The Soviet Turn Toward Conventional Force Reduction

The Internal Struggle and the Variables at Play

Harry Gelman

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PREFACE

This report examines the relationship between the Soviet force posture toward Western Europe and the political struggle that is being waged in the Soviet Union for control over the priorities of military deployment policy and military-industrial decisionmaking. It presents an overview of the intertwined issues that have been the key battlegrounds in this contest: how to define the Soviet military budget, how far and how fast to cut it, how far to reduce Soviet conventional forward deployments in Europe, how much asymmetry to accept in such reductions, how to reorganize forces for "defensive" purposes, and whether to move away from the traditional Soviet mass, conscripted army in the direction of a professional army. The study then considers prospects for the future.

The report has been sponsored by the U.S. Air Force as part of an ongoing project on the contingency of Soviet force reduction in Europe and Asia, within Project AIR FORCE's National Security Strategies Program. An earlier study published in this project was:

> S. W. Popper, *The Economic Cost of Soviet Military Manpower Requirements,* R-3659-AF, March 1989.

The work builds on the findings of a related study prepared for another project in the National Security Stategies Program:

> H. Gelman, *The Soviet Military Leadership and the Question of Soviet Deployment Retreats,* R-3664-AF, November 1988.

This study is intended to be of assistance to Air Force officers and planners concerned with the evolving strategic environment. It should also be of interest to other readers following the evolution of Soviet policy. The report considers information available through December 1989.

SUMMARY

Over the last three years, the future of the Soviet force posture toward Western Europe has become increasingly affected by an intense political conflict in the Soviet Union over control of military deployment policy and military-industrial decisionmaking. Gorbachev's close associate Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze has become the "point man" in an ongoing struggle within the elite to weaken the influence of the General Staff and to change Soviet political, economic, and military priorities. The intertwined issues of how to define the Soviet military budget, how far and how fast to cut it, how far to reduce Soviet conventional forward deployments in Europe, how much asymmetry to accept in such reductions, and how to reorganize forces for "defensive" purposes have all been key battlegrounds in the contest for influence. The struggle at the top over decisionmaking authority has given impetus to a widening Soviet public debate about the future size and structure of the Soviet armed forces. The very existence of this debate has greatly alarmed the military leadership.

Those in the Soviet elite who shared the goal of raiding the military budget for other purposes tended to share an optimistic view of the rewards Soviet policy could obtain in the West from unilateral or heavily asymmetrical Soviet force cuts in Europe. These people stressed that such rewards would not be limited to the formal Western reciprocal concessions that might be obtained in arms negotiations. The payoff for Soviet conventional force reductions, it was hoped, would also encompass a great many equally important unilateral actions and inactions by individual Western nations, driven by domestic political pressures, that might tend over time to degrade NATO's military capabilities while exacerbating political difficulties within the Western alliance.

To this end, Gorbachev began a series of major and unprecedented changes that promise, when implemented, to reduce the threatening appearance of the Soviet force posture. Gorbachev pledged to substitute a radically different, "defensive" force posture as the basis for building a new set of political and economic relationships with Western Europe, and particularly with West Germany.

THE REORGANIZATION

As yet it is too soon to tell how far the reorganization of the Soviet armed forces now under way will in the end provide the reassuring "defensive" configuration announced by Gorbachev.

- Some of the discernable force changes so far—such as a planned 50,000-man reduction in the Air Defense Forces—appear to be driven more by a need to parcel out the military budget cut than by any consistent overall plan to become more defensive in orientation.
- The promised removal of six tank divisions and more than 5000 tanks from the forces in Eastern Europe—the biggest concrete step toward such a defensive transformation—appears to be going forward, and when completed will indeed greatly reduce the Soviet short-term threat potential.
- In the process, the Soviets are evidently replacing a tank regiment in each of their 24 remaining divisions in Eastern Europe with a motorized rifle regiment. Six of these motorized rifle regiments are apparently to be obtained from the six tank divisions being withdrawn, and as compensation, six tank regiments will be removed from among the divisions remaining. Each remaining and restructured tank division will then have two tank regiments and two motorized rifle regiments, whereas each remaining motorized rifle division will evidently have four motorized rifle regiments. The restructuring will apparently require the strengthening of all the remaining divisions with numerous additional infantry fighting vehicles, some of which are being transferred from the divisions being withdrawn.[1]
- Meanwhile, Soviet intentions regarding the disposition of artillery remains ambiguous, and their contradictory statements and general reticence on this subject are disquieting. It is possible that the reassuring reduction of the tank strength of the divisions left in Eastern Europe is being partly compensated by some increase in artillery strength, among other things. This is important because the introduction of self-propelled artillery and the massive increase in overall artillery holdings were central features of the Soviet conventional buildup after the mid-1960s, and artillery fire appeared to play a key role in traditional Soviet thinking in creating breakthroughs to be exploited by tanks and motorized infantry. The Soviet advantage in artillery in Europe was second in importance only to their advantage in tanks as a factor contributing to military disequilibrium in Europe. On the other hand, the Soviets may also consider artillery important in a defensive role, as helping to achieve significant attrition on the attacker.

[1]For elaboration, see the testimony of Edward L. Warner III to House Armed Services Committee, September 13, 1989.

- In addition, the General Staff apparently desires to use the occasion of the withdrawal of six divisional structures and many tanks from Eastern Europe to increase the level of modernization, and possibly the readiness, of the divisions remaining that are being "restructured." The final result envisioned may be the creation of forces that indeed have a greater defensive capability and are less of a short-term offensive threat, but that nevertheless have a new flexibility and considerable offensive potential.
- On the other hand, recent Gorbachev statements suggest that because of economic pressures he has compelled the military to accept changes that have tended to erode the Soviet mobilization potential. Gorbachev has publicly revealed the liquidation of 101 military units, which he described as "so-called divisions" (*divisii*), and which he has denounced as "feeding troughs" without combat value. Gorbachev's statement would appear to refer to major changes in the table of organization of the ground forces that have already been accomplished—that is, prior to the reorganization that is now under way. He did not elaborate further on the nature of the units involved and all interpretations of his remarks are necessarily speculative. But one plausible hypothesis is that he was alluding to skeleton organizations existing largely but not entirely on paper, with minimal permanent headquarters staffing—units intended to be activated and staffed only in the event of full-scale wartime mobilization to provide follow-on forces after active low-category reserve divisions are filled out.

If such inactive structures have existed in addition to the Soviet divisions normally identified as such by the West, their elimination will evidently have little or no effect on readiness, as Gorbachev indeed contends. He may have regarded them as "feeding troughs" because he saw them as sinecures for high-ranking personnel, maintained against an eventuality (protracted conventional war) which he regarded as increasingly improbable, but which added nothing to Soviet current combat potential. Yet this change could have some significance for the Soviet longer-term reinforcement potential. This Gorbachev decision was therefore probably resented by many in the Soviet military leadership.

Moreover, there is reason to suspect that the reorganization plans that have now been set in motion are neither completed nor immutable, and could well be greatly affected by future economic and political realities.

Already, General Staff plans for staging the reductions and reshaping the divisions in Eastern Europe have been considerably disrupted by Gorbachev. Despite Minister of Defense Dmitri Yazov's vehement public protests, Gorbachev in July 1989 insisted on early release of 176,000 drafted students, many of whom, according to Yazov, help make up the junior officer corps. Yazov has since bitterly complained that the "overwhelming majority" of the released students "were serving in posts of the most complex specialities, those most important for combat readiness." He asserts that as a result, "for at least a year, and two years in the navy, there will be practically no one to take the place of the discharged student servicemen," adding that "over 700 tanks and 900 infantry fighting vehicles will be left without crews in Groups of Forces alone." Thus, regardless of the General Staff's intentions, for the time being readiness has probably been degraded rather than bolstered as a result of the reduction and restructuring process. Such unpleasant surprises may recur. Dynamic factors are at work in Soviet society that seem likely to continue to erode the stability of the new structure being created.

Finally—and perhaps most disturbing to the General Staff—as part of the policy shifts accompanying the force cuts, Gorbachev has accepted, and even encouraged, rapid and momentous changes in Eastern Europe. These changes are weakening Soviet control mechanisms over the region and placing in question Soviet ability to preserve Eastern Europe's most important military value to the Soviet Union—its service as a buffer zone. The Soviet forces remaining in Eastern Europe have been placed in an increasingly uncomfortable military position by the growing fragility of their East European support mechanisms. The dramatic events in Poland, Hungary, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia in the summer and fall of 1989 have, among other consequences, raised the prospect of a political erosion of the Warsaw Pact infrastructure supporting the Soviet troop presence in Central Europe.

Gorbachev's acceptance of this rapid loosening of the Soviet hold on Eastern Europe is generally seen in the West as powerful additional evidence of the genuineness of the Soviet change of course. While the limits of change tolerable to the Soviet Union are in fact still undefined, Gorbachev does appear to be opting for a radically new definition of Soviet net interests, in which many, although not necessarily all, former Soviet military advantages are being incrementally traded for new political advantages. What has been at issue within the Soviet elite has been the terms of this trade—that is, the adequacy of the reward to be expected from a given sacrifice of Soviet military advantage.

The recent drastic changes in Eastern Europe, superimposed on the unilateral Soviet force reduction, have given new prominence to the issue of German reunification and have simultaneously greatly strengthened Western perception of a decline in the Soviet military threat. Both considerations will almost certainly contribute to a multiplication of strains within the Western alliance and to a more rapid erosion of willingness to commit resources to the alliance. Indeed, the new events have put an effective end to the political possibility of NATO short-range nuclear missile modernization, and have precipitated a strong tendency throughout the Western alliance to reduce forces unilaterally. To this extent, the hopes Shevardnadze's adherents in the Soviet elite had held out about the anticipated Western reaction to a decisive Soviet change of course have proven justified.

On the other hand, there is reason to believe that the new atmosphere created by Gorbachev's unilateral force reductions and the radical political changes taking place in Eastern Europe are placing the structure and coherence of the Warsaw Pact under much more severe pressure than that of NATO. The Eastern alliance has much weaker roots than its Western counterpart, and the asymmetrical consequences of change are now visible. Under these circumstances, recriminations are likely to persist in the Soviet Union over whether Gorbachev is allowing the Soviet military position in Central and Eastern Europe to be undermined faster than is justified, despite the reciprocal reaction in the West.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE GENERAL STAFF

The campaign against the General Staff has been in high gear since July 1988, when Shevardnadze convened a large Foreign Ministry conference attended by many of the country's senior national security elite. Shevardnadze publicly insisted on the right of his ministry to "verify" all future major innovations in Soviet defense development. He called for a new mechanism for defense decisionmaking, and attacked as foolish and harmful to Soviet net interests the prejudices of "certain strategists" and the assumptions built into the Soviet military buildup of the Brezhnev era.

The antimilitary salvos fired at this Foreign Ministry conference were accompanied and followed up in the summer and fall of 1988 by an increasingly outspoken press campaign hostile to traditional General Staff authority and priorities, and military prestige generally, over a wide range of issues. This coordinated and sustained propaganda offensive was led by the ministry's journal *International Affairs*. The

onslaught appeared to intensify considerably after the late September shakeup in the Soviet leadership. An important milestone was reached in mid-October, when the Politburo publicly criticized the Ministry of Defense rather severely.

In the aftermath of the 1988 campaign, part of Shevardnadze's objective in his attacks against the General Staff appears to have been obtained, but other aspects of his future relationship with the military have not yet been settled. A long list of steps that were taken at the end of the year had the cumulative effect of confirming that a watershed in the political status of the military leaders had been reached.

Among these steps were the Politburo decisions to implement significant unilateral withdrawals from Eastern Europe, to make overall cuts in the Soviet armed forces, to order a reorganization of the Soviet armed forces, to announce reductions in the Soviet military budget, to ordain severe party criticism of the work of the General Staff, and to arrange extensive changes in the personnel of the Soviet high command. These changes reflected considerable Gorbachev unhappiness with the performance of the General Staff over the past year. Since these events, the military leaders have become involved in simultaneous, ongoing public controversies over such matters as the future structure of the armed forces, the army's relationship with assertive minority nationalities around the Soviet periphery, and the disastrous consequences of the army's employment in an internal police role.

Thus far, one institutional change has emerged as a result of the events of 1988—the establishment of an arrangement for oversight of major military policy decisions by a committee of the new Supreme Soviet. The extent of the influence this committee will have on decisionmaking in practice remains to be seen, but it has already become a factor of some importance in the ongoing political debate.

MILITARY RESISTANCE

When Shevardnadze launched the propaganda offensive against the General Staff in the summer of 1988, the leadership appears to have already reached a decision in principle to make some unilateral force reductions and some reductions in the military budget. It appears, however, that the scope of what was to be done under both headings remained controversial in the elite for many months. As the Politburo moved during 1988 toward its eventual parallel decisions to unilaterally withdraw six divisions and 5000 tanks from Eastern Europe and to begin cutting the military budget, there was evidently a great deal of resistance from some Soviet military leaders.

This resistance existed despite the fact that many in the Soviet military leadership have seen long-term military problems for the Soviet Union in adherence to the status quo. The concerns centered on the implications of the technological race in threatening the Soviet military's ability to maintain its existing advantage in Europe in the future. The new political and economic pressures from civilians to reduce the threatening Soviet military appearance—and above all, to reduce the degree of emphasis on tanks—may have been welcomed by some who saw an opportunity to accomplish long-obstructed shifts in resources within the military budget in order to give higher priority to a more rapid military assimilation of advanced technology.

Many in the military leadership, however, remained extremely reluctant to give up the traditional instruments of the inherited force advantage, notably the huge surplus of tanks. They were particularly resistant because the military budget as a whole was now under increasing threat. Some far-sighted Soviet military leaders have evidently recognized that some temporary resource transfers from the defense sector were in the long-term interests of the armed services themselves—as the inevitable price that had to be paid to modernize the technology of the civilian economy on whose performance military industry was increasingly dependent. But the terms and value of this tacit deal were always highly ambiguous and far from generally agreed upon within the Defense Ministry. Moreover, as the difficulties of *perestroyka* have grown more grave, the ultimate reward that has been held out to the military leadership—in a more technologically advanced civilian industrial base—has tended to recede in time, while the price being demanded of the military leaders in the next decade has tended to grow.

The present chief of the General Staff, General M. A. Moiseyev, has acknowledged that many officers consequently "dragged their feet" in working on implementation of a "defensive defense." In July 1989, Gorbachev alluded to this resistance in a speech to the Supreme Soviet, asserting that he "began to receive information that the Defense Council and its chairman [Gorbachev] were moving too sharply, and the Marshals requested me to bear this comment in mind." The most outspoken officer was Deputy Defense Minister and Air Defense Forces commander Army General Ivan Tretyak, who in February 1988 warned in a dramatic interview that the Khrushchev troop cuts of the late 1950s had been disastrous for the Soviet Union—a "rash" step that "dealt a terrible blow at our defense capacity." He demanded that "any changes in our army should be considered a thousand times before they are decided upon." A year later, Tretyak violated party discipline by publicly protesting the major cut imposed on his service.

THE ECONOMIC CATALYST

As this struggle went on, the bad economic news appears to have been a major catalyst in the debate. The leadership was driven in 1988 to challenge the military priority more seriously than before because it simultaneously became aware of both the extent of the political dangers attached to the severe consumer goods shortage and the extent of the enormous and growing budget deficit. Unless drastic steps were taken to deal with that deficit, steps that almost inevitably would have to include significant cuts in the military budget, there was little hope of finding the resources to begin to attack the consumer shortage on a scale remotely commensurate with the gravity of the crisis.

The Politburo had not necessarily become more optimistic about the results to be obtained from this transfer of resources. There were plenty of voices, inside and outside the country, to warn that the resulting benefits would be painful and slow. But even if the payoff in consumer goods production was not equivalent to the sacrifice—not proportionate to the funds transferred from military purposes—the leadership now had little choice but to begin.

Thus it seems indisputable that economic pressures have been of overwhelming importance in driving Soviet conventional force reductions. Although the Soviets value the political advantages Gorbachev seeks to obtain in the West through this process, they are a useful byproduct, not the main factor pressing the Soviet Union toward unilateral cuts and asymmetrical concessions. The main factor has been the grave and worsening state of the Soviet economy.

After the decision to cut the military budget and the forces had been announced, many of the political tensions within the elite over resource allocation to the military became focused on the issue of estimating and disclosing the Soviet military budget. Defense Minister Yazov wished to minimize perception of the extent of the military burden in order to minimize the military's political vulnerability to pressure for reductions. Opponents associated with the Foreign Ministry wished, for the opposite reason, to maximize the estimate of the burden.

The version of the total military budget eventually announced by Gorbachev in June 1989 was much lower than the version estimated in the West. It seems likely that the most important reason for this was the radical price distortion involved in Soviet procurement expenses. During questioning before the Armed Services Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives in July 1989, Marshal Sergey Akhromeyev made an admission tending to support this hypothesis.

There is increasing reason to believe that up to now many of the prices paid by the Soviet Union for military hardware have been kept

artificially low for political reasons. Inadequate profits or even nominal losses suffered by military plants for this reason have apparently been traditionally compensated by state loans that are never repaid. These costs were evidently not included in Gorbachev's calculation of Soviet military expenditures. At the same time, part of the potential loss that would be faced by military plants is apparently avoided through the imposition of artificially low prices on their suppliers. The suppliers themselves must then often be subsidized through loans or otherwise compensated in order to remain in operation. Thus, the financial costs engendered by the political priority enjoyed by defense may all along have been broadly diffused outward through the Soviet economy in a manner not recognized in the plan—or in Gorbachev's new depiction of the military budget.

A new calculation that was supposed to reflect military procurement prices better had been expected to be furnished by a general Soviet price reform, but such a reform has now been postponed for several years. In the absence of this reform, and given the pressure from abroad to make a statement about the military budget, the Soviet leadership appears to have consciously decided to issue a budget figure that did not adequately reflect General Yazov's procurement subsidies, and that consequently was attuned much more closely to Yazov's conception of the military burden than to that of his opponents. This announcement will inevitably remain controversial within the Soviet elite, and may indeed be retroactively altered when and if a price reform is eventually carried out.

The 14.2 percent reduction in military spending that Gorbachev has promised to accomplish by 1991 will bite less heavily into Soviet military programs than initially thought in the West, since the amount of the reduction in rubles will be much smaller than Western estimates of the size of the military budget had implied. Nevertheless, the implications for the Soviet armed forces remain quite serious. Force reductions of at least the scope of those announced will be required as part of the measures needed to accomplish the budget cuts, and other military programs could be adversely affected. Indeed, Soviet discussions of the force reorganization now under way suggest that the nature of this reorganization has been significantly affected by the new budget constraints as well as by military and political considerations.

PROSPECTS

Substantial economic and political pressures are gradually accumulating for larger cuts in both the Soviet military budget and deployed

general purpose forces, over and above the cuts already announced. The Soviet leaders have indeed held out the prospect of such cuts over the next decade. There are many variables at play, however, that will affect the scope and timing.

Probably of most immediate importance is how successful will be the short-term efforts the regime has already undertaken to deal with its two most pressing economic headaches—the budget deficit and the consumer goods deficit. If significant progress is not made on these two fronts in the next two or three years, fear of the political consequences could drive the leadership to take more resources from the military, and sooner than it wishes to. In this connection, the series of widespread, spontaneous miners' strikes that began in the Soviet Union in July 1989 has certainly added to the leadership's sense of gathering crisis.

The second most important factor in terms of timing of further reductions is the nature of the reciprocal concessions that the Soviet Union can obtain from the West in the Vienna negotiations on conventional arms reductions. The Soviet political leadership may feel it has a considerable stake in obtaining compensation it can use to justify the large asymmetrical concessions it has already offered in the negotiations. The Gorbachev leadership is particularly likely to feel this way in view of the difficult political struggle it was forced to wage to compel the General Staff to yield half a million men in a preliminary uncompensated reduction advertised within the country as necessary to "prime the pump" for future Western concessions. The Soviet leaders are also probably acutely sensitive to the impression of negotiating weakness created by their grave economic difficulties and their series of past negotiating retreats.

At the same time, however, Gorbachev is also aware that the Soviet negotiating position is in fact not strong. In addition to the economic pressures the Soviets face, the momentous events in Eastern Europe in late 1989 have confronted the Soviet leaders with a spontaneous and unexpected change for the worse in the Soviet military position in the region as a result of the sudden new erosion of the value of the Warsaw Pact. Moreover, this trend toward degeneration of the Pact will go further, since it is being driven by East European internal pressures that Gorbachev has allowed to be released and that he will find difficult to contain in the future. This prospect has added to the pressure on the Soviet Union to obtain a face-saving agreement, one that would provide an international framework for the changes in the Soviet relationship with Eastern Europe and a measure of Western compensation for Soviet reductions.

THE INTERNAL ISSUES AT STAKE

Meanwhile, the political status of the Soviet military leaders appears exceptionally fluid at present. The campaign Shevardnadze launched against them in the summer of 1988 has achieved some of its objectives, but by no means all. It does not appear, for example, that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has yet achieved the right to "verify" all "major innovations in defense development," claimed for it by Shevardnadze in July 1988.

Since the force cuts and the reorganization began, the Foreign Ministry journal has published the first detailed argument and blueprint for a massive further reduction in the armed forces. In addition, the General Staff has had to contend with growing clamor for radical changes in the force structure in ways that are anathema to most of the senior military leaders. Although there are many variants to these proposals, the two most politically important elements are (a) the demand that conscription be ended entirely and that the Soviet Union shift, like the United States, to an entirely professional army, and (b) the demand that the army be reorganized on a territorial-militia basis, a notion that is incompatible with many of the present missions of the armed forces. Much to the indignation of the Ministry of Defense, Gorbachev and Shevardnadze have given protection and in some cases prominence to certain of the advocates of these radical reforms, and Gorbachev has publicly rebuked General Yazov for his disdainful attitude on these issues.

