

Who to watch for in the military brass

We present here highlights of EIR's biographical dossiers on some of the key Soviet military officers involved in the current staff reorganization. The full dossiers are available to our "Confidential Alert Service" clients on request.

First Deputy Defense Minister Vasilii I. Petrov

On Feb. 2, the Soviet military newspaper *Krasnaya Zvezda* quietly listed Marshal Vasilii I. Petrov as "first deputy minister of defense of the Soviet Union," telling anyone who knew how to read between the lines of the Soviet press that he was no longer deputy defense minister and, in line with that promotion, no longer commander in chief of the Ground Forces. He had been appointed to both of those posts in December 1980.

Petrov fought in World War II, starting out as a battalion commander and rising to chief of section of a division. During 1948-57, he rose to become commander of a regiment and then chief of staff of a division. The year 1957 marked the beginning of his 19 years of military service in the Far East, as a commander of a Motorized Rifle Division (1957-61), chief of staff of an army (1961-64), and then commander of an army (1964-66).

His second decade in the Far East was spent in district-level command positions. From 1966 to 1972, he was first chief of staff, and later first deputy commander of the Far East Military District. From April 1972 to June 1976, he served as commander of the Far East Military District.

From 1969 on, reflecting the extreme tensions with China, the Far East Military District received only what the Kremlin considered to be top-notch combat commanders. Every Far East Military District commander from that time on has risen to very high levels of command following his stint there.

After leaving the Far East in June 1976, Petrov was appointed first deputy commander in chief of the Ground Forces, staying at that post until the end of 1978. Then, following Moscow's decision to recreate the dormant—since April

1953—Far East High Command, Petrov was sent to the new headquarters in Chita in December 1978, as commander in chief of the Far East High Command.

While Petrov was first deputy commander in chief of the Ground Forces, serving under General of the Army Ivan G. Pavlovskii, Petrov was dispatched to Ethiopia to direct the Cuban and Ethiopian ground forces and their supporting Russian and East German fighter and fighter-bomber squadrons, in the successful routing of the Somalian invasion of the Ogaden desert region of Ethiopia. In that period—1977-78—the vast Soviet/Cuban military presence was the key lever in consolidating the Soviet hold on Ethiopia, together with other assets in the region such as Libya and South Yemen, directly across the Perim Straits from the Eritrean region of Ethiopia.

Two years later, in December 1980, in the context of a wide-ranging Soviet command reorganization, Petrov was named commander in chief of the Ground Forces. With his rise to the post of first deputy defense minister, we will certainly be hearing more about him in the months ahead.

Lieutenant General D. A. Volkogonov

A good candidate to replace the 76-year-old Gen. Aleksei Yepishev as head of the Main Political Administration of the Soviet Armed Forces is Lt. Gen. Volkogonov, the current deputy chief of the MPA. The MPA functions as a kind of "priesthood" for the armed forces, molding the belief structure of the military, from top to bottom. This is done through "political education" classes as well as the daily military media, all run by the MPA, bombarding the troops with liturgical, repetitive appeals to such Blood and Soil concepts as defense of "the Motherland" and "the sacred borders of the U.S.S.R."

Volkogonov gained distinction in 1977—the year Nikolai Ogarkov was named chief of the General Staff—for co-authoring the book *War And Army*, a landmark in Soviet military literature which flatly stated that the results of the Soviet military buildup make it feasible to embark upon an expansionist foreign and military policy. It declared the "external function" of the Soviet armed forces—outside the territory of the Warsaw Pact countries—to be "the basic, main one." Phase one in this process had occurred in 1975-76, with the Angolan venture and the North Vietnamese capture of Saigon. By 1977, Phase two was in full swing, with Soviet consolidation of control over Ethiopia. Therefore, Volkogonov concluded, "In contemporary circumstances the external function of the socialist army naturally is becoming broader and deeper. . . . In these circumstances the international obligation of socialist states is to give support and aid to liberated countries in suppressing the imperialist export of counter-revolution." Two years later, this line was employed to justify the invasion of Afghanistan.

