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The Soviet Military Under Gorbachev

Report on a RAND Workshop

Alexander R. Alexiev, Robert C. Nurick

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February 1990

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PREFACE

This report summarizes the proceedings of a RAND workshop on the Soviet military under Gorbachev, held in Oxnard, California, on June 16–17, 1989. The workshop was designed to provide a forum for an exchange of views among RAND specialists on Soviet affairs and to distill an interim assessment of the current state of the Soviet military as an institution. The report highlights the principal themes and issues that emerged from the workshop discussions, identifying the main areas of consensus and debate. Supported by The RAND Corporation from its own research funds, the workshop drew on an extensive body of research conducted under Project AIR FORCE, the National Security Research Division, and the Arroyo Center.

This discussion should be of interest to policymakers, government analysts, and Soviet-affairs specialists concerned with the impact of Gorbachev's reforms on Soviet military and security policies.

SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the proceedings of a RAND workshop on the state of the Soviet military, held in Oxnard, California, on June 16-17, 1989. It has been selectively updated to account for major developments through January 1990. The workshop was intended to produce an interim assessment of the effects on the military of the political, social, and economic trends unleashed by Mikhail Gorbachev and his program of *perestroika* and to evaluate prospects for the future. The workshop sessions were organized around brief introductory presentations by individual participants; the principal themes of these presentations and the issues that emerged from the discussions that followed are summarized below.

THE MILITARY IN GORBACHEV'S DOMESTIC POLITICAL AGENDA

The first session examined the implications of the policy debates surrounding Gorbachev's program of domestic reform for the military's political role and status. Harry Gelman provided an overview, and Sergei Zamascikov described the ways in which political pressures for change have been reflected in personnel trends within the military itself.

Gelman argued that Gorbachev and his political allies have been mounting a powerful political challenge to the military's traditional prerogatives and preferences. The military's status actually began to erode in the mid-1970s, but the erosion process gained momentum after Gorbachev assumed power, and it has accelerated dramatically in the past year. The result has been political struggle and debate over control of military deployment policy and military-industrial decisionmaking; the political and economic costs of maintaining the USSR's current huge force structure; and the likelihood and adequacy of economic, political, and military payoffs that could result from Soviet force reductions, defense budget cuts, and restructuring.

Participants noted several strands of evidence suggesting that the military's overall political status has begun to erode. The first strand consists of a series of defense and security policy decisions that have run contrary to apparent military preferences, e.g., the USSR's uni-

lateral force reductions, as announced in President Gorbachev's December 1988 speech to the United Nations; Soviet agreement to the principle of highly asymmetrical cuts in the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) negotiations; the now officially promised cuts in the Soviet defense budget, as well as in the military's share of investment; and the reinstatement of student deferments from military service. Some workshop participants also cited the USSR's acceptance of an intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) agreement largely on NATO's terms and its virtually unconditional withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan. The perspective of military planners on the promised restructuring of the USSR's armed forces for "defensive operations" was a more contentious issue; at a minimum, however, participants agreed that the very rapidity and unpredictability of the directives from the political leadership have been highly unsettling to senior officers and have caused considerable anxiety.

Trends in personnel policy within the military itself constitute the second strand of evidence. Zamascikov noted that turnover at the top levels of the military hierarchy has been very high under Gorbachev. The replacement rate at the Military District level and above has doubled since the early 1970s, such that by 1989 the High Command had been nearly completely replaced. Typically, the new incumbents are considerably younger than their predecessors; many of them have been recruited from outside the military's traditional channels of promotion, and they have frequently been promoted over officers with greater seniority. Two subgroups among the prominent new commanders have acquired a high profile: the "Far Easterners" (senior officers who have served in the Soviet forces in the Far East) and the "Afghantsi" (those who served in the Afghanistan conflict). Despite this reshuffling of military personnel, however, the Soviet military leadership appears to remain basically conservative on defense issues.

The third strand of evidence of the military's declining political status is a growing challenge to traditional military prerogatives and claims in the making and implementation of defense policy. Spearheaded by officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)—with Foreign Minister Shevardnadze himself playing an increasingly visible role—this campaign has been reflected in attacks on the military's right to monopolize information, analysis, and advice concerning defense policy, and also on several previous policy decisions. The latter attacks have called into question, by inference, the General Staff's competence to determine on its own future issues of force structure and operational doctrine. Shevardnadze and his allies have

argued for, and to some extent achieved, an overhaul of the Soviet national security decisionmaking process, giving the military (and military considerations) less weight.

As a corollary to the MFA's challenge and its assertion of an oversight role in security policymaking and implementation, Shevardnadze and Gorbachev have encouraged the emergence of a network of civilian academics and analysts as an alternative source of ideas and advice to the political leadership, thereby invading some of the military's traditional domains. The real extent and durability of this civilian influence remains unclear, however; the prospects for the nonmilitary analysts over the longer term will probably depend upon their ability to institutionalize their ties with the political leadership and secure a degree of legitimacy in the eyes of military officials, who clearly resent the intrusions into their domain.

Workshop participants stressed that although the challenges to the military's political status and prerogatives are real and powerful, the outcome is far from settled, especially since the military's institutional status has become part of a broader struggle within the political elite over the course of Gorbachev's domestic agenda.

THE MILITARY AND SOCIETY

Eugene Rumer introduced the second session by arguing that the Gorbachev years have witnessed an unprecedented erosion of the military's standing in Soviet society at large. Key factors in this decline have been Gorbachev's effort to recapture the national security decisionmaking agenda; the effects of *glasnost*, especially as reflected in media coverage of the war in Afghanistan and the nuclear accident at Chernobyl; and the Rust affair. The military has been handicapped in its efforts to counteract these trends because its own propaganda apparatus has been undermined by *glasnost* and because the military no longer has a monopoly on defense information. At the same time, military officers have themselves suffered from the "period of stagnation" and economic decline. The growing sense of disillusionment and the decline of ideological commitment characteristic of civilian society is now observable within the military ranks as well. In Rumer's view, the decline in the military's status and prestige may be irreversible in ethnically non-Russian areas, but might be reestablished among the Russian population if nationalist appeals were to become an important rallying point for future political development.

Workshop members noted that since the emergence of *glasnost*, there has been a blizzard of public criticism of the armed forces' in-

ternal practices. The complaints, ranging from cruelty to young recruits (*"dedovshchina"*), to corruption, to authoritarian command styles, have also been aired in the new Supreme Soviet. Senior officers have acknowledged and deplored many of these problems, but they clearly resent the attacks.

Other indicators of declining social support include evidence of recruitment problems, even at some of the most prestigious military academies, and signs that paramilitary training and predraft military education are becoming unpopular. Also contributing to morale problems in the officer corps are the poor living conditions and other grievances of many junior officers. More broadly, the military has been affected by the frustration and anger with the "period of stagnation" directed at *all* central institutions.

A particularly important manifestation of the societal challenge to the military's prestige has been the debate within the USSR over alternative military structures—specifically, proposals to move from a conscript system to a professional/volunteer army, or to a system of territorial militias. Workshop participants noted that some junior officers have supported the movement toward a professional army. Virtually without exception, however, senior military officials have rejected the professional or cadre-militia models, on the grounds that they would be too expensive, would have a negative impact on ethnic relations, and would disrupt the traditional system for mobilizing reserves. The issue of the implications of structural reform for the mobilization system was thought to be of particular import for Soviet operational planners. But at least some of the opposition from the High Command may also arise from the realization that alternatives to a large conscript army would entail substantial force reductions, leading to the widespread retirement of entrenched military elites and a commensurate loss of power and privilege. The political leadership appears to share the distaste for territorial militias, on grounds of nationalities policy alone. However, several participants argued that a move away from a large, standing army toward a professional/volunteer force is highly likely, as long as the present political course in the USSR is maintained.

Workshop members cautioned that, despite these trends, there remains an important reservoir of social support for the military and for military values. But the wide-ranging criticisms and broad social pressures to which the military is now subject mean the end of a long-standing taboo: The military is now fair game.

THE MILITARY AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION

The workshop then addressed the growing impact of the "national question" on the Soviet military. Alex Alexiev introduced the discussion by pointing out that the military's current problems have both an internal institutional dimension and an external societal dimension. A powerful demographic shift in favor of the non-Russian and non-Slavic populations, especially the Muslim/Turkic nationalities, has over the past two decades produced a significant change in the ethnic composition of the armed forces. While the officer corps and elite units tend to remain overwhelmingly Russian and Slavic, recruits are increasingly drawn from non-Slavic groups. Deficiencies in education and in Russian language skills have made these minority conscripts difficult to train, especially for tasks involving technologically sophisticated equipment; moreover, ethnic tensions within the ranks have been exacerbated by nationalist ferment in the country at large.

The societal dimension of the national question concerns the military's role as a multinational institution in a time of increasing national turmoil. The Red Army has long had an important internal policing function and, despite the evident misgivings of some senior officers, has played a key role in the regime's recent efforts to maintain order in areas riven by nationalist upheaval. This policing function has made the Army the focus of attack and hostility on the part of nationalist groups, which have begun to press for an end to extra-territorial staffing within the military, the establishment of national military units on republican territory, and the placing of local units under local political control. All these demands are troublesome for the senior military leadership.

Several participants warned against overestimating the negative impact of the ethnic factor on the current ability of the Soviet military to fulfill its assigned combat functions. But despite the reservations of senior officers, the Soviet political leadership may well begin giving serious consideration to alternative force structures that might help alleviate some of the ethnic problems. A professional army would be smaller, presumably more efficient and better motivated, and probably ethnically more homogeneous than the current conscript army. It could also provide better pay and living conditions, thus eliminating some of the grievances of junior officers. If the nationalist ferment continues, a professional army could look increasingly attractive as a solution to both ethnic and recruit quality problems.

At the same time, however, workshop members argued that the transformation of the Red Army into a "Russian Army" could incur

serious political costs, especially if the military's internal policing functions were to expand. Much thus will depend on the ability of the Soviet leadership to find satisfactory political resolutions for the current nationalist grievances, without recourse to incessant crackdowns involving the military.

THE MILITARY IN GORBACHEV'S ECONOMIC AGENDA

Discussion of the implications for the military of Gorbachev's domestic economic agenda was based on introductory remarks by Abraham Becker, who addressed the difficulties of interpreting newly available data on the Soviet defense budget, and by Arthur Alexander, who examined the program of "conversion" of portions of the defense economic sector to civilian purposes.

Soviet Defense Spending: The Data and Their Implications

There was considerable discussion and some disagreement about three sets of puzzles raised by newly released Soviet data on the USSR's defense spending: (1) ambiguities and apparent internal inconsistencies in the Soviet data themselves; (2) discrepancies between the Soviet figures and Western estimates; and (3) the problem of reconciling the available data with Soviet policy pronouncements. The new Soviet figures on total defense spending are considerably lower than Western estimates; moreover, whereas Soviet officials have said that some cuts in defense spending were instituted before 1989 and that further cuts are planned for 1991, estimates by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) show an acceleration in real military spending, especially in procurement, since Gorbachev took office.

Intrinsic accounting and pricing difficulties may account for some of the discrepancies, but a more important factor is the probable omission of some expenditures that are included in Western estimates. Workshop participants generally agreed that evolving leadership perspectives on the magnitude and implications of the defense burden are also important: A deepening perception of domestic economic and political crisis, combined with Gorbachev's own political struggles—including the struggle to control the military—help explain the delay in both the announcement of the defense budget and, more important, the decision to impose sharp cuts in military expenditures.

A contrary explanation for the discrepancies emphasizes the controversy engendered in the Soviet leadership by the whole defense data issue. In this view, military industry has probably been receiving off-budget subsidies for years, implying that the military budget is an even greater economic burden than Soviet officials have acknowledged, and also more of a factor in the USSR's overall deficit. Those holding this view believe that the larger problem the leadership faced in preparing the defense budget figures for public release was thus not ambiguity about costing, but rather how to arrive at a politically acceptable level.

Reducing the Burden of Defense

There was little dissent from the view that reducing Soviet force levels by some 500,000 troops will not by itself significantly ease manpower shortages in civilian industry and agriculture, nor will it bring much improvement in worker productivity. Moreover, reducing the size of the military may produce some increase in civilian consumption demands, thus creating further strain on the already tight consumer-goods markets. On the other hand, however, reinstatement of student deferments should increase the pool of trained technical elites, and important benefits for civilian consumer welfare may be gained over the longer term if the resource reallocations help to reduce crucial bottlenecks or ameliorate critical deficiencies, especially in agriculture and food processing. The announced defense budget reductions thus may help ease the USSR's fiscal crisis, although not decisively.

Workshop participants saw little reason to doubt the strong priority that the Soviet political leadership currently attaches to the program of "conversion"—the application of expertise, resources, and infrastructure from the defense economic sector to civilian purposes. In contrast with earlier efforts, real resources are now being transferred. These resource reallocations, together with the political pressures being exerted on behalf of conversion, civilian production, and consumer welfare, could eventually dismantle the mechanisms by which military priorities have traditionally been enforced.

Nevertheless, participants stressed, this outcome is far from a foregone conclusion. Indeed, there are considerable grounds for uncertainty, if not outright pessimism, about the long-term impact the conversion program can have in the absence of broader systemic reform. Unless steps are taken to change the broader economic environment, the civilian sector may be unable effectively to assimilate

and use the resources the conversion program is intended to provide. Though infusions of Western capital and plants can help in the short term, they are unlikely to provide a long-run solution; conditions do not yet exist in the USSR for replicating Western operations. Finally, the workings of a new system for policy oversight and implementation are not yet clear. The practical evolution of the policymaking arrangements in defense will be a key indicator of the extent to which traditional military claims and priorities become deinstitutionalized; as such, the nature of those arrangements will undoubtedly continue to be the focus of political struggle within the elite.

THE MILITARY AND GORBACHEV'S FOREIGN-POLICY AGENDA

Based on introductory remarks by John Hines, the workshop participants addressed two broad sets of issues: (1) the nature and implications of Gorbachev's foreign-policy agenda, both for the military as an institution and for the weight of the military "factor" in Soviet policymaking; and (2) the relative importance of domestic and foreign-policy considerations in generating the pressures the military is now facing.

There was general agreement with Hines' observation that the military appears to share some of Gorbachev's broader foreign-policy objectives—both because of shared concerns about the need to repair the Soviet technological base, and because of some trends in military thinking that predated Gorbachev but produced military positions that are in accord with his own. However, there is strong evidence to suggest that senior military officers have been very reluctant to pay the price—in procurement, in investment for military research and development, and in institutional size and structure—that Gorbachev evidently believes his agenda requires. It is partly for this reason that Gorbachev has had to mount a challenge to the military's prerogatives and institutional status.

Probably the most contentious issue among workshop participants was the hypothesis that Gorbachev has a long-term vision for Europe, entailing possible withdrawal of Soviet forces from Eastern Europe and perhaps even the eventual reunification of Germany. Several participants did see a pattern of evidence lending credence to this view: evident high-level support for ideas put forward by the advocates of "new political thinking," some characteristics of Gorbachev's foreign policy (most strikingly, the evolving Soviet posture toward political change in Eastern Europe), and some straws in the wind con-

cerning defense policy. Other participants, however, argued that the broader Soviet political agenda for Europe has more to do with the U.S. presence in the West than with the Soviet presence in the East; its purpose has been to encourage a process, especially in West Germany, whose practical result would be a reduction of the U.S. presence. Still other discussants argued that the Soviet leadership would not want to take the risk of withdrawing from Eastern Europe, but that, precisely for that reason, it would not welcome wholesale American withdrawals from the continent either.

* * * * *

NOTE: The workshop discussions were held before the dramatic chain of events that began to unfold in Eastern Europe in the late summer and early fall of 1989. The rapid unraveling of Communist Party power throughout the region, the resulting pressures on Soviet troop deployments there, and the reemergence of the issue of German reunification have, of course, severely sharpened the difficulties confronting Gorbachev's European policy. The key question now seems to be less the nature of his long-term vision for Europe than whether and how Soviet diplomacy would be able to affect the course of change, in ways that are at least minimally consistent both with Gorbachev's domestic political requirements and with overriding Soviet security interests.