However, after a long series of humiliating rebuffs and purges and incessant harassment in the press, the military in the spring of 1989 at last found some support within the Soviet leadership—reflected in a Central Committee Secretariat resolution—for its resistance to these pressures. Such support was obtained from former Politburo member Viktor Chebrikov, among others. There is reason to believe that even after Chebrikov's ouster from the leadership, the treatment of the military remains a subject of contention in the Politburo. The struggle over the status and priorities of the General Staff has not ceased, and now centers on the national debate over whether—and when—to move toward a professional army. In this situation, both the nature of the emerging Soviet force reorganization and the future evolution of the Soviet negotiating position on conventional force reductions are likely to be strongly affected by the ongoing economic and political crisis in the Soviet Union.

The deepening crises in both the Soviet economy and in internal nationality relations have evoked some leadership tendencies toward economic and political retrenchment, and have increased the regime's

awareness of its stake in countering the spread of centrifugal antipatriotic and antimilitary sentiment. In the future, the further Gorbachev feels obliged by these pressures to retreat along the conservative path, the more likely the retreats are to have the incidental effect of helping to shore up the political status of the military leadership. On the other hand, throughout 1989 many aspects of Gorbachev's political reform movement were still expanding—notably movement toward freer elections and a more independent Supreme Soviet. These trends are not likely, in the long run, to be helpful to the General Staff's efforts to defend the remnants of its formerly entrenched position. Moreover, the same economic pressures that have induced the regime to take steps that are retreats from economic reform are also continuously pushing the Politburo in the direction of seeking additional help at the expense of the military budget.

Over the next few years, much will depend on whether the leadership can agree to carry out a fundamental price reform that will come to grips with the issue of the subsidies that underlie the Defense Ministry's cheap hardware procurement prices. Such a reform would require adoption of a new version of the military budget that would describe the military share of resources and the military burden on the economy in terms much closer to the picture commonly accepted in the West than to the version of reality presented in Gorbachev's June 1989 depiction of the military budget. Willingness to publish a closer approximation of the truth would probably go hand in hand with willingness to cut more deeply into the military priority thus revealed.

The rate at which the Soviet Union moves in this direction is, however, a matter of fierce dispute in both the military and civilian elites. When and if such a general price reform is eventually prepared, the General Staff will expect its military hardware to become more costly, and will therefore expect to be able to buy fewer copies of each item than heretofore if the military budget is no longer allowed to grow. This in itself would appear to imply some future reductions in the corresponding forces. Even in the absence of a price reform, pressures in that direction are already facing the Ministry of Defense because the economic crisis is generating increasing demands by economic leaders for an end to the subsidies to loss-making plants. It is such direct and indirect subsidies that have up to now sustained the abnormally low prices attributed to military hardware, and in turn the Ministry's ability to procure weapons on a scale commensurate with the present size of its armed forces.

In addition to this threat to its resources, the Soviet military leadership must now reckon with the long-term implications for its force structure of the growing call on the leadership's instruments of

coercion to deal with popular disturbances repeatedly arising on a mass scale in widely separated places. This trend has imposed severe strains on the regime's resources for such purposes. One consequence of this dilemma over the next few years is likely to be a growing inclination by the leadership to divert money and scarce Slav manpower away from the Ministry of Defense to build up and train the forces of the Interior Ministry. The need for policing troops is so vital to the regime that this trend, which has already begun, will almost certainly go on. It is therefore likely to create a new drain on the resources available to the Defense Ministry for its external missions, both in terms of funds and in terms of politically reliable and sufficiently educated Slav manpower.

Because of all these factors, important forces in the Soviet elite—symbolized by Chairman V. L. Lapygin of the new Supreme Soviet Committee on Defense and State Security—now appear to believe that an eventual major contraction of the Soviet conventional forces is inevitable, and should be accepted to protect Soviet capabilities in military R&D. Lapygin—a conservative defense manager who is a friend of the Soviet armed forces (if not to all its leaders), and who seems sincerely dedicated to optimizing Soviet future military strength within the foreseeable economic constraints—appears to see a growing and inevitable resource conflict between preserving the investments and expenditures needed for large Soviet conventional forces, on the one hand, and pursuing advanced military technology sufficient for Soviet needs, on the other. He has taken a public position sharply at odds with the military leadership on this central point, and could prove a formidable factor in the future debate. His views furnish a respectable underpinning for the growing movement advocating change to a smaller, all-professional army.

More important, Lapygin was carefully selected by Gorbachev for a post that was known to have great political sensitivity. His opinions on the military tradeoffs facing the Soviet Union were almost certainly known to Gorbachev before his selection. If Gorbachev prevails, those views could prefigure the evolution of the Soviet elite consensus.

But the military leadership and its sympathizers in the Soviet political elite will fight vigorously to delay and minimize these changes. Most senior Soviet military leaders will continue to oppose a professional army, partly because it would necessarily be a much smaller army, but above all because it would be detrimental to the massive mobilization capabilities to which they attach great importance. They are likely to be particularly concerned to avoid being forced to hasten the further contraction of the Soviet armed forces in advance of the arrival of those qualitative technological improvements in Soviet

hardware that are supposed to compensate for quantitative reductions. The prospect of becoming "leaner but meaner" may indeed have attractions to some in the high command, but not if the rate at which the Soviet armed forces become "leaner" outpaces the rate at which they achieve greater "meanness."

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I. INTRODUCTION: THE THREE CONVERGING DEBATES

Over the last few years, three fundamental issues—two internal and one external—have intersected in an ongoing struggle in the Soviet elite over defense policy. These converging debates have already had major consequences for the domestic position of the Soviet military establishment, on the one hand, and the Soviet official attitude toward conventional force reduction in Europe, on the other.

CONTROL OVER MILITARY DECISIONMAKING

In the first place, an intense political conflict has been going on in the Soviet Union over control of military deployment policy and military-industrial decisionmaking. At issue has been the question of whether the existing military decisionmaking structure with its inherited assumptions and priorities should be essentially retained, or whether the structure has produced so many grievous errors, counterproductive to Soviet national interests, that it must be significantly changed.

Behind this effort to modify decisionmaking procedures is a more fundamental effort—led by the Foreign Ministry—to dilute the influence of the General Staff and to weaken its relative position in the regime as a whole. The question of how far to reduce Soviet conventional forward deployments in Europe—and how to reorganize forces for "defensive" purposes—has been one of the key battlegrounds in this contest for influence. On a broader scale, the struggle at the top over decisionmaking authority has given impetus to a widening Soviet public debate about the future size and structure of the Soviet armed forces.

THE RESPONSE TO ECONOMIC PRESSURES

Second, closely intertwined with the decisionmaking question has been the military economic issue. Here the question has been: can the Soviet Union any longer afford the conventional force structure inherited from the Brezhnev years, or are the political and economic costs—and opportunity costs—of maintaining this force structure now deemed so great as to be inconsistent with overall Soviet national

interests? If the latter, how urgent is the need to reduce military costs, and therefore to reduce the Soviet general purpose forces, the biggest contributor to those costs? That is, how much must be accomplished soon, and therefore unilaterally, and how much can be allowed to wait for a quid pro quo, and can therefore be left dependent upon the eventual results of political pressures in the West and protracted negotiations? By the same token, to what extent do urgent economic compulsion and a need for speedy results dictate a need for drastic Soviet concessions in such negotiations?

Intra-Military and Civil-Military Contention

The struggle over these choices has brought to the surface long-standing differences, both within the military establishment and between the military as a whole and other rising powers within the Soviet elite. Within the military, the new outside pressures from civilians interacted with a long-standing, complex internal debate as to how best to adapt Soviet defense to new adverse realities. Most important were the implications of the technological race in threatening the Soviet military's ability to maintain its advantage in Europe in the future. In the eyes of many military leaders, notably Marshal Nikolay Ogarkov, the advance of new military technologies and associated operational concepts in the West had severely challenged the adequacy of existing Soviet strategy, organization, and equipment. Before Gorbachev came to power, Ogarkov had called for rapid conversion to high-technology weapons and equipment and the adoption of revolutionary changes in Soviet strategy and tactics. However, many others among his colleagues, particularly in the ground forces, while accepting the need for modernization, favored an evolutionary approach and were reluctant to accept change at the pace favored by Ogarkov.[1]

As Gorbachev was to discover, these entrenched recalcitrants were particularly reluctant to give up quickly the traditional instruments of the inherited force advantage, notably the huge surplus of tanks. This attitude was evidently fortified by concern that because of growing economic constraints, the additional resources which Ogarkov had demanded as underpinning for his radical modernization would not in the future be obtainable from the political leadership. Those military leaders who wished to slow down the rate of change thus evidently feared that the bird in the hand—the inherited military structure, weaponry, and strategy—would be sacrificed before it was adequately

[1]See Rose E. Gottemoeller, *Conflict and Consensus in the Soviet Armed Forces,* The RAND Corporation, R-3759-AF, October 1989.

replaced by the bird in the bush—the capabilities to be sought from new technology and new operational concepts for using that technology.

A variety of objective factors, however, were impelling the divided Soviet military establishment toward change. Even before they felt the full force of Gorbachev's demand for a shift to a "defensive" doctrine, many in the Soviet military had become convinced of a need to pay more attention to operational defense, partly because of a growing sense of vulnerability to Western defense technologies and partly because of recognition that the Warsaw Pact in any case could not be on the offensive in all sectors.

Meanwhile, technical considerations were gradually pressing the military leaders toward acceptance of the inevitability of eventual constriction of the size of Soviet forces. The Soviet tactical innovations imposed by new NATO weapons called for highly maneuverable, smaller, autonomous units, which tended to require a level of technical competence increasingly difficult to attain in the large, poorly trained, conscript army. The growing complexity of operation and maintenance of modern equipment similarly tended to highlight the potential advantages of a smaller, more professional army. Demographic trends and the decreasing proportion in the armed forces of the educated Slavs most capable of operating complex military technology were pressing in the same direction. Finally, the escalating costs and unreliability of equipment using new technology were arguing for using smaller numbers of weapons with a greater proportion of resources devoted to support.

Thus, Gorbachev's demands for change in 1987 and 1988 served as a catalyst forcing resolution of dilemmas that had long been building within the armed forces. The new political and economic pressures from outside the Defense Ministry for a reduction in the threatening Soviet military appearance—and above all, in the degree of emphasis on tanks—were bitterly resisted by many military leaders, but may well have been welcomed by others who saw an opportunity to accomplish long-obstructed shifts in resources within the military budget to give higher priority to a more rapid military assimilation of advanced technology.

The Threat to the Military Budget

Complicating the issue for the military, however, was the fact that many nonmilitary figures—led by Foreign Minister Shevardnadze—have seen force reduction in Europe as a vehicle with which to push through not only the reorganization and redistribution of military

resources sought by military modernizers, but the transfer of substantial resources from the military budget as a whole.

Some far-sighted Soviet military leaders have evidently recognized that some temporary resource transfers from the defense sector were in the long-term interests of the armed services themselves—as the inevitable price that had to be paid to modernize the technology of the civilian economy on whose performance military industry was increasingly dependent. But the terms and value of this tacit deal were always highly ambiguous and far from generally agreed upon within the Defense Ministry. Moreover, as the difficulties of *perestroyka* have grown more grave, the ultimate reward that has been held out to the military leadership—in a more technologically advanced civilian industrial base—has tended to recede in time, while the price being demanded of the military leaders in the next decade has tended to grow.[2] This sense of an uncertain and worsening bargain probably contributed to the significant resistance many in the military establishment offered when the prospect of real Soviet unilateral conventional force reductions and real cuts in the Soviet military budget finally materialized in the spring and summer of 1988.

GORBACHEV'S POLITICAL COMPENSATION IN THE WEST

The third interwoven factor for the Soviet elite has been the question of the likely extent and adequacy of the anticipated payoff in the West for unilateral or drastically asymmetrical Soviet conventional force reductions. In broadest terms, this is the question of which of two alternative paths is likely to be more profitable for net Soviet national interests. One path, followed until recent years, has been to cling at all costs to the essence of the military status quo in Europe. This Soviet policy, followed throughout the Mutual Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) negotiations, ordained a Soviet negotiating posture designed to preserve the Eastern bloc's force advantages versus NATO, regardless of the economic price paid at home or the political opportunities forgone in Western Europe.

The other path, to which Gorbachev has increasingly turned since 1987, has been to strive to erode NATO's political coherence and NATO's side of the force equation through major and unprecedented concessions sufficient to remove the threatening appearance of the

[2]See Abraham S. Becker, *Ogarkov's Complaint and Gorbachev's Dilemma: The Soviet Defense Budget and Party-Military Conflict*, The RAND Corporation, R-3541-AF, December 1987.

Soviet force posture. Gorbachev promised to substitute a radically different, "defensive" force posture as the basis for building a new set of political and economic relationships with Western Europe, and particularly with West Germany.

As part of the process, Gorbachev has recently accepted rapid and drastic changes in Eastern Europe that are greatly weakening Soviet control mechanisms over the region and even placing in question Soviet ability to preserve Eastern Europe's most important military value to the Soviet Union, its service as a buffer zone. The dramatic events in Poland, Hungary, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia in the summer and fall of 1989 have, among other momentous consequences, begun to undermine the political foundation of the Warsaw Pact military infrastructure supporting the Soviet troop presence in central Europe. Gorbachev's acceptance of this gradual loosening of the Soviet hold in Eastern Europe is generally seen in the West as impressive additional evidence of the genuineness of the Soviet change of course.

Although the limits of change tolerable to the Soviet Union are in fact still undefined, Gorbachev appears to have opted for a radically new definition of Soviet net interests, in which some, although not necessarily all, former Soviet military advantages are being incrementally traded for new political advantages. What has all along been at issue within the Soviet elite has been the terms of this trade—that is, the adequacy of the reward to be expected from a given sacrifice of Soviet military advantage.

Those in the Soviet elite who shared the goal of raiding the military budget for other domestic purposes have all along tended to take an optimistic view of the rewards Soviet policy could obtain in the West from unilateral or heavily asymmetrical Soviet force cuts in Europe. These people have stressed that such rewards would not be limited to the formal Western reciprocal concessions that might be obtained in arms negotiations. The payoff for Soviet conventional force reductions, it was hoped, would also encompass a great many equally important unilateral actions and inactions by individual Western nations, driven by domestic political pressures, that might tend over time to degrade NATO's military capabilities while exacerbating political difficulties within the Western alliance. From the start, major hopes in this connection have been placed on the anticipated reaction in West Germany.

Until the fall of 1989, Gorbachev's promises to change Soviet force posture had rapid political effects in the West, although the implementation of those promises emerged more gradually. Many Western observers therefore feared that the coherence of the Western alliance would be degraded faster than the Soviet force advantages over NATO

were reduced. By the summer of 1989, the reaction to Gorbachev's political offensive had evoked several specific consequences with adverse implications for the alliance.

One was the impasse that emerged within the Western alliance in 1988 over modernization of short-range nuclear missiles, and the associated disagreement over the desirability and modalities of negotiations with the Soviets over short-range nuclear systems. Although NATO was able in May 1989 to produce a compromise formula that reduced political tensions over this issue, Gorbachev's peace offensive had laid bare what is likely to be a growing, long-term discrepancy in perceived national interests within the NATO alliance. A visible division was emerging between NATO's nuclear and nonnuclear powers over the degree to which the force posture of the alliance should continue to be shaped by the symbolism of extended deterrence.

Gorbachev's antinuclear campaign in Europe—and particularly his pressing of the elimination of short-range nuclear weapons, so sensitive in West Germany[3]—seemed well calculated to encourage the gradual process of gravitation of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) away from dependence on its nuclear allies, and particularly the United States. Gorbachev's policies were facilitating a gradual erosion of leverage of all three nuclear powers within the alliance, as the perception of a disappearing Soviet military threat gave freer play to a German sense of separate national interests fostered by increased economic power but previously hampered by nuclear dependence.

These tendencies have probably been accelerated by the recent drastic changes in Eastern Europe, and particularly by the East German abandonment of emigration controls and the emergence of prospects for further radical political changes in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). These events have given new prominence to the issue of German reunification and simultaneously have enormously strengthened Western perception of a decline in the Soviet military threat. Both considerations will almost certainly contribute to a multiplication of strains within the Western alliance. In the meantime, the new events have put an effective end to the political possibility of NATO short-range nuclear missile modernization, and have precipitated a strong tendency throughout the Western alliance to reduce

[3]This is not to deny that Gorbachev—and indeed, many in the Soviet military for reasons of their own—may genuinely wish to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in the European force balance. The most important Soviet motive for pressing the anti-nuclear theme, however, has appeared to lie elsewhere. This motive has centered on calculations about the issue's potential to erode the political underpinnings of the NATO alliance, and most specifically, to weaken the political position of the United States, the main nuclear guarantor.

forces unilaterally. To this extent, the hopes Shevardnadze's adherents in the Soviet elite had held out about the anticipated Western reaction to a radical Soviet change of course have proven justified.

On the other hand, there is reason to believe that the new atmosphere created by Gorbachev's unilateral force reductions and the radical political changes taking place in Eastern Europe are placing the structure and coherence of the Warsaw Pact under much more severe pressure than that of NATO. The Eastern alliance has much weaker roots than its Western counterpart, and the asymmetrical consequences of change are now visible. As already suggested, the viability of any continued long-term Soviet military presence in central Europe has at last been put in question. In the meantime, the Soviet forces remaining in Eastern Europe have been placed in an increasingly uncomfortable military position by the growing fragility of their East European support mechanisms. Under these circumstances, recriminations are likely to persist in the Soviet Union over whether Gorbachev is allowing the Soviet military position in Europe to be undermined faster than is justified, despite the reciprocal reaction in the West.

PUSHES AND PULLS

To sum up thus far: Gorbachev's policy regarding force reduction has been the mixed product of both internal pushes—particularly economic pressures—and external pulls—notably the prospect of favorable political and military changes in Western Europe. Judgments as to which has been the more important factor have tended to vary with the aspect of the problem under focus. Some observers preoccupied with the difficulties and radically new realities Gorbachev's initiatives have created in the Western alliance may be inclined to conclude that achieving this result was his primary consideration, whereas observers of worsening Soviet internal difficulties may be more impressed with the gravity of the domestic pressures pushing Gorbachev toward Soviet force reduction. This report will attempt to render a judgment on the issue.

The next section of this report is an overview and survey of the key political and economic factors involved in the future of the Soviet conventional force posture. The discussion will review in turn the contest that has emerged in the Soviet elite in recent years over military decisionmaking authority, the political struggle that took place in 1988 and 1989 over reducing the Soviet military budget and over how to depict that budget to the public, the debate over Soviet unilateral conventional force reduction in Europe, the ongoing struggle over the

future of the Soviet force reorganization, and the status of the Soviet army as a Politburo issue. A final section of the paper will then draw some conclusions for the future.

II. THE RESULTS THUS FAR

THE STRUGGLE OVER MILITARY DECISIONMAKING AUTHORITY

In retrospect, it seems clear that the central figure—the "point man"—in the struggle within the Soviet regime to whittle down the power of the General Staff has been Foreign Minister Shevardnadze, a senior Politburo member and close associate of Gorbachev. Gorbachev and a few other senior figures in the regime—such as Politburo member Aleksandr Yakovlev—have broadly shared Shevardnadze's attitude and helped to encourage the gradual emergence of civilian criticism of military institutions and civilian competition with General Staff analysis of strategic matters. But it was the Foreign Minister, because of the responsibility placed on his organization, who eventually came to take the most overt role in challenging the legitimacy of long-established General Staff prerogatives.

The Ministry's effort first began to emerge into the open in 1987, building on political trends in the first two years of the Gorbachev regime that had already opened the military leadership to unprecedented public criticism.[1] Shevardnadze and the civilian writers he and Yakovlev encouraged seized on the Intermediate-range Nuclear Force (INF) negotiations as the pretext for their first direct attack on past deployment decisions and the policy machinery that had produced them. Soon after Gorbachev's February 1987 decision to accept a zero-zero INF formula without Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) concessions, the journalist Aleksandr Bovin for the first time publicly asked why the decision to deploy the SS-20 missiles had been made in the first place.[2] Although a General Staff official made a polemical reply,[3] Bovin's attack proved only the opening gun. Once the INF treaty was agreed upon and signed, Bovin's supporters in the Foreign Ministry were in a position to pursue more directly the issue he had raised. In November, Deputy Foreign Minister Bessmertnykh seized on the SS-20 question to make the following open assault on the traditional General Staff perspective, and on General Staff prerogatives regarding both deployment decisionmaking and weapons development:

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[1]See Harry Gelman, *The Soviet Military Leadership and the Question of Deployment Retreats,* The RAND Corporation, R-3664-AF, November 1988, pp. 4–7.

[2]*Moscow News,* No. 10, March 15–22, 1987.

[3]*Moscow News,* No. 11, March 23–29, 1987.

> A number of decisions have clearly not been optimal. . . . Somewhat different calculations could have been made, in my opinion, when our security goals on the European continent were being defined. I feel that the effective development of our technology rather than political analysis influenced the adoption of some decisions. Take medium range missiles, for instance. We had quite enough SS-4 and SS-5 missiles in Europe. Then we began to deploy SS-20s. Technically, they were more perfect. But the question is how they fitted into our military-strategic concept in the European theater. I repeat: national interests must determine strategy, while strategy must determine political tactics **and, to a certain extent, the technological development of the armed forces.**[4] (Emphasis added.)

The July 1988 Foreign Ministry Conference

That Foreign Minister Shevardnadze stood behind his deputy on this matter was made abundantly clear the following summer, when he personally launched a vehement public campaign against the status and interests of the General Staff. At a large Foreign Ministry conference in late July 1988 attended by much of the country's senior national security elite, Shevardnadze himself now publicly insisted that

> major innovations in defense development **should be verified at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** to determine whether they correspond juridically to existing international agreements and to stated political positions.[5] (Emphasis added.)