Volkogonov has recently been given heavy publicity in the military press—a sure sign that he is on the way up. He hosted Romanian and Hungarian MPA delegations in Mos-

cow on Oct. 6 and 19. On Oct. 25 he was a speaker at the ceremony commemorating the 40th anniversary of Romania becoming a communist state, and on Nov. 16 he addressed representatives of the military press.

The prominence of his speaking engagements has risen markedly through the winter of 1984-85. Volkogonov was one of the main speakers at the funeral for Defense Minister Ustinov, and then a main speaker at the 100th anniversary festivities in January honoring the birth of General Frunze (the famous Soviet defense minister of the 1920s for whom the Frunze Military Academy is named). Finally, Volkogonov recently authored the lead article in *Communist of the Armed Forces*, the MPA's political journal (issue no. 2, 1985).

General of the Army Ivan A. Gerasimov

Named commander of the new High Command of the Southwestern Strategic Direction late in 1984, Gerasimov was born in 1921 and joined the Red Army in 1938. He served in World War II as chief of staff of a Tank Regiment, and later a Tank Brigade. In 1973, he was commander of the Soviet Northern Group of Forces in Poland, and then from 1975-84, commander of the Kiev Military District.

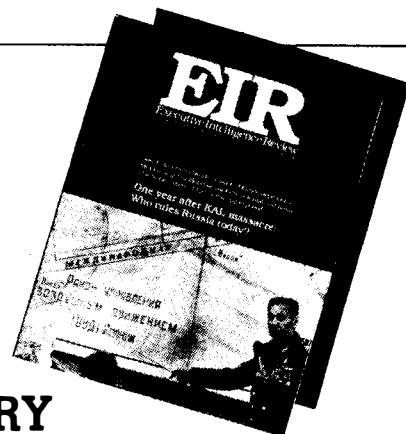
General of the Army Yuri P. Maksimov

The commander of the new High Command of the Southern Strategic Direction is a candidate member of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, and has played a key role in the Soviet subjugation of Afghanistan. Born in 1924, he served in World War II as a front-line company commander. He spent the past 11-12 years almost entirely in commanding positions in Tashkent, Central Asia. During 1973-76, and then 1978-79, he was the first deputy commander of the Turkestan Military District, headquartered in Tashkent. Just before the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan, he was promoted to commander of the Turkestan Military District, holding this post until late 1984.

In 1982 he was promoted to his current rank and awarded the order of "Hero of the Soviet Union," the highest order possible and awarded very rarely. It could only have been awarded for his commanding role in Afghanistan.

General of the Army Ivan M. Tretyak

The commander of the Far East High Command since July 1984, Tretyak was a candidate member of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party from 1971 to 1976, becoming a full CC member in 1976. Born in 1923, he joined the Red Army in 1939 and was a war combat hero in the Second World War, decorated in 1945 with the Order "Hero of the Soviet Union." He graduated from the Frunze Military Academy in 1949 and the General Staff Academy in 1959. During 1967-76, he commanded the Byelorussian Military District. From 1976 to July 1984, he served as commander of the Far East Military District.



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- SEPT. 6, 1984:** Soviet Chief of the General Staff Nikolai Ogarkov is officially "transferred to another post."
- SEPT. 10:** The *Christian Science Monitor* comments: "Suddenly, the man who earlier in the week had been at the side of Defense Minister Dmitri Ustinov had . . . become a nonperson. Most Western analysts are convinced that Ogarkov is at least in limbo, and perhaps in disgrace."
- SEPT. 25:** *EIR* publishes its evaluation: "The most important economic and military changes in the Soviet Union have been done under the guidance of Ogarkov. It is unlikely that he would have been demoted just at the point that the reorganization process is to be completed."
- OCT. 12:** Ogarkov resurfaces for a meeting with East German party chief Erich Honecker. Western news services learn that he has been named commander of the Western Theater of War.

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