There seems little doubt that the Soviet leadership has hoped to slow the pace of change in the East, preserve the integrity of the Warsaw Pact, and defer the issue of German reunification to the indefinite future. The Soviets have displayed particular horror at the prospect of a new Germany reunited in NATO. However, having renounced the option of military intervention, Soviet diplomacy has had to find other, political levers to safeguard the USSR's interests. Hence their stress on preserving "all-European processes," their reminders of the legal rights and obligations of the Four Powers for the status of Berlin, and their frequent appeals to shared Western interests in stability—as well as to residual Western anxieties about the economic might and possible political orientation of a unified German state.

The developments in East Germany and elsewhere in Eastern Europe have undoubtedly sharpened the dilemmas and challenges Soviet military officials now feel they face and intensified internal debates about the implications of Gorbachev's foreign-policy priorities for the USSR's defense posture. With the changing complexion of

East European governments and the resulting pressures from several of them for withdrawal of Soviet troops independent of arms-control talks, the Soviet military may not only be skeptical about the continuing relevance of the USSR's approach to CFE, but in all likelihood is deeply anxious about the future military viability of the Warsaw Pact as well.

* * * * *

For most participants, not only Gorbachev's challenge to the military but also many important characteristics of his foreign policy can be explained by the overriding priority he attaches to internal reconstruction and reform. But there also appears to be an important interplay between the Soviet leadership's domestic preoccupations and its foreign-policy goals. The leadership has come to appreciate that domestic policies in general, including those aspects bearing on the military, are important prisms through which the reality and sincerity of Soviet external policy are measured. Most of those at the workshop thus agreed that the Soviet armed forces now find themselves on the receiving end of a combination of domestic and foreign policies that exert powerful pressures for change. Whether these pressures will prove significantly stronger than countervailing factors, will be felt abruptly by the military, or will be attenuated and spread over time, however, were issues of considerably greater uncertainty and debate.

SOME FINAL OBSERVATIONS

Workshop participants concurred that some long-standing prerogatives and preferences of the Soviet military are under increasing pressure. Some of the difficulties the military faces are a by-product of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. Yet much of the challenge to the Soviet military's institutional status seems to reflect a conscious design on Gorbachev's part: He has allowed, if not encouraged, much of the pressure the armed forces are now feeling, especially as the leadership perception of the gravity of the USSR's economic situation has deepened.

Participants emphasized, however, that the picture for the Soviet military establishment is not necessarily as bleak as a simple recitation of the new challenges it faces would suggest. First, it is important to note that the workshop discussions focused on trends, not on providing a net assessment. The pressures seem especially striking

precisely because of their contrast with the privileged position the military enjoyed in the past; these privileges appear to be under challenge and stress, but they have by no means disappeared.

Second, a number of countervailing factors seem likely to offset, at least in part, the forces tending to erode the military's institutional weight and status. There remains an important reservoir of support for the military in society at large; the military continues to be the central repository of critical defense information and operational expertise and will wield considerable leverage through its role in implementing new defense policies; and the sheer weight of bureaucratic mass, inertia, and vested interest will make institutional change difficult. Finally, the military will continue to serve as the ultimate guarantor of the security of the Soviet state and system.

Third, a number of uncertainties continue to bear on the future prospects for the military's institutional status and health. These derive from the complex military perspectives on Gorbachev's policy agenda and priorities, the unsettled nature of decisionmaking arrangements in defense, and uncertainties about Gorbachev's own fate and that of his program.

The largest and arguably the most important imponderable of all, however, concerns the future evolution of the Soviet political and social system in general—an issue on which there was little consensus at the workshop and even less certainty. Whatever uncertainties and disagreements exist about future prospects for the Soviet military, the experience of the past few years has driven home an elemental point: The Soviet military is not hermetic, isolated from the larger social fabric within which it exists. Predictions about the future status of the military as an institution, or even about the weight of the military factor in policymaking, are difficult to separate from predictions about the future of the Soviet society and polity as a whole.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The workshop whose highlights are summarized here was convened in June 1989, at a time of considerable ferment and debate within the USSR about the main lines of defense policy and doctrine and the broader role of the military in Soviet society. This debate has been accompanied by increasingly harsh and widespread criticism of the Soviet military as an institution and of the weight accorded military considerations in Soviet security policy. In addition, the USSR's military establishment is presently being affected by broader social forces and trends, especially unrest in the national republics, and has begun an uneasy process of adjusting to Mikhail Gorbachev's foreign-policy and domestic economic agenda. Taken together, these developments suggest that the Soviet military is currently facing a serious and wide-ranging set of challenges to its traditional prerogatives and preferences. These challenges, in the view of many Western analysts, may be eroding the military's traditional political clout, as well as its overall societal status.

The workshop was intended to bring together RAND staff members who study Soviet developments so that they could make an interim assessment of how the political, social, and economic trends unleashed by Gorbachev have affected the military as an institution. It also sought to evaluate the future prospects of the Soviet military. The workshop agenda did not seek to encompass specific military-operational and doctrinal changes or arms-control issues. These have frequently been examined elsewhere. Rather, the workshop sessions were organized around brief introductory presentations by individual participants; they addressed the following topics:

- The military in Gorbachev's domestic political agenda
- The military and society
- The military and the national question
- The military in Gorbachev's economic agenda
- The military and Gorbachev's foreign-policy agenda

A number of major developments have occurred since the workshop which bear importantly on the issues discussed there, notably the intensification of ethnic turmoil within the USSR and the dramatic events in East Europe of late summer and fall 1989. For the most

part, the text of the report has not been altered to account for these events, in order to preserve a record of the expectations held by at least one group of analysts about the likely future prospects for the Soviet military. However, implications of major post-workshop trends, through early February 1990, are addressed selectively through footnotes and a brief addendum.

II. THE MILITARY IN GORBACHEV'S DOMESTIC POLITICAL AGENDA

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Trends in Personnel Policy

The opening speaker of the session was Sergei Zamascikov, who focused his remarks on Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's military personnel policies, with special emphasis on command appointments. Zamascikov outlined five general trends that have characterized Gorbachev's military personnel policies to date:

- Unusually high rates of replacement at the top, at both the High Command and the regional levels.
- The appointment of "outsiders" to the most important positions in the Soviet High Command.
- The emergence of two powerful subgroups within the military command structure—"Far Easterners" and "Afghantsi."
- Preference given to politically active, politically aware officers.
- The continuing conservatism of officers at the high and medium command levels.

Zamascikov noted that throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, an average of ten top-level commanders were replaced in each two-year cycle. After Gorbachev came to power, the rate increased to 15 in 1985-86 and 20 in 1987-88. Within the first six months of 1989, 12 top-level commanders were replaced. Fifteen of 17 members of the Collegium of the Ministry of Defense, the very top of the military structure, were replaced during the first four years of Gorbachev's tenure. There has also been a generational change: New appointees are, on the average, ten years younger than their predecessors.

Two subgroups of prominent new commanders have clearly acquired a high profile. One group, the "Far Easterners," are senior officers who served within the past ten years in the Soviet Forces of the Far East (e.g., the Far Eastern Military District, the Transbaikalian Military District, the Siberian Military District, the Central Asian Military District, and the Pacific Fleet). Army-General D. T. Yazov, the Minister of Defense, and Army-General M. A. Moiseev, the Chief of the General Staff, along with their deputies, including Army-

General P. G. Lushev, the Commander of the Warsaw Pact, Army-General I. M. Tret'yak, the Chief of the Air Defense Forces, Army-General V. L. Govorov, the Chief of the Civil Defense Forces, and Army-General M. I. Sorokin, the Chief Inspector of the Ministry of Defense, are members of this subgroup. The commanding officers of both the Western and Far Eastern theaters of military operations (TVDs), as well as the commanders of some of the most important military districts (including the Moscow Military District), are also "Far Easterners."¹

Zamascikov cautioned that the "Far Easterners" should not be seen as an interest or pressure group. They are not tied to any specific service branch, and they appear to have no special vested interest in advancing the goals of any particular service arm. Rather, they are united by personal ties and patronage relationships formed during their years of serving together in geographically remote areas. In fact, this characteristic of having been "outsiders" with respect to the Moscow-based military hierarchy that developed under Brezhnev may have been an important consideration for Gorbachev.

The second subgroup, the "Afghantsi," are officers who served in senior positions in Afghanistan or who were involved in the war there because they held commanding positions in the Turkestan Military District and the Southern TVD. They include the current Commander of the Warsaw Pact, Army-General P. G. Lushev; the Commander of the Ground Forces, Army-General V. I. Varennikov; the Commander of the Strategic Rocket Forces, Army-General Yu. P. Maksimov; the Chief Inspector of the Ministry of Defense, Army-General M. I. Sorokin; the Chief of the Voroshilov Academy, Army-General G. I. Salmanov; the Commander of the Vystrel Higher Officers Training School, Lieutenant-General L. Ye. Generalov; the Chief of the Main Operations Directorate, Lieutenant-General V. G. Denisov; and several important military district commanders.

Zamascikov emphasized that almost every senior commander who served in Afghanistan has been promoted (some of them quite rapidly), despite the fact that the Soviet forces did not fare well in that war. As a group, the senior "Afghantsi" are typically younger than those they have replaced and thus are likely to play an important role for some time to come.

Zamascikov argued that despite Gorbachev's vigorous personnel replacement policy, the military leadership remains essentially con-

¹Army-General S. I. Postnikov, Commander in Chief of the Western TVD, and Army-General I. M. Voloshin, CINC of the Soviet Forces in the Far East (who was replaced after the workshop), had prior experience in the Far East, as did Colonel-General N. V. Kalinin, the Commander of the Airborne Troops.

servative. This is especially true below the level of the High Command and appears to reflect the inclination of those responsible for mid-level personnel appointments, both within the military and on the Central Committee, to ensure continuity rather than to encourage radical change.²

Zamascikov also examined the results of the March 1989 elections to the new Congress of People's Deputies, the most remarkable outcome of which was the voters' rejection of many of the top military leaders—men who were accustomed to automatic inclusion in the leadership forums. The losers included Colonel-General Yu. A. Yashin, a deputy Minister of Defense; Army-General B. V. Snetkov, Commander in Chief of GSFG (the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany); Colonel-General A. V. Betekhtin, the First Deputy Chief of the Ground Forces; Fleet-Admiral K. V. Makarov; the Chief of the Main Naval Staff; the commanders of the Northern, Pacific, and Black Sea Fleets; and the commanders of the Leningrad, Volga, and Far Eastern Military Districts.

There is no doubt that for many high-level officers, the election was a deeply humbling experience. Some senior commanders were defeated by junior officers running in opposition to them, and several of those who were voted out of office explicitly blamed Gorbachev's policies of reform and *glasnost* for their humiliating losses.³

The Internal Political Struggles and Debates

Harry Gelman examined the evolving political role and status of the Soviet military in the context of the policy debates surrounding Gorbachev's program of domestic reform. In Gelman's view, Gorbachev and his political allies have sought to diminish the political clout of the military as an institution. The military's status actually began to erode in the mid-1970s, when the rate of growth of the military budget was first cut, but the erosion process gained momentum after Gorbachev's rise to power and has accelerated dramatically in the past year. Three converging debates on fundamental issues, all of them with major implications for both the domestic position of the

²Until the September 1989 Central Committee plenum, personnel matters were apparently supervised by Communist Party Secretary Lev Zaikov and former KGB Chief Viktor Chebrikov, who served as chairman of the Central Committee's State and Legal Affairs Department.

³The Chief of the Political Directorate of the Leningrad Military District, Lieutenant-General Yu. M. Pavlov, complained that because of publications that demean service in the Army and blame societal problems on "excessive military expenditures, ... a certain part of the population has developed negative attitudes towards the military."

Soviet military and external defense policy, have been at the center of the political struggle.

First, there has been an intense political struggle concerning control over military deployment policy and military-industrial decision-making. It has become clear that civilian forces in the Soviet leadership, led by Foreign Minister E. A. Shevardnadze, have been trying to reduce the leverage the General Staff has traditionally exercised over these decisions.

The second debate concerns the military/economic issue of whether the Soviet Union can still afford the conventional force structure inherited from the Brezhnev years, or whether the political and economic opportunity costs of maintaining this force are so great as to be inconsistent with overall Soviet national interests.

The third area of debate focuses on the likelihood and adequacy of political, economic, and military payoffs from the West and China that the USSR's defense cuts, force reductions, and restructuring are hoped to produce.

Gelman noted that the Foreign Ministry's efforts to curtail the power of the General Staff first became evident in 1987. A number of developments, including the Rust affair, the stalemate in Afghanistan, and the intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) agreement, served as pretexts for attacking existing national security decision-making procedures and the influence the military has exercised over them.

The first official attack was delivered by First Deputy Foreign Minister A. A. Bessmertnykh in November 1987. He maintained that a number of suboptimal decisions had been made and that technological imperatives rather than political analysis had determined the outcome of policy on issues such as that of the deployment of the SS-20s. Bessmertnykh argued that "national interests must determine strategy, while strategy must determine political tactics, and to a certain extent, the technological development of the armed forces."⁴ This direct attack on Soviet military decisionmaking prerogatives could not have been made without the support of Shevardnadze, and ultimately that of Gorbachev.

Direct criticism of military decisionmaking accelerated in 1988, as a result of the mounting perception within the Politburo that the country's economic crisis was deepening. During a July conference of the national security community, Shevardnadze criticized past military decisionmaking and scathingly denounced the Soviet chemical weapons program as the product of "primitive and distorted" notions

⁴A. Bessmertnykh, "The Art of Weighing Possibilities," *New Times*, No. 46, 1987.

of Soviet interests. He called for major modifications in defense decisionmaking and implied that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) should be given what amounts to veto power over weapon programs, arguing that "in the future, major innovations in defense development should be verified at the MFA to determine if they correspond juridically to existing international agreements and to stated political positions."⁵

Other MFA officials claimed that as a result of having achieved strategic parity, the Soviet Union no longer needs to compensate for a Western nuclear advantage by maintaining superiority in conventional weapons. They stated that a "global trend" was imposing fiscal and demographic constraints on military activity worldwide (e.g., the Americans and the Chinese have been making big cuts in their defense budgets), and that it was time for the Soviets to make cuts in their defense budget as well. Others, including the Deputy Chief of the Foreign Ministry's International Organizations Directorate, A. V. Kozarev, criticized the maintenance of a Soviet military presence beyond the nation's land and maritime borders and voiced proposals for unilateral force reductions.

Another milestone was reached in mid-October 1988, when the Politburo publicly criticized the Defense Ministry for failing to solve problems of military discipline. Debates surfaced in the press on alternative military manpower structures. Prominent figures such as A. G. Arbatov of the Institute of the World Economy and International Affairs, R. Z. Sagdeev of the Institute for Space Research, and N. Portugalov, a former consultant to the Central Committee's International Information Department, began alluding to the existence of a military-industrial complex in the Soviet Union.

Gelman said that a turning point was reached in late 1988, with a series of decisions that were probably opposed by the military. These included unilateral force reductions, troop cuts in Eastern Europe, the restoration of student deferments from the draft, and the announcement of defense budget cuts. In addition, High Command personnel continued to be replaced, and Party members severely criticized the work of the General Staff.

Gelman cautioned that even with these developments, it is too early to say that the military has decisively lost its former influence and no longer plays an important role in Soviet society. Powerful political forces in the Soviet leadership continue to try to mitigate attacks on military institutions and to preserve the military's influen-

⁵Shevardnadze's speech at the July 1988 conference was published in *International Affairs*, No. 10, 1988.

tial position. The situation remains very uncertain. Analysts must carefully watch current developments, including the functioning of the new military oversight committees of the Supreme Soviet and the outcome of the ongoing investigation of the Tbilisi affair.

He thought it clear, however, that the military has become a focal point in the struggle within the political elite over law and order and the limits to *glasnost*—in other words, over whether the situation calls for further loosening up or a crackdown. A sense of overlapping interests is leading the military in many, though not all, cases to align with conservative forces in the civilian leadership. The implications of this are profoundly disturbing to individuals in both the Soviet Union and the West. Some have gone so far as to envisage the military taking on a role similar to that played in Jaruzelski's Poland in 1981. Gelman said that he believed such a scenario to be unlikely.

Nonetheless, the apparent erosion of the political role of the military, which seems to be under attack from all sides, raises questions about the military's future position in a society where all the big political issues are currently up for grabs.