Shevardnadze followed this up by explicitly calling for a new mechanism for defense decisionmaking to supplement the Defense Council, the existing mechanism traditionally given staff support and heavily influenced by the General Staff. He declared:

> There is a need to introduce a legislative procedure in accordance with which all departments engaged in military and military-industrial activity would be under the control of the highest nationwide elective bodies. This applies to use of armed force outside the country's borders, defense development plans, and openness of military budgets where they are linked mainly with the problem of national security.[6]

To illustrate his indictment of past military-industrial decisionmaking, Shevardnadze scathingly denounced those past Soviet decisionmakers (obviously alluding to the Ministry of Defense and the members of the Defense Council) who had "continued to push for

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[4]*New Times,* No. 46, November 23, 1987.

[5]*International Affairs,* No. 10, October 1988, p. 19.

[6]*International Affairs,* No. 10, October 1988, p. 19.

quantity in chemical weapons over the past fifteen years." After condemning the "enormous amount of money," production capabilities and manpower that had been "diverted" to Soviet chemical weapons, he heaped scorn on those who had thought this necessary for the country's security, asserting that "this was the most primitive and distorted notion of what strengthens a country and what weakens it." Even an "elementary technical level of knowledge would be sufficient," he said, "to realize that chemical weapons are more dangerous for us . . . than for the United States . . . as geographical factors are not in our favor."[7] Such examples, he added, "could go on and on."

Finally, Shevardnadze rejected as "absolutely untenable" the contention advanced during the Brezhnev era that the Soviet Union "can be just as strong as any coalition of states opposing it." The Foreign Minister sarcastically remarked that this tenet "has established itself in the hearts and minds of **some strategists**.[8] (Emphasis added.) He now revealed that Gorbachev had himself rejected this contention in an unpublished portion of a speech delivered to an earlier Foreign Ministry meeting in 1986. Again, the implication conveyed was that some adverse changes in the Soviet Union's global force matchup with its accumulated adversaries—changes unwelcome to "some strategists"—were inevitable.

Echoes of Shevardnadze's attacks on military prerogatives and preferences were then heard during the conference discussion. Some Foreign Ministry officials denounced the "excessive secrecy in the military sphere," demanding that "an end be put at long last to an absurd situation where data on our armed forces known to the rest of the world are kept secret from Soviet people, including those specializing in military-strategic problems."[9]

These antimilitary salvos fired at the July Foreign Ministry conference were immediately accompanied and followed by an increasingly outspoken press campaign hostile to traditional General Staff priorities over a wide range of issues, led by the ministry's journal *International Affairs*.[10] One article in this journal in the summer of 1988, by two

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[7]*International Affairs,* No. 10, October 1988, p. 20. Shevardnadze was presumably referring to factors such as the proximity of the Soviet Union to potential European battlefields, as contrasted with the distance of the United States from Europe, as well as to the fact that the weather patterns that would carry chemical warfare products generally move from west to east—that is, from the hypothetical European battlefield toward the Soviet Union but away from the United States.

[8]*International Affairs,* No. 10, October 1988, p. 18.

[9]Conference statement by First Deputy Foreign Minister Yuri Vorontsov, published in *International Affairs,* No. 10, October 1988, p. 42.

[10]It should be noted that although all of these articles in foreign-language editions of this journal were surely expected to have a positive effect in the West, all appeared first

staffers of the Institute of the USA and Canada, made a new frontal attack on Soviet military spending, the secrecy of Soviet military decisionmaking, the priority given to military competition with the United States since Brezhnev's time, and the resources said to have been squandered by the USSR in that competition.[11]

The following month, the same Foreign Ministry organ published an article asserting that the Soviet acquisition of strategic nuclear parity with the United States had removed the credibility of a NATO first use of nuclear weapons in a European war, and had therefore made it "no longer necessary for the Soviet Union to compensate for NATO's nuclear superiority by the quantitative and qualitative composition of its conventional weapons and armed forces." This new "qualitative weakening of [NATO's] offensive potential," said the writer, "has apparently opened up such possibilities for cuts in [Soviet] forces as the Soviet Union has never had in the postwar period."[12]

A month later, the Foreign Ministry journal published a polemical contribution more explicitly identified with the ministry. Two Foreign Ministry officials signed a short article summarizing what they described as a "global trend" of growing financial, demographic, and other constraints on military spending. In particular, the authors asserted that the United States had already begun to reduce its military budget, had allegedly cut military expenditures "by 11 to 12 percent" in 1987, and planned to reduce the size of its army by 100,000 men by the mid-1990s. The reduction of forces, they said, was a "growing trend" in some NATO countries. Moreover, they noted, such other countries as China and Yugoslavia were also making large unilateral cuts in their forces.[13] This depiction of reality contradicted, of course, the military leadership's picture of the threat facing the Soviet Union, and strongly implied that the USSR should join the trend of unilateral reductions.

In the early fall, another Foreign Ministry official, Andrey Kozyrev, followed this up with yet another far-reaching attack on past Soviet foreign and military policies. Kozyrev went so far as to denounce the notion of a Soviet military presence "beyond our land and maritime borders," insisting that "our country has no interests which would

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in the journal's Russian-language edition—as part of the domestic polemic—and only one or two months later in the translations of the journal aimed at foreign audiences.

[11]Alexey Izyumov and Andrey Kortunov, "The Soviet Union in the Changing World," *International Affairs,* No. 8, August 1988.

[12]Sergey Karaganov, "The Common European Home: The Military Angle," *International Affairs,* No. 8, August 1988, p. 75.

[13]Aleksandr Gavryushkin and Nikolay Sokov, "The Arms Race: A Senseless Proposition," *International Affairs,* No. 9, September 1988.

justify any use of military resources outside the socialist community." He defended the principle of Soviet unilateral withdrawals in Europe as representing "a policy of initiative rather than a 'wait-and-see' policy," and noted that withdrawals "can be a great help in solving our socioeconomic problems." Responding to the military argument that Soviet cuts would have to wait upon NATO reciprocal concessions, Kozyrev declared:

> At the present time . . . the present correlation of forces between NATO and the Warsaw Pact possesses great reserves of stability, which allows us to take convincing and major steps toward sufficiency and eliminating asymmetries in order to set an example. Indeed, why should the rationality of our actions depend on the other side's irrationality?[14]

Finally, all this was supplemented, in the fall of 1988, by a two-part article in the same journal which broke new ground by presenting a detailed indictment of Soviet overreliance on tanks since World War II, by condemning the Soviet military thinking that had produced the traditional heavy imbalance of tanks favoring the Soviet Union in Europe, and by calling for agreement to reduce tank holdings on both sides to zero.[15]

This coordinated and sustained propaganda offensive by the Foreign Ministry against the General Staff was only part of a more general pattern of gradually increasing Soviet press criticism of the military on a variety of subjects during the summer and fall. The onslaught appeared to intensify considerably after the late September shake-up in the Soviet leadership. An important milestone was reached in mid-October, when the Politburo publicly criticized the Ministry of Defense rather severely for having inadequately dealt with the problem of poor military discipline.[16]

Subsequently, one officer for the first time publicly referred to the "dislocation of relations between Soviet society and its armed forces," and said that it was "impossible to ignore the armed forces' recent drop in prestige among civilians and young men's dwindling interest in army

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[14]Andrey Kozyrev, "Confidence and the Balance of Interests," *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn,* No. 10, October 1988. Kozyrev was identified as deputy chief of the International Organizations Administration in the Ministry.

[15]Vitali Shlykov, *International Affairs,* Nos. 10 and 11, October and November 1988.

[16]*Pravda,* October 14, 1988. One of the failings singled out by the Politburo was the Ministry's inability to halt "nonstatutory relationships among servicemen"—that is, the hazing, bullying, and beating of young soldiers by older ones. The military had been under gradually growing press attack for two years over this issue.

service.[17] Another revealed that because of "the fall in the prestige of the profession of defender of the motherland," there had been a "drop in competition for entrance into military academies, including flying schools."[18] During the autumn, reports began to surface of fairly widespread student protests against compulsory military classes in universities.[19] Proposals now also began to be heard for a reduction of the term of military service, and by late October Gorbachev for the first time acknowledged that the leadership was considering the notion.[20]

In mid-October, Georgiy Arbatov published an article in *Pravda* that lamented the long-drawn-out, "bureaucratized" bargaining process characteristic of arms negotiations. He said this process favored "domestic interests and departments . . . who even have a stake in thwarting an accord on one question or another, and sometimes in frustrating the very possibility of an agreement." He cited "the military industrial complex in the U.S." as such an "element," but the context of his argument strongly implied that this was equally true of the Soviet military and its friends.[21] More explicitly, Roald Sagdeyev, former head of the Soviet Space Committee, remarked a month later: "The objective laws of development of military-industrial complexes in capitalist states obviously operate in the Soviet Union too."[22] A prominent Soviet journalist who was well known as a weathervane for the prevailing political winds now similarly declared:

> One radical difference between us and the West is that our generals and defense-industry leaders do not get profits from selling weapons to the state. But honestly, isn't the influence on domestic and foreign policy, on the entire economic process, and the possibility of freely spending astronomical sums a cement firm enough to create an influential "pressure group" with its own specific interests sometimes

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[17]Lt. Col. Aleksandr Savinkin, "What Kind of Armed Forces Do We Need?" *Moscow News*, No. 45, November 6, 1988.

[18]Moscow Television Service, October 29, 1988 (*FBIS Daily Report—Soviet Union*, November 1, 1988, p. 87).

[19]Students in Irkutsk, Leningrad, Odessa, and at an institution in Moscow are said to have protested, and at Kiev State University they are reported to have picketed and boycotted military classes. (*Radyans'ka osvita*, Kiev, October 18, 1988, cited in the computer network Sovset, December 5, 1988.) In December, the existence of the student boycotts was finally acknowledged in *Krasnaya Zvezda*.

[20]*Pravda*, November 1, 1988. After Gorbachev announced the Soviet force withdrawals and reductions in December, the leadership eventually disclosed a decision—obviously keyed to the reductions—to end the student draft. (*Washington Post*, March 31, 1989.)

[21]*Pravda*, October 17, 1988.

[22]*New Times*, No. 47, November 1988.

different from the interests of the economy as a whole?[23] (Emphasis added.)

Clearly, a good deal of political momentum had now accumulated in the campaign to reduce military influence.

The Late 1988 Turning Point

In the aftermath of the 1988 campaign and the series of major leadership actions that followed, part of Shevardnadze's objective in his attacks against the General Staff appears to have been obtained, but other aspects of his future relationship with the military had not yet been settled. A long list of steps that were taken at the end of the year, which will be discussed in more detail below, had the cumulative effect of confirming that a watershed in the political status of the military leaders had been reached.

Among these steps were the Politburo decisions to implement unilateral withdrawals from Eastern Europe, to make overall cuts in the Soviet armed forces, to order a reorganization of the Soviet armed forces, to announce reductions in the Soviet military budget, to ordain severe party criticism of the work of the General Staff, and to arrange extensive changes in the personnel of the Soviet high command. Beyond this, the military leaders were now to become involved in simultaneous, ongoing public controversies over such matters as the future structure of the armed forces, the army's relationship with assertive minority nationalities around the Soviet periphery, and the disastrous consequences of the army's employment in an internal police role.

The full institutional consequences of the campaign Shevardnadze conducted against the General Staff in 1988 seem likely to remain uncertain for some time. The one institutional change that thus far has been consummated as a result of the events of 1988 has been the establishment of an arrangement for oversight of major military decisions by the new Supreme Soviet.

By the spring of 1989, the inevitability of some such new institution had apparently been accepted both by those members of the military leadership who were relatively amenable to change and by those who previously had been reluctant to accept it. Thus, the Central Committee military adviser General Geliy Batenin, who had displayed a fairly forthcoming personal attitude toward many of the demands of civilian reformers, declared that he was "looking forward to the new Supreme Soviet which will have an armed forces committee to ensure proper

[23]Nikolay Portugalov, *Moscow News,* No. 46, November 13, 1988.

control over all the Armed Forces. . . ." Batenin was quoted as asserting that "sounder decisions are likely once there are inquiries, democratic procedures, accountability, when there is openness in the publication of military budgets."[24] Even more significant, however, was the fact that army General V. N. Lobov, who in 1988 had displayed considerable unhappiness with the prospect of Soviet force reductions until they were finally announced, now also professed to have a "positive attitude" toward the notion of establishing "a military commission under the USSR Supreme Soviet to monitor the activity of the Ministry of Defense."[25]

The body in question came into being in June 1989, entitled the Committee on Defense and State Security of the USSR Supreme Soviet, under the chairmanship of Vladimir Lapygin. Several deputies of the Supreme Soviet pointed out, however, that the appointees to the committee appeared to be dominated by defense industry managers (like Lapygin himself) and military and KGB officers. In the summer of 1989, there consequently remained considerable doubt about how effective a check upon the Soviet military-industrial complex this committee would prove to be, and how far it would serve Shevardnadze's purposes. As will be seen below, however, on certain important issues the committee's leader Lapygin has in fact expressed views that are highly unwelcome to the Defense Ministry.

THE ROLE OF ECONOMIC PRESSURES

Both the struggle over institutional arrangements discussed above and the struggle over force cuts discussed below were powerfully affected in 1988 by the growth of economic pressures on the Soviet leadership. As will be seen later, by the summer, when Shevardnadze launched the propaganda offensive described above, the leadership appears to have already made a decision in principle to make some unilateral force reductions and some reductions in the military budget. However, the scope of what was to be done under both headings evidently remained quite controversial in the elite for many months. As the year went on, the bad economic news became a major catalyst in the debate.

The gravity of the Soviet domestic economic crisis began increasingly to affect the attitudes of the leadership, and to enhance both Gorbachev's readiness and his ability to make more radical changes at home and more far-reaching concessions abroad. As realization of the seriousness of the situation created by *perestroyka*'s

[24]*Morning Star,* London, April 10, 1989.

[25]*Izvestiya,* May 9, 1989.

setbacks began to sink in, it became progressively more difficult for members of the Politburo to obstruct efforts to begin to reduce the military burden.

The leadership was driven in 1988 to challenge the military priority more seriously than before because it simultaneously became aware of both the extent of the political dangers attached to the severe consumer goods shortage and the extent of the enormous and growing budget deficit.[26] Unless drastic steps were taken to deal with that deficit, steps which almost inevitably would have to include significant cuts in the military budget, there was little hope of finding the resources to begin to attack the consumer shortage on a scale remotely commensurate with the gravity of the crisis.

This does not necessarily mean that the Politburo had become much more optimistic about the results to be obtained from this transfer of resources. There were plenty of voices, inside and outside the country, to warn that the benefits to be obtained in this way would be painful and slow. But even if the payoff in consumer goods production was not equivalent to the sacrifice—not proportionate to the funds transferred from military purposes—the leadership now had little choice but to begin.

Reinforcing this economic pressure was the prospect that any military budget reductions made dependent upon a conventional arms agreement might be long delayed. By the summer of 1988, it became increasingly evident that as matters then stood—that is, in the absence of significant Soviet unilateral concessions—new conventional force reduction negotiations, when they eventually began, were going to be long and drawn out. It became clear in Moscow that if the Soviet Union insisted as usual on perpetuating the existing force imbalance, it was going to be very hard to obtain Western concessions that the General Staff would consider significant. Moreover, internal NATO disagreements—notably with France—promised to further delay progress in the future negotiations. Consequently, in the absence of a decisive move by the Soviet Union, if Gorbachev wanted to extract economic benefits from reductions flowing from such talks, he might have to wait a very long time.

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[26]Other manifestations of the military burden—such as the Defense Ministry's competition with the economy for scarce skilled manpower—had apparently indirectly affected the rate of growth of the armed forces in the past, by inducing the leadership to constrain military manpower growth as demographic problems shrunk the total manpower pool. (See Steven W. Popper, *The Economic Cost of Soviet Military Manpower Requirements*, The RAND Corporation, R-3659-AF, March 1989.) But the manpower issue was almost certainly insufficient in itself to force the leadership now to begin to cut the forces. The particular issue of student deferments did, of course, acquire more prominence in 1988, but was hardly the dominant factor behind the impulse to cut the military budget.

Meanwhile, the effects of economic pressures were heightened by a gradual change in the political balance during 1988. In particular, Gorbachev's conservative colleague and rival Yegor Ligachev was placed on the defensive after a Politburo clash in April, was further weakened by the outcome of the 19th Party Conference in late June, and was then deprived of his de facto position as "second secretary" in the leadership shake-up at the end of September. This series of events—and the removal of Ligachev's conservative allies Gromyko and Solomentsev from the Politburo in late September—may have cumulatively helped to shift the Politburo consensus sufficiently to override military opposition to both unilateral force reduction and cuts in the defense budget.

The Budget Deficit and Military Spending

Until 1988, the Soviet leadership had only gradually and incrementally begun to address the implications that its budget deficit posed for its force posture, and indeed in the view of some Soviet critics, it has still not adequately done so. Premier Nikolay Ryzhkov has frankly confirmed that the current Five Year Plan that began in 1986—the first one under the Gorbachev regime—envisioned what he admitted to be "**a traditional growth of defense expenses at a pace exceeding the growth of the national income.**" But Ryzhkov has also claimed that this level of planned growth in military expenditures was subsequently modified.[27] Gorbachev has claimed that at some unspecified time in the apparently not-too-distant past "we saved $6 billion through cutbacks in military expenditure and handed that money over to health care services.[28] Gorbachev has also asserted that in 1987 and 1988 "military spending was frozen," and that "this made a savings in the budget, in comparison with the 5-year plan, of 10 billion rubles."[29] It would appear that the six billion rubles said to have been transferred to health care was part of this sum of 10 billion rubles supposedly saved in 1987–1988.

The most authoritative Western source, however, has estimated that in 1988, "Soviet defense spending, as measured in constant 1982 rubles, grew by roughly 3 percent—in line with the growth rates of the past several years," while the growth of the economy as a whole was much slower. Moreover, "procurement of weapon systems was again a major

[27]Ryzhkov speech to Congress of People's Deputies, *Izvestiya,* June 9, 1989.

[28]Gorbachev's concluding speech to Central Committee plenum, *Pravda,* March 18, 1989. Shevardnadze has also claimed that money has in the past been transferred from the military to health services.

[29]Gorbachev's report to Congress of People's Deputies, *Izvestia,* May 31, 1989.

contributor to growth" in 1988.[30] In other words, the West has perceived that Soviet military spending behavior through 1988 continued to reflect the customary preferential treatment now admitted by Ryzhkov to be imbedded in the Five Year Plan, without the change in this trend alleged by Ryzhkov and Gorbachev to have been introduced in 1987 and 1988.[31]

One possible explanation for this apparent discrepancy is that the 1987–1988 savings alluded to by Ryzhkov and Gorbachev may reflect only reductions in annual plans for growth of military spending—in comparison with the Five Year Plan—rather than concrete reductions subsequently accomplished in the growth of the funds in fact spent each year for military purposes. There are plenty of precedents for such major discrepancies between spending plans and spending actions, in both the military and civilian sectors of the Soviet economy. The difference is often determined by political will—the willingness to follow through on budget decisions and to enforce them through politically painful choices. Indeed, Gorbachev himself acknowledged, in his congress speech, that a failure of such will—which he interpreted as a failure of Gosplan "to stand up to the pressure of departments"—had contributed mightily to the growth of the budget deficit. Although Gorbachev did not admit that military industry had followed this pattern as well as other economic sectors, this seems likely to have happened. In short, contrary to Gorbachev's suggestion, under his aegis—at least until 1989—the inertia behind military spending growth may well have withstood his attempts to "freeze" that growth and his recognition of new claimants on resources.

Indeed, the inflationary pressures and huge budget deficits that so alarmed the Soviet leadership by 1989 appear to have resulted, at least in part, from the very willingness of the leadership to allow defense expenditures (along with other expenditures) to grow in 1988 while there was "near stagnation in the growth of government revenues."[32] This unwillingness to choose among incompatible expenditures and to enforce in practice new plans to ration more severely the revenue pie evidently stemmed from an impasse in the **political** support behind rival claimants on resources, including "food subsidies, defense, investment, and the support of unprofitable resources."[33]

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[30]Central Intelligence Agency and Defense Intelligence Agency, *The Soviet Economy in 1988: Gorbachev Changes Course,* paper presented to the Congressional Joint Economic Committee, April 1988.

[31]See the discussion of this issue in Becker, 1987.

[32]*The Soviet Economy in 1988,* 1988.

[33]*The Soviet Economy in 1988,* 1988. In 1987 and 1988, the Gorbachev leadership did begin to apply growing indirect pressure on military production, by increasing party

During 1988 and early 1989, many of these growing political tensions within the elite over resource allocation to the military became focused on the issue of disclosing the Soviet military budget. In the summer of 1987, the regime had for the first time publicly disavowed the adequacy of the budget line item, which it had previously identified as Soviet military spending—and which the leadership had for years mendaciously used in propaganda campaigns seeking to draw the West into reciprocal military budget reductions. The Soviet Union now acknowledged that this figure represented only that portion of military expenditures directly attributed to the Ministry of Defense and did not include that much larger portion traditionally identified in the West but traditionally hidden in other accounts in the Soviet Union.

Soviet spokesmen from 1987 on also began to promise, for the first time, to make public within the next couple of years a figure for all military expenditures as these were commonly understood in the West. Such an unprecedented Soviet statement would be of central importance both internally and externally. On the one hand, it would provide a benchmark in the ongoing internal debate about the military burden, while on the other hand, the leadership hoped it would significantly enhance Soviet credibility with the Western public.

