Front—after the separate peace with Finland in late 1944—to the Manchurian Theater. It is very probable that Sokolov ended his wartime service in the Far East.

Sokolov, a career tank officer, is, as one would expect, totally offensive oriented in his thinking. The longevity of his tenure as first deputy defense minister is also very significant. He received the post in April 1967 when Marshal Andrei Grechko became defense minister, and has kept this post throughout the tenure of Ustinov, Grechko's successor.

General Petrov, was summoned to Moscow to become head of the land forces—the post he still holds.

Thus, while Zaitsev prepared the GSFG for all forms of warfare, from a limited "surgical strike" into part of West Germany to an all-out offensive across Europe, Govorov and Tretyak accomplished parallel tasks concerning military operations against Japan and South Korea. The parallels reach down to the not insignificant detail that, in a clear statement of offensive intentions, in 1983 and 1984 for the first time in both East Germany and the Far East, the Soviets stationed a minimum of three air assault brigades in each location.

The "symmetry" extends further to the case of Germany and Korea, the two nations which share the tragic postwar "distinction" of being divided. Both now face the threat of a Soviet invasion, or, in the case of Korea, an invasion by the largest Soviet surrogate military power in the world, North Korea. Since the extensive tour of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe undertaken this past spring by North Korean leader Kim Il Sung, and his extensive consultations with the Kremlin, the Soviets have repeatedly and publicly been stressing their commitment to the "reunification of Korea," and their full support for North Korea's efforts to achieve it.

The fact is that on the soil of East Germany and North Korea, facing West Germany and South Korea, respectively, the following two events occurred in early 1984: The Soviet Armed Forces stationed in East Germany underwent their biggest strengthening and restructuring since the end of World War II, and, across the world in that other divided country, the North Korean Armed Forces undertook their biggest buildup of offensive power and restructuring since the end of the Korean War.

## Intimidation of Japan

The parallels in the Soviet political intimidation campaign against both West Germany and Japan are as striking as the military "hardware" parallels in terms of troop buildups, weaponry, and command changes. Since the spring of 1984, in an echo of the vitriolics employed on an almost daily basis against West Germany since December 1983, the Soviet Union has mounted and intensified a propaganda campaign against an alleged rebirth of "revanchism" in Japan. As in the case of West Germany, the Soviet litany of charges portray the Japanese leadership, and, above all, the armed forces, as infested with schemes and desires to plot the recovery of territory lost in 1945. The Japanese are allegedly plotting to seize the Kuriles and the southern half of Sakhalin, which were taken by the Soviets in 1945. How non-nuclear West Germany and Japan could ever militarily attack the Soviet Union is never explained to the Russian worker, peasant, or soldier.

That the attacks are nonsensical is self-evident. They are, however, significant, as in the case of Germany, because they create the climate and pretext for launching of either a "surgical-strike," limited-incursion seizure of territory, or all-out invasion of Japan. The area of West Germany most