DISCUSSION

Personnel Policies

Most of the discussants agreed that the top Soviet military leadership remains very conservative with respect to Gorbachev's broader security policy agenda, despite large-scale replacements of military cadres. Many leading officers, in the words of one participant, "continue to oppose Gorbachev on the most important issues of resource allocation and the structure and deployment of forces."

This persistent conservatism reflects the fact that most of the new appointees were apparently chosen not because of their support for Gorbachev's "new thinking" on foreign/political and military/strategic issues, but because of their apparent sensitivity to the serious internal problems plaguing the Army. Many of them, for instance, had written articles about corruption in the military, the nationality question, discipline, and the military's internal performance. They were appointed with the specific task of introducing *perestroika* into the armed forces.

One discussant argued that Defense Minister Yazov, apart from being a co-optable "outsider," may have caught the eye of Gorbachev and his allies because he emphasized anticorruption themes and similar topics in his writings as early as 1983. The same was true of

Moiseev, Yazov's successor in the Far Eastern Military District, who later became Chief of the General Staff. These issues have traditionally been the purview of the political officer rather than the commander, but it now appears that officers hoping to attract the attention of the political leadership have been emphasizing internal military problems.

The new "political" criteria for leadership recruitment resulted in the appointment of many new top leaders who had little apparent expertise in foreign policy or evident background in larger military/strategic and doctrinal/theoretical issues. There is currently no one atop the military hierarchy who has the intellectual breadth of military theoreticians like Marshals N. V. Ogarkov and S. F. Akhromeev, both former Chiefs of the General Staff, or Army-General V. N. Lobov, the First Deputy Chief of the General Staff.

Gorbachev's difficulties with the military leadership arise in part from the progressive radicalization of his own policies. Officers he promoted at earlier stages of the reform process, who often appeared sympathetic to his broad objectives, have watched as he has embraced progressively more radical initiatives, some of which appear to run counter to the intrinsic interests of the military establishment. Thus, even some officers who initially were seen as part of a Gorbachev "team" have increasingly tended to distance themselves from his policies. Most workshop participants believed that Gorbachev will find it difficult to secure enthusiastic support among superior officers for the policy decisions that will need to be taken over the next few years. Continued military resistance to radical policies and an alliance with conservative forces therefore remain likely.

Shevardnadze and the Military

The participants generally agreed that the Foreign Minister is the single most important actor in the ongoing civil/military struggle. Shevardnadze has emerged as Gorbachev's "point man" in this debate. He represents the views of Gorbachev's allies in the Politburo, though not necessarily those of the Politburo as a whole.

Shevardnadze's position has had both substantive and procedural components. Substantively, it has been cast in terms of the "new thinking" in security affairs, stressing that the USSR's earlier overreliance on the military aspects of security produced a Western backlash that isolated the USSR diplomatically and left it worse off in military terms. Procedurally, Shevardnadze and his Foreign Ministry colleagues have called for (and to some extent achieved) an overhaul

of the national security policymaking process, giving the military (and military considerations) less weight.⁶

Shevardnadze has undertaken a series of bureaucratic reforms within the Foreign Ministry itself, designed to enhance the agency's ability to play an effective role (and contest the defense sector) in security issues. The reforms include the creation of a new Directorate for Questions of Arms Limitation and Disarmament and the establishment of an arms-control directorate, headed by former Soviet START negotiator Viktor Karpov. A new Scientific Coordination Center was also set up to coordinate Foreign Ministry contacts with the Academy of Sciences and other civilian institutions.

The extent to which Shevardnadze is willing to pursue his stated positions is unclear. One participant noted that he has attacked the military for exorbitant spending on chemical weapons, but has acquiesced in the military's claim that Soviet chemical stocks are about the same size as those of the United States. (Most Western estimates hold that the Soviet arsenal is many times larger.)

Another commentator remarked that in addition to his complaints about defense spending, secrecy, and the need for democratic controls, Shevardnadze has also advanced a strategic critique of the military's worldview, based on the premise that the most serious threat facing the Soviet Union comes from U.S. strategic nuclear and chemical weapons. According to Shevardnadze, Soviet policy should be directed against this threat and thus should seek deep reductions or the complete elimination of such weapons around its periphery. Several workshop participants saw this as a rather simplistic view of strategy, neglectful of the history of Soviet conflict and rivalry with countries other than the United States, including China and a resurgent West Germany and Japan.

In the view of several participants, Shevardnadze's forceful articulation of this view of strategy raises several questions, the most important of which concerns whether his line is meant to serve

⁶One indication that Shevardnadze's campaign has enjoyed some success came during the Supreme Soviet's July 1989 confirmation hearings for Yazov as Minister of Defense. In the course of the debate, Gorbachev responded to criticism of Yazov from the floor by telling deputies they should not exaggerate the Defense Minister's role in the formulation of military doctrine and strategy, since this was decided not by the Ministry but by the Defense Council, which Gorbachev chairs. Gorbachev went on to say that the Defense Council, which he described as moribund under Brezhnev, had been reactivated. (For a description and analysis of this exchange, see Alexander Rahr, "Gorbachev Discloses Details of Defense Council," *Radio Liberty, Report on the USSR*, September 15, 1989.) In the fall of 1989, Central Committee Secretary and Politburo member Lev Zaikov told *Pravda* that the Defense Council had assumed the role of overseeing all major military/political initiatives, under strict subordination to the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, i.e., Gorbachev (*Pravda*, November 27, 1989).

"offensive" or "defensive" political ends. Does he in fact believe that the Soviet Union can score major gains at the expense of the United States by pressing for the elimination of U.S. forces from Western Europe and elsewhere along the Soviet periphery? Or is his stress on reducing the U.S. threat a way of justifying, to the military and the Soviet elite as a whole, a policy of partial retreat and retrenchment? Many participants believe the answer lies in some combination of the two interpretations. Shevardnadze may believe that, over the long term, the main strategic goal of the USSR should be to undercut U.S. presence and influence worldwide. But he may also feel considerable pressure to demonstrate that he and Gorbachev have produced major foreign-policy achievements, and that the conclusion of the INF treaty and the breakdown of the Soviets' "enemy" image in the West have made the Soviet Union more secure, despite the cutbacks and criticisms of the military.

Another discussant suggested that this assault on the military may be partly the product of the Foreign Ministry's frustration at the military's constraints on traditional diplomatic prerogatives. For example, the former chief of the Soviet chemical weapons negotiating team complained publicly that he was not permitted to answer a question about whether the Soviet Union possesses chemical weapons.

One unresolved issue concerned whether the Foreign Ministry has important institutional allies in its attack on the military. Some participants argued that both the KGB and the International Department (ID) appear to support Shevardnadze's line, but others thought the evidence for such a conclusion was weak and wondered whether the Foreign Minister may not be stepping on KGB and ID toes as well.

The Civilian Analysts and the Military

Considerable attention was devoted to the emergence of a group of civilian academic experts on military issues. These scholars, centered in such bodies as the Institute for the United States and Canada and the Institute of World Economy and International Relations, appear to have received a mandate from the Soviet leadership for their growing activism. They also seem to be gaining access and therefore influence in policymaking bodies. Some civilian analysts are now attached to Soviet arms-control delegations, the ID, and the Foreign Ministry. As noted, a special center has been formed within the Foreign Ministry to encourage the involvement of civilian institutes in foreign-policy and arms-control issues. Other civilian groups, such as the

Committee of Soviet Scientists (formed in 1983 to examine issues related to the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI)), also remain active.

As a group, the civilian analysts have clearly come to play a significant role in the Soviet defense debate. Increasingly, they seek not only to criticize past decisions but also to shape the direction of future Soviet defense policy. They have had some success in providing decisionmakers with independent information as well as alternatives to traditional military viewpoints. Many of the civilian analysts are in the vanguard of the Foreign Ministry's assault on military thinking in security affairs, and they often use the Ministry's journal, *International Affairs*, as a forum for their views. In addition, they enjoy ready access to widely read liberal publications such as *Moscow News*, *Ogonyok*, and *Arguments and Facts*.

However, the depth and durability of their real influence remain open to question. Most of these civilian analysts have not grasped the reins of power; some of them may in fact be trying to build bridges between the military establishment and the civilian sector. One prominent expert, A. A. Kokoshin, Deputy Director of the Institute for the United States and Canada, maintains excellent relations with the General Staff and, in the view of some participants, is trying to mitigate some of the pressure on the military. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that military officers resent civilian interference, and many have become increasingly outspoken in their objections to it.⁷

The civilian analysts' prospects for achieving real influence in military decisionmaking will depend on their ability to institutionalize their ties with the political leadership and to secure at least some degree of legitimacy in the eyes of the military. In any case, their activities merit continued attention.

⁷Indeed, the summer and fall of 1989 witnessed something of a military backlash against the activities of the civilian experts. Particularly prominent in expressing the military's resentment has been Army-General Mikhail Moiseev, Chief of the USSR Armed Forces General Staff, who took several opportunities to attack what he called "nonprofessional" analyses appearing in the civilian press, arguing that only the professional military was competent to deal with matters of force structure and operational strategy. See, for example, Moiseev's article in *Kommunist voozhennykh sil*, No. 13, 1989.

III. THE MILITARY AND SOCIETY

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Eugene Rumer introduced this session by arguing that the past four years have witnessed an unprecedented erosion of the military's standing in Soviet society. Respect and support for the military as an institution have declined across the board, and negative attitudes toward it have become a common denominator among otherwise diverse segments of society. Rumer saw numerous driving forces behind this phenomenon, several of which warrant particular notice.

One crucial factor was Gorbachev's effort to reassert control over national security decisionmaking as an imperative of his domestic political agenda. Early in Gorbachev's tenure, the introduction of *glasnost* helped to erode the military's traditional monopoly on defense information and advice in the policy process.

A second factor was the war in Afghanistan. *Glasnost* played a major role here as well: The increasingly honest coverage of the war, beginning in the summer of 1985, dealt a severe blow to the armed forces' prestige in society. The optimistic pictures painted by the military media during the first five years of the war stood in sharp contrast to the new and often graphic accounts of mistreated veterans and brutalities against Afghan civilians, and the sight of thousands returning in zinc coffins or with crippling disabilities.

Another event that negatively affected the military's image was the nuclear accident at Chernobyl. (The impact of the accident on the military's relations with society has received little attention in the West.) Although the military has taken special pains to stress its role in dealing with the catastrophe, Chernobyl has become a very powerful antinuclear—and, by association, antimilitary—symbol. For the Soviet public, Chernobyl is a symbol of the dangers not only of nuclear energy, but also of nuclear weapons and strategy. The accident thus created doubts in the public mind about some of the proudest accomplishments of the military, including the achievement of strategic parity with the United States.

Another development that undermined the military's prestige was the Rust affair. While Gorbachev turned this event to his political advantage, it subjected the military to public humiliation. Not only was the leadership of the Ministry of Defense accused of incompe-

tence, the military more generally was for the first time subjected to criticism as an institution.

Finally, the military has been discredited by recently publicized cases of modification and even outright falsification of Soviet military history, including the "Great Patriotic War."

Rumer observed that the military has been handicapped in its ability to counteract these trends because its propaganda apparatus has been made ineffective both by *glasnost* and by the erosion of the military's monopoly on defense information. This trend has been accelerated by a generational change within the creative intelligentsia. The current "nightingales of the General Staff," such as writers A. Prokhanov and V. Pikul, are a far cry in talent and credibility from popular authors like K. Simonov and A. Tvardovskii, who dealt with military themes in former decades. Furthermore, the war in Afghanistan simply did not evoke the intense feelings of patriotism and respect for the military that earlier conflicts, especially World War II, had evoked. The long-standing myth of the liberating Soviet Army was no longer credible.

Rumer noted, however, that it would be unfair to blame the military for all of the ills afflicting Soviet society. The military is very much a part of that society and, as such, reflects its conditions and problems. Military representatives themselves have stressed that the armed forces, like the rest of society, have suffered during the "period of stagnation" and economic decline, as well as from Stalinist oppression in years past. There is considerable evidence suggesting that many Soviet junior officers, once considered to be a privileged class, currently live in conditions that are much worse than those of the general population. Many of the officers may, in fact, be living below the poverty line. As a result, the growing sense of disillusionment and the decline of ideological commitment and support for the regime that are characteristic of civilian society are now observable in the military as well.

Partly because of dissatisfaction with this state of affairs, voices have begun to be heard advocating the merits of alternatives to the present conscript army model. Proposals have been put forth for a professional, all-volunteer army or a territorial-militia system. Remarkably, some of the proposals have come from within the ranks of the military, and even some high-ranking officers have joined the fray.

In Rumer's view, the decline in the status and prestige of the Soviet military is probably irreversible in some of the ethnically non-Russian areas, such as the Baltic republics and Central Asia, where

the Soviet Army is increasingly seen as an army of occupation. This may be one of the most serious problems facing Moscow. For the ethnic Russian population, however, the prestige of the military could conceivably be reestablished, if nationalism rather than Communism became the rallying point for future political development.

In light of such challenges to the armed forces, the transition to a volunteer/professional force may offer at least a temporary solution to some of the problems facing the military. A volunteer force is likely to be smaller than the conscript army, but more efficient, better motivated, and ethnically more homogeneous. It would also be less costly in a period of severe economic constraints. Such a force could offer better remuneration to military personnel and would thus be attractive to Soviet officers who are alarmed by intolerable living standards and declining prestige. Further, abandoning universal conscription could relieve some of the antimilitary pressures in the non-Russian areas and bring significant returns in Western goodwill.

DISCUSSION

Military Prestige

Workshop participants observed that some of the public frustration that has found its outlet in *glasnost* reflects an increasing perception of the military as a corrupt and wasteful state within the state, one whose activities were long secretive and seemingly untouchable. The most obvious example of the military's loss of credibility was Afghanistan, where for nearly five years, the public was led to believe that soldiers were engaged primarily in peaceful construction activities. Another highly emotional issue—one that is well known but could not be addressed prior to *glasnost*—concerns the cruel hazing of young recruits that has existed in the Soviet Army. This activity, known as "*dedovshchina*" (grandfatherism) in Army jargon, and the military's earlier, clumsy efforts to deny its existence, have created a great deal of public resentment.¹

¹Senior officers continued to show sensitivity to criticism of the military's internal practices through the fall and winter of 1989. They have typically acknowledged that these practices exist and have done damage, but they assert that such activities are manifestations of widespread social ills, and that the armed forces have made great strides in combatting them. See, for example, Yazov's speech to Moscow's Higher Combined Command School (published as "Lofty Vocation," *Pravda*, November 3, 1989); and M. Moiseev, "Once More on the Prestige of the Army," *Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil*, No. 13, 1989.

One specific indicator of the declining prestige of the military profession is the growing evidence that military schools and academies are no longer able to attract sufficient numbers of high-quality candidates. This is reportedly the case even at some of the most prestigious schools, which never experienced such problems in the past.

The discussants noted that the decline in the attractiveness of the military profession is related to the increasingly unfavorable living conditions of junior officers and warrant officers. Indeed, the number of officers who are actually homeless is staggering. One discussant cited figures from the Soviet press indicating that in the city of Moscow alone, 7,000 officers are reportedly homeless, while in the Leningrad Military District the figure is 9,000. Similarly, 15 to 20 percent of the professional military personnel in the Belorussian Military District are reportedly without housing.²

An additional factor contributing to problems of morale and cohesion in the officer corps may be a growing cleavage between the junior and senior officers. Many recent articles, including some signed by active-duty officers, have complained openly of top brass privileges, widespread nepotism, and an inequitable promotion system.

Several participants noted that despite these problems, the military as an institution and its conservative leadership continue to enjoy strong support from important segments of the Soviet political establishment. In April 1989, the Central Committee issued a directive that warned editorial staffs against presenting an overly negative picture of the armed forces.³ Then, during the inaugural session of the new Congress of People's Deputies, a substantial majority supported Colonel-General I. N. Rodionov, who had been accused of re-

²Partly in response to morale problems in the officer corps and to the difficult social conditions military personnel often face, an unofficial trade union for servicemen and their families has been established in the Soviet Union. Called "Shield," the union held its founding conference in October 1989, at which time it described the Army as going through a "severe crisis" and published a program calling for changes in the condition of military service, the eventual elimination of Communist Party political sections within military units, a reduction in conscript service to six months, increased pay, and improved living conditions (see Jonathan Steele, "Red Army Has a Bad Attack of the Blues," *The Guardian*, October 23, 1989).