As time went on and the new Soviet military budget figure failed to appear, many in the Soviet elite already inclined to be critical of military expenditures—including Shevardnadze—began to express increasing impatience, implying that the General Staff was foot-dragging because of reluctance to face the consequences of disclosure. This pressure increased after Gorbachev in early January 1989 announced a 19.5 percent cut in the procurement of military hardware and a 14.2 percent cut in the total military budget, both to take full effect by 1991.[34]

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demands upon military industry to take on responsibility for producing consumer goods. During 1989, these demands on the military-industrial complex grew significantly. In May 1989, Deputy Defense Minister Vitaliy Shabanov noted that 40 percent of the "volume" (presumably, the ruble value) of defense industry output was now composed of consumer goods for civilians. He lamented that "unfortunately hardly anyone knows about it," and that Premier Ryzhkov had disclosed the fact only recently. (Moscow television interview, May 9, 1989.) Many observers suspect, however, that at least through 1989, military industries have not yet significantly improved the overall quality of the consumer goods they are now charged with producing, suggesting that these industries have thus far tended to evade much dilution of the priority given to the defense customers. This state of affairs may soon change, however. See John Tedstrom, "Defense Complex Contributions to Civilian Production: Is it Growing?" *Radio Liberty Report,* June 2, 1989.

[34]It was later disclosed that the 14.2 percent reduction would be phased in incrementally, beginning with a relatively small cut of only 1.5 percent in 1989. (*Washington Post,* July 27, 1989.)

A General Staff spokesman, General Nikolay Chervov, soon thereafter made it clear that the 14.2 percent reduction was intended to apply to some broad (but still undefined) concept of military expenditures "of the nation," and no longer merely the fraction directly attributed to the Ministry of Defense.[35] In view of their past disingenuous behavior, however, the Soviet leaders' failure to specify the figures they were claiming to reduce fueled some ongoing international skepticism. Shevardnadze evidently became particularly impatient with the continued silence about the size of the military budget because he saw this reticence as a source of ongoing embarrassment for the Soviet peace offensive.

From the start, however, disclosure of the revised figure had been linked to the accomplishment of a Soviet price reform, and military leaders, pressed to explain the delay in revelation of the military budget, kept citing the delay in the price reform as the reason.[36] On the other hand, the regime has found itself obliged since early 1989 to postpone for several more years the announcement of the price reform previously said to be a prerequisite for revelation of the "real" military budget. The leadership was evidently compelled to put off the price reform for a number of reasons, but particularly because of apprehension about the political consequences of a reduction in consumer food subsidies. Having made this decision, the leaders were apparently placed in a dilemma as to what to do about the military budget announcement. The results derived from the existing pricing system were evidently quite controversial within the Soviet elite, and Gorbachev should have had ample reason to believe that they would lack credibility both inside and outside the country.

Nevertheless, in the end the leadership decided to proceed, and in May 1989 Gorbachev announced to the new Congress of People's Deputies a total military budget of 77.3 billion rubles, or about 9 percent of Soviet GNP as the latter is estimated by the U.S. govern-

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[35]Statement was attributed to Col. Gen. Nikolay Chervov, Moscow Radio, January 6, 1989 (*FBIS—USSR*, No. 89–005, January 9, 1989, p. 95).

[36]Marshal S. F. Akhromeyev and his successor, General M. A. Moiseyev, also insisted through the spring of 1989 that a comparison with prices paid for military hardware in the West was also somehow involved in the preparation of an overall military budget figure. This suggests that even after a general price reform was deferred, some internal argument may have gone on over whether to introduce some arbitrary upward adjustments to the military budget figures to be announced, to help compensate for the unreality of Soviet military procurement prices. (*Moscow News*, No. 5, January 29, 1989; and *Argumenty i Fakty*, No. 15, 15–21 April 89 (*FBIS—USSR Daily Report*, April 19, 1989, p. 8).)

ment.[37] This total, which Gorbachev defensively insisted was the "real" figure, was much lower than was commonly estimated by observers in the West and by some Soviet economists. The April 1989 CIA-DIA report to the Joint Economic Committee, for example, estimated Soviet military spending to be some 15–17 percent of Soviet GNP.[38] Some other estimates, both in the West and in the Soviet Union, are considerably higher.

Conjectures about the reason for this discrepancy have varied.

- Many observers have suggested that the Soviet leadership has continued to omit some categories of military spending from its depiction of the total military budget. The Soviet government has subsequently confirmed this. Ryzhkov in his report to the Congress of People's Deputies acknowledged that an additional 3.9 billion rubles in the space budget are intended for military purposes, and some Soviets have suggested that this may be an underestimate. In addition, the senior Soviet economic advisor Leonid Abalkin, who has recently become a Deputy Premier, has "indicated that some research programs that could have military applications were not included in the new figure."[39] And finally, Marshal Akhromeyev, in testimony before the U.S. Congress in July 1989, confirmed that the new military budget total excludes all costs associated with the KGB (including the militarized border guards), and all noncombatant forces such as construction troops.[40] But although these omissions contribute to the Soviet understatement of the military budget, most Western observers believe they are probably only part of the problem.
- Others believe Soviet GNP is significantly smaller than officially estimated in the United States, and that Gorbachev's version of the military budget is therefore itself a much larger portion of GNP than he acknowledges. This is strongly disputed by many Western observers; moreover, even if true, it would not explain the discrepancies between Gorbachev's depiction of **trends** in the growth of planned Soviet military spending in recent years and Western assessments of those trends.
- A more important factor explaining Gorbachev's understatement relates to the political underpinning of military expendi-

[37] *Izvestiya,* May 31, 1989.

[38] *The Soviet Economy in 1988,* p. 11.

[39] *Washington Post,* May 31, 1989.

[40] *Washington Post,* July 22, 1989.

tures and the political assumptions built into the military-industrial price system. In this view, increasingly held in the West, Gorbachev's version of the total military budget may be much lower than the version estimated in the West because of radical price distortions. There is increasing reason to believe that many of the prices paid by the Soviet Union for military hardware have always been kept artificially low for political reasons.

A statement in 1988 by Defense Minister Yazov seemed to imply that Soviet military books were being kept in this strange fashion. In an interview with an American periodical, Yazov declared:

> The U.S. data that shows Soviet military expenditures up to 16 percent, even 25 percent, of national income do not correspond to reality. Proportionately, we spend less on defense than the U.S. If you spend 2 percent for purchasing weapons, we spend approximately 0.5 percent. It's just not correct to take GNP and the percentage spent on defense and compare them because our weapons are a quarter as expensive as those in the West. The West German Leopard tank costs around $2 million, and our T-80, which is practically the same, costs a quarter as much. We have state-owned military enterprises; that is why we don't have to pay **extra.** If we come to the market system, we'll have the same approach as you."[41] (Emphasis added.)

Yazov's claim that the Defense Ministry obtains such an extraordinary bargain price for its main battle tank is not dependent on use of an artificial exchange rate to compare his costs with Western costs. His assertion is apparently valid without reference to foreign prices, because, as one Soviet journalist notes, "wholesale prices for military products set in our country are, putting it plainly, symbolic, **they are not in line with actual outlays.**"[42] (Emphasis added.) According to one authoritative source, the Soviet military customer can, in fact, impose a very low price **that does not cover the costs of production** and, he adds, "today this occurs quite often."[43] (Emphasis added.)

Up to now, one of the reasons Soviet defense enterprises have not suffered adverse consequences from these enforced low prices for their products has been the fact that the regime has in many cases imposed artificially low prices on their suppliers. The suppliers themselves must then often be subsidized or otherwise compensated in order to remain in operation. Thus the financial costs engendered by the

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[41] *U.S. News & World Report,* March 13, 1989.

[42] *Moskovskaya Pravda,* March 21, 1989, cited in Arthur J. Alexander, "Soviet Defense Industry and *Perestroyka*: The Second Phase," June 1989, unpublished draft.

[43] A. Isayev, "Reform and the Defense Branches," *Kommunist,* March 1989, p. 25, cited in Alexander.

political priority enjoyed by defense may all along have been broadly diffused outward through the Soviet economy in a manner not recognized in the plan—or in Gorbachev's new depiction of the military budget. During questioning before the Armed Services Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives in July 1989, Marshal Akhromeyev made an admission tending to support this hypothesis. Responding to a question contending that the Soviets had underestimated the cost of raw materials used for military goods, Akhromeyev acknowledged that the prices used may have been too low in some instances.[44] It appears, however, that sometimes these artificially low supplier prices may be insufficient subsidization for factories producing cheap military hardware. Revenue gaps facing defense factories for this reason have apparently been traditionally effaced by automatic state subsidies, and these have evidently also not been included in Gorbachev's published total of Soviet military expenditures.

The mechanism for these subsidies is apparently an extension of the one used widely throughout the economy to keep loss-making enterprises afloat. Soviet enterprises that incur losses have customarily been reimbursed through loans from the State Bank that are automatically supplied when needed and generally not repaid. In the defense complex, the system has been carried even further, since up to now the military consumer—the Defense Ministry—has not been made responsible for paying defense plants for the military hardware procured.[45] All the sums involved seem to have customarily been supplied directly to plants by the State Bank from central funds as needed to fulfill approved production plans for items for the Defense Ministry. When found to be insufficient, the sums are apparently supplemented without question with State Bank loans that are generally not repaid. At least until 1989, even unpublished Soviet accounts did not appear to have kept track of the extra defense costs incurred in this indirect fashion, since they have traditionally been considered unexpired loans rather than expenditures.[46]

In short, according to one American observer:

> [The] inefficiency of the Soviet defense production sector may not be fully apparent to Soviet planners and leaders because the full cost of output is not always reflected in the prices that the defense ministry pays for its products. As "khozraschet" [self-sustainability] is introduced into defense plants, we are finding increasing numbers of

[44] *Washington Post,* July 22, 1989.

[45] Marshal Akhromeyev has said: "Nor did we pay for series production deliveries!" (Moscow television interview, October 9, 1989 (*FBIS—USSR,* October 13, 1989, p. 105).)

[46] This account of the Soviet military-industrial funding mechanism draws on work in progress by Arthur Alexander.

> complaints from enterprise managers that they cannot generate profits under the existing pricing practices where monopsonist-established prices do not cover the costs of production.[47]

The coming of economic reform and *khozraschet* to the defense industry thus signifies a **political** attack on the system of subsidies to defense plants, and therefore, in the long run, on General Yazov's ability to continue enforcing on those plants the bargain prices for military hardware that he considers so natural. That such a trend is under way was suggested during a session of the new USSR Supreme Soviet in June 1989, when a deputy involved in defense shipbuilding, V. I. Lisitskiy, denied allegations of "uncontrolled spending of money by the military-industrial complex," asserting that "recently procedures for disbursing outlays have become noticeably more stringent."[48]

Gorbachev Understates the Military Burden

It hardly seems possible that Gorbachev and his colleagues have been unaware of the controversial nature of military hardware prices, and therefore of the slipperyness of the new "real" Soviet military budget. The economist and Gorbachev adviser Oleg Bogomolov, director of the Institute for the Study of the Economy of the World Socialist System, has publicly contradicted Yazov's view of his prices. Bogomolov insisted in a newspaper roundtable discussion in the summer of 1988 that the Soviet Union spent at least as much as did the United States, and probably more, for equal defense results. He added that "yes, we have cheap manpower, but the nucleus of modern armaments—electronics—**costs us many times more than other countries.**"[49] (Emphasis added.) This judgment is widely shared in the West.

Bogomolov was clearly referring to "cost" in a more fundamental sense than was Yazov. The Minister of Defense appeared to be claiming that the astonishingly modest prices that he says his ministry pays for weapons should be accepted as an accurate indication of their "cost" to the Soviet economy, and thus—the political point—of the extent of the military burden. Bogomolov was expressing incredulity about the usefulness of those prices as an indicator of the burden, and was demanding a new calculation of the burden—and therefore of the

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[47]Alexander.

[48]*Trud,* June 29, 1989.

[49]*Literaturnaya Gazeta,* June 29, 1988. Bogomolov went on to note that even if the Soviet Union obtained equal results for equal expenditures—which he did not believe—the burden on the much smaller Soviet national income was in any case much greater than the burden on America.

military budget—that more fully expressed, as part of the military budget, all those direct or indirect subsidies enjoyed by Yazov.

It should be reemphasized that the conflicting points being made by Yazov and Bogomolov were, at their heart, not economic but political in nature. As Deputy Foreign Minister Karpov put it in a January 1989 *Pravda* interview, "it is important to know the actual size of military spending and the precise amount that we spend on scientific research for military purposes **in order to see whether we are not spending too much.**"[50] (Emphasis added.) Yazov wished to minimize perception of the extent of the military burden in order to minimize the military's political vulnerability to pressure for reductions, while Bogomolov and the Foreign Ministry for the opposite reason wished to maximize the estimate of the burden. The sensitivity of this question did not disappear when the Politburo resolved in principle to begin a series of major cuts in defense programs in 1989 and to continue cutting in future years. The extent and implementation of these budget reductions have not ceased to be matters of ongoing controversy.[51]

As already suggested, it now seems likely that the Soviet leaders have never had available to them a single figure for all defense resource allocations expressed in comparable economic units. Indeed, until recently they have apparently not felt a political need to seek such a figure. It has been plausibly argued that Soviet military economic decisionmaking has instead traditionally been based on material balances and programs, with the leadership reviewing General Staff allocation proposals under these headings. Estimates of the ruble consequences of these decisions thus have traditionally emerged only as subsequent artifacts, if at all. Under these circumstances, the improbable nature of some of the nominal prices ascribed to defense hardware under the skewed pricing system was traditionally of little political consequence. This changed, however, once the new foreign and domestic environment compelled the Soviet military and political leaderships to conjure up and publish a total ruble figure for all the segments of Soviet military spending.

Precisely because this figure was apparently being assembled from disparate accounts for the first time, the process of constructing it was to a considerable extent arbitrary and necessarily highly politicized. One key dilemma was how to treat Soviet military procurement costs,

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[50]*Pravda,* January 15, 1989.

[51]Thus, for example, in September 1989—long after military budget reductions were first announced—Yazov found it necessary to protest against those who were so shortsighted as to see the military budget as the sole cause of Soviet economic problems, and to criticize some who in his opinion were inclined to try to balance the budget solely by cutting military spending. (*Izvestiya,* September 16, 1989.)

since the Soviet leadership had felt obliged to postpone the general price reform that might have established more realistic figures for Soviet military hardware. Some Soviet statements have confirmed that during the period when the military budget figure was being assembled in early 1989, the question of American military costs entered into the process. Marshal Akhromeyev has said that those Soviet officials who were involved in compiling the new unified Soviet military budget used the U.S. budget as a "basis so we could compare."[52] But there is also reason to suspect that American costs were being studied because there was internal debate about whether it might be advisable to adjust Soviet data on procurement costs upward for publication, so as to be less flagrantly at variance with international experience. This was in essence a political choice.

In the end, given the absence of a price reform, and given the pressure from abroad to make a statement about the military budget, the Soviet leadership appears to have consciously decided to issue a budget figure that did not adequately reflect Yazov's procurement subsidies, and that consequently was attuned much more closely to Yazov's conception of the military burden than to Bogomolov's. The announcement will therefore inevitably remain controversial within the Soviet elite.[53] Radical Soviet economists are likely to interpret Gorbachev's announced version as reflecting a politically motivated decision to postpone acknowledging to the country the true extent of the military burden, and if nothing else, to understate the extent of the potential help to the national budget that could be obtained by cutting the military budget further.

Some Western observers have been inclined to accept as sincere (if probably mistaken) Gorbachev's protestation to the People's Congress that he was now presenting the "real" military budget, on the ground that Gorbachev would not knowingly expose himself to the embarrassment of later being forced to make radical corrections to this "real" total. It is true that Gorbachev has in the past displayed considerable

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[52]Moscow television interview, October 9, 1989 (*FBIS—USSR*, October 13, 1989, p. 105).

[53]Thus the economist Gavril Popov, immediately after Gorbachev's military budget statement, commented privately that the defense expenditures announced by Gorbachev appeared low, and that the figures were practically meaningless without detailed information about how the prices were calculated. (*Washington Post,* May 31, 1989.) Similarly, the economist Alexei Izyumov some weeks later expressed skepticism "about the methods with which the announced figures have been obtained," both because there has been no information published about those calculations and because Soviet prices are "severed . . . from the realities of our domestic economy." (*Moscow News,* No. 37, 1989.)

naivete about some economic matters.[54] Nevertheless, Gorbachev is almost certainly well aware that his total will be a subject of ongoing political controversy both inside and outside the Soviet Union, and he has surely been told—by Bogomolov, for example—that the Soviet military procurement prices reflected in the increases in the 1989 military budget total are highly suspect.[55]

Even more important, Gorbachev is surely aware that the battle over the "reality" of military procurement prices will some day have to be fought anew within the regime when and if the Soviet leadership eventually does undertake a general price reform. At that time, Gorbachev will be under pressure from reformers to adopt changes that could conceivably force him to accept significant retrospective increases in the 1989 military budget total he has just avowed to be "real." In his July 1989 testimony to the U.S. Congress, Marshal Akhromeyev acknowledged that the figures presented by Gorbachev may eventually be changed.[56] And in mid-July, Col. Gen. Chervov of the General Staff's Arms Control Directorate at last frankly acknowledged, in an interview with Western journalists, that when the USSR undertakes its price restructuring, military purchases would come under much greater pressure because the cost of armaments will be sharply increased.[57]

Moreover, even in the absence of such a reform, the Ministry of Defense's bargain prices are likely to come under increasing question. The prominent Soviet reform economist Abalkin, who has now become a Deputy Premier, has repeatedly demanded that all loss-making state enterprises must cease to drain the Soviet treasury by 1992, even if it means shutting them down completely. The point is not that this is likely to happen to defense plants, which of course would be protected from any such general requirement in the unlikely event that it is ever put into effect in the economy as a whole. But Abalkin's statement is indicative of growing political pressure to minimize subsidized losses,

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[54]For example, he initially failed to anticipate that his antialcohol campaign would create major losses in revenues for the budget, and he failed to realize that his demands for simultaneous acceleration of production and modernization of production were unreasonable and almost incompatible.

[55]This does not exclude the possibility that Gorbachev does not realize the extent of what might be termed "secondary" or indirect subsidies to the military. As already suggested, those are the costs that may be imposed on the economy by the military establishment to the degree that military industry, compelled to accept prices that might impose losses, succeeds in reducing or eliminating these losses by passing them on to its suppliers in the form of dictated prices below their own production costs. The funds required to compensate the losses "transferred" to suppliers are presumably then furnished as state loans to the various supplier enterprises concerned, and never show up as a military expenditure.

[56]*Washington Post,* July 22, 1989.

[57]*Washington Post,* July 14, 1989.

and as this pressure continues to build, both the defense industry and its suppliers are likely to increase their demands for relief from low dictated prices for their products.

Finally, in view of the political sensitivity of this issue, it is quite possible that the general price reform was postponed not only because of leadership reluctance to face the political consequences of abolishing the existing, publicly acknowledged subsidies for key consumer necessities. It is likely that the unacknowledged subsidies for military goods were also found politically difficult to tackle at the present time.

Implications for Policy Toward the Armed Forces

What are the consequences for Soviet military forces of the leadership decision to accept, for the time being, a new public understatement of the military burden? Three conclusions suggest themselves.

1. The 14.2 percent reduction in military spending which Gorbachev and Ryzhkov have promised to accomplish by 1991 will bite less heavily into Soviet military programs than initially thought in the West, since the amount of the reduction in rubles will be much smaller than Western estimates of the size of the military budget had implied.

In April 1989, a joint CIA-DIA report to the Congressional Joint Economic Committee asserted:

> If the promised cut is to be applied to a defense budget as large as we estimate Moscow's to be—about 15 to 17 percent of Soviet GNP—then the resource savings involved will be substantial. Indeed, our estimates indicate that to reduce their total defense budget by 14.2 percent, the Soviets would have to go beyond the cutbacks in military programs that they have specifically promised to make. By our estimates, only about a third to a half of the 14.2 reduction can be accounted for by savings associated with withdrawing from Afghanistan, complying with the INF Treaty, and carrying out the reductions promised at the UN. Although some additional savings will come from reduced demands for weapons . . . as a result of the force restructuring Gorbachev promised . . . , we believe the Soviets will have to do much more than what they have publicly disclosed to achieve reductions amounting to 14.2 percent. Actions the Soviets might take to meet their promise of a defense spending cut include reductions in military research, development, testing, and evaluation (RDT&E).[58]

A budget reduction that reflected a decision to make significant cuts in military R&D as well as in existing forces would have been of great political significance. Such a decision would have implied economic pressures so grievous as to force Soviet leaders to constrict the pace of

[58]*The Soviet Economy in 1988.*

advanced weapons research, and thus of future military modernization. In fact, however, the smaller ruble reductions Gorbachev has announced imply that the Soviet leaders do not yet consider themselves this desperate.

2. Nevertheless, the implications for the Soviet armed forces of Gorbachev's and Ryzhkov's statements about the military budget remain quite serious. Force reductions of at least the scope of those announced will be required as part of the measures needed to accomplish the budget cuts, and some other military programs could be adversely affected. Indeed, as will be seen below, Soviet discussions of the force reorganization now under way suggest that the nature of this reorganization has been significantly affected by new budget constraints as well as by military and political considerations. And finally, as suggested earlier, the Defense Ministry's understated procurement prices are already becoming more vulnerable, despite the absence of a price reform to date. If the military budget is not allowed to grow (much less forced downward), and if military hardware prices are meanwhile allowed to escalate, either readiness or the force structure must be constricted.

