

Ogarkov remains in strategic command

by Konstantin George

Moscow has confirmed that 71-year-old Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, the key figure in the Soviet High Command over the past 12 years, was never "retired" and remains commander-in-chief of the wartime High Command West.

The source is the February edition of the new Soviet monthly *Izvestia of the Central Committee*, which, in publishing the biographies of all full members of the Soviet Central Committee, cited Marshal Ogarkov as commander-in-chief of the "Western Strategic Direction." This is the Soviet designation for the wartime command responsible for all military operations against the United States and NATO, at any level of conflict, ranging from global war to "limited" military operations.

Under the jurisdiction of Ogarkov's Western High Command fall the various Western "Theaters of War," known as TVD from the Russian initials. These include the Western TVD, the Southwest TVD, and a Northwest TVD.

The facts on Ogarkov's current functions cited in *Izvestia of the Central Committee*, confirm the evaluation of *EIR* founder Lyndon LaRouche that Ogarkov is the key military mind behind the Soviets' current war plan, and remains the key figure in the High Command. The same facts discredit the opponents of LaRouche, who have repeatedly spread the piece of disinformation that Moscow is moving away from aggressive military plans, and have cited a supposed "retirement" or "demotion" of Ogarkov to prove their case.

Facts covered up

This hard information concerning Ogarkov has been in the hands of Western intelligence agencies since at least mid-March, while copies of the February edition of *Izvestia of the Central Committee* exist, for example, at intelligence-related think tanks such as the Rand Corporation. Yet, not one mention of these facts has yet to appear in any Western media outlet.

The Western disinformation campaign concerning Ogarkov's functions reached massive proportions in September 1988, when his "retirement" was proclaimed. Alone among Western publications, *EIR* had at that time stated the actual

updated facts concerning Ogarkov.

1) Ogarkov had only turned over the lowest of his multiple command functions to a replacement. The position involved was that of commander-in-chief of the Western TVD, which was assumed around Sept. 1 by General of the Army Stanislav Postnikov. *EIR* emphasized that Ogarkov remained commander-in-chief of the Western High Command and remained, in terms of protocol, number-two on the National Defense Council.

2) The Western TVD change was part of a wave of critical high command changes, the most sweeping since the September 1984 creation of the wartime High Commands. *EIR* also stated that in the course of the next months, crucial facts proving this would surface. Exactly that has transpired.

Wartime High Command changes

The new biographies of Soviet Central Committee members in *Izvestia of the Central Committee* reveal command changes in the two Soviet wartime theaters which are prime areas for near-future military adventures: the Southwest TVD headquartered in Kiev, and High Command South headquartered in Baku. The reorganization was conducted at Marshal Ogarkov's direction, and occurred in the latter half of 1988. It featured the retirement of two Generals of the Army, both of whom are younger than Ogarkov: Ivan Gerasimov and Mikhail Zaitsev. Both are now listed in *Izvestia of the Central Committee* as having retired to join the non-active generals of the "group of inspectors" at the Soviet Defense Ministry.

General Gerasimov had been commander-in-chief of the Southwest TVD, responsible for military operations in the Balkans, while General Zaitsev was commander-in-chief of High Command South, the area facing the Iran-Persian Gulf Theater and Turkey.

While their replacements remain unknown, the main policy consideration, ensuring full war readiness, has been revealed through key district command changes, namely, that the last two commanders of Soviet forces in Afghanistan were named to South and Southwest district command posts. In May 1988, Gen. Lt. Igor Rodionov, the predecessor to Gen. Lt. Boris Gromov as commander in Afghanistan, was named commander of the Transcaucasus Military District. Following the Feb. 15 completion of the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Soviet commander there, Gromov, was sent to command the Kiev Military District.

During 1988, under the pretext of national unrest in Armenia and Azerbaijan, Moscow conducted a huge buildup of its military forces, supplies, and military-related infrastructure in the Transcaucasus opposite Iran and Turkey. Now, using the outbreak of national unrest in the Soviet Republic of Moldavia, bordering on the Balkan nation of Romania, 1989 will soon witness a buildup of military forces in Moldavia and the Western half of the Ukraine. Under preparation is a military move into the Balkans later this year, as the Yugoslav crisis explodes.