The unfavorable living conditions of many Soviet servicemen have received considerable attention not only from the military press, but also from the Supreme Soviet's new Committee on Defense and State Security. In a November 1989 interview, Committee Chairman V. Lapygin said that many officers live below the poverty line, and remarked that "deputies know well in what a calamitous situation ... our army finds itself." Lapygin also indicated that the Defense Ministry had decided to allocate an additional 1.2 billion rubles to address the problem ("On What Is a Serviceman's Family to Live?" *Izvestiya*, November 9, 1989).

³The text can be found in *Izvestiya Tsk KPSS*, No. 6, 1989.

sponsibility for a brutal crackdown in Tbilisi. Academician A. D. Sakharov's attack on the military's conduct in Afghanistan, on the other hand, provoked a vociferous display of open hostility from conservative deputies.⁴

Militarization of Society

Workshop participants next considered the role and status of paramilitary organizations in light of the changes taking place in the Soviet Union. Some argued that extensive networks of paramilitary structures, designed to inculcate military values among the broader population, have always been characteristic of Soviet and other Communist societies, and that any movement away from such militarization would therefore be an indicator of genuine change. Changes in paramilitary training and the evolution of DOSAAF (the Voluntary Society for Cooperation with the Army, Aviation, and Fleet) as the major organization tasked with such training were discussed in some detail.

Participants generally agreed that the state remains committed to existing paramilitary structures. This commitment was demonstrated by a June 1987 decree on improving predraft training and by the appointment of a young and energetic active-duty officer (Colonel-General N. N. Kotlovtssev) to head DOSAAF. There has also been considerable reference to the need to improve the material and technical resources of DOSAAF, as well as its training methodologies.

⁴Manifestations of public disaffection with the military have continued to appear throughout the remainder of 1989 and into 1990. In October, Lieutenant-General N. Ter-Grigoryants, Deputy Chief of the Ground Forces Main Staff, acknowledged serious problems in both the spring and autumn callups of draftees, commenting in an interview on the "reluctance of many young people to fulfill their constitutional duty" and berating local party and law-enforcement officials for doing nothing to help ("The Fall Draft: Concerns and Anxieties," *Krasnaya zvezda*, October 29, 1989). In November, *Komsomolskaya pravda* reported that draft resistance and evasion have been on the rise. Demonstrations, sit-ins, and hunger strikes protesting callups and extraterritorial stationing have taken place in the Baltic republics, the Transcaucasus, and Moldavia. The Soviet press has reported that some 1,500 Georgian youths, along with several hundred from other areas, have refused to appear. Twenty-five percent of the draftees in one Moscow district were said to be no-shows. In the Baltic, an organization called "Geneva 49" has said that it will assist draft resisters, on the grounds that the Geneva Conventions prohibit an occupying army from conscripting in an occupied territory. Lieutenant-General Ter-Grigoryants complained that in many areas local authorities are said to be siding with the draft resisters and refusing to take any actions against them. (These problems are summarized in Stephen Foye, "Growing Anti-Military Sentiment in USSR Worries Soviet Military Leadership," *Soviet / East European Report*, Vol. VII, No. 11, December 20, 1989.)

Another interesting development has been a definite editorial shift in DOSAAF publications toward more narrow, Russian nationalist positions and themes. These publications have recently been devoting more space to Russian national heroes and personalities, such as Peter the Great and Dmitrii Donskoi.

Despite the persistence of traditional structures for paramilitary training, their attractiveness for most members of society appears to have declined markedly. There is growing evidence that paramilitary training and pre-draft military education in schools have been discredited by *glasnost* and have become highly unpopular. In response to public outcry, some restrictions have already been imposed on military training in educational institutions.

Meanwhile, new organizational structures have emerged that may be supplanting DOSAAF. These include so-called military-patriotic clubs or associations, which have appeared across the country. The clubs, often organized and led by veterans of the war in Afghanistan, seem to be dominated by ethnic Russians. Their declared purposes are to prepare Soviet youth for service in the Army and to inculcate patriotic values. They appear to ignore DOSAAF and pursue direct ties with military units in their areas. Specific information on their activities is scarce, however, and neither their current importance nor their future prospects can be reliably assessed.

The civil defense system has been a target of severe criticism, especially after its dismal performance in the aftermath of the Chernobyl disaster and following the catastrophic earthquake in Armenia.

Alternative Armed Forces Structures

A lively debate took place regarding the likelihood of radical change in the structure of the Soviet armed forces, focusing on the pros and cons of discarding the present universal conscription system in favor of a volunteer/professional army or a mixed professional/territorial-militia system.

The question of whether a radical restructuring of the Soviet military is necessary under present political and economic conditions has already been widely discussed in the Soviet press. First aired in fringe publications such as *20th Century and Peace*, the debate soon moved to more important journals, including *International Affairs* and the *Military-Historical Journal*, and then to the popular press and the floor of the Congress of People's Deputies.

The top military leaders and some of their conservative political allies have voiced strong opposition to the abolition of universal con-

scription. Every high military official who has addressed the matter, including Yazov, Moiseev, and Lizichev,⁵ has flatly rejected such radical restructuring. A professional army, they maintain, would be too expensive—three to eight times the present manning costs, according to some military estimates—and would severely disrupt the traditional system for mobilizing reserves. And a cadre-militia system, they argue, would have a negative impact on ethnic relations and would be likely to disrupt command-and-control in wartime.

Several workshop participants said that while the last two arguments have merit, the first is far from convincing. The wide range of the cost estimates suggests that no serious calculations have been attempted. Moreover, it was argued, the U.S. experience demonstrates that a smaller, professional force is not necessarily more expensive. Considerable savings could be achieved in the Soviet system from, for example, the elimination of the current biannual training cycle. At least some of the opposition from the High Command may reflect a realization that the elimination of the large conscript army would entail substantial force reductions, leading to the widespread retirement of entrenched military elites and a commensurate loss of power and privilege.

The participants agreed that many junior and field-grade officers, unlike their superiors, seem to favor change in the direction of a professional army. Many of these younger officers seem convinced that successful change to a professional armed force would markedly improve the remuneration and living conditions of the officers and would also increase the prestige of a military career. Finally, a professional army might attract better-quality enlistees and would probably be staffed primarily by Russians and other Slavs, thus ameliorating language problems and ethnic conflict.

Some younger officers, including Lieutenant-Colonel A. Savinkin, have even argued that restructuring along professional or territorial-militia lines would bring the armed forces into line with the newly espoused defensive doctrine by diminishing their offensive potential.

One discussant observed that many of the outspoken supporters of radical military reform are attached to the Main Political Administration or the Lenin Military-Political Academy. There may be a parallel in this situation with that of Czechoslovakia during the Prague Spring of 1967–68, when many of the ideas for military reform originated in the Gottwald Military-Political Academy.

⁵Army-General A. D. Lizichev, Chief of the Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army and Navy.

The potential impact of radical force restructuring on combat capabilities, especially with respect to offensive operations, received considerable attention in the discussion. It was generally agreed that if the Soviets hope to maintain the ability to conduct a strategic counteroffensive with a smaller force and under a defensive doctrine, they will need to maintain a strategic reserve and the capacity to mobilize quickly. Universal conscription trains large numbers of soldiers, creating a strategic reserve that contributes significantly to the Soviet mobilizational advantage over NATO. Neither a professional force nor a militia system would provide these capabilities. Both proponents and opponents appear to recognize that either system would militate toward the creation of a defensive posture.

In short, most of the workshop participants agreed that the High Command's evident distaste for reform results from a combination of doctrinal and institutional considerations. Senior officers appear reluctant to forgo the offensive options for which they have traditionally planned, and therefore wish to retain a preferential claim on resources (including manpower); at the same time, they probably recognize that the requirements for offensive operations provide a useful justification for maintaining heavy resource flows—and the institutional and bureaucratic weight they bring with them.

Nevertheless, several participants thought that the pressures to move away from the large, standing conscript army of today may well prove irresistible, as long as the present political course is maintained.⁶

⁶The High Command's opposition to organizational reform has, if anything, become more pronounced in the months since the workshop was held. Proponents of a professional army are frequently dismissed as "armchair strategists," while the explosion of ethnic tensions and conflict—most recently in Azerbaijan—is cited as further proof that the creation of territorial militias would be dangerously destabilizing. Nevertheless, calls for the professionalization of the Soviet armed forces are beginning to be voiced even by some high-ranking military officials. Col. General Dmitry Volkogonov, Chief of the Institute of Military History in the Ministry of Defense, recently predicted that the Army would be two to three times smaller and increasingly professional by the year 2000 and claimed that steps in this direction have already been taken in the submarine fleet and the rocket forces (see *Rabochaya tribuna*, January 1, 1990). The idea of alternative service for conscientious objectors has even reached the pages of the military press, and a civilian alternative to military service has been endorsed by high-ranking church official Metropolitan Pitirim on the pages of *Krasnaya zvezda* (January 5, 1990).

IV. THE MILITARY AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

This session of the workshop focused on the growing impact of the "national question," in all of its manifestations, on the military. The participants examined the ongoing demographic shift in the country's conscript pool and the implications for the Soviet armed forces of the current nationalist ferment gripping the country. Introductory remarks on this topic were presented by Alex Alexiev.

Alexiev first noted that the Soviet military's current problems with regard to the national question have both an internal institutional dimension and an external societal dimension. The internal dimension reflects the dynamics of the ethnic factor in the military establishment, while the external dimension involves problems experienced by the Soviet Army as a multinational institution at a time of mounting nationalist ferment.

A powerful demographic shift over the past two decades in favor of the non-Russian and non-Slavic populations, especially the Muslim/Turkic nationalities, has significantly changed the ethnic makeup of the Soviet Army. According to Soviet sources, Muslim recruits now constitute almost 40 percent of the draft-age cohort. The officer corps, however, remains overwhelmingly Russian and Slavic, so the Soviet Army is beginning to resemble a colonial army.

Complicating the situation further is a long-standing policy of staffing elite units, such as the airborne and air assault troops, the Air Force, parts of the Navy, and other high-technology units, primarily with Russians and Slavs. This results in even higher percentages of minorities in tank, motorized rifle, artillery, and other conventional units. Non-Slavs have, of course, been numerically dominant in support units (construction battalions, railroad troops, etc.) for a long time.

The ethnic balance is likely to be skewed further toward the non-Slavs in the future because of the recent decision to reinstate deferments for university students. Half of the roughly 1.1 million students who enter Soviet universities every year are potential conscripts, and a far higher proportion of these students are Slavs and Russians than other ethnic groups. Thus, there are fewer available Slav and Russian draftees.

The higher ratios of Muslim and other minority conscripts would be of little consequence were it not for the fact that many of the minorities, officers say, are difficult to train and lack motivation. Perhaps the most serious problem is their limited knowledge of Russian, which is the command language in the armed forces. The recent Soviet military literature is replete with evidence documenting extremely poor comprehension of Russian by Soviet Muslim recruits. The DOSAAF publication *Patriot*, for instance, reported that 90 percent of rural Central Asians (the vast majority of all Muslim conscripts) speak Russian "very poorly or not at all." Other problems include the formation within the units of ethnic solidarity groups that engage in violent conflict and undermine discipline and morale.

Ethnic problems and the potential for conflict in the ranks have been exacerbated by mounting nationalist tensions in the Baltic region, the Transcaucasus, Central Asia, Moldavia, and even previously quiescent Belorussia. During the ethnic strife over the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, for example, Armenian and Azeri servicemen had to be assigned to different units to avoid serious conflict.

It may also be necessary to reconsider the conventional wisdom that the Slavs present a monolithic bloc in terms of ethnic affinity. This image may never have been completely accurate, but the recent nationalist upsurge in the Ukraine and Belorussia makes it even more difficult to assess Slavic solidarity in the armed forces. The Western Ukrainians, for example, although Slavic, have always been intensely nationalistic and share some of the non-Slavs' hostility toward the system.

The Soviet military leadership, Alexiev said, has long been aware of the negative impact of the ethnic factor, persistent official denials notwithstanding, and has sought to institute staffing policies that will minimize this impact on troop cohesion and combat effectiveness. But policies such as those calling for elite combat units to be staffed primarily with Russians and Slavs, while Central Asians and other minorities are largely relegated to support units and uncomplicated menial tasks, are becoming increasingly unfeasible because of the rapid growth of the Muslim cohort and the concurrent stagnation and aging of the Slavic population.

Given these realities, Alexiev speculated that Soviet leaders may begin thinking seriously about alternative force structures that would alleviate some ethnic problems. If the nationalist ferment continues, a professional army could look more and more attractive as a solution to both ethnic and quality problems, since it would probably attract primarily the better-educated Russians and Slavs. On the other

hand, the transformation of the Red Army into a "Russian Army" would undoubtedly carry political costs, especially if the military had to be used for internal policing tasks in ethnic areas.

Alexiev next discussed the impact of the resurgence of nationalism throughout the Soviet Union on the multinational Soviet Army as an institution. The military has traditionally played a key role as the ultimate guarantor of the Communist Party's tenure in power. As such, it has always had a well-defined and decisive internal policing function. There are, of course, other instruments of control, such as the internal security forces (the MVD) and the KGB, but in size alone they are inadequate to cope with major upheavals. Thus there appears to be no present alternative to using the military in the event of large-scale unrest.

Developments over the past two years have demonstrated the key role of the Soviet military in efforts to maintain order in areas riven by nationalist turmoil. Three Soviet republics in the Transcaucasus are presently under de facto military administration, as are the Fergana Valley and some other parts of Central Asia. And it seems likely that military intervention will be required elsewhere in the foreseeable future.

Yet, Alexiev observed, there are significant and growing limitations on the ability of the military to carry out internal policing tasks. Not only does the Army have an intractable internal ethnic problem, it has increasingly come under attack as an institution by nationalist elements. These nationalist forces have been able to co-opt local party leaderships to the nationalist cause in several republics, and as a result, nationalist pressures on the military are acquiring a massive, institutional character that makes them difficult to rebuff. These pressures are increasingly manifested in specific demands, which could have a profound effect on the Army and could dramatically diminish its ability to act as a guarantor of the unitary Soviet state.

First, there have been persistent demands in the Baltics, the Caucasus, and even Central Asia to terminate the long-standing policy of staffing the Soviet Army on the basis of extraterritoriality. The Soviets have for some time attempted to structure their forces such that soldiers do not serve in their native regions. However, the military has been forced to make concessions with respect to this policy. According to official statements,¹ 40 percent of the Lithuanian con-

¹Pressures on the military emanating from the Baltic republics have, if anything, intensified since the workshop was held. Perhaps the most dramatic manifestation

scripts and 25 percent of the Estonian conscripts will be allowed to serve locally as of this year. Similar compromises are being worked out in Latvia and Georgia, and other republics are certain to press similar demands.

Even more threatening to the cohesion of the Soviet armed forces as an integrated multinational institution are demands for the creation of national military units on republican territory. Here again, the republican leaderships, such as those of the Baltic republics, are often raising these troublesome issues. It is, of course, not likely that Moscow will acquiesce to such radical demands, since this would clearly lead to the dissolution of the Soviet Army as we know it. Still, it is highly significant that such bold demands are being made at all.

Perhaps most provocative have been demands to place locally stationed units of the Soviet Army under the political control of republican officials. Such demands have been made in all three of the Baltic republics. Estonian authorities have argued publicly that this is necessary because "the Army is outside of civilian control, and this can no longer be tolerated." In a similar vein, national forums have called for official recognition of the right to conscientious objection and for doing away with the "teaching of militarism."

A significant, albeit less obvious, challenge to the military is posed by a pervasive trend challenging the primacy of the Russian language in the non-Russian republics. Several republics have already passed laws and regulations declaring their national language to be their official language. Should these laws be imposed, for instance, on the military draft boards, it would become exceedingly difficult for the center to control the activities of those agencies.

Alexiev concluded his remarks by warning against overestimating the negative impact of the ethnic factor and nationalism on the current ability of the Soviet military to fulfill its assigned combat objectives. In his judgment, these factors are a long way from seriously affecting Soviet capabilities to conduct a major campaign in Europe, for example. However, neither should these problems be underestimated. If the current crisis in the Soviet system is not resolved and nationalist ferment continues, the Soviet military may face serious trouble as an integrated, multinational instrument of central control.

was a proposal issued in September 1989 by the Lithuanian legislature calling for Lithuanian recruits to be allowed to perform their mandatory service in their home republic. Similar measures have been actively considered in the Latvian and Estonian parliaments.