3. Moreover, the Soviet leaders, although they have thus far evaded facing the political and military consequences that a thoroughgoing price reform should have for the military budget, nevertheless evidently perceive the economic pressures on them as sufficiently grave so as make further major reductions in the military budget highly desirable and indeed probably unavoidable over the next decade. It is testimony to the seriousness of the leadership's concern about the growing budget deficit that they are planning other radical steps to deal with it besides cutting the military, including broad cuts in investment. It is plausible to suppose that the Politburo has already been warned that these measures may not be sufficient, and that additional expedients such as further reductions in military spending could prove necessary. In his speech to the June 1989 People's Congress session, Premier Ryzhkov laid down a marker for the future. He asserted that "we intend to continue persistently along the path of disarmament, and to strive for reducing by one-third to one-half the relative share of defense expenses in the national income by 1995."[59]

Although the implications of this statement for the scope of future military cuts are ambiguous—because of the uncertainty about the economy's rate of growth between 1989 and 1995—it was intended to serve as political notice to all concerned that the leadership will probably make significant further reductions in military programs over the

[59]See footnote 30.

next half-decade. Escape clauses were duly provided: Ryzhkov implied that any additional budget cuts will be dependent upon international disarmament agreements, and as noted, he in any case left the extent of such future reductions rather cloudy. But a warning has been posted to the military leadership that additional resource restrictions are coming. The warning was reiterated in the legislative program announced at the conclusion of the first session of the Congress of People's Deputies.[60]

Thereafter, in his interview with American journalists in mid-July 1989, Col. Gen. Chervov was quoted as stating that the Soviet military budget would decline by roughly 25 percent by 1995. Presumably this would include the 14 percent reduction already scheduled to take effect by 1991. Chervov claimed, like Gorbachev, that defense spending had already been reduced by 10 billion rubles below the original plan for 1987 and 1988. He said that it would be cut by another 10 billion rubles by 1992, and added that "if circumstances will allow us," another reduction greater than 10 billion rubles would be made in the following three years.[61]

FORCE REDUCTION AND REORGANIZATION: THE SCOPE AND THE STRUGGLE

The Soviet force withdrawals that have begun from Western Europe and Asia are intimately related to the growth of pressure on the Soviet leaders to reduce military spending, on the one hand, and to the evolution of Soviet plans to reorganize their armed forces, on the other hand. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that all three phenomena are interdependent and have materialized together. There is good reason to believe that Soviet military leaders had previously been mulling over alternative variants for a possible reorganization for a considerable time. There has been widespread speculation in the West since at least 1987, for example, that the General Staff might opt to restructure combat units to attempt to make them smaller yet more capable. One model frequently cited as an option for such a Soviet reorganization was that of Hungary, whose army had been reshaped in recent years to replace the old structure of regiments and divisions with a supposedly cheaper and more flexible system of brigades.[62] In the Soviet army, two experimental unified army corps that appeared in the 1980s—containing "a more equitable mix of infantry and armor than the

[60] *Los Angeles Times*, June 25, 1989.

[61] *Washington Post*, July 14, 1989.

[62] "Hungary: No Change for Defence," *Jane's Defense Weekly*, June 4, 1988, p. 1102.

traditional Soviet tank division"—seemed to point in the same direction.[63]

It now seems likely that the General Staff, and the armed services generally, were for a long time divided on the merits and modalities of reorganization, particularly in view of the politically sensitive resource transfers among the services that might be implied. One key variable in thinking about the desirability of reorganization, of course, was the question of whether and how far the military budget as a whole might be cut. Delay on the reorganization question was therefore almost inevitably perpetuated so long as the political leadership remained itself undecided on whether and how far to reduce both forward deployments and military resources. As will be seen, although a decision in principle appears to have been taken on both counts by mid-1988, some internal argument seems to have continued thereafter during the summer and fall.

As the Politburo moved toward its eventual decisions to unilaterally withdraw six divisions and 5000 tanks from Eastern Europe and to begin cutting the military budget, there was evidently considerable resistance from some Soviet military leaders. A year later, Gorbachev alluded to this resistance in a speech to the Supreme Soviet, asserting that he "began to receive information that the Defense Council and its chairman were moving too sharply, and the Marshals requested me to bear this comment in mind."[64] Those military leaders who lobbied most aggressively to delay or dilute these political decisions were thereby also acting to delay reorganization. It was only after the decisions to withdraw and to cut were finally settled that the long-pending issues of the reorganization and the associated resource transfers within the military establishment were also resolved.

Zhurkin Versus Tretyak

Even before unilateral conventional Soviet force withdrawals and reductions became a subject of public Soviet polemics in late 1987, it seems likely that an unpublicized internal debate on the question had already gone on for some time behind the scenes in Moscow. After the conclusion of the INF agreement in the late summer of 1987, the political climate in the Soviet elite changed sufficiently to make it possible to raise the subject publicly. The first extensive and forthright defense

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[63]Gottemoeller, 1989.

[64]*Christian Science Monitor,* July 12, 1989. This statement is reliably reported by Paul Quinn-Judge as having been made by Gorbachev during a July 3 debate on the nomination of Defense Minister Yazov, but then excised from the published version of Gorbachev's remarks.

of the notion of unilateral Soviet cuts and withdrawals was offered in the fall, in an article published by the civilian analyst Vitaliy Zhurkin and two colleagues in October and reiterated with some elaboration in December.[65]

The much-discussed Zhurkin articles cited the large Khrushchev unilateral troop cuts of the late 1950s as examples that should be emulated by the Soviet Union today. Zhurkin denied that Soviet security had suffered from the Khrushchev reductions, and he claimed that this was because they had been "accompanied by a broad peace offensive which made it virtually impossible for the West to bring additional military pressure to bear on our country." He thus implied that a similar political offensive accompanying unilateral reductions today would bring the Soviet Union major political compensation in the erosion of Western coherence, a suggestion that Gorbachev has since verified in practice. At the same time, Zhurkin, like many other civilian writers, suggested that reductions should be tied to a reorganization of Soviet forces to make the Soviet force posture more consistent with the defensive doctrine now being promulgated.[66]

In addition, Zhurkin hinted that the USSR, should it take the initiative with unilateral reductions, could reasonably hope for some reciprocal reaction by the West, in the form of "parallel unilateral actions." Calling for a "flexible combination of unilateral, bilateral and multilateral measures," he intimated that Soviet unilateral cuts would condition Western public opinion to make possible joint agreements on mutual negotiated cuts.

Although much of Zhurkin's argument has since been justified by events, there is good evidence that at least part of the Soviet military leadership reacted to these suggestions with great hostility. By far the most outspoken officer was Deputy Defense Minister and Air Defense Forces commander army General Ivan Tretyak, who in February 1988 warned in a dramatic interview that the Khrushchev troop cuts had been disastrous for the Soviet Union—a "rash" step which "dealt a terrible blow at our defense capacity." He demanded that "any changes in our army should be considered a thousand times before they are

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[65]*New Times,* No. 40, October 12, 1987; *SShA: Ekonomika, Politika, Ideologiya,* No. 12, December 1987.

[66]The notion of reorganization of forces to promote a "defensive defense" had had its origin earlier in the West German Social Democratic Party and other West European socialist circles. Originally encouraged by the Soviets in the first half of the 1980s because they hoped to see the concept applied to NATO, in the second half of the decade the notion diffused back into the Soviet Union as an argument for radical changes in Soviet military deployments, much to the discomfiture of many in the Soviet military leadership.

decided upon."[67] It is now clear that this was part of the opposition from "the Marshals" to which Gorbachev later alluded in 1989.

It now also seems obvious in hindsight that Tretyak's outburst was a reaction not merely to Zhurkin's public statements, but more fundamentally to the inner reality that was legitimizing those statements—the fact that the prospective "changes in our army" he was objecting to were already being considered as possibilities by the Soviet leaders, evidently in decisionmaking bodies including the Defense Council. At the same time, there is good reason to assume that Tretyak had a specific vested interest in opposing troop and budget reductions. It will be seen below that a year later, after the reorganization had begun, Tretyak was to make equally outspoken complaints about the way the cuts he had opposed were being implemented. He had apparently correctly foreseen that his command, the Air Defense Forces, might be one of the resulting losers.

Although Tretyak was the most extreme example, other Soviet military leaders from the start had made clear their strong opposition to Soviet unilateral force reduction. As early as February 1987, then Warsaw Pact commander Marshal Kulikov had tried to stake out a Soviet position claiming that NATO and the Warsaw Pact had equality in tanks—a line which, if adhered to, would have prevented Gorbachev's subsequent evolution toward both unilateral withdrawals and acceptance of heavily asymmetrical negotiated reductions.[68] Indeed, Soviet acceptance of Kulikov's dictum would also have made it difficult to justify a Soviet reorganization involving a substantial reduction of tanks in the unit structure.

Despite the resistance by figures such as Tretyak and Kulikov, by mid-1988 Gorbachev appears to have moved the Soviet consensus a step closer to asymmetrical action on force reduction. Then Chief of the General Staff Marshal Akhromeyev has revealed that the General Staff began "preparatory work on the decision to cut 500,000 men" in the "summer of 1988."[69] In mid-July the Warsaw Pact published a formal proposal endorsing the principle of asymmetry in reductions and stating, apparently for the first time, that forces withdrawn should all be demobilized and their weapons either destroyed or converted to peaceful purposes.[70]

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[67]*Moscow News,* No. 8, February 28–March 6, 1988.

[68]*Trud,* February 22, 1987. See Gelman, 1988, pp. 23–25.

[69]Akhromeyev interview in *La Repubblica* (Rome), March 11, 1989 (*FBIS Daily Report—Soviet Union,* March 15, 1989, p. 2).

[70]*Pravda,* July 16, 1988.

In early July, the U.S. State Department revealed that the United States had received "increasing indications" that the Soviet Union was in fact considering some unilateral withdrawal and might in the near future pull some or all of its forces from Hungary.[71] American officials urged caution in interpreting such a move, recalling that in 1980, the Brezhnev regime had announced a withdrawal of 1000 tanks and 20,000 men from East Germany, but that this gesture had subsequently turned out to be a sham, since all the forces involved were subsequently replenished.

Despite the evidence acquired by the United States, the anticipated Soviet announcement of a partial troop withdrawal from Hungary did not materialize in the summer or fall of 1988. It is possible that one reason for the delay was leadership uncertainty as to the most advantageous moment to make such an announcement. It also seems likely, however, that another factor causing Soviet procrastination was the significant reluctance that many Soviet military leaders continued to demonstrate, even after they had received their instructions to begin to work on the modalities for reduction.

Asked at the time of the American statement if a Soviet troop withdrawal from Hungary was in fact being planned, Marshal Akhromeyev vigorously denied that anything unilateral was appropriate. This was to remain the position of all the senior Soviet military leaders who addressed the subject down to the moment when Gorbachev announced the Soviet cuts in early December. And although Gorbachev and other Soviet civilian spokesmen also issued denials on this point throughout the summer and fall, the statements of some of the military leaders often had a polemical tone which strongly suggested that a debate was still going on behind the scenes. The debate is likely to have involved both the extent of the prospective force cuts and the extent of the prospective military budget reduction, since the two were closely interwoven.[72]

Military Polemics

In late May the military's resentful attitude toward Khrushchev—and concern about his example for current Soviet policy—was displayed in a full-page article in the central military newspaper. It, like Tretyak, attacked Khrushchev for neglecting the needs of the

[71] *New York Times, Washington Post,* July 9, 1988.

[72] In a 1989 interview, Shevardnadze said that the figures finally announced for both the troop cut and the military budget cut had been the subject of "repeated" discussion in both the Politburo and the Defense Council. (*Argumenty i Fakty,* No. 18, May 6–12, 1989.)

military. The article cited a secret meeting that took place in the Kremlin soon after Khrushchev's ouster, at which senior party leader Mikhail Suslov and Defense Minister Malinovskiy were said to have criticized Khrushchev for his "crusade" against the Soviet military.[73]

Three months later—and after the July Warsaw Pact statement had already signaled Gorbachev's movement toward acceptance of asymmetrical reductions—a *Kommunist* article coauthored by the General Staff official Major General Yuriy Lebedev complained that the earlier May 1987 Warsaw Pact initiative (which had not endorsed the notion of compensating for asymmetry) "was not appropriately . . . supported by the [Soviet] mass information media and the scientific public." Lebedev sneered that "the discussions held last year among scientific and public circles in the USSR demonstrated the inadequate training of political scientists in questions of military doctrine, an inclination to draw rash conclusions at times, and a lack of the professionalism which is so necessary for the analysis of military-political problems."[74] This was a transparent attack on Zhurkin and his Foreign Ministry supporters.

At about the time this article was being printed, Col. Gen. Vladimir Lobov, first deputy chief of the Soviet General Staff, claimed in an interview published in the Hungarian press that NATO had a net advantage in the present balance of forces. Complaining that the West had not reciprocated for the Soviet Union's 1980 alleged withdrawals from the GDR, he asserted:

> Why should we repeat this now? Unilateral measures only lead to a situation in which the aforementioned asymmetry is even more to our detriment.[75]

In mid-October, another deputy chief of the General Staff, the leading theoretician Col. Gen. Makhmut Gareyev, similarly insisted to a Western audience that there was no question of the Warsaw Pact reducing unilaterally, because "NATO has superiority in strike aviation and naval forces, . . . [and] elementary fairness and interest in security says that we cannot unilaterally have one set of imbalances removed

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[73]*Krasnaya Zvezda,* May 21, 1988.

[74]Maj. Gen. Y. V. Lebedev and A. I. Podberezkin, "Military Doctrines and International Security," *Kommunist,* No. 13, September 1988 (signed to press August 25, 1988).

[75]*Magyar Hirlap* (Budapest), August 31, 1988. Lobov displayed a similarly unreconstructed attitude in a Moscow television discussion with two civilians two months later. ("Studio 9" program, Moscow television, October 15, 1988 (JPRS-UMA-88-025, October 21, 1988.)

and another set not removed."[76] As late as November 21—when the decision to make unilateral reductions had almost certainly been formalized but not yet announced—the Soviet central military organ published a book review that appealed for "high vigilance," denounced "a too frivolous attitude toward the danger of war," and warned against "weakening efforts to enhance the combat readiness of the Soviet Armed Forces."[77]

Meanwhile, in the summer of 1988, forces within the Foreign Ministry resumed the campaign for unilateral Soviet cuts that Zhurkin had begun the previous fall. Although "some speakers" at the ministry's July conference maintained that Soviet force cuts should be made only "on a reciprocal basis"—the official Soviet government public position at the time—others departed from this line to insist "that a political gesture ought to be made and that it might be worth taking unilateral steps by cutting our armed forces in Europe."[78] In August, the ministry journal published an article that reiterated praise of the Khrushchev unilateral troop cuts of 1955, 1956, and 1960, and claimed that the subsequent military buildup in the Brezhnev era had served to "undermine Soviet positions in the world."[79] Subsequently, as earlier noted, in September, October, and November this campaign in Shevardnadze's journal for unilateral withdrawals and military budget reductions became increasingly outspoken, and involved several signed articles by ministry officials.

By this time, in the fall of 1988, the leadership seems to have begun final consideration of alternative variants for a unilateral Soviet force cut. On the first of November, Shevardnadze made the following statement at a conference of the Foreign Ministry's party organization:

> A very complex issue was recently discussed at a meeting of the ministry collegium. Different scenarios for possible actions were compared and predictions were made of the consequences of a particular step and of the reactions to it in other countries. . . . It was a question of a political decision that, whatever its version, will affect the material interests of thousands of Soviet people.[80]

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[76]*The Times* (London), October 18, 1988.

[77]*Krasnaya Zvezda,* November 21, 1988.

[78]Conference statement by First Deputy Foreign Minister Anatoli Kovalev, published in *International Affairs,* No. 10, October 1988, p. 37.

[79]Alexey Izyumov and Andrey Kortunov, "The Soviet Union in the Changing World," *International Affairs,* No. 8, August 1988.

[80]*Vestnik Ministerstva Inostrannykh Del,* No. 22, December 1, 1988.

Although Shevardnadze did not identify this momentous "political decision," it seems quite likely in retrospect that he was alluding to the unilateral force reduction issue. By mid-November, a concrete decision appears to have been reached. Politburo member Aleksandr Yakovlev then visited Hungary and Czechoslovakia, apparently to discuss the political implications of this decision.[81]

Gorbachev's Announcement and the Aftermath

The prolonged internal skirmishing came to an end in early December, when Gorbachev in his New York speech to the United Nations announced the Soviet decision to withdraw a substantial portion of Soviet troops and equipment from Eastern Europe and to reduce the Soviet armed forces as a whole. The scope of this decision is likely to have confirmed many of the fears indicated at various times by military leaders like Kulikov, Tretyak, and Lobov, and recorded above. The cuts announced went well beyond those generally anticipated in the West, and were more significant than the reductions of forces in Hungary, which the United States had earlier expected.

Gorbachev stated that:

- Over the next two years the Soviet Union would withdraw six tank divisions from Czechoslovakia, the GDR, and Hungary, and disband[82] them, that certain ancillary units termed "assault landing troops" and "assault crossing units" would be withdrawn from those countries, and that Soviet forces in the three countries would be reduced by a total of 50,000 men and 5000 tanks;
- Over the same period, Soviet armed forces in Eastern Europe and the European part of the Soviet Union combined would be reduced by 10,000 tanks (including the 5000 to be withdrawn from Eastern Europe), 8500 "artillery systems," and 800 combat aircraft;

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[81]Yakovlev apparently did this in his new capacity as chairman of the International Affairs Commission of the Central Committee. A Hungarian military official subsequently stated that Budapest was given advance notice, but only about the "general thrust" of the Gorbachev withdrawal statement, and not about details of the statement or the number of troops to be withdrawn from Hungary. (Colonel Geza Sipos, deputy chief of the Hungarian army's main political directorate, in *Komsomolskaya Pravda,* December 15, 1988.)

[82]It subsequently became apparent that the expressions "withdraw" and "disband" were somewhat misleading, since it was always intended that a number of subordinate units and part of the manpower of the divisions being withdrawn would be transferred to other divisions remaining. This will be discussed below.

- Finally, the Soviet armed forces as a whole would be reduced in the same period by 500,000 men—including the 50,000 man reduction in Eastern Europe.

In the aftermath of Gorbachev's UN statement, several East European regimes followed with assertions that they, also, would cut their military forces. Hungary did so quickly and eagerly, Czechoslovakia and East Germany subsequently and with visible reluctance; but cumulatively the promised East European cuts offered an important supplement to the Soviet reductions announced by Gorbachev.[83]

Despite Akhromeyev's assertion that the General Staff had been working on the problem since the summer, there is abundant evidence to suggest that detailed plans for implementation of the reductions Gorbachev announced had not been worked out by the General Staff at the time of the announcement. This fact, again, suggested that long and bitter dispute had continued over the decision itself until the final hour. Details regarding the Soviet forces to be withdrawn from Eastern Europe subsequently emerged piecemeal and rather chaotically from various Soviet spokesmen, sometimes temporarily contradicted by statements from official East European sources. Whatever the General Staff had been doing on the matter since the summer of 1988, when the moment of decision finally arrived there was little evidence of advance Warsaw Pact coordination of the details of the change. The highly unusual evidence of disorganization suggested hasty, last-minute scrambling in Moscow to staff out instructions dictated from above.

Both in the weeks before the Gorbachev UN statement and during the immediate aftermath, Foreign Minister Shevardnadze took the occasion to prod the Soviet military publicly over its dilatory behavior in preparing for the coming change. On November 1, he told a Foreign Ministry conference that "we are overdue in drafting and firming up a military doctrine and imparting to it a strictly defensive emphasis."[84]

Then, in an interview published in late December, Shevardnadze made remarks that both confirmed the lag in concrete planning for the withdrawals and reductions and demanded forthright action:

> In connection with the measures announced by the Soviet Union for the unilateral reduction of its Armed Forces and armaments, we are asked exactly what types of tanks will be cut—new or old? And how will it be possible to verify whether reductions have really been carried out? These questions must be answered. And in our replies we must be honest. We must bluntly say what kinds of tanks will be destroyed and within what time limits.

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[83]An authoritative Soviet summary of the announced Warsaw Pact reductions was furnished in *Argumenty i Fakty,* No. 6, February 11–17, 1989.

[84]*Vestnik Ministerva Inostrannykh Del,* No. 22, December 1, 1988.

> There is a highly urgent . . . need to work out as quickly as possible all details of the coming reductions. . . . Hence the task to work out in the shortest possible time jointly with the Ministry of Defense . . . , the State Planning Committee and other government departments, detailed plans and measures for the fulfillment of all those goals announced at the UN before the whole world. . . . A detailed plan for the stage-by-stage fulfillment of our program must be ready as early as the beginning of next year.[85]

It should be noted that despite all this hectoring by Shevardnadze, and despite the fact that the Ministry of Defense had allegedly been working on the problem since the summer, the ministry did not satisfy Shevardnadze's demand to complete a plan for the withdrawal and reductions by the beginning of 1989. In February 1989, a first deputy chief of the General Staff was asked at a news conference whether a schedule for the Soviet reduction of forces in Eastern Europe yet existed. He replied that this was "a complex problem," adding that the Ministry of Defense was **now** drawing up a plan, that a "schedule exists at present only in a general form," and that "its more profound elaboration by specialists is required."[86] Only in mid-May was he able to report that the planning for the withdrawal had been completed.[87]

Changes in the Soviet High Command

Almost simultaneously with his announcement of the regime's decision on force withdrawals and reductions, Gorbachev carried out major changes in the high command, the most notable of which involved the chief of the General Staff. Although Marshal Akhromeyev had played a leading role at the Reykjavik conference and had been cooperating prominently with Gorbachev in dealings with the United States on strategic issues, he had been less successful, as he privately admitted, in getting the General Staff to throw its weight behind conventional force reduction and reorganization into a "defensive" mode.

In February 1989, Akhromeyev's successor Moiseyev acknowledged that the General Staff had been tardy in carrying out the "practical implementation of the requirements of a defensive military doctrine," that "we are only just beginning to tackle a series of questions, and some problems have not yet been properly approached."[88] Two weeks later, he wrote that "it is impossible not to mention that the military

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[85]*Moscow News,* No. 52, December 25, 1988 (*FBIS—USSR*, January 12, 1989).

[86]Col. Gen. B. A. Omelichev, *Izvestiya,* February 2, 1989.

[87]Omelichev interview in *Krasnaya Zvezda,* May 14, 1989 (*FBIS—USSR Daily Report,* May 16, 1989).

[88]*Krasnaya Zvezda,* February 10, 1989.

scientific organizations whose duty it is to provide the preliminary and in depth theoretical elaboration of these questions **often drag their feet,**" particularly regarding "the organization and conduct of combat actions of a defensive nature."[89] (Emphasis added.) In July 1989, a Western press account quoted a former Soviet officer as saying that the toughest challenge for military reformers had been the General Staff, whose middle layers were said to be "actively resisting and ignoring reform."[90]

Akhromeyev's retirement on grounds of health had been expected for some time, and he was then given an honorable and fairly prominent post as adviser to Gorbachev and salesman for Soviet policies to foreign audiences. Nevertheless, the timing and manner of the regime's announcement of his departure from the General Staff was apparently intended to convey the impression that it was a consequence of the force reduction decision. Akhromeyev subsequently expressed resentment at this.[91]

This change was accompanied by several others. Marshal Ogarkov, the outspoken former chief of the General Staff who since 1983 had been posted as commander of the Western TVD (theater of military operations) opposite NATO, had been quietly retired during the fall. At the end of the year, Marshal Kulikov, yet another former chief of the General Staff who had evidently also opposed the force withdrawals and reductions, was similarly retired from his post as commander of the Warsaw Pact. General Lobov, who had been one of the more outspoken figures resisting the notion of a unilateral reduction, was moved from the position of the ranking First Deputy Chief of the General Staff to that of Chief of Staff to the Warsaw Pact Command, a clear demotion. The message of these events for the General Staff was hammered home at a party conference of this organization that criticized its work in terms more severe than had been heard for many years.[92]

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[89]*Krasnaya Zvezda,* February 23, 1989.

[90]*Christian Science Monitor,* July 12, 1989.

[91]*Moscow News,* No. 5, January 29, 1989. The decision to bring the outsider Col. Gen. M. A. Moiseyev to Moscow from the Far East Military District, promoting him over the heads of other officers to replace Akhromeyev as head of the General Staff, was also suggestive of considerable Gorbachev unhappiness with the performance of the General Staff over the past year.

[92]*Krasnaya Zvezda,* December 28, 1988. At this party meeting, many important figures, including the leading military theoretician General Gareyev, were sharply criticized. Lobov evidently absorbed the disciplinary message, and in the immediate aftermath of Gorbachev's announcement of the troop cut was at great pains to defend the party's decision he had so vehemently sought to prevent. Lobov, Akhromeyev, and other military leaders subsequently gave repeated, rather ludicrous assurances to Western media representatives that the military leadership had had no problems with the troop cut or the budget reduction.

Glimpses of the Reorganization

In announcing the Soviet unilateral withdrawal and force reduction in December, Gorbachev had also asserted that these steps were to be accompanied by a general restructuring of Soviet forces facing NATO in Eastern Europe that was intended to demonstrate their defensive orientation. Soviet spokesmen then added that this change would be part of a more general restructuring of the Soviet armed forces as a whole for the same purpose.

What is the nature and scope of this reorganization, and what are its implications for the West? Although many aspects of what the Soviets now intend are still hazy, by the winter of 1989 Soviet statements had created the following broad picture:

Military Headquarters and Districts. There will be some effort at staff reduction through trimming and amalgamation of various headquarters. The personnel of the General Staff have been reduced by one-fifth.[93] According to General Moiseyev, "the number of military districts . . . is being decreased."[94] Soviet contemplation of such a change had been rumored for some time, and in the spring of 1989, Major General Yuri Lebedev, deputy chief of a General Staff department, indicated that two military districts would be eliminated.[95] The first was the Central Asian Military District, whose abolition and merger with the Turkestan Military District was announced in June. The second was the Ural Military District, which was similarly abolished and merged with the Volga Military District in August. Meanwhile, the KGB has announced that its border troops have also cut back "management apparatus" and have "halved" the number of border districts.[96]

Armies and Divisions. The number of armies will be reduced.[97] According to Moiseyev, the Soviets intend to disband the headquarters "of four armies (two in the Trans-Baykal Military District and one in each of the Far Eastern and Turkestan Military Districts) and four army corps (one in the Byelorussian, one in the Far Eastern, and two in the Turkestan Military Districts).[98]

The number of divisions will be reduced.[99] According to Moiseyev,

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[93]*Krasnaya Zvezda,* October 29, 1989.

[94]Moiseyev interview, *Argumenty i Fakty,* No. 15, April 15–21, 1989.

[95]*Meeting Report,* Institute for East-West Security Studies, April 17, 1989.

[96]*Izvestiya,* October 22, 1989.

[97]Moiseyev interview, *Argumenty i Fakty,* No. 15, April 15–21, 1989.

[98]Moiseyev, *International Affairs,* No. 9, September 1989.

[99]Moiseyev statement in *Krasnaya Zvezda,* February 23, 1989 (*FBIS Daily Report—USSR,* February 23, 1989).

"24 motorized rifle and tank divisions are being eliminated."[100] The number of "combined arms divisions" "will be cut almost in half."[101]

In this connection, a notable statement was made by Gorbachev himself, in an impromptu intervention at the July 3, 1989 Supreme Soviet session that confirmed General Yazov as Minister of Defense. Gorbachev asserted:

> I will tell you straight, the building of the Armed Forces was such as allowed garrisons and posts to be maintained in the country without any need for them. In connection with this, we have painfully dealt with and eliminated what used to stand for—used to imitate—so-called divisions. We have eliminated **101 divisions.** Have you felt our Army get weaker? No. They were feeding troughs.[102] (Emphasis added).

Gorbachev's statement would appear to refer to major changes in the table of organization of the ground forces that have already been accomplished—i.e., prior to the reorganization that is now under way. He did not elaborate further on the nature of these "so-called divisions,"[103] and all interpretations of these remarks are necessarily speculative. But one plausible hypothesis[104] is that he was alluding to skeleton organizations existing largely but not entirely on paper, with minimal permanent headquarters staffing—units intended to be activated and staffed only in the event of full-scale wartime mobilization, to provide follow-on units after active low-category reserve divisions are filled out.

If such inactive structures have existed in addition to the Soviet divisions normally identified as such by the West, their elimination would have little or no effect on readiness, as Gorbachev indeed contends. He may have regarded them as "feeding troughs" because he saw them as expensive sinecures for high-ranking personnel that were maintained against an eventuality (protracted conventional war) which he regarded as increasingly improbable, but which added nothing to Soviet current combat potential. Yet the change could have significance for the Soviet longer-term reinforcement potential. This

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[100]Moiseyev statement in *Krasnaya Zvezda,* February 23, 1989 (*FBIS Daily Report—USSR,* February 23, 1989).

[101]Moiseyev statement in *Krasnaya Zvezda,* February 23, 1989 (*FBIS Daily Report—USSR,* February 23, 1989).

[102]Moscow Radio, July 3, 1989 (*FBIS—USSR,* July 5, 1989, p. 49).

[103]Contrary to some speculation in the West, a Soviet stenographic report of the text of the Gorbachev statement obtained by the author confirms that he did indeed use the Russian term *divisii.*

[104]One knowledgeable Soviet academic source has made a private statement consistent with this explanation, and has also suggested that the change Gorbachev referred to has been in effect since 1988. (Private communication.)

Gorbachev decision was therefore probably resented by some in the Soviet military leadership.

Tanks. The most advertised change thus far concerns the number of tanks in Soviet divisions. Overall, according to Moiseyev, tanks are to be reduced by an average of "30–35 percent."[105] One of the more explicit statements spelling out what is intended in this regard was furnished in May 1989 by Lt. Gen. Valeriy Fursin, first deputy commander in chief and chief of staff of the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany (GSFG), who declared:

> Tank regiments are being taken out of the motorized rifle divisions, and the number of tanks in these units is reduced by 40 percent. In addition, the tank divisions are reduced by one tank regiment each. This means that the number of tanks in these divisions is reduced by more than one-fifth. . . . The already existing independent tank units will be turned into motorized rifle regiments. In the course of this their amount of tanks will be reduced by 60 to 80 percent.[106]

In consequence, according to one commonly heard Western estimate, motorized rifle divisions until now possessing 270 tanks each will be reconfigured with 160 tanks, whereas tank divisions with 328 tanks each were to be reduced to 260 tanks.[107] In the process, the Soviets are evidently replacing a tank regiment in each of their 24 remaining divisions in Eastern Europe with a motorized rifle regiment. Each remaining and restructured tank division will then have two tank regiments and two motorized rifle regiments, while each remaining motorized rifle division will have four motorized rifle regiments.[108]

These tank reductions from the Soviet divisional structure, according to one senior officer, were being carried out "first in those divisions which are situated in Groups of Soviet Forces in all East European countries where we have them," and "later [in] all the forces in the European part of the Soviet Union."[109]

Other Divisional Changes. Other planned subtractions and additions to Soviet divisions have been reported piecemeal. Moiseyev has claimed that motorized rifle and tank divisions will experience a 30–35

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[105]Interview in *Krasnaya Zvezda,* February 23, 1989 (*FBIS Daily Report—USSR,* February 23, 1989).

[106]*Neues Deutschland,* May 6–7, 1989 (*FBIS Daily Report—USSR,* May 11, 1989, p. 1).

[107]Philip Karber, interview with *Armed Forces Journal International,* April 1989 p. 43.

[108]Statement of Edward L. Warner III to House Armed Services Committee, September 13, 1989.

[109]*Jane's Defence Weekly,* April 18, 1989, p. 638, interview with Maj. Gen. Vladimir Kuklev, deputy to Maj. Gen. Nikolay Chervov, chief of the Legal and Treaty Directorate of the General Staff.

percent reduction in the number of artillery systems and assault crossing means as well as of tanks. "But at the same time," he states, "the quantity of antitank means and air defense means will increase by a factor of 1.5–2."[110] According to GSFG chief of staff General Fursin, "it is planned to raise the proportion of antitank and antiaircraft equipment and equipment for the building of barriers and mine fields as well as of means for camouflage for engineers in the restructured units."[111]

It has at length become apparent, however, that many of the additions which the Soviets have planned to furnish to the divisions remaining in Eastern Europe were being supplied from the divisions supposedly being subtracted. In early August 1989, unidentified Soviet military leaders acknowledged to Western journalists that "some artillery, antitank weapons, and accompanying troops are not leaving with tank divisions, but are being reshuffled into other units. . . ." Moreover, "the Soviet officials also confirmed . . . that other equipment and units critical to military readiness also are remaining behind, including infantry fighting vehicles and communications, maintenance and medical troops."[112] These troops were left behind, according to Edward Warner, largely as the result of the Soviet decision to transfer one motorized rifle regiment—with its associated infantry fighting vehicles—from each of the six divisions being withdrawn, with six tank regiments from divisions remaining sent in their place to join the forces being withdrawn. Moreover, Warner has suggested that the increased number of motorized rifle regiments resulting from the restructuring of the divisions remaining in East Europe will require an influx of nearly two thousand infantry fighting vehicles from the USSR, in addition to those left behind by the withdrawing forces.[113]

The officer cadre to man the reshaped divisions is evidently a more serious problem. According to GSFG commander army General Snetkov, "we have been given the right to retain some officers [from the divisions being withdrawn] for service in our units."[114] Presumably, these include those officers already serving in the motorized rifle regiment being transferred from each tank division being withdrawn. In addition, the General Staff may intend to use some other officer personnel left behind from the tank divisions being withdrawn to help direct the new "defensive" functions being expanded within each

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[110]*Krasnaya Zvezda,* February 23, 1989.

[111]*Neues Deutschland,* May 6–7, 1989 (*FBIS Daily Report—USSR,* May 11, 1989, p. 1).

[112]*Washington Post,* August 9, 1989; see also *New York Times,* August 9, 1989.

[113]Warner, 1989.

[114]*Krasnaya Zvezda,* March 23, 1989 (*FBIS Daily Report—USSR,* March 24, 1989, pp. 81–83).

division. This intention, however, may have been partially undermined by Gorbachev's July 1989 decision to release early all drafted students now serving in the armed forces. As will be seen, Minister Yazov had fought this decision publicly and vehemently on the ground that it would significantly hurt Soviet combat capability in the short term by depriving the army of what he said were 176,000 key junior officers, nearly all serving abroad. The various longer-term implications of this decision will be discussed below.

The Contradictions and Reticence Over Artillery. In all this Soviet discussion, the greatest ambiguity continues to adhere to the question of the role of artillery in the new divisions and in the new structure generally. This is of considerable importance because of the two-sided nature of artillery. The introduction of self-propelled artillery and the massive increase in overall artillery holdings was a central feature of the Soviet conventional buildup after the mid-1960s, and artillery fire appeared to play a key role in traditional Soviet thinking in creating breakthroughs to be exploited by tanks and motorized infantry. The Soviet advantage in artillery in Europe was second in importance only to their advantage in tanks as a factor contributing to military disequilibrium in Europe. However, the Soviets may consider artillery quite important in a defensive role, as helping to achieve significant attrition on the attacker.

Neither Gorbachev nor any Soviet military spokesman has made a statement claiming that any Soviet artillery would be withdrawn to the Soviet Union from the forces in Eastern Europe, along with the tanks, although Gorbachev did promise to remove what he termed "8500 artillery systems" from the stock of the Soviet armed forces in Europe as a whole.[115] And although, as noted above, on one occasion Moiseyev did state that "artillery systems" in Soviet divisions would also be cut by 30–35 percent, no other such claim appears to have yet been made in the Soviet press. Moreover, it seems quite likely that if any such cut were in fact being planned, the Soviet Union would be widely advertising them in the same way that it is now propagandizing the tank reductions.

And finally, on at least one occasion a senior Soviet officer has contradicted Moiseyev on this point. In March 1989, army General Snetkov, commander in chief of the GSFG, alluded to an "increased

[115]In September 1989, General Yazov alluded to the "artillery systems" that were allegedly to be "withdrawn from the effective combat strength," and said that they "are being mothballed at arsenals and weapons storage depots, and obsolete models are being written off." (*Izvestiya*, September 17, 1989.) It seems likely that he, and Gorbachev as well, were referring to older artillery previously stored in the Soviet Union. It is conceivable that some of this older weaponry had been assigned to the 101 largely unmanned "so-called divisions" already eliminated by Gorbachev.

number of antitank systems **and artillery** in the remaining divisions."[116] (Emphasis added.) Both Moiseyev's and Snetkov's statements are exceptional; throughout 1989, remarkably little was said in the Soviet press about the role of artillery in the reductions and reorganization. The general reticence suggests that the General Staff and the political leadership consider the question a sensitive issue.[117]

It is possible that this reticence was imposed on the matter merely because the Soviets have remained undecided about artillery and the issue is controversial. It is also possible, however, that instructions have been issued to minimize comment because the facts about Soviet intentions regarding artillery strength in the new divisions do not fully support the impression being fostered by the tank reductions regarding Soviet dedication to "defensive defense." This explanation was bolstered in the summer of 1989 by the earlier-cited admission by unidentified Soviet military leaders in Moscow that some artillery, along with other weapons and equipment, was in fact being left behind by divisions being withdrawn from Eastern Europe and was being integrated into divisions remaining in order to strengthen them.[118] It thus seems likely that Snetkov's statement that artillery deployments would increase—perhaps in the revised divisions, perhaps outside them—would prove more accurate than the contrary prediction initially made by Moiseyev.

The Air Forces. The Soviets have made only sparse comment about how their air forces will be affected by the reorganization and reduction. Gorbachev had stated in his UN speech that some 800 aircraft would be removed from the air force inventory as part of the Soviet unilateral force reductions over the next two years. These reductions are presumably being driven primarily by the budget cut rather than by a grand reorganization design.

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[116]Snetkov, see footnote 114. On the other hand, in the summer of 1989 General Lobov is said to have told a visiting U.S. congressional delegation that the Soviet Union would not increase the artillery strength of the Soviet forces deployed in Eastern Europe. (Warner, 1989.) This statement still left open the question, however, of whether divisional artillery strength in Eastern Europe would be increased at the expense of artillery left behind by the divisions being withdrawn. It also left unclear Soviet intentions regarding artillery outside of the divisions, under army and front control.

[117]Particularly noteworthy was General Moiseyev's overview article on the reduction and reorganization published in *International Affairs,* No. 9, September 1989, which failed to mention either artillery or infantry fighting vehicles. Moiseyev reiterated, however, the customary Soviet assertion that "antitank" weapons would be strengthened in the new divisions. It is possible that the Soviets may eventually seek to justify some increased artillery deployment as serving an antitank, and therefore "defensive," function. There has been some speculation in the West that the Soviets may turn to the use of tubed artillery in a direct-fire antitank role. (See Steven Zaloga, "Soviet Artillery—The Red God of War," *Armed Forces Journal International,* May 1989, p. 40.)

[118]*Washington Post,* August 9, 1989.

Moiseyev has added that the reductions in aircraft would involve "two large air units, four aircraft divisions, nineteen aircraft regiments and two pilot-training schools."[119] This is considerably vaguer than some of the statements the Soviets have made about their ground forces. A senior official of the Soviet Air Forces, however, has asserted that "basically," ground-attack aircraft would be the ones eliminated, although some other types would be involved. On the whole, he said, "the share of fighter aircraft within the Air Force will increase."[120] If true, this would in principle be at least consistent with the new defensive doctrine, but the Soviets have failed to make the kind of extensive claims on this score for the impending changes in their aircraft deployments or inventory that they have made for their tank reductions.

The Soviets have also been generally more reticent about the air force withdrawals they claim to be making from Eastern Europe than they have been regarding the ground force pullbacks. In listing units to be withdrawn from Eastern Europe by October 1989, Moiseyev has said that "aircraft and helicopter regiments" would be included, but he did not disclose how many. These were the only types of military units he mentioned in this context whose number he failed to specify. He did, however, declare that "all the bomber aviation will be withdrawn to the USSR," and added that "the number of aircraft in the air regiments of the Western group and those stationed in the European part of the Soviet Union" would be "cut back roughly by 20 percent." After these reductions, he promised, "the first line of an air grouping of the Western Group will include only fighters and army aviation belonging to purely defensive forces. In the second line, there will be combat support aviation and reconnaissance aircraft."[121] The Soviet Union's public reserve on this matter has no doubt to some extent reflected its uncertainty about the extent of the concessions the USSR will obtain in conventional arms negotiations with the West over its demands that ground-attack aircraft be reduced but that certain other types of aircraft be left intact. The Soviets probably also feel obliged to be guarded about their air force reductions and withdrawals in Europe because they do not wish to commit themselves regarding trends in their future force posture in air power stationed beyond the Urals. It is noteworthy that in speaking of the projected air reductions in the Western Group and "the European part of the Soviet Union," Moiseyev avoided mention of what would happen to the force allocations to Asia.

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[119]Moiseyev, *International Affairs,* No. 9, September 1989.

[120]Interview with Deputy Chief of Soviet Air Forces Main Staff Lt. Gen. of Aviation Aleksandr Yevgen'yevich Pozdnyhakov, *Krasnaya Zvezda,* January 18, 1989.

[121]Moiseyev, *International Affairs,* No. 9, September 1989.

Air Defense. In the case of Soviet air defense, it appears that the influence of the budget reduction has been the leading factor driving change, and that changes of doctrine in a defensive direction have been a secondary consideration. Strategic air defense—*Voyska Protivozdushnyy Voyny*—is being forced to take a considerable cut in resources, despite its defensive mission. Although not quite proportionate to the average manpower cut levied on the armed forces as a whole, the reduction has evoked public recriminations.

The most important evidence for air defense reductions is an extraordinary statement in the spring of 1989 by the uninhibited commander of Soviet Air Defense, Deputy Defense Minister and army General Ivan Tretyak. Tretyak, who, as already noted, in February 1988 made the most outspoken protest of any military leader against the impending force cuts, fourteen months later—after the cuts had been formally announced—also made the most outspoken protest against the impact of the cuts on his branch of the service. In early April 1989, Moscow radio carried a report of an emotional interview with Tretyak in which he was quoted as making the following outburst:

> The Air Defense Forces are purely defensive in nature. . . . They fully reflect our defensive doctrine. Whether cuts in these forces need to be large or only small remains to be seen. No one these days is cutting their air force or cruise missiles; on the contrary, by the end of the next 5-year period cruise missiles will account for about 50 percent of Western airborne attack capacity. That is why the role and importance of the Air Defense Forces is growing in defensive military doctrine. Despite this, however, cuts in the Armed Forces have affected us, too: **We are losing 50,000 men. What results is this going to have?** Organizational structure changes—**are we going to cut the number that is justified?** After all, 2 years ago an aircraft piloted by . . . Rust brazenly landed alongside the wall of the Kremlin and thus demonstrated that we had, to put it mildly, some aspects of our Air Defense that needed to be looked at, yet today we are cutting these forces?[122] (Emphasis added.)