DISCUSSION

The discussion period focused on the internal policing function of the military, the pros and cons of a professional force from an ethnic point of view, and, more broadly, the future of the Soviet Union as a multinational state.

The Soviet Military as an Internal Policing Agent

Participants viewed the military's policing functions as a particularly relevant issue, given present developments in ethnic relations. It was generally agreed that there is presently no alternative to using military forces to suppress large-scale unrest or riots. Neither local militias nor the internal security troops appear capable of dealing with massive disturbances. The militias are generally not well-trained in riot-control techniques, and most of their members are of the same national or ethnic composition as the population of the areas in which they serve. Thus, they are unlikely to be either very effective or completely reliable—as was demonstrated dramatically during the events in Tbilisi on April 9, 1989, when the local militia sided with the demonstrators and tried to protect them from the MVD and Army troops that were assaulting them.

Participants judged the MVD troops to be more capable than other nonmilitary forces, particularly the recently established riot-control units known as the "black berets." It appears, however, that there are still relatively few of them. Moreover, the regular MVD troops consist largely of minorities and Central Asians and may not be reliable if deployed in certain ethnic areas.²

There was considerable discussion of the attitudes of military officials toward the policing role. Several participants noted that military establishments generally do not cherish police duties, and the

²The inadequacies of the MVD troops to deal with large-scale disturbances appear to have been recognized by the central leadership. In an October 1989 interview, Major-General A. Griyenko, Chief of the MVD Internal Troops Political Directorate, said that only about half of the MVD troops, currently numbering about 36,000, can be released from their permanent stations for service in other areas. He acknowledged that at a time when nationalist unrest and conflict are intensifying, "the forces of law and order are insufficient for mass disturbances. Sometimes we are forced to ship the same units distances of thousands of kilometers, from one 'hot spot' to another.... There are no reserves." He announced that the size of the MVD troops will be increased over the next two years through the "drafting of new recruits for compulsory military service," and that their pay and social conditions will be improved. Griyenko did not indicate the scale of the planned increases in troop levels ("Number of Internal Troops to Increase," *Izvestiya*, October 4, 1989).

Soviet Army apparently is no exception. Senior officers have expressed concern that in the current Soviet situation such deployments are likely to exacerbate existing strains with society and compound the Army's already difficult internal ethnic problems. Other participants held that although the military does indeed appear reluctant to intervene, this could change quickly if senior officials were to perceive a serious challenge to the Soviet state. As one discussant argued, the Russian imperial consciousness remains strong among the officer corps, and fundamental challenges to the empire would prompt strong resistance.

The opprobrium the military has received for its role in the brutal suppression of the April 1989 uprising in Tbilisi has dramatized the discomfiture of senior officers. Several participants argued that despite numerous denials by Rodionov, there is no credible evidence suggesting that the High Command seriously resisted the use of the Army in crushing the demonstrations. Indeed, during debate in the Congress of People's Deputies, several members charged that the operation was in fact organized with the active participation of officers up to the level of Yazov and his deputy Kochetov, and was conducted under the direct command of Rodionov. The available evidence has left a widespread impression that the Tbilisi incident was designed as a punitive operation, intended to teach a lesson not only to Georgian nationalists but also to others around the country who might seek to emulate them.³

³The repercussions of the Tbilisi events caused considerable bitterness among senior officers, who appear to believe that the military is being made the scapegoat for conditions whose ultimate responsibility lies with the political leadership. Moiseev spoke for many when he lashed out at the criticisms emanating from the Congress of People's Deputies and emphasized that the Army does not welcome the internal policing role it has been given (*Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil*, No. 13, 1989). Others have emphasized the internal tasks—helping with the harvests, major construction projects, dealing with natural disasters, etc.—that the Army has taken on “in the interests of the people.” (See, for example, V. Varennikov, “Our Army Has One Honorable Function,” *Krasnaya zvezda*, June 15, 1989.)

Debate about the proper internal functions of the armed forces has now spread to the pages of the military press. Some officers have maintained that the military should not be used to deal with internal disorders at all; in this view, forces for internal security should be kept strictly separated from those whose job is external defense (Colonel O. Bel'kov, “The Army Should Do Its Job,” *Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil*, No. 19, 1989). In a similar vein, Major-General M. Surkov has written that “the Soviet Army must not be entrusted with functions that are not particular to it ... it is not our function to break up demonstrations or maintain order in the streets. Such duties imposed on us just set the Army against the people.” (“To Guarantee Social Protection,” *Krasnaya zvezda*, June 4, 1989.) More commonly expressed, however, is the view that although the control of social disturbances is not part of the Army's direct mission and should be avoided if possible, current social tensions make it impossible for the military

Even if the military were perfectly willing to take on policing chores, there are some inherent limitations on the ability of a multinational force to deal with serious ethnic unrest. Senior officers undoubtedly recognize, for instance, that a motorized rifle unit staffed with 40 percent Central Asians might not be especially reliable if called upon to use force against Muslim populations. Indeed, most serious ethnic unrest to date has been dealt with by elite units such as the airborne, which is staffed primarily with Russian and Slavic troops. Elite units, however, are not available in great numbers, and the military authorities are often forced to deploy cadets from the officer schools, most of whom are also Russian. This has already occurred in the Transcaucasus, as well as a number of other areas.

Using ethnically reliable troops, however, creates the impression among local populations that they are being suppressed by the Russians, which only reinforces anti-Russian and nationalistic attitudes. This was what happened in Tbilisi, where both the MVD and the airborne troops used were primarily Russian and Slavic.

A Professional Army: The Ethnic Dimension

There was considerable divergence of views among workshop members on the question of whether changing from a conscript army to a professional army could solve some of the ethnic problems currently plaguing the Soviet military. Some participants could see no other effective way of dealing with the progressively worsening demographic situation, societal disaffection with the military, and increasing problems of cohort quality and trainability. A smaller, professional force would not only be a much more effective combat force, but would also be more reliable as an instrument of the unitary state, especially if its motivation were based on Russian nationalism.

Other participants argued that if Soviet society continues to move in the direction of greater pluralism, openness, and representativeness, a professional army would create more problems than it would solve. For instance, a largely Slavic professional army would be increasingly unrepresentative and would therefore be a very unsatisfactory political solution.

One participant challenged the notion that a professional army would attract primarily Russians and other Slavs. He did not believe

to be completely restricted to external defense (see, for example, General V. Varennikov, "The Mission of the Soviet Armed Forces," *KVS*, No. 18, 1989; and Colonel N. Belyakov, "If Dogma Is Not Adhered To," *KVS*, No. 20, 1989).

that people whose skills would be very much in demand in the civilian economy would choose to pursue a military profession. In response, another discussant stressed that the Russians and the Ukrainians are the only large nationalities with a martial tradition that could be attracted to the profession with proper material incentives. For the Central Asians and other ethnics, the military is a culturally alien environment, and this would still be the case with a professional army. Moreover, a smaller, professional force is likely to be more selective and not interested in people who do not speak Russian.

Many workshop members had little doubt that a primarily Russian professional military would be perceived by most non-Russians as Moscow's instrument of imperial control and would probably engender considerable antimilitary hostility. Its use for internal policing functions might thus be circumscribed.⁴

The Future of the Soviet State and Security

In concluding the session, the participants discussed likely future outcomes of the centrifugal processes currently under way and their implications for the military. At one extreme, some viewed events in the Soviet Union today as the beginning of the decolonization process of the last surviving empire—a process that is historically inevitable and cannot be reversed until it has run its course. In this view, only after the unraveling of the present imperial state can a Soviet multinational state be reconstituted as a confederation of free states on the basis of shared economic interests.

Other participants argued that it would be possible to resolve the serious national grievances through compromise short of separatism and disintegration of the Soviet state. Still others were of the opinion

⁴The nationalist ferment that swept the Soviet Union through the summer and fall of 1989 has evidently made senior officers even more outspoken in their criticism of alternative forms of military organization and those who espouse them. They are particularly critical of proposals to end extraterritorial manning and related demands for the creation of national or territorial militias. Yazov has frequently bemoaned the effects of nationalism on morale and has dismissed proponents of territorial manning as people who "pass themselves off as champions of the 'national interest.'" (See, for example, "The Defense of the Fatherland Brooks No Parochialism, Egotism, or Self-Interest," *Pravda*, November 13, 1989.) Other military officials have said that territorial manning would tear the Army "into little pieces" and has been propounded by those who would "destroy the fraternal union of our republics." The most dramatic warning came from Ter-Grigoryants, in a discussion of the Armenian-Azerbaijani confrontation: "At present it is being conducted with the use of stolen weapons. But if we should create national divisions, what would happen then? Another Lebanon?" (*Krasnaya zvezda*, October 29, 1989).

that while some nationalities (e.g., the Balts) might pursue a separatist agenda in any case, others would be satisfied with greater economic, political, and cultural autonomy.

Most participants found it difficult to imagine that the current turmoil in the republics could continue for much longer without serious consequences for the cohesion of the Soviet Union as a multinational state. Present trends in the Baltic republics, for example, could, if played out for another year or so, produce something approaching de facto separation from the Soviet system. The possibility of a crackdown involving the military there or elsewhere thus cannot be excluded. Ironically, while the Soviet military is increasingly buffeted by societal opprobrium, ethnic problems, and political pressures, its importance as the ultimate guarantor of the cohesion of the Soviet unitary state is growing.⁵

⁵The exacerbation of ethnic conflict in the Transcaucasus, especially in Azerbaijan, has of course further dramatized both the dilemmas nationalism poses for the military, and the extent to which the Soviet political leadership looks to the military as the final guarantor of internal order. In September 1989, Colonel-General Yuri Shatalin, commander of all MVD internal troops, and two other senior generals on a fact-finding trip to Nagorno-Karabakh were held hostage by an Azerbaijani crowd in Shusha (Bill Keller, "Soviet Drama: 3 Generals Held by Crowd," *New York Times*, September 8, 1989). There appears to be firm evidence that defections of both Armenian and Azeri servicemen have taken place, although the numbers remain uncertain. As the Armenian-Azeri conflict deepened in January 1990, the Western press reported that many armed Armenian youth in Army uniforms were being recruited in Erevan for service in the armed militias being set up by the Karabakh Committee (see, for example, *Los Angeles Times*, January 21, 1990) and that Azeri servicemen in several units stationed in Azerbaijan had mutinied. On January 23, the Soviet television news program *Vremya* reported that "terrorists dressed in Soviet army uniforms" were battling the Soviet Army in Baku.

Difficulties were also reported in Slavic areas. Beginning January 19, reserves in a number of Russian cities in the south, including Stavropol, Krasnodor, and Rostov-on-Don, were mobilized for service in the units to be deployed in Azerbaijan. There is evidence that these callups proved highly unpopular, resulting in several organized protests and demonstrations. Committees of women and strike committees demanding the repeal of mobilization were evidently organized in Stavropol (according to *Vremya*), as well as in Ipatov, Svetlograd, and Krasnodar—where some 50,000 people are reported to have rallied. These protests may have been partly responsible for the reservists being sent back home a few days later (see *Ekspress Khronika*, No. 4, January 23, 1990).

V. THE MILITARY IN GORBACHEV'S ECONOMIC AGENDA

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The workshop discussions next turned to the place of the military in Gorbachev's domestic economic agenda. Introductory remarks by Abraham Becker addressed the difficulties of interpreting newly available data on the Soviet defense budget, and Arthur Alexander examined the program of "conversion" of portions of the defense economic sector to civilian purposes.

The Data and the Data Puzzles

Becker observed that the Soviet leadership has finally recognized the damage the defense burden is doing to the Soviet economy, has taken steps to reduce it, and in the process has begun to lift the veil of secrecy surrounding the military budget. Nevertheless, in a number of respects, Western analysts remain as puzzled as ever. The puzzles concern three issues: (1) ambiguities and apparent internal inconsistencies in the newly released Soviet data; (2) discrepancies between the Soviet figures and Western estimates; and (3) the need to reconcile the available data with Soviet policy pronouncements.

For the first time, Soviet officials have provided figures on the defense budget that purport to represent a true aggregate, of the kind Western governments release, as well as information on the distribution of resources within the defense budget and on changes in defense spending over time. Gorbachev announced that total defense spending for fiscal year 1989 came to 77.3 billion rubles; he also said that expenditures were frozen in 1987-88, saving some 10 billion rubles relative to the Five-Year Plan, and that defense spending will be reduced "as early as" 1990-91 by another 10 billion rubles, or 14 percent.¹ Prime Minister N. I. Ryzhkov provided a distribution, stating that spending on procurement amounted to 32.6 billion rubles, and added that the overall savings relative to the Five-Year Plan, "including the proposed reductions for the forthcoming two years," will be nearly 30 billion rubles.²

¹Gorbachev report to Congress of People's Deputies, *Izvestiya*, May 31, 1989.

²N. I. Ryzhkov, *Pravda*, June 8, 1989.

These numbers already raise some questions: Is the 77.3 billion rubles announced for the 1989 plan higher or lower than 1988 spending? We don't know. Gorbachev's juxtaposition of a 10 billion ruble cut with a 14 percent reduction suggests an overall budget of about 71 billion rubles, but what does that refer to? And what does Ryzhkov's 30 billion ruble savings consist of? Is it future savings only, or does it also include some savings already obtained—for example, the 10 billion rubles credited to the effects of the 1987–88 freeze?³

There is also the problem of reconciling the Soviet data with estimates provided by the U.S. intelligence community. Gorbachev's aggregate spending figures are nearly 50 percent lower than Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) estimates, and Ryzhkov's procurement figures are also significantly lower than the CIA's numbers.⁴ Finally, Becker commented, the Soviet claim that the burden of Soviet defense amounts only to about 9 percent of gross national product (GNP) is particularly difficult to accept.

In attempting to reconcile these numbers, Becker continued, two assumptions seem appropriate: (1) Gorbachev is not lying; that is, he did not have a larger figure at hand, which he then cut for political purposes. Though there are ways the data can be fudged, the political costs of being caught in a bare fabrication are enough to make this unlikely. (2) The real resource costs of Soviet weapons have presumably been rising over time, whether or not the increases are reflected in the published data. With these assumptions in mind, there are several possible explanations for the data puzzles.

The first possibility is that there are major errors in the CIA/DIA estimates. It is unlikely, however, that these errors could be on the order of 100 percent, partly because Soviet official statements over the years suggest a pattern that is relatively consistent with the numbers produced by the intelligence community. Similarly, Foreign Minister Shevardnadze, among others, has indicated a belief in a defense burden considerably higher than that implied by the official

³In September 1989, Finance Minister Valentin Pavlov provided some additional information about Soviet defense spending plans, telling the Supreme Soviet that the USSR will cut military expenditures to 70.9 billion rubles in 1990. He also provided a partial breakdown of the reductions: In comparison with the Twelfth Five-Year Plan, operations and maintenance costs will decline from 20.2 billion rubles to 19 billion rubles, research and development expenditures will be reduced by some 2.2 billion rubles, and military construction funding will decline by 15 percent. He said the cuts were justified by the successes of Soviet foreign policy in reducing the threats to Soviet security (reported in *Radio Liberty Daily Analyses*, September 26, 1989).

⁴See Central Intelligence Agency and Defense Intelligence Agency, *The Soviet Economy in 1988: Gorbachev Changes Course*, presented to the Joint Economic Committee, U.S. Congress, April 1988.

numbers. Nor does it seem likely that accounting complexities alone can account for the disparities: Although Soviet accounting may well be complicated, it surely cannot be more complex than the accounting difficulties of, say, the U.S. military and federal budgets.

More likely, according to Becker, Gorbachev's figures omit some expenditures that are included in Western estimates—for example, support functions such as KGB border troops, construction and railroad troops, and civil defense. Gorbachev may have left out the military component of the Soviet space program, which Ryzhkov has since reported amounts to almost 4 billion rubles. There may also be some other military research and development functions, including a portion of the Academy of Science budget; we really do not know. But the notion of restricted coverage seems highly plausible, although it would still provide only a partial explanation for the discrepancies.

Another possibility is that some of the variance between Soviet and Western figures is the result of a price issue. But what kind of an issue? A simple subsidy—that is, where Soviet prices for military goods and services are artificially low because defense firms and factories are subsidized—is probably not the answer. A subsidy must be implemented through some channel, and if that channel is the budget, then the existence and approximate magnitude of the subsidy will be known and can be accounted for. (The Soviets do provide substantial subsidies for food and housing, so they are hardly unacquainted with the idea.) Conceivably, a subsidy could be carried outside the budget, but the little available evidence does not suggest the existence of off-budget revenues of that magnitude. Perhaps price levels have been forced down somewhat in recent years, with enterprises in the defense sector having to absorb the cuts. Or there may be a price-index phenomenon at work that hides inflation of Soviet defense costs over time.⁵

The final set of puzzles Becker identified concern the relationship between Soviet defense spending and Soviet policy pronouncements. Both Gorbachev and Ryzhkov have said that some cuts in spending were instituted before fiscal year 1989 and that further cuts are planned for 1991. Yet the CIA estimates that there has in fact been a slight acceleration of total military spending since Gorbachev entered office, especially on procurement. Pricing differences may explain part of the difference, but some peculiar issues nevertheless remain. If military expenditures were in fact frozen in 1987–88, when military

⁵In an appearance before the U.S. House Armed Services Committee, former Chief of the Soviet General Staff Marshall Akhromeev acknowledged that at least some prices in the defense economy may not fully reflect true resource costs (see R. Jeffrey Smith, "House Panel Hears Top Soviet Military Officer," *Washington Post*, July 22, 1989).

officials were still viewing "unilateral disarmament" as unthinkable, why did we detect no cries of pain, or even Aesopian references to the deprivation of resources, in the military literature at that time? Perhaps the freeze applied only to portions of the overall defense budget; if so, then a real cut in aggregate expenditures has occurred only in the last year or so.

But this explanation, too, raises a paradox: The background to Gorbachev's arrival in office and the kinds of problems he faced make it seem unusual that military expenditures would have continued to rise until a decision was finally made last year to cut them in 1989-91. Gorbachev's domestic goals were ambitious and demanding from the outset and entailed an enormously straining program of investment in engineering and high technology. He was certainly conscious of the fact that defense posed a burden on his plans. The entire thrust of his program, from the moment he came to power, suggested that he saw the need to constrain military spending in order to concentrate resources and energy on domestic reconstruction. Such constraints could have been rationalized on the grounds of a tacit *quid pro quo*, in which the military accepted that the success of Gorbachev's economic program was critical to their prospects for sustaining the long-term, technology-driven competition with the West.⁶ Nevertheless, the basic problem remains that Western intelligence estimates describe an acceleration of real military spending, especially in procurement.

Becker saw two possible ways to rationalize the paradox: (1) Gorbachev may have come into office interested in curbing defense spending, but—saddled with an unsympathetic Minister of Defense until 1987 and faced with significant military opposition to unilateral cuts through the fall of 1988—he has only recently felt strong enough to take on the military. Or (2) Gorbachev did wish to achieve greater efficiencies in the military sphere, but in the early days he was not seriously concerned about the defense sector as a drain on overall resource allocations. Certainly, over the course of four years he has developed a much more alarmed view of the state of the Soviet economy than he had at the outset; especially important is his belated recognition that the consumption problem, which he initially neglected, is crucial to political stability.

Becker concluded that some combination of these explanations is probably appropriate: A deepening leadership perception during the

⁶For a fuller discussion, see Abraham Becker, *Ogarkov's Complaint and Gorbachev's Dilemma: The Soviet Defense Budget and Party-Military Conflict*, The RAND Corporation, R-3541-AF, December 1987.

past year of domestic economic and political crisis, combined with Gorbachev's own political struggles, including the struggle to control the military, represented the final set of gates that had to be opened before Gorbachev took the step of making sharp cuts in military expenditures.

The Conversion Issue

Arthur Alexander then discussed Soviet attempts to apply the expertise, resources, and infrastructure of the defense economic sector to the civilian economy. He began by observing that since the 1930s, the Soviet military's ability to acquire large quantities of relatively high-technology weapons has derived from some basic political choices favoring defense. Implemented through the Military-Industrial Commission (VPK) and the Party apparatus, these political choices have operated through three mechanisms: (1) the sheer volume of resources flowing to the military, (2) the priority status of the defense sector within the Soviet planning system, and (3) the existence of a buyer's market in which the military has had the right to turn back items that do not meet its requirements. At the same time, however, the defense-industrial system operates within the larger Soviet economy and exhibits many of the features and disincentives of that economy. In short, the defense economy has been shaped by a combination of political preference and the constraints of the wider Soviet economic system.

Historically, the Soviets have dealt with this situation by adopting a research and development approach strongly favoring simplicity and evolutionary change. But increasingly over the past decade, that approach appears to have been violated, because with the acceleration of technological change—especially in electronics, telecommunications, sensors, and command and control—it has failed to produce the systems the military believes it needs. The newer equipment is generally more complex and more expensive (both in absolute terms and in relation to Western defense items). It is also often less reliable and thus more difficult to operate, maintain, and train troops to use.

The traditional mechanisms—i.e., the heavy flow of resources, priority claims on them, and buyer's clout—have led to a "cost-plus" approach to accounting and pricing in the defense sector. The military gets what it wants, but at a very high resource cost. The military-industrial system is thus effective, but inefficient. And this bloated, resource-absorbing system has become Gorbachev's target: He wants to extract resources from it by reducing the allocations the defense sector receives and by drawing on its skills and hidden reserves.

The initial signs of conversion appeared in late 1987 and early 1988 and were applied to the agricultural sector. Defense industries were ordered to produce machinery for the food-processing industry. Then, on March 1, 1988, the Ministry of Machine-Building for Light and Food Industry and Household Appliances (*Minlegpishch*) was dissolved,⁷ and more than 200 of its enterprises—along with their associated plans—were reassigned to the defense complex. Defense industry managers quickly judged that some 60 percent of the equipment from these enterprises was unusable, and that unless they reassigned output to their own factories they would be unable to meet the plan targets they inherited. As a result, nearly 200 design bureaus and research institutes were reportedly assigned the tasks of designing civilian equipment, and several hundred factories have begun to produce civilian goods.⁸ Thus, real resources are being transferred, and managerial attention, effort, and resources are all being devoted to the effort, from the ministers on down.

These first steps in the food-processing sector were followed in mid-1988 by the elaboration of new plans for defense industry output of consumer goods, light-industry machinery, and medical supplies. In other words, the conversion process had been set in motion before Gorbachev announced major defense cutbacks. But it appears that an overall plan for conversion, intended to consolidate and harmonize the reduction in defense production and the increase in the defense sector's responsibilities for civilian production, was not fully worked out at that time.

Indeed, as defense industry involvement in civilian output accelerated throughout 1988, it became evident that events were moving faster than the planning process could accommodate. By the end of the year, defense industry managers began to complain about sudden and unexpected cancellations of orders, which were forcing them to scramble to find ways to employ the capacity of their plants. The cancellations appear to have affected missile plants in the Ministry of Medium Machine-Building (*Minsredmash*), among others, and are unlikely to have been the result of the INF agreement, since most of the missiles had already been built and an end to their production was foreseeable. The pattern seems to be repeating itself elsewhere

⁷"Aiming for a Breakthrough," *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, February 28, 1988.

⁸According to Prime Minister Ryzhkov, by October 1989, 176 defense industry enterprises were producing for the agro-industrial complex alone, and there were plans to increase this number to 235 by 1990. Lev Zaikov later stated that the defense industry was producing the entire Soviet output of television sets, radio equipment, cameras, and refrigerators, as well as 80 percent of its vacuum cleaners, two-thirds of its washing machines, and half of its motorcycles and bicycles (*Pravda*, November 27, 1989).

in the defense sector: Managers are having to simultaneously cut back on defense production and increase output for civilian uses, and they are having to do so quickly and often without much warning.

Meanwhile, defense industry enterprises are becoming subject to *khozraschet* ("economic accountability"). Their managers have begun to complain that defense buyers squeeze them and that profits on defense products (normally 1 to 2 percent) are thus considerably lower than the 20 to 25 percent that can be achieved from production for the civilian economy. Moreover, some managers claim that defense production incurs losses and should be covered by subsidies from the state budget.

Alexander noted that implementation of the conversion efforts is being pushed by visible and energetic intervention from above. Supervisory responsibility appears to lie with the VPK,⁹ whose chairman, Igor Belousov, has begun visiting plants, giving speeches to local Party organizations, and appearing at supermarket openings. Oleg Baklanov, the Central Committee Secretary for Defense Industry, is also appearing at these plants, exhorting managers to increase their civilian production.¹⁰

These developments, Alexander concluded, signal important change. Resource reallocations are already drawing on the defense resource base, and there has been at least a dilution of the mechanisms that have traditionally enforced the priority of the defense sector. Although the military remains a demanding buyer, the overall pattern suggests a major shift in political choices away from the bias that has favored defense industries since the Stalinist 1930s. What remains uncertain, however, is whether and for how long the political leadership will be able to continue implementing these new choices.

DISCUSSION

Soviet Defense Spending: The Data and Their Implications

There was considerable discussion and some disagreement about the reliability, meaning, and potential implications of the currently available data on the Soviet defense budget. At issue were not only the Soviet figures, but Western estimates as well.

⁹According to Politburo member and Central Committee Secretary Lev Zaikov, ultimate responsibility for overseeing the conversion effort is now exercised by the Defense Council, under Gorbachev's chairmanship (*Pravda*, November 27, 1989).

¹⁰All Central Committee departments with industrial and sectoral oversight responsibilities were dissolved in late 1988, with the notable exceptions of the departments of agriculture and defense industry.

Some participants argued that the ambiguities and gaps in the official Soviet numbers may primarily reflect the controversy the whole data question has engendered among the leadership, rather than intrinsic accounting and pricing difficulties. Underlying the controversy, in this view, is the very real possibility that military industry has been receiving off-budget subsidies from the state treasury for years. The existence of such off-budget subsidies would help explain the discrepancy between the Soviet contention that the defense budget has been flat since 1987–88 and the CIA/DIA estimates indicating that final expenditures on defense have continued to rise. Most important, if off-budget subsidies have in fact been the practice, Soviet authorities would be aware of the additional costs defense production entails and would certainly find it awkward to add those costs back into the ledger now. This implies that the military budget is an even greater economic burden than the leadership is acknowledging, and also more of a factor in producing the deficit. If this is the case, then publication of accurate figures would intensify political pressures for further cuts in military spending.

Workshop participants pointed to several pieces of evidence indicating not only that hidden subsidies exist, but that the military views subsidies as its right. Defense Minister Yazov, for example, has asserted that the USSR's state-owned enterprises can produce major military items, such as tanks, for a quarter of the price Western armies pay for weapons produced by the market system.¹¹ Can he really believe that the relative prices reflect relative resource costs? Yazov's contention has implicitly been contradicted by civilian analysts such as Oleg Bogomolov, who said last year that although the military sector enjoys cheap manpower, the "nucleus" of its armaments—i.e., electronics—is much more expensive to produce in the USSR than in the West.¹² These statements and other reports in the Soviet press strongly suggest a controversy about the assumptions built into Yazov's statement—assumptions that in turn are reflected in Gorbachev's announced budget figures.

The larger problem faced by the Soviet leadership in preparing defense budget figures for public release was thus thought to be not ambiguity about costing, but the problem of arriving at a politically acceptable level. The sensitivity of the matter and its link to the internal debate about future defense spending are evidenced not only by the terms of the disagreement between Yazov and Bogomolov, but

¹¹See Yazov's interview in *U.S. News and World Report*, March 15, 1989.

¹²See the roundtable discussion in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, June 29, 1988. Bogomolov is Director of the Institute of Economics of the World Socialist System.

also by the lengthy delay in making the numbers public. Shevardnadze, among others, complained publicly about this, while Akhromeev and Moiseev insisted that the exercise was extremely difficult and really does take time. However, it was argued, the reasons for the delay were primarily political, not technical. The data the USSR released appear to be very much the product of political compromise, if not outright mendacity.

Other participants were not persuaded by this line of reasoning. They noted that the initial Soviet promise to release the defense budget was expressed in 1987 via Deputy Foreign Minister Petrovskii and a letter from Gorbachev to the United Nations. These pronouncements did not appear to have been based on a Politburo consensus, other than perhaps a consensus to delay. Both then and later, however, Soviet officials were promising not only to provide a figure for defense expenditures, but to provide one that could be used to compare Soviet spending with Western levels. Making Soviet data comparable to Western data introduces additional complexity, if not confusion, into the accounting: It implies both the conversion of Soviet outlays from one currency into another and the creation of a new price system in which prices reflect relative costs. In other words, the announcement was conditioned on a true price reform that would enable real comparison of Soviet and Western outlays. Most likely, only when price reform was itself postponed did the political issue began to surface among the leadership.

Adherents of this view also pointed out that if subsidies to defense industries have been a regular practice, there must also have been a regular mechanism for handling them—that is, for dealing with the difference between incurred costs and prices paid in the budget. If the subsidies are not recorded in the state budget or military account, perhaps they represented redistributions of military-industrial ministry funds, accumulated at the expense of their civilian activities or perhaps drawn indirectly from the state budgets. The only alternative is bank loans. But while there is some evidence that Soviet banks have taken a rather liberal lending policy toward defense industries, and some loans may have been rolled over and/or excused (thus effectively becoming grants), the data do not suggest that the magnitudes of such transactions have been sufficient to account for the data puzzles and discrepancies we see.

In addition, although the military does seem to be a quality- rather than a cost-sensitive consumer, there appears to be a mechanism in the military pricing system for forcing prices downward. It may be a kind of “ratchet” mechanism, based on the expectation that production of given military items will become more efficient over time. Yet

there is a puzzle here as well: The general trend toward producing more sophisticated equipment should result in cost increases, reflected in turn in price hikes for defense goods. How can this be reconciled with the indications that profit margins are extremely thin in military industry? The picture is a murky one.

Western estimates also received their share of criticism from workshop participants. Some directed skepticism at CIA estimates that the Soviet GNP grew during the 1980s at an average rate of about 2.2 percent per year and is now at 54 percent of the U.S. GNP, and that roughly 15 to 17 percent of the Soviet GNP is devoted to defense. Abel Aganbegyan, a prominent Soviet economist, has stated that Soviet growth rates from 1971 to 1985 averaged only 1.8 percent. Several other Soviet economists have maintained that the USSR's GNP is only about one-third the U.S. level, and some have reported that their studies show a defense burden of 20 to 25 percent. Some workshop participants saw these higher estimates of the defense burden as much more plausible, especially in light of items such as the costs of empire and the defense-related activities carried out in the nominally civilian sectors, which were omitted from both Ryzhkov's figures and the CIA estimates.

Moreover, some participants asked, if the CIA estimates were accurate and Soviet growth rates were roughly comparable to those of the European Economic Community (EEC), why would the Soviet economy be in crisis? It is very difficult to reconcile those estimates with the characterizations of the state of the Soviet system—the imagery of “systemic crisis”—that Gorbachev, Aganbegyan, and many others have so visibly put forward.

Again, there was a contrary perspective, one less persuaded of the reliability of unofficial Soviet estimates and less skeptical of those provided by the American intelligence community. It was pointed out, for instance, that the estimates of Soviet GNP offered by Soviet economists have varied considerably and usually have been accompanied by very little documentation or detail. Nor is it evident that most of the Soviet economists have had access to the kind of data necessary to do serious work. Even Aganbegyan, who presumably does enjoy such access, has not indicated how he arrived at his figures. This is not to say that his or other estimates are necessarily incorrect, but it does mean they are difficult to evaluate.

Moreover, as one speaker stressed, it is important to be clear about the meaning of GNP and how it is measured. Western comparisons of Soviet and U.S. GNP do not attempt to measure the real comparative effectiveness of resources, but simply the relative resource cost. Thus, to say that the U.S. GNP is twice that of the USSR is to com-

pare only the relative drain on resources, not the real bundle of satisfactions obtained as a result. (The latter ratio would undoubtedly be higher.) It is also important to keep in mind that GNP is calculated in different ways depending upon the purpose of the exercise. When the object is simply to assess the relative size of the Soviet and American economies, GNP is usually expressed in dollar terms; but when GNP is used as the denominator of a burden estimate, it is calculated in the indigenous currency. Thus the CIA's 17 percent burden estimate is expressed as a fraction of the ruble value of GNP. It is arrived at by an adjustment of both numerator and denominator, to account for the arbitrariness of Soviet prices. The nature of the two calculations is quite different, and they should not be confused.