This vehement complaint evidently violated party discipline. Ever since Gorbachev in December announced the decision to cut Soviet

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[122]Moscow radio international service, April 8, 1989 (*FBIS Daily Report—USSR*, April 11, 1989, p. 73). In a May interview, the chief of the Air Defense Forces Cadres Department confirmed that "we will have to cut a certain number of units and subunits," and went on to reveal that he was being inundated with requests for discharge from officers; in some cases, this was said to involve all the officers of some units. The interview implied that this was happening on a very large scale, apparently in response to a hasty reaction by Tretyak to a heavy cut imposed rather suddenly. It was alleged that the Air Defense Forces command had provoked mass applications for discharge by initially sending out a clumsily worded order that gave the misleading impression that all those who wished to be released would be released. (Lt. Gen. P. Zakharov, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, May 3, 1989 (*FBIS Daily Report—USSR*, May 4, 1989, pp. 86–89).)

forces, military commanders had obviously been constrained by party rules not to voice such resentment publicly, but instead to repeat the party line that "qualitative" improvements could in every case compensate for the resources withdrawn. Tretyak's statement obviously occasioned some turmoil in the Ministry of Defense, because on the very next day his deputy went on the air to contradict what he had said. In an interview on Moscow radio with Colonel General of Aviation Igor Maltsev, chief of the Main Staff and first deputy commander in chief of the Air Defense Forces, Maltsev stated:

> **I am obliged to say** that its [Air Defense] efficiency will not be negatively affected by the cutbacks in the Armed Forces of the Air Defense troops that have begun. We are dealing with precisely such an instance where quantitative changes dialectically move to a new and higher quality.[123] (Emphasis added.)

Tretyak evidently has an inadequate grasp of the dialectic.[124] In September 1989, General Moiseyev added a few sparse details to what Tretyak had said. Moiseyev now stated that "in the air defense forces, sixty units and formations will be disbanded or reduced as well as anti-aircraft missile command higher school." He also declared that the units to be disbanded would include one "air defense missile brigade," to be eliminated in the 1989–1990 period.[125] These cuts will apparently account for most or all of Tretyak's lamented 50,000-man force reduction.

Ironically, it is possible that at least some of the lost manpower and financial resources which he was lamenting may be redirected by the Defense Ministry to tactical air defense in support of troops at the front, a function that is apparently outside of Tretyak's control. Such a shift in resources was suggested in earlier-noted remarks by Chief of the General Staff Moiseyev, who observed in February 1989 that as part of the reorganization of both motorized rifle divisions and tank divisions, "the quantity of antitank means and **air defense means** will

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[123]Moscow radio domestic service, April 9, 1989 (*FBIS Daily Report—Soviet Union*, April 11, 1989, p. 74).

[124]More subdued reflections of the resentment felt about the force cut in the high command were heard from other leaders. For example, also in April, army Gen. Dmitriy Sukhorukov, Deputy Minister of Defense and Chief of the Main Personnel Directorate, went out of his way to emphasize that "undoubtedly a 500,000 reduction of our Armed Forces—this is 12 percent of all personnel—will not make us stronger. This must be clearly understood. . . ." Sukhorukov went on to say that "we must compensate these reductions through qualitative parameters," but watered down this reassurance by adding that "then, **possibly,** the alarm of our Soviet people would be considerably allayed as far as issues of the country's defense are concerned." (Moscow television April 15, 1989 (*FBIS—USSR*, April 19, 1989, p. 117).)

[125]Moiseyev, *International Affairs,* No. 9, September 1989.

increase by a factor of between 1.5 and 2."[126] (Emphasis added.) This will apparently apply first of all to the forces remaining deployed in Eastern Europe. In September, Moiseyev stated that by the following month, two "air defense missile brigades" would have been withdrawn to the Soviet Union from East Europe, but he nevertheless reemphasized that the Western and Central Groups of Forces in Eastern Europe would receive "some" net increase in air defense forces as a result of the reorganization.[127]

THE FIGHT OVER THE FUTURE STRUCTURE OF THE ARMY

But whatever the implications of this fragmentary evidence regarding Soviet reorganization plans as of the summer of 1989, those plans do not seem likely to become fixed, permanent, or long-lived. Dynamic factors are at work in Soviet society that seem likely to erode the stability of the new structure being created.

The Pressure for Further Cuts

In the first place, both political and economic pressures for further Soviet force reductions have already emerged since Gorbachev announced his troop cuts in December 1988, and there are objective factors, discussed below, that make it reasonable to expect that these pressures will continue growing.

On the political side, one indicator of the changing atmosphere was the emergence, in the spring of 1989, of the most detailed argument and blueprint for radical unilateral Soviet force reduction yet published in the Soviet Union. This pathbreaking article appeared, as usual, in the Foreign Ministry journal *International Affairs,* and was written by Aleksey Arbatov, an analyst who up to this point had displayed far more caution.[128] The very fact that this prudent writer now deemed it politically useful to appear in print with these extreme proposals was probably significant as an indication of the direction in which trends were moving.

It is probably also of some significance, in view of General Tretyak's behavior, that in Arbatov's long catalogue of proposals for drastic

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[126]*Krasnaya Zvezda,* February 23, 1989 (*FBIS Daily Report—Soviet Union,* February 23, 1989).

[127]Moiseyev, *International Affairs,* No. 9, September 1989.

[128]Aleksey Arbatov, "How Much Defense Is Sufficient?" *International Affairs,* No. 4, April 1989, pp. 31–44.

further Soviet military cuts, he devoted more space to air defense—which is quite expensive—than to anything else. "It is time," he said, "to reconsider at long last our apparently very costly air defences echeloned in depth." Alluding to what he described as the Soviet Union's 8600 surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) and 2300 interceptor fighters, he adduced a list of reasons why these defenses would, in his view, prove inadequate in the event of an American nuclear attack. He contended that a "conventional war between the Soviet Union and the United States—a war involving massive mutual air raids without using nuclear weapons"—was very unlikely, and therefore also not a justification for pouring increasingly scarce money into strategic air defense. Arbatov also insisted that "it would be useful to think once again whether it is advisable to maintain and modernize the ABM complex around Moscow."

In sum, Arbatov called for "a far more modest air defense system," sufficient only to provide "early warning of attack, controlling air space in peacetime and safeguarding the country against possible terrorists."

The drastic pruning Arbatov advocates for air defense would obviously go much further than whatever cuts the General Staff has thus far ordained for Tretyak's command. It is noteworthy that the Russian-language version of Arbatov's article appeared in Moscow in March. It is possible that the public emergence of his statements helped to provoke Tretyak's indiscreet April 8 denunciation of the present cuts in air defense.

In addition, Arbatov presented a picture of Soviet ground and air force needs in Europe that surely infuriated the General Staff with its effrontery:

> To close the 800-kilometer Central European front, the Warsaw Treaty Organization needs from 20 to 30 divisions. Defense echeloned in depth (including the troops stationed in the European part of Soviet territory, some of which are intended to close the southern and northern flanks) could evidently be ensured with the aid of **50 to 60 WTO divisions.** This is organizationally **roughly one-third of the forces now deployed** on the extensive principle. . . . An appropriate reorganization of our divisions, armies and groups of armies would guarantee reliable defense with smaller forces. Such defense would make it possible to counterattack . . . in order to expel the invading enemy from our territory.
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> This approach could be applied also to air forces in view of their high mobility and multipurpose character. **It is hardly advisable to**

> **have about 8,000 tactical aircraft most of which are obsolete.**[129] (Emphasis added.)

Beyond this, Arbatov took particular aim at the Soviet navy, which, he said, deserves "special mention . . . in view of the high cost of modern surface ships and submarines and the time it takes to build them." He asserted that "defense sufficiency" requires that the navy be restricted to defending the coast against Western carriers or amphibious landing potential and defending Soviet strategic missile submarines in Soviet coastal waters. He ruled out interdiction of Western communications or searching for Western SSBNs as a proper role for the Soviet navy. Hence, he said,

> it would be useful to seriously revise plans for the construction of a large surface fleet, including aircraft carrier, nuclear-powered cruisers and landing ships.

Arbatov probably considers the Soviet large-carrier building program, like the air defense program, to be particularly vulnerable in political terms. Gorbachev's continued investment in these big-ticket items constitutes a remarkably expensive anomaly in a period of overall naval retrenchment, especially in view of his growing need to ration resources generally.[130]

Finally, Arbatov heavily criticized what he depicted as the profligate Soviet practice of fielding duplicate types of weaponry. He cited foreign sources to demonstrate that the USSR for many years had deployed more types than the United States in tanks, combat vehicles, armoured personnel carriers, fighter aircraft, ground attack planes, bombers, and several classes of warships and submarines. He went on to cite Western data showing the much higher Soviet production rates than the United States since the mid-1970s in such items as fighters, submarines, tanks, combat helicopters, artillery pieces, SAMs, ballistic missiles, and medium bombers. He concluded:

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[129]Aleksey Arbatov, "How Much Defense Is Sufficient?" *International Affairs,* No. 4, April 1989, pp. 31–44.

[130]The controversial nature of these particular investments was underlined in an October 1988 Japanese interview with retired Soviet Admiral Nikolay Amelko, a former commander of the Pacific Fleet and former deputy commander of the navy who is now an adviser to the Foreign Ministry. Amelko was quoted as severely criticizing the Soviet investment in aircraft carriers, saying that "the Soviet Navy should not have made a desperate effort to have the same types of vessels as the U.S. Navy." He stated that the late Admiral Gorshkov and Defense Minister Ustinov had rejected his recommendation opposing the construction of the Kiev-class light aircraft carriers in the 1970s on the grounds of their inefficiency, fragility, and expense. (*Tokyo Shimbun,* October 25, 1988.)

> If these data . . . reflect the actual state of affairs at least to some degree, then perestroyka in this field should include a whole set of measures, such as broader discussion on key programs from the standpoint of defense sufficiency and stricter selection of them on the principle of comparing cost and effectiveness. There is also a need to end unnecessary duplication and introduce healthy competition between construction bureaus and in industry, limit output series and effect renewal at longer intervals while taking bigger leaps in quality.

In short, in addition to demanding huge cuts in the Soviet force structure, Arbatov was asking that the Soviet military-industrial machine make equally radical changes in the way it has been doing business for several decades. He concluded by asserting that implementation of these proposals in the next Five Year Plan period "could reduce our defense spending by 40 to 50 percent. . . . "

The Question of a Professional Army

The unprecedented public challenge to the military budget surfaced at a time when the continuity of the Soviet force structure in the wake of the budget cut was already under political attack from several other directions. Since the fall of 1988, the General Staff has had to contend with growing clamor for radical changes in the force structure in ways that are anathema to most of the senior military leaders. Although there are many variants to these proposals, often mixed in different proportions, the two most politically important elements were (a) the demand that conscription be ended entirely and that the Soviet Union shift, like the United States, to an entirely professional army, and (b) the demand that the army be reorganized on a territorial-militia basis.

Since the beginning of 1989, Defense Minister Yazov, Chief of the General Staff Moiseyev, Chief of the Main Political Administration Lizichev, and a variety of other senior military figures have denounced these demands in tones of increasing alarm. Characteristic was a statement by Moiseyev in February 1989 in which he warned the General Staff not to "succumb to pressure by departmental forces and incompetent individuals." The General Staff, he said,

> is now receiving dozens of proposals on how the Armed Forces should be built. There are some competent views, but there are also many which are detached from life. There seem to be widespread opinions that we should unilaterally reduce the army by 50 percent. To switch to a territorial-militia manning system. To create a professional, essentially volunteer [*nayemnyy*] army. These views ignore the fact that a militia system is absolutely unrealistic given today's most complex means of struggle, while switching to a professional

> volunteer Army involves a sharp increase—by a factor of at least 5 to 8—in maintenance costs. Such proposals are naturally unacceptable, **and our attitude toward them must be unambiguous.**[131] (Emphasis added.)

There is a note of warning to the General Staff personnel in the last Moiseyev phrase quoted above, evidently because many Soviet officers are, in fact, attracted by the improvement in quality—and, presumably, readiness—that a smaller, purely professional army would offer. The public challenge to the existing system to which Moiseyev and his colleagues have responded has been mounted not only by civilians, but by a growing number of junior officers emboldened by Gorbachev's *glasnost* to express disagreement with their superiors. The attractiveness of the notion of a professional army for many officers below those at the very top is enhanced, among other things, by the prospect that it would mean a significant improvement in their own conditions of life.

In response, the military leadership has tended to emphasize (as does Moiseyev above) the argument that a professional army would be far too expensive.[132] This objection, of course, is disingenuous, since the additional cost per soldier would be decisive only if the Soviet army remained at its present swollen size. The point that is really at issue is whether the Soviet military leadership is willing to accept a great reduction in the size of the armed forces if this were the price necessary to compensate for greater unit costs and to achieve a higher average professional and technological level. It is not the higher pay that would be required, but rather the military leadership's insistence on maintaining a very large force structure, that is the essential obstacle to a professional Soviet army.

In addition, the Soviet military leaders are disturbed by an associated problem that is apparently even more important to them: the preservation of the existing Soviet advantages over the West in mobilization capabilities. In May 1989, Moiseyev observed that "a serious defect in a voluntary service is that the possibilities for building up trained military reserves, which are necessary for the deployment of the Armed Forces according to a plan of mobilization, are significantly curtailed."[133] By the fall of 1989, the Soviet military leaders had come

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[131]*Krasnaya Zvezda,* February 10, 1989 (*FBIS Daily Report—USSR*, February 13, 1989, pp. 77–81).

[132]However, whereas in February Moiseyev was contending that a volunteer army would cost five to eight times as much as the present one, by April he had reduced this estimate to three to five times as much. (TASS, May 3, 1989, reporting on Moiseyev interview with *Pravitelstvennyy Vestnik* (*FBIS—USSR*, May 3, 1989, p. 88).)

[133]TASS, May 3, 1989.

to make this their primary argument against the notion of a professional army.[134]

Without a mass conscript army continuously building a huge pool of reserves, and without the traditional huge divisional structure also fed by conscription, rapid mobilization on the enormous scale on which the General Staff has traditionally counted will be much more difficult. Since this objection focuses on Soviet capabilities in a crisis, it could conceivably find more resonance within the political leadership than the financial argument. However, it should be noted that Gorbachev has already proven willing, according to his own testimony, to eliminate over 100 inactive divisions from the force structure whose value had probably centered on their function in facilitating mobilization.[135]

In fact, however, Soviet military leaders are apparently resigned, albeit to different degrees, to some further shrinkage in the budget and the force structure in the next decade, as they were forewarned in the July 1989 Ryzhkov statements to the Supreme Soviet cited earlier. Their concern is to minimize these changes and to delay them as long as possible.

For example, Maj. Gen. Geliy Batenin, a senior advisor to the Central Committee, stated in an interview that the Soviet Union has had "too many soldiers," and asserted that if all else were equal, he would indeed like to see the armed forces become much smaller, with a highly trained professional core.[136] Moiseyev himself has said that at some point in the future, it might be possible to consider "extending the practice of granting deferments from call-up to military service to various categories of citizens, for example, those working in the rural economy of the country or in construction."[137]

But the two men agreed—for different reasons—that a change in this direction could not begin happening until the mid-1990s. Moiseyev, who is hardly enthusiastic about major new reductions generally, thought that a big further increase in deferments could come "by the middle of the 1990s," but only if an expected improvement in the Soviet demographic situation were reinforced by "an improved international climate." Batenin, who professed to be more favorable in principle to the notion of a professional army, said that movement toward a much smaller Soviet army would have to be postponed about "five years," allegedly because of "the difficulty of absorbing so many people within the Soviet economy."

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[134]See Moiseyev television interview of October 9, 1989 (*FBIS—USSR*, October 13, 1989, p. 105).

[135]Moscow radio, July 3, 1989 (*FBIS—USSR*, July 5, 1989, p. 49).

[136]*London Morning Star*, April 10, 1989 (*FBIS—USSR*, April 17, 1989, pp. 3–4).

[137]Moiseyev interview, *Argumenty i Fakty*, No. 15, April 15–21, 1989 (*FBIS Daily Report—USSR*, April 19, 1989, pp. 7–8).

Batenin's objection could be seen by Gorbachev as a serious one, although Batenin has been less than frank about the real nature of the difficulty he cites. Whereas the economic problems that could be conjured up if larger Soviet force reductions were compressed into a relatively short period are not insignificant, the political problems might in practice be more serious for Gorbachev. The issue here is not so much the ability of the economy to generate jobs as such for the demobilized, but rather its ability to avoid a demoralizing loss of status for hundreds of thousands of released officers who might be forced to accept relatively menial jobs. The bitterness evoked among the Soviet officer class by the Khrushchev demobilizations of the late 1950s is constantly being cited in the Soviet press today. The Soviet leadership is likely to be sensitive to the political dangers that could be created by too cavalier treatment of the officers.

At the heart of the military objection to large-scale further cuts, however, is a different problem. Most Soviet military leaders are likely to want to avoid what they consider an overly hasty contraction of the Soviet armed forces in advance of the arrival of those qualitative technological improvements in Soviet hardware that are supposed to compensate for quantitative reductions. From this perspective, the Ministry of Defense is likely to see an unlucky harbinger of future trends in the humiliating defeat the ministry suffered in its struggle to "stretch out" the present 500,000 man cut evenly over two years by retaining student draftees inducted in 1987 and 1988. In his response to hostile questions at a Supreme Soviet session in early July 1989, General Yazov went rather far out on a limb on this issue:

> Many people are now raising the question of freeing the students on active military service. At the present moment 176,000 students called up in 1987 and 1988 are on active military service. Roughly half the questions from deputies to the Ministry of Defense wonder whether it is not possible to let the students called up in 1987 and 1988 go early. I would reply that those 176,000 students are a very highly trained part of the Armed Forces. They have undergone training in training subunits and are section commanders, commanders of tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, and guns. In other words, **176,000 of the junior officer corps would be discharged,** and that would undoubtedly have an effect on the combat readiness of the armed forces.
>
> Any decision could be made, but I would ask you to bear this in mind: **at the present moment there is no possibility** of discharging these comrades, and they **must** do the length of service that is laid down by the law. . . . **If we transfer them to the reserve, the fighting efficiency will decrease to a considerable degree,**

> and, as a rule, all these servicemen serve mainly abroad.[138] (Emphasis added.)

Despite these categorical Yazov statements, Gorbachev insisted in his subsequent comments to this session of the Supreme Soviet that "I think that further work should be done on the students' question and that it should be completed; that is the feeling of the Supreme Soviet and of our people."[139] The decision in favor of early release of these students—Yazov's 176,000 prized junior officers—was then in fact announced a week later, in Premier Ryzhkov's speech to the Supreme Soviet on July 11. Two months later, Yazov bitterly complained in print that the "overwhelming majority" of these released students "were serving in posts of the most complex specialties, those most important for combat readiness." As a result, he asserted:

> For at least a year, and two years in the Navy, there will be practically no one to take the place of the discharged student servicemen. Over 700 tanks and 900 infantry vehicles will be left without crews in Groups of Forces alone. Two shifts instead of three will perform combat alert duty in the Rocket Forces. Up to 40 percent of posts for section commanders will remain vacant in military construction units.[140]

Finally, even more ominous from the perspective of the military leadership—in terms of the long-term prospects for holding off political and economic pressures for massive new conventional force reductions—were statements made in late June by the chairman of the new USSR Supreme Soviet Committee for Defense and State Security Questions, Vladimir Lavrentyevich Lapygin. Lapygin is a distinguished defense industry manager whose primary concern appears to be the need to protect Soviet weapons research and development in the face of economic constraints, and who seems fully prepared to sacrifice the traditional Soviet large conventional force structure to that end. Asked his attitude toward the idea of a professional army, Lapygin replied:

> In my opinion such an army would be stronger than the current one. Military hardware is constantly getting more complex and the draftees—yesterday's schoolchildren—are not able to handle it skillfully. Be it aviation, the nuclear sub fleet, or the missile troops—in the main, the decisive sectors—unskilled people simply cannot cope. That is why professionals—specialist officers, warrant

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[138]Moscow radio, July 3, 1989 (*FBIS Daily Report—USSR*, July 5, 1989).

[139]Moscow radio, July 3, 1989 (*FBIS Daily Report—USSR*, July 5, 1989).

[140]*Izvestiya*, September 17, 1989.

> officers, and ensigns—have been manning these posts for years. With the development of technology their share will increase.
>
> What will an entirely professional army and navy cost us? Opinions and methods of calculating the cost vary. It is necessary to subject them to in-depth analysis and discussion. **I disagree with those who say that the idea of a professional army should be discarded point blank, so to speak, simply because it is not to the taste of certain military leaders.**[141] (Emphasis added.)

After this pointed allusion to the Defense Ministry leadership, Lapygin was asked his views about the conversion of the defense industry to civilian purposes. He replied:

> Organizations which create new types of arms—scientific research institutes, design bureaus, and their experimental plants—must not be dismantled or placed on starvation rations. **Research and development work must not be discontinued.** Otherwise we risk falling seriously behind our competitors. **Mass production of new arms is another matter. It "swallows up" a large part of the resources allocated to the defense industry. It is this production that must be reduced and reoriented toward civilian needs.**[142]

In sum, Lapygin—a friend of the Soviet armed forces (if not to all its leaders) and one who seems sincerely dedicated to optimizing Soviet future military strength within the foreseeable economic constraints—appears to see a growing and inevitable resource conflict between preserving the investments and expenditures needed for large Soviet conventional forces, on the one hand, and pursuing advanced military technology sufficient for Soviet needs, on the other. While by no means identical in his views with Shevardnadze, he has taken a position at odds with the military leadership on this central point, and he could prove a formidable factor in the future debate.

More important, Lapygin was carefully selected by Gorbachev for a post that was known to have great political sensitivity. His views on the military tradeoffs facing the Soviet Union were almost certainly known to Gorbachev before his selection. Those views could therefore prefigure the evolution of the Soviet elite consensus.

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[141]Interview in *Izvestiya,* June 27, 1989 (*FBIS Daily Report—USSR,* June 29, 1989, pp. 44–45).

[142]Interview in *Izvestiya,* June 27, 1989 (*FBIS Daily Report—USSR,* June 29, 1989, pp. 44–45).