The CIA estimates do raise other kinds of issues, this participant continued. Some analysts argue that the CIA figures underestimate the sheer volume of military activity in the USSR, or that they underestimate the prices at which this activity is registered. Perhaps the more important issue, however, involves the claim that the burden estimates fail to account for important activities not normally included in military expenditure—such as the system of military priority and the costs that system imposes on the civilian economy which cannot be captured by standard measures of expenditure, a variety of civilian activities that can have important military-strategic content, and/or the “costs of empire.” These arguments are legitimate, he said, but they are of a very different order from the methodological questions and data puzzles we have been addressing.

Reducing the Defense Burden: Implications for the Economy

The remainder of the session was devoted to assessments of the potential economic effects of Soviet efforts to reduce the defense burden and to divert personnel, resources, and productive capacity from the military sector to civilian purposes. The discussion revolved around the implications of force reductions and cuts in defense spending, the consequences of the “conversion” efforts, and the importance of sustained political commitment and attention.

Force Reductions and Spending Cuts. There was general agreement that reducing Soviet force levels by 500,000 troops will not in itself significantly ease the manpower shortages in civilian industry and agriculture. Manpower in the civilian economy is not allocated efficiently: Official estimates suggest that some 20 percent of the industrial labor force (8 to 10 million people) is superfluous. This kind of drain on enterprise payrolls swamps the additions that would result from reductions in the military. Nor does an influx into the la-

bor force of young and generally ill-trained and unskilled potential conscripts seem likely to bring much improvement in worker productivity. Reinstatement of student deferments, however, could help by increasing the pool of trained technical personnel.

One participant suggested that the potential effects on the civilian labor force may provide less rationale for the force reductions than does the looming shortage of military manpower. Demographic analysis indicates that there is insufficient manpower available to fill the slots in the military's current organization charts. The force reductions may be viewed, at least in part, as an attempt to reduce that discrepancy. And it does appear that the programmed force reductions will produce a small surplus of conscripts by 1990.¹³

A more complicated question is whether reducing the size of the military might affect civilian consumption demands. In general, military service has been believed to suppress consumption levels by reducing the claims that would otherwise be placed on the Soviet economy. While it might be argued that a force reduction of 500,000 would have little impact in a nation of over 280 million people, the consumer-goods markets are now so tight that even small changes in demand could affect them. Certainly adding demobilized soldiers to the ranks of dissatisfied consumers will not ameliorate the situation.

One participant estimated that reducing the overall defense burden by 40 percent over the next three or four years could—if the reallocations were equally divided between consumption and investment—produce a one-time boost in per-capita consumption of about \$40 per year, accumulating to roughly \$165 over a four-year period and remaining static thereafter. The relatively modest impact should not be surprising: As large as the Soviet defense sector may be, the transfer of even a hefty fraction of its basic capacity would account for only a small proportion of the USSR's aggregate stock of industrial capital. The resulting effect on the economy as a whole will perforce be restrained.

On a more optimistic note, however, important benefits for civilian consumer welfare might be gained if the resource reallocations helped to reduce crucial bottlenecks or ameliorate critical deficiencies. This is particularly the case in agriculture and food processing, where enormous losses of foodstuffs occur in the fields, in transportation,

¹³There is an ambiguity here, however: Does the 500,000 reduction refer to the number of *personnel* to be demobilized or the number of *slots* to be eliminated? The effects on military manpower will vary depending upon the answer. It may be that this ambiguity is affecting Western estimates of Soviet military manpower as well. (See Steven W. Popper, *The Economic Cost of Soviet Military Manpower Requirements*, R-3659-AF, The RAND Corporation, March 1989.)

and in processing. Improvements in these areas could dramatically affect peoples' perception of their consumption standards, even if the resource reallocations are barely measurable in macroeconomic terms. In any case, Soviet planners also have other avenues by which they can increase consumption levels, namely, imports and systemic change. They need not, and should not, confine their policy choices to a single option: The effects of defense reductions and reallocations, in the absence of imports and systemic change, are likely to be small.

The announced defense budget reductions may, however, help ease the USSR's fiscal crisis. Cuts of some 20 to 30 billion rubles within two years would help to lower the deficits (projected officially to be reduced to 60 billion rubles in 1990, though likely to be larger). But the contribution would not be decisive, and Soviet policymakers will still have to find a way to finance the deficit without increasing the money supply and thereby stimulating inflation.

The Consequences of Conversion. The workshop participants saw grounds for uncertainty—if not outright pessimism—about the long-term impact that the program of conversion will have on the Soviet economy as a whole, absent broader systemic reform.

One important set of problems derives from two characteristics of the producer-user relationship in the civilian economy: (1) Producers typically respond to a list of performance criteria which by definition cannot be complete and which often do not account for actual conditions of use, and (2) buyers lack clout. The *Minsredmash* has experience in building nuclear weapons but not in building milking machines, and the milk cooperatives may find it difficult to convey their requirements—and they are not likely to have sufficient market power vis-à-vis the Ministry to enforce them in any case. Defense industries are used to dealing with strong and knowledgeable buyers: The armed forces know what they want and, through their face-to-face ties with the producers, are able to specify their needs. Defense managers complain that, by contrast, they lack direct contact with the ultimate users of their civilian output, that the intermediaries (such as the now-dismantled Agro-Industrial Commission) through which they must deal are often incompetent, and that most of their civilian buyers don't really know what they want.

Under such circumstances, defense industries may be able to increase the volume and technical standard of civilian items, yet nevertheless find it difficult to produce goods that meet the needs of the

users or that contribute significantly to the general upgrading of the civilian sector.¹⁴

Another potential difficulty concerns the ability of the civilian sector to assimilate and use the resources the conversion program is intended to provide. A significant transfer of both capacity and resources—plants, equipment, and engineers, as well as intermediate goods and some specialty materials—has already occurred. The results will undoubtedly vary: Relatively simple machine tools can be accommodated to civilian uses fairly easily and quickly, while more complex items will probably have to be scrapped or will require considerable time and effort to convert. For high-technology items, the historical record is not very encouraging. The USSR has not done well in utilizing its imports of Western high-quality production equipment, which has usually been much less efficient than it is in its original setting. The attempt to apply defense sector equipment to civilian output may be beset with a similar problem: Unless there are changes in the broader economic environment, the conversion program will almost certainly find high-quality defense equipment displaying lower productivity in the civilian context.

Finally, some participants noted, if the systemic deficiencies of the Soviet economy do seriously dampen the effects of the conversion efforts, then any tacit quid pro quo for the military's acceptance of *perestroika*—the hope or promise that sacrifices now will produce a reinvigorated economic base later—could be undermined. Certainly expectations along these lines have so far been unfulfilled. Though infusions of Western capital and plants can help in the short term, they are unlikely to provide a long-term solution: Conditions do not yet exist in the USSR for replicating Western operations. In the absence of further systemic change, the drive to modernize the Soviet industrial base could prove an expensive disappointment, especially for military officials looking for quick results.

The Institutional Setting and the Need for Sustained Commitment. Workshop members agreed that under these circumstances, the prospects for the conversion program will depend greatly upon the extent to which the process becomes institutionalized. This,

¹⁴Soviet press accounts indicate that many of these problems persist, and that some new ones have cropped up. Igor Belousov, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers and head of the VPK, has been candid in acknowledging lags in component supply, the high prices of goods produced by many defense industry plants, and other difficulties. Commenting on output for the agro-industrial sector, he noted that although supplies of processing equipment are up, there has been "no fundamental change in the situation." (V. Romanyuk, "Civilian Profile of Military Plants: Defense Sectors to Double Production of Equipment for Processing Agricultural Raw Material," *Izvestiya*, October 13, 1989.)

in turn, will require sustained political attention and commitment from the top.

The participants saw little reason to doubt the strong priority Soviet political leaders currently attach to this effort. Soviet leaders recognize that earlier attempts to transfer defense industry personnel and processes to civilian production or to implement administrative solutions like *gospriemka* (a system of quality control) did not produce the results they had hoped for. This time, real resources are being transferred. These reallocations, together with the political pressures now being exerted on behalf of conversion, civilian production, and consumer welfare could, over time, dismantle the mechanisms by which military priorities have traditionally been enforced.

But the participants stressed that this outcome is far from a foregone conclusion. The basic economic system has not changed. Instead, the institutional manifestations of conversion have so far consisted largely of redrawing boundaries and reassigning responsibilities for civilian production to defense. While old enforcement mechanisms have been weakened, a new system for policy oversight and implementation has not yet taken hold. The respective roles of and relationships among the VPK, the Party apparatus, and the new Supreme Soviet Committee on Defense and Defense Industry remain to be defined in practice. The nature of these policymaking arrangements will be a key indicator of the extent to which traditional military claims and priorities become deinstitutionalized; as such, they will undoubtedly be the focus of political struggle within the elite.¹⁵

¹⁵The functions, composition, and political weight of the new Committee on Defense and State Security quickly became subjects of controversy and debate in the Soviet Union (see, for example, "Soviets Set up Committee to Oversee Defense, KGB," *Baltimore Sun*, June 27, 1989). Nevertheless, the Committee has evidently had some success in its efforts to define and expand its mandate. Both the Congress of People's Deputies and the Supreme Soviet have become actively involved in discussing defense matters, but it is unclear how their role may be affected by the proposed political reforms agreed to at the Central Committee plenum in early February 1990. If implemented, these reforms would create an executive presidency with far greater powers than Gorbachev now enjoys, and government ministers—including the Defense Minister—might report directly to the new president rather than through the parliamentary bodies.

VI. THE MILITARY AND GORBACHEV'S FOREIGN-POLICY AGENDA

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

This session addressed two broad sets of issues: (1) the nature and implications of Gorbachev's foreign-policy agenda, both for the military as an institution and for the weight of the military "factor" in Soviet policymaking as a whole; and (2) the relative importance of domestic and foreign-policy considerations in generating the pressures the Soviet military now appears to be facing.

John Hines opened the session by noting that Gorbachev's perspective on defense issues has become increasingly radical over time: His underlying objectives have been first to reevaluate, then to redefine, the requirements for the security of the USSR and its allies. Reflecting his belief that an overemphasis on the military factor has been wasteful and counterproductive to overall Soviet security interests, he has sought to redefine the measurement of the "correlation of forces" to give greater weight to economic and political factors and downplay the purely military ones. As his views have evolved, Gorbachev has been willing to take the implications of this thinking quite far.

The Soviet military, in Hines' view, appears to share some of Gorbachev's broad objectives. The armed forces have made their own independent assessments of the threat from the West, and even before Gorbachev assumed power they had become highly concerned about the ability of the USSR to deal with the West's technological challenge. Indeed, the further they looked into the future, the more pessimistic their assessments became. Some senior officers appeared to undergo a kind of "crisis of confidence," especially regarding the USSR's capacity to execute demanding operational concepts like the "theater strategic offensive." Thus Marshal N. V. Ogarkov himself, former Chief of the General Staff and the godfather of this concept, has recognized and stressed a theme to which Gorbachev has also given prominence—the need to repair the underlying Soviet technological base, in order to sustain the military competition over the longer term.

Beyond this broad area of agreement, however, consensus between Gorbachev and the military appears to have broken down. The fundamental difference involves the military's reluctance to pay the

price—in procurement, in investment for military research and development, and in institutional size and structure—that Gorbachev believes his agenda requires. As a result, Gorbachev increasingly has had to challenge military prerogatives and the military as an institution.

Hines noted that if Gorbachev were to succeed in this effort, he needed at a minimum to break the military's monopoly on information and analysis. Statements by Aleksandr Yakovlev and Anatolii Dobrynin calling for competing centers of assessment¹ were early expressions of this intention, but there is evidence that pressures on the military's monopoly began even earlier. In particular, the SDI, unveiled in 1983, appears to have represented a challenge to the Soviet defense establishment that the military could not deal with on its own. The leadership thus called on civilian academics and scientists to help them understand what the SDI might mean and how the Soviet Union should respond. As a result, nonmilitary specialists came to enjoy both greater standing and a new body of expertise and were increasingly looked to by the government to expose their work in international forums. In short, competing centers of assessment grew up partly as a result of the military's increasing dependence on civilian expertise, which, with the explicit encouragement of people like Yakovlev and Dobrynin, was then intentionally exploited to further the challenge to the traditional monopoly of the General Staff.

One result has been military/civilian contention over questions of access and legitimacy: Whose estimates and assessments should count? There are indications that the military's assessments are now less influential with the Soviet political leadership than they used to be, and in some cases, they are less influential than those of the civilian analysts.

The civilian analysts have used their new status to spark debates with their military counterparts on a variety of defense issues, ranging from force levels (How much is enough? How is sufficiency determined?), unilateral vs. negotiated reductions, and the rate of change (How quickly must military restructuring take effect?), to questions of force structure, procurement, and military reform in general. The doctrinal debates have opened up basic questions of military art (What forms of military art are indeed "defensive"?) and have posed difficult dilemmas for military planners. Hines judged that the military has genuflected to Gorbachev's new doctrinal emphasis on

¹See, for example, A. Dobrynin, "Za bezyadernyy mir navstrechu XXI veku" ("For a nuclear-free world as we move toward the 21st century"), *Kommunist*, No. 9, June 1986, pp. 20-28.

the prevention of war but still feels responsible for anticipating and preparing for the possibility of war and have not found it easy or rewarding to jettison old concepts and practices. They are rewriting their training manuals but reportedly are working from handouts at their academies, since the old regulations are obsolete but the new ones have not yet been formulated. In short, implementation has proven difficult.

This is the context in which military relationships with the institute scholars have developed, and in Hines' view, the civilians often seem to be dominating because they are coming up with more of the right answers. However, the relationship is complex, since the civilians depend upon the military as well. For example, a key analytical issue raised by conventional arms control is that of qualitative asymmetry; the institute people have no mechanism for understanding and expressing this concept, while the General Staff has been working on it for 25 years. Thus Andrei Kokoshin and some of his colleagues in the Institute for the United States and Canada have embraced the General Staff concept of "combat potential," while other civilians have adopted essentially General Staff methodologies for calculating the military balance and the correlation of forces.² These military methodologies are based on operational outcomes, and they stand in contrast to the approaches of the institute scholars who apply concepts of "stability" and "balance" largely borrowed from the West.

Overall, then, the military hardly lacks resources for responding to the challenge the civilians are posing. Senior officers play important roles in high-level groups investigating questions of global strategy. Military editors and consultants are being established for the press. And although the military may have lost its former monopoly over information and assessment, it remains a key source of expertise that

²To date, the two most explicit arguments for application of General Staff correlation-of-forces methodologies to conventional arms control have been made by General-Major (ret.) Valentin Larionov, identified as a scientific consultant to the Institute for the United States and Canada, and Dr. Vitaly Tsygichko, a senior associate of the All-Union Scientific Research Institute of System Sciences of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, where a great deal of economic, social, and strategic military modeling is carried out. Andrei Kokoshin of the Institute for the United States and Canada routinely uses the military term "combat potential" in a manner that indicates his appreciation of the specific meaning of the expression in General Staff modeling. See, for example, General-Major Valentin V. Larionov, "Problemy predotvrashcheniya obychnoy voyny v evrope" ("Problems of preventing conventional war in Europe"), *Mirovaya edonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya* (World Economics and International Relations), No. 7, July 1989, pp. 36-42; and Doctor of Engineering Vitaly Tsygichko, "Combat Potential Method for Vienna Talks," *Voennyi Vestnik* (APN), No. 5, March 1989, pp. 7-15.

the civilians often find they cannot do without. Increasingly, the civilian/military relationship is one of mutual dependence.