The Notion of "Territorial Militia"

Even more disturbing to the military leadership are the demands being heard from national republics around the Soviet periphery—particularly in the Baltic—for the Soviet armed forces to be reorganized on a "territorial-militia" basis. As Yazov indignantly pointed out with some justice during his July 1989 Supreme Soviet interrogation, this would be completely incompatible with many of the present missions of the Soviet armed forces:

> A great many questions were submitted to me, **connected with the possibility of servicemen doing their military service on the territory where they were born.** Comrades from the Baltic republics, Moldavia and Georgia are asking these questions.
>
> I would ask all comrade deputies to appraise the situation. If every serviceman serves on the territory of the republic where he was born, then one can ask the question: and who will serve in the Western Group of Forces? This is the group of Soviet forces in Germany which has now been renamed the Western Group of Forces. Who will serve in the Central Group of Forces, or in the Southern and in the Northern? . . . Who will serve in the Strategic Missile Forces? Or in the Air Force? In the final analysis, who will serve in the Northern and Pacific Ocean Fleets, which are the main strike force of our Armed Forces? **I think that such a formulation of questions is impermissible.**[143] (Emphasis added.)

It is remarkable that even on this issue—where Yazov would appear to have a strong case—Gorbachev in his comments immediately thereafter did not fully support him, but took the occasion to chide the Minister of Defense and to imply that some compromise would have to be found to satisfy the minority republics. Gorbachev declared:

> I see that on some questions he began to get irritated, which is altogether impermissible for anyone in the Supreme Soviet. . . . Today's mood is such that one must not immediately brush aside the idea of giving replies here. . . . As for the question of how fulfilling security tasks, and ensuring our main forces which guarantee our security and the combat-readiness of our Army, can be combined with the requests being made by the republics, well, this, too requires attentiveness and must be worked through. **I do not think that Comrade Yazov is absolutely right. Similarly, I do not think that the proposals that the representatives of the republics are putting forward are absolutely correct. That wouldn't be serious on either side.**[144] (Emphasis added.)

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[143]Yazov address to Supreme Soviet, Moscow radio, July 3, 1989.

[144]Yazov address to Supreme Soviet, Moscow radio, July 3, 1989.

Although it does not seem likely that Gorbachev will move very far in this direction, the General Staff was probably upset by this hint that it might be forced to make some organizational gesture to the "territorial-national" principle, in order to placate those militantly antimilitary forces of the minority republics with whom *Krasnaya Zvezda* has been polemicizing for many months.

The Resource Claim of the Internal Police Mission

In addition to all this, the Soviet military leadership must reckon with the long-term implications for its force structure of the growing call on the leadership's instruments of coercion to deal with popular disturbances repeatedly arising on a mass scale in widely separated places. These disturbances have imposed severe strains on the regime resources traditionally reserved for this purpose. Because ordinary police (militia) are often deemed unreliable to suppress demonstrations by their compatriots in Soviet minority republics, troops of the Ministry of the Interior must frequently be used; but these forces have apparently been stretched thin by the multiple demands. Consequently, the regime was initially inclined to use army units as well.

In April 1989, Ministry of Defense airborne units were thus used in conjunction with Interior Ministry troops in the violent suppression of demonstrations in the Georgian capital of Tbilisi, under the overall command of the Military District commander, Col. Gen. Rodionov. The resulting massacre created a grave ongoing political dilemma for the regime and has added significantly to the level of tensions between many sections of the Soviet population and the military establishment. There are abundant indications that many military leaders would greatly prefer to be relieved of this policing burden, which they regard as a diversion from their primary external responsibilities and extremely bad for both internal morale and their position in Soviet society. After the Tbilisi massacre, the regime apparently sought to avoid using the army again in a police role, until compelled to do so by the escalation of violence in the Caucasus in January 1990.

Although the political leadership has agreed with the generals that it is undesirable to use the army for this purpose, Gorbachev has already found that in some cases he has no choice. The regime's practical difficulty is that it has apparently found the alternative—the Interior Ministry troops—to be both qualitatively and quantitatively inadequate.[145] Part of the problem is that the most politically reliable

[145]Although Western sources have considered the Interior Ministry to have several hundred thousand troops under arms, ministry officials claimed in 1989 that only some 36,000 men were military "troops," while the rest were "policemen" of various kinds.

sources of Interior Ministry manpower—the Slavs—are also the ones who are most in demand by the Defense Ministry, both on grounds of political reliability and because it is they who are most capable of using complex military technology.

One long-term consequence of this dilemma over the next few years is likely to be a growing inclination by the leadership to divert money and scarce Slav manpower to build up and train the forces of the Interior Ministry. In August 1989, the Supreme Soviet at Gorbachev's urging passed a resolution calling for an unspecified increase in these forces.[146] The need for policing troops is so vital to the regime that this trend is likely to continue. It is therefore likely to create a new drain on the resources available for the Defense Ministry for its external missions, both in terms of funds and in terms of politically reliable and sufficiently educated Slav manpower.

THE FUTURE OF THE ARMY AS A POLITBURO ISSUE

Despite all these unpleasant accumulating considerations for the General Staff, it is clear that there are still important political forces in the Soviet elite that are seeking to temper the attacks on military institutions and to stabilize their position in Soviet society.

In the first place, it should be recognized that notwithstanding all he has done to reduce the leverage military leaders can exert on him and to force undesired changes on them, Gorbachev retains a personal vested interest in the morale and capabilities of the armed forces and the attitudes of their leaders. The Soviet military remains a significant (if no longer supremely important) foreign policy instrument. Gorbachev shares with the military leaders a sense of the need for the qualitative improvement of the armed forces through the assimilation of advanced technology, even as he differs from many of them on size of the quantitative reductions that are an acceptable tradeoff to that end.

In addition, the army remains the ultimate internal instrument of regime control over the population. Until the Interior Ministry forces have been sufficiently improved and enlarged—which will probably take a great deal of time and resources—this army function still cannot be totally eliminated without endangering the regime, particularly in view of the recent widespread disruption in the Soviet Union.

Moreover, Minister of the Interior Vadim Bakatin further claimed in July 1989 that only 18,000 of the "troops" were available as a rapid deployment force, and that even these were poorly equipped. (*Pravda*, July 17, 1989.)

[146]*Los Angeles Times*, August 5, 1989. In October, chief of the USSR interior troops Col. Gen. Yuriy Shatalin told a press conference that his forces would be increased by 26,700 (75 percent) in the next two years. (Reuters, October 24, 1989.)

Finally, Gorbachev cannot ignore the unlikely but not inconceivable possibility that the aggrieved Soviet military leadership might some day become more directly involved as an arbiter of the political struggle within the Politburo, in support of more sympathetic political figures.

These considerations are likely to retain some importance. As already suggested, there is good reason to believe that Gorbachev in June 1989 agreed to publish and defend a version of the military budget that he almost certainly knew to be seriously understated because of distorted prices, as well as for other reasons. This Gorbachev decision was a political act that, in effect, moderated the rate at which he sought to reduce the military burden. The decision presumably reflected his sense of the political inadvisability of attempting at this juncture to make an immediate and overt onslaught on the system of hidden subsidies supporting military expenditures. And as has also been suggested, the same consideration may have previously contributed at least in part to Gorbachev's decision to postpone a general price reform that would have had to confront those subsidies.

There are a number of indications that the status of the military institution and the future of the Soviet armed forces remain subjects of intense controversy within the political leadership. For example, one anomaly suggestive of some political support for the high command is the continued survival in his post of the unrepentant and unrestrained General Tretyak. Although Deputy Defense Minister Tretyak presumably receives some protection from Minister of Defense Yazov, an old personal associate, his conduct is so egregious as to imply higher political backing.

The political pressure on Gorbachev to mitigate the unpleasant image of the military that Gorbachev's own supporters in the media have created was demonstrated by several events in 1989. Early in the year, it was revealed that military officers had been posted as editors to the central television bureaucracy to help improve Soviet television's depiction of the armed forces. In April, the Main Political Directorate of the Army and Navy prevailed upon the leadership to have the Central Committee Secretariat issue a resolution condemning antimilitary trends in the press.[147]

These actions represented major concessions to the military leadership by the Politburo, concessions that are likely to alarm reformist forces in the Soviet Union. The Secretariat resolution was also an indirect rebuff to Shevardnadze, whose Foreign Ministry journal *International Affairs*, as noted earlier, has been leading the attack on the General Staff. It is also noteworthy that the resolution went so far as

[147]*Krasnaya Zvezda,* July 6, 1989.

to condemn the first article that attacked the mass conscription system, published by Lt. Col. Savinkin in *Moscow News* in November 1988. Thus the central party apparat was, at least for the moment, placed on record as opposing a professional army.

There are some indications that in the spring of 1989, Politburo members Chebrikov and Ligachev were active supporters—perhaps instigators—of the mysterious Central Committee Secretariat resolution defending the military leadership against its critics. Chebrikov—whom Gorbachev was to remove from the Politburo in the fall—was known to hold views that were generally conservative, and the State and Legal Department of the Central Committee which he oversaw helped to prepare the resolution. In a speech to a Central Committee plenum in July 1989 that heard widespread criticism of Gorbachev's leadership, his rival Ligachev—while conceding the need to transfer some resources from military purposes—stressed that it was "our duty" to "strengthen the army's prestige in society . . . and without fail, protect it from all kinds of attacks."[148]

That this attitude is still strongly represented within the conservative party apparat was also suggested at the first sessions of the Congress of People's Deputies in June 1989, when many of the delegates—those belonging to the "aggressively obedient majority" controlled by that apparat—displayed a chauvinistic resentment of all criticism of the Soviet army by Moscow intellectuals. Later, at the stormy session of the new Supreme Soviet in July that debated and confirmed General Yazov's renomination as Defense Minister, Gorbachev revealed that "some comrades here"—evidently, in the leadership—had been saying that this discussion should not be shown on television.[149] Some members of the Politburo apparently unsuccessfully objected to airing before a mass audience the complaints about the Defense Ministry heard in the debate. And indeed, as observed earlier, some of Gorbachev's strongest comments about the marshals on this occasion were in fact censored.

Having said this, it also must be stated that it is by no means clear that the forces and factors tending to shore up the position and priorities of the General Staff will be sufficiently strong to do so. Thus, despite the Central Committee Secretariat resolution demanding that the Soviet press be more respectful of the military, it remained highly uncertain whether the flood of attacks on the Ministry of Defense would be significantly diminished.

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[148]*Pravda*, July 21, 1989.

[149]Moscow radio domestic service, July 3, 1989 (*FBIS—USSR*, July 5, 1989, p. 50).

Gorbachev himself set a remarkably negative example in this respect in the humiliating treatment he gave General Yazov during the publicized Supreme Soviet debate on Yazov's confirmation. Moreover, Gorbachev went on to criticize the military leadership generally on many fronts; to support the complaints of junior officers[150] about that leadership; to complain bitterly about its past obstruction of change; to assert that the process of change in the military "is still a long way from completion—frankly, it is only just developing"; and to warn that "many people do not like that." Gorbachev added that he intended to take up all these matters in detail in the Defense Council.[151]

Even in its censored version, Gorbachev's public philippic against the generals, heard by tens of millions throughout the country, was hardly calculated to inculcate respect by newspaper editors for the Secretariat decree. And indeed, when the military newspaper *Krasnaya Zvezda* a few days later cited the decree in an effort to intimidate its press critics,[152] one immediate response was the publication of one of the severest indictments of the incompetence of the Soviet military leadership ever to appear in the Soviet press.[153]

Since then, the struggle over the status of the military institution and the appropriate pace of reduction in the military budget has not ceased. At the September 1989 Central Committee plenum, for example, Minister of Defense Yazov insisted that "the imperialist sources of aggression and war have not disappeared," and then went on to claim that for this reason the Soviet Union was "obligated" to possess "**not only a sufficient . . . defense**"—the formula endorsed by Gorbachev—but "**also**" a defense which was "**unconditionally**

[150]Gorbachev alluded favorably in this connection to Lt. Col. Podziruk, a strong critic of the practices of the military leadership who had defeated a senior commander for election to the Congress of People's Deputies, and whom Gorbachev had then placed, along with a few of the generals Podziruk had attacked, on the Supreme Soviet Committee for Questions of Defense and State Security.

[151]Moscow radio, July 3, 1989 (*FBIS—USSR*, July 5, 1989, p. 49). Gorbachev's criticism of Yazov was then repeated in *Pravda's* discussion of the Supreme Soviet session. (*Pravda*, July 5, 1989.)

[152]Although the April Secretariat decree in question was published in the Central Committee monthly journal *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, it does not seem to have appeared anywhere in the central daily press in the wake of its adoption. This circumstance itself suggests some leadership disagreement about the opinions the resolution expresses. It was apparently only three months later, three days after Yazov's harassment at the Supreme Soviet hearing, that *Krasnaya Zvezda* resurrected the resolution and published it for the first time in the central press in an evident effort to offset the political effects of Gorbachev's statements about the military.

[153]Victor Pankin, "Is the Army for the People or for the Generals?" *Moskovskiy novosti*, July 23, 1989. For another outspoken rebuttal to military efforts to silence civilian critics, see Aleksey Arbatov, "Not for the 'Uninitiated'"? *New Times*, No. 39, September 26–October 2, 1989.

reliable."[154] (Emphasis added.) In unveiling this formula, Yazov appeared to be seeking to press on the leadership a revision—a toughening—of the "sufficiency" doctrine the party has used to justify force reductions.

On the other side of the fence, a month after the Yazov remark, Foreign Minister Shevardnadze made a public report to the Supreme Soviet that contained some of the most pointed allusions to the fatuity of past—and also very recent—military thinking since his July 1988 speech to the Foreign Ministry's conference. For example, he again attacked Soviet policy for having continued "bulk production" of chemical weapons "for almost two decades" after the United States stopped production in 1969. He alluded to military opposition to Soviet negotiating retreats during the INF talks, recalling that "at the time there were quite a few people who accused the diplomats of making concessions and giving ground and not taking defense interests into account."

And most telling of all, Shevarnadze not only acknowledged that the Krasnoyarsk radar station had been a "breach of the ABM treaty," but hinted that military obstruction had been the reason this violation had not been acknowledged earlier. Although he claimed that it had taken the leadership four years to realize that the Krasnoyarsk facility was indeed a violation, he also observed that after the Soviet Union finally announced it would dismantle the station, "again objections were raised—interests were being abandoned, people said." These Shevardnadze statements were polemical attacks on the present Soviet military leadership as well as on the military leaders of the past.[155]

In the long run, the issue of whether such attacks continue hinges to a large extent on whether Gorbachev's ascendancy in the Politburo, and the degree of protection he has offered for antimilitary voices, will continue. In the last analysis, the struggle over the status and priorities of the Soviet military leadership remains dependent on the future course of events in the struggle within the political leadership.

By late 1989, the prospects in this regard remained mixed. The deepening crises in both the Soviet economy and in internal nationality relations had evoked some leadership tendencies toward economic and political retrenchment, and also signs of increasing regime awareness of its stake in countering the spread of centrifugal, antipatriotic and antimilitary sentiment. The further Gorbachev in the future feels himself obliged by these pressures to retreat along the conservative path,

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[154]*Pravda,* September 22, 1989.

[155]*Pravda,* October 24, 1989. Shevardnadze went on to ask "what guided those who took the decision to construct the Krasnoyarsk station, which cost several hundred million rubles? The dismantling will also require money, transport, and manpower. . . . We again see for ourselves that ill-considered decisions cost us dearly."

the more likely the retreats are to have the incidental effect of helping to shore up the political status of the military leadership.

On the other hand, at the end of 1989 many aspects of Gorbachev's political reform movement were still expanding—notably regarding movement toward freer elections and a more independent Supreme Soviet. These trends were not likely, in the long run, to be helpful to the General Staff's efforts to defend the remnants of its formerly entrenched position. Moreover, the same economic pressures that have induced the regime to take steps that are retreats from economic reform are also continuously pushing the Politburo in the direction of seeking additional help at the expense of the military budget. These countervailing tendencies are likely to be bolstered by the wave of unilateral Western force reductions set in motion by the relaxation of the Soviet hold on Eastern Europe.

III. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions emerge from a review of the considerations examined in this report.

First, it seems indisputable that economic pressures have been of overwhelming importance in driving Soviet conventional force reductions. Although the Soviets value the political advantages Gorbachev seeks to obtain in the West through this process, they are a useful byproduct, not the main factor pressing the Soviet Union toward unilateral cuts and asymmetrical concessions. The main factor is the grave and worsening state of the Soviet economy.

Substantial pressures are gradually accumulating for new cuts in the Soviet military budget and in deployed general purpose forces, additional to those already announced. The many variables at play will affect the timing.

Probably of most immediate importance is the question of how successful will be the short-term efforts the regime has already undertaken to deal with its two most pressing economic headaches, the budget deficit and the consumer goods deficit. If significant progress is not made on these two fronts in the next two or three years, fear of the political consequences could drive the leadership to take more resources from the military, and sooner than it might wish. In this connection, the widespread series of spontaneous miners' strikes that began in the Soviet Union in July 1989 has certainly added to the leadership's sense of gathering crisis.

The next most important factor in terms of timing of further reductions is the nature of the reciprocal concessions that the Soviet Union can obtain from the West over the next two years in the Vienna negotiations on conventional arms reductions. The Soviet political leadership may feel it has a considerable stake in obtaining compensation it can use to justify the large asymmetrical concessions it has already offered in the negotiations. The Gorbachev leadership is particularly likely to feel this way in view of the difficult political struggle it was forced to wage to compel the General Staff to yield half a million men in a preliminary uncompensated reduction advertised within the country as necessary to "prime the pump" for future Western concessions. The Soviet leaders are also probably acutely sensitive to the impression of negotiating weakness created by their grave economic difficulties and their series of past negotiating retreats.

It is too soon to tell how far the reorganization of the Soviet armed forces now under way will in the end provide the reassuring "defensive" configuration announced by Gorbachev. There is some reason to suspect that the reorganization plans are neither completed nor immutable, and could well be greatly affected by future economic and political realities. Some of the discernable changes so far—such as the 50,000-man reduction in the Air Defense Forces—appear to be driven more by a felt need to mechanically parcel out the budget cut than by any consistent overall plan to become more defensive in orientation. The promised removal of more than 5000 tanks from the divisions in Eastern Europe—the biggest concrete step toward such a defensive transformation—appears to be going forward, and when completed will indeed greatly reduce the Soviet short-term threat potential. But Soviet intentions regarding the disposition of artillery remain ambiguous, and their reticence about the subject is disquieting. It would appear that the reassuring reduction of the tank strength of the divisions left in Eastern Europe is being partly compensated for by some increase in artillery strength. The General Staff apparently desires to use the occasion of the withdrawal of some divisional structures and tanks from Eastern Europe to increase the level of modernization and the readiness of the divisions remaining that are being "restructured" to a more defensive configuration.

On the other hand, Gorbachev's statements suggest that a far-reaching elimination of low-category divisional structures in the Soviet Union is also envisaged, apparently primarily to save money. The military leadership is likely to regard Gorbachev's announced intention to liquidate over one hundred of what he terms "so-called divisions" as a blow to mobilization capabilities. The General Staff is likely to be even more concerned about the adverse effects on the Soviet military position that will flow from the late 1989 events in Eastern Europe, the loosening of the Soviet hold on the region, and the decline in the coherence of the Warsaw Pact.

The political status of the Soviet military leaders appears exceptionally fluid at present. The campaign Shevardnadze launched against the General Staff in the summer of 1988 has achieved some of its objectives, but by no means all. After a long series of humiliating rebuffs and purges and incessant harassment in the press, the military has at last found some high-level support—reflected in a Central Committee resolution—for resistance to these pressures. The struggle over the status and priorities of the General Staff has not ceased, and now centers in the national debate over whether—and when—to move toward a professional army. Consequently, both the nature of the emerging Soviet force reorganization and the future evolution of the

Soviet negotiating position on conventional force reductions also remain fairly fluid, and both are likely to be strongly affected by the ongoing economic and political crisis in the Soviet Union.

Over the next few years, much will depend on whether the leadership can agree to carry out a fundamental price reform that will come to grips with the issue of the subsidies that underlie the Defense Ministry's cheap hardware procurement prices. Such a reform would require adoption of a new version of the military budget that would describe the military share of resources and the military burden on the economy in terms much closer to the picture commonly accepted in the West than to the version of reality presented in Gorbachev's June 1989 depiction of the military budget. Willingness to publish a closer approximation of the truth would probably go hand in hand with willingness to cut more deeply into the military priority thus revealed.

The rate at which the Soviet Union moves in this direction is now a matter of fierce dispute in both the military and civilian elites. If such a general price reform is eventually undertaken, the General Staff can expect its military hardware to become more costly. If the military budget is no longer allowed to grow, the General Staff will therefore be able to buy fewer copies of each item. This in itself would appear to imply future reductions in the corresponding forces. Even in the absence of price reform, pressures in that direction are facing the Ministry of Defense because the economic crisis is generating increasing demands by economic leaders for an end to subsidies to loss-making plants. It is such subsidies that have sustained the abnormally low prices paid by the military for its hardware, and thus the Ministry's ability to buy weapons on a scale commensurate with the present size of its armed forces. Important forces in the Soviet elite—symbolized by Chairman Lapygin of the Supreme Soviet Committee on Defense and State Security—now appear to believe that a contraction of the Soviet conventional forces is inevitable, and should be accepted to protect Soviet capabilities in military R&D. This view furnishes a respectable underpinning for the growing movement advocating change to a smaller, all-professional army.

However, the military leadership and its sympathizers in the Soviet political elite will fight vigorously to delay and minimize these changes. Most senior Soviet military leaders will continue to oppose a professional army, partly because it would necessarily be a much smaller army, but above all because it would be detrimental to the massive mobilization capabilities to which they attach great importance. The leaders are likely to be particularly concerned to avoid the further contraction of the Soviet armed forces in advance of the arrival of those qualitative technological improvements in Soviet hardware that are

supposed to compensate for quantitative reductions. The prospect of becoming "leaner but meaner" may indeed have attractions to some in the high command, but not if the rate at which the Soviet armed forces become "leaner" outpaces the rate at which they achieve greater "meanness."

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