In Hines' view, the nature of the assault on military prerogatives suggests that Gorbachev may have an underlying "grand strategy" of sorts—a vision of both the kind of military establishment he would eventually like to fashion and the accompanying political and diplomatic conditions he would like to create. The budget cuts and the announced goal of a 50 percent reduction in the size of the military forces are components of that vision. There are also indications that Gorbachev may have made a decision in principle to try to remove Soviet forces from Eastern Europe by the year 2000, if not earlier. Especially tantalizing was a statement by Shevardnadze reportedly suggesting that the withdrawal from Afghanistan was the first step in a process whose end result would be the return of virtually all Soviet troops to within Soviet borders.³

This would, of course, be a dramatic departure in Soviet policy. As Hines noted, it would require that the military find a way to secure Soviet security essentially from within the country's own borders and that Soviet diplomacy create the political conditions under which abandonment of the East European buffer would be acceptable. In this light, the conventional arms-control negotiations can be seen as an instrument by which the Soviet leadership hopes to obtain Western cooperation in a process about which the fundamental decisions have already been taken.

The hypothesis of such a Gorbachev "grand design" may also help explain the evolving Soviet posture on the question of German reunification: For about two years, institute officials have been hinting to the West Germans that eventual reunification is not out of the question, and some observers now believe that Gorbachev himself is beginning to hold out this possibility.⁴ True, Hines acknowledged, there may be no intention of delivering on these hints. But reunification could bring important benefits, both in its impact on NATO and in enhancing Soviet access to European economies. In this respect, reunification would be consistent with Gorbachev's evident belief that the security of the Soviet state should be enhanced primarily through economic recovery and the fostering of international economic rela-

³Unpublished report from a Western journalist covering the March 1989 opening of CFE talks in Vienna.

⁴So, too, are some Soviet military officials. Moiseev, in fact, has been quoted as telling the visiting Bundeswehr Inspector General that "Germany has been divided by history, and history is correctable." (*Die Welt*, May 5, 1989.) For a synopsis of post-workshop Soviet positions on German reunification, see pp. 55-59 below.

tionships that will help repair the Soviet technological base. Strengthening the military dimension of the technological competition would be a corollary benefit.

Hines concluded by noting that this hypothesis does not imply that the Soviet military has embraced the goal of withdrawing from Eastern Europe; on the contrary, it would probably view such a step as reckless and irresponsible. It is clear, however, that the military has been given an important role to play in helping to implement Gorbachev's broader diplomatic objectives.

DISCUSSION

The discussion revolved around three broad, interrelated issues raised in the opening remarks: (1) whether or not the pressures on the military's status and prerogatives reflect a vision on Gorbachev's part of long-term objectives for Europe, embodying among other things an altered Soviet view of the desirability of German reunification; (2) the perspectives and political weight of the military establishment; and (3) the relative importance of foreign-policy considerations and perceived domestic imperatives in generating Gorbachev's challenge to the military.

Does Gorbachev Have a Long-Term "Vision"?

The hypothesis that Gorbachev may have a long-term vision for Europe, entailing withdrawal of Soviet forces from Eastern Europe and perhaps even the eventual reunification of Germany, sparked considerable debate.

Several participants did see a pattern of evidence lending credence to the view that Gorbachev has developed a broad vision of the direction in which Soviet security policy and the international security order should move, has made a decision in principle to try to implement that vision, and has some more-or-less concrete ideas about how to reach his goals. Some of this evidence consists of the high-level political support for the ideas put forward by the specialists in the "new political thinking" and the encouragement the "new thinkers" have received to reexamine heretofore unchallenged (and unchallengeable) postulates of foreign and security policy. Gorbachev's January 1986 call for denuclearization may fit the pattern as well. Though easy to dismiss as merely the latest in a long Soviet tradition of utopian appeals, or as an attempt to make Europe safe for Soviet conventional superiority, the 1986 speech did contain a schedule of steps toward

Gorbachev's ultimate goal and has apparently served as a kind of guiding principle both in internal Soviet debates and for Gorbachev's own thinking.

The "vision" hypothesis was also supported, it was argued, by some characteristics of Gorbachev's foreign policy. Gorbachev has been increasingly willing to break old habits and abandon old banalities, recasting Soviet policy toward China, southern Africa, and perhaps Latin America, and in arms control. Most striking is the evolving Soviet posture toward political change in Eastern Europe.⁵ Whatever the separate rationales for these policies may be, taken together they present a sharp contrast to what would have been commonplace in Stalinist foreign policy—the notion that to protect the "sacred core" of the Soviet homeland, it is necessary to control and protect the periphery. This is a reflex that Gorbachev appears not to share.

Finally, there are some straws in the wind concerning defense policy. These range from reportage from Eastern Europe indicating some anticipation of further, possibly dramatic Soviet force withdrawals to statements by high-level Soviet military officials that the General Staff, in thinking about how to implement Gorbachev's call for a thoroughly defensive doctrine, is looking to establish new "fortified regions," not in Poland or East Germany, but within the USSR. These regions—which would combine prepared and mobile defense backed up by an operational-scale reserve and would be manned by new machine gun/artillery units with some 40 tanks—are intended for the Soviet interior, not the territory of the Pact.

Supporters of the "grand vision" hypothesis concluded that Gorbachev's view had evolved over time, driven by a combination of dire economic straits and a recalculation of the utility of military force in foreign policy. They made no claims that it reflected a consensus within the leadership, or that it had produced a precise sequencing of events in Gorbachev's own mind. But they did see evidence of a coherent overall design based on a belief that the country's security would be best served by withdrawing the armed forces to within its own borders. The military has been tasked with working out the ramifications of this idea, and it is struggling to do so—sometimes by wrapping existing plans in the cloak of "sufficiency." The outcome is uncertain, because the vision is a radical one whose implementation carries great potential risks. But, in this view, Gorbachev's actions

⁵That Soviet policy toward Eastern Europe was being reassessed was already evident at the time of the workshop, well before the dramatic events of the autumn. The implications of these post-workshop developments are addressed briefly on pp. 55-59.

increasingly suggest that he is ready to run those risks for the sake of a new security order in Europe.

Some workshop participants agreed that Gorbachev has a more-or-less coherent "grand vision" in mind but disagreed about its likely implications for Soviet policy and Western interests. One speaker noted, for instance, that Soviet diplomacy has a history of floating utopian visions, and that the "comprehensive system of international security" is only the most recent in this tradition. These proposals have often militated against rather than for concrete agreements. In Gorbachev's case, the key phrase is "beyond détente," a phrase that appeared in his speeches as early as 1985 as his solution to a particular policy problem he inherited: how to repair relations with the West without falling back on the discredited 1970s-style notions of détente. With Chancellor Kohl, Prime Minister Thatcher, and President Reagan all seeming to call for a revival of détente on Western terms, Gorbachev had to up the ante, and he did so by speaking in utopian terms. His language has had undeniable political impact in the West, but what it will mean in operational policy terms is far from obvious.

Still other participants were distinctly skeptical that Gorbachev's policies reflect a coherent underlying design at all. In this view, "ad hoc" has been the rule both at home and abroad. Initiatives in domestic policy have often seemed improvised, mutually contradictory, or inadequately prepared. Examples of ad hoc decisions can also be found in defense policy, the unilateral withdrawal from Eastern Europe being a case in point: Despite avowals from Akhromeev and others that the General Staff had spent some two years preparing for this step, neither the Soviet military nor the East Europeans seemed ready for it when it came. In sum, Gorbachev's style is that of an activist, not a strategist. His policies have been constantly altered under the impact of experience, driven primarily by the imperatives of the deteriorating Soviet economic situation rather than by a grand design to reconstruct the European security order.

Eastern Europe and the Future of Germany

Most contentious of all, however, was the suggestion that Gorbachev's policy agenda for Europe might entail a readiness to accept, much less encourage, the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Eastern Europe and the reunification of Germany. Some participants noted, for example, that Soviet hints about German reunification can be understood only in terms of the evolution of West German perspectives on that issue: Having abandoned the notion that reunification

would come about through Four Power negotiations, by early 1987 many West Germans had come to envision a long-term process by which reunification would be the by-product of a new European peace order in which the division of Europe would be made irrelevant. The Soviets simply adopted this position, largely to influence the West Germans to embrace the broader Soviet political agenda for Europe.

This agenda, some argued, has much more to do with the U.S. presence in the West than with the Soviet presence in the East. They maintained that hints of possible German reunification, as well as the much more visible emphasis on a "common European home," serve a clearly instrumental purpose—to encourage forces in West Germany that would accelerate the dissolution of the alliance and encourage a process whose practical result would be a reduction of the U.S. presence. On the other hand, although Gorbachev has been considerably more radical in foreign than domestic policy, it is difficult to believe that he would go so far as to abandon the East European buffer, much less be able to convince his colleagues to concur. That could mean the de facto dissolution of the Pact and would leave the Baltic states, Moldavia, and the western Ukraine in a precarious position.

Taking a somewhat different perspective, other participants agreed that the Soviets would not want to take the political risk of withdrawing from Eastern Europe, but precisely for that reason, would not want wholesale U.S. withdrawals either. It would be very difficult to continue to justify the Soviet presence in the East if the Americans were to leave. Moreover, the Soviets still worry about Germany and may have advanced the idea of a "common European home" in part to head off the prospect of a hegemonic German state in the heart of Europe. This would explain why Gorbachev and other Soviet spokesmen have taken such pains to emphasize—even to their West German interlocutors—that they cannot envision the "European home" without an American presence. Whatever Gorbachev's long-term vision may be, for the foreseeable future he needs the structures of both alliances to remain intact.

The Views and Weight of the Military

The discussion then turned briefly to military perspectives on Gorbachev's broader foreign-policy objectives and the reasoning underlying them. It was generally agreed that there are important areas of congruence—both because of shared concerns about the need to repair the Soviet technological base for the sake of the country's long-term competitiveness, and because of some trends in military

thinking that predated Gorbachev but produced some military positions that are in accord with his. Some individuals in the Soviet Navy, for example, have objected to Admiral S. G. Gorshkov's emphasis on a "big ship, blue water" presence, on the grounds that it tends to heighten foreign perceptions of the Soviet threat and thus produces counterreactions that redound to the ultimate detriment of Soviet security. Similar examples can be found in the other services.

But the situation is hardly clear-cut, participants emphasized. Long-standing intramilitary, and even intraservice, debates have produced complicated lines of alliance and contention with the political leadership. Moreover, while the military in general may understand and accept aspects of Gorbachev's foreign-policy rationale, it seems evident that many senior military officers are unhappy about many of the implications of Gorbachev's external agenda for the military's institutional interests and political weight.

The workshop participants also found it difficult to assess the extent to which the military is able to influence that agenda. One view held that the military's role in Soviet foreign-policy debates has in fact never been large and that it has eroded still further under Gorbachev. The access and visibility of the civilian analysts, on the other hand, has grown significantly.

A counterargument stressed that, whatever the institutional weight of the military may be, the military factor remains powerful in the Soviet foreign-policy calculus. Thus, for example, while civilian analysts were proclaiming an end to military interventionism in the Third World and a reduced Soviet reliance on the military instrument in general, the evidence from Soviet behavior was not thought to be so clear. The USSR has pulled its troops out of Afghanistan, but it continues to mount a massive airlift of supplies there. Similarly, the military component of Soviet involvement in Ethiopia, Angola, and Cuba remains large. It is not evident, in this view, that the perceived decline in the utility of military power is universally shared in the top leadership, or that this aspect of the "new thinking" cannot be overridden in concrete cases by more traditional instincts.

The Challenge to the Military: Internal vs. External Considerations

Despite these qualifications, however, there was little disagreement that the status, influence, and prerogatives of the Soviet military were under increasingly severe challenge. What has generated this challenge? In particular, to what extent do the pressures on the

military result from the imperatives of Gorbachev's domestic priorities and to what extent do they reflect foreign-policy considerations?

One widespread view was that not only Gorbachev's challenge to the military but also many important characteristics of his foreign policy can be explained by the overriding priority he attaches to internal reconstruction and reform. The need to close the USSR's technological gap with the developed West has clearly convinced him and like-minded colleagues of the destructive effects on civilian industry of the military's priority claim to resources. Much of the pressure on the military flows from this conviction. It is therefore hardly a coincidence that accelerated concessions abroad, including some with direct bearing on the interests and preferences of the military, have coincided with a deepening leadership perception of the desperate state of the Soviet economy.

But while there was a general consensus about the centrality of the current Soviet leadership's domestic preoccupations, there was also thought to be an important interplay at work between the domestic crisis and foreign policymaking. First of all, as one participant noted, the drive to reduce the military burden may also reflect a calculus about the external environment—a recognition not only of Soviet weakness, but also of Western constraint. Gorbachev may thus see this period as a unique opportunity to gain some slack for his own economy with some confidence that, because of domestic and allied pressures, the United States will be unable to steal a strategic march in the meantime.⁶ More generally, the Soviet leadership clearly has come to recognize how domestic policy initiatives can help to validate Soviet objectives abroad. In particular, the skeptical queries that first greeted their professions of fundamental change in defense policy made them aware that secrecy about military issues and defense budgets has been an enormous handicap to Soviet diplomacy. Many

⁶The rapid unraveling of Communist Party power in Eastern Europe, the resulting pressures on Soviet troop deployments in the region, and the reemergence of the question of German reunification on the international political agenda have revived concerns among the Soviet elite that the West might attempt to exploit the evolving situation for long-term strategic advantage. During the fall, Gorbachev, Shevardnadze, and other Soviet spokesmen frequently and explicitly warned the West of the dangers of such a course. President Bush, Secretary Baker, Chancellor Kohl, and Foreign Minister Genscher, among other Western politicians, have evidently sought to reassure Moscow on this score. Some Moscow-based journalists have suggested that the evolution of the USSR's posture on the German question and related sensitive issues does in fact reflect a renewed confidence in the intentions of Western governments. In this view, Soviet officials have concluded that Western impulses to steal a strategic march will, at least for the time being, be tempered by an appreciation of the West's own stakes in stability in the East, as well as in the political fortunes of Gorbachev himself. That underlying anxieties remain, however, seems equally evident.

in the leadership came to understand that domestic policies in general, including those aspects bearing on the military—methods of training, deployment patterns, the size and structure of the defense budget, the information supplied to the outside world—were important prisms through which the reality and sincerity of Soviet external policy would be measured.

This interplay between internal and external considerations was thought to be crucial to understanding the momentum behind Gorbachev's challenge to the military. Abroad, the USSR's political leaders seek a respite from Western military competition. They hope to undermine Western unity and cohesion and to gain access to technology and capital. They are cutting back on costly involvements in the Third World and are being highly selective in taking on new obligations. But they also want to promote and expand Soviet influence: The *peredyshka* (literally, a "breathing spell") has hardly meant diplomatic passivity. To achieve their foreign-policy objectives, the Soviet leadership has labored to reduce the "enemy" image of the USSR and has conducted an arms-control offensive of occasionally breathtaking proportions. All these impulses create strong pressures on the size, character, doctrine, and activities of the armed forces. The feedback from the foreign-policy arena reinforces the effects of Gorbachev's domestic agenda, tending to militate toward a military that must reduce its size, change its character, and alter some of its operational patterns.

In sum, most participants agreed that the armed forces now find themselves on the receiving end of a combination of domestic and foreign policies that exert powerful pressures for change. Whether or not these pressures will prove significantly stronger than countervailing factors, will be felt abruptly by the military or be attenuated and spread over time, and will be sustained over time, however, were all issues of considerably greater uncertainty and debate.

ADDENDUM

These workshop debates about Gorbachev's intentions for Eastern Europe and the future of Germany reflected the underlying assumption that, if he did have such a vision, it was one for the longer term. There was little expectation that the questions of German reunification and the Soviet military presence in the eastern half of the continent might soon be placed on the international political agenda. Needless to say, this assumption—one very probably shared by the Soviet leadership—was rapidly overtaken by the extraordinary chain

of events that began to unfold in Eastern Europe in the late summer and early fall of 1989. As a result, the key question seemed to be less the nature of Gorbachev's vision for Europe than whether and how Soviet diplomacy would be able to affect the course of change, in ways that are at least minimally consistent both with Gorbachev's domestic political requirements and with overriding Soviet security interests.

The first manifestation of Soviet attempts to cope with the processes of change in the East came in July, when, in a speech to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, Gorbachev indicated that while the USSR had no intention of intervening militarily, he was confident that Eastern Europe would remain socialist; he warned the West against exploiting the ferment there and reiterated his earlier calls for the removal of all foreign troops from the territory of other countries and for the liquidation of NATO and the Warsaw Pact.⁷ These themes were characteristic of Soviet commentary well into the fall. By November, however—after Communist authority had unraveled not only in Poland and Hungary, but in Bulgaria and East Germany as well—there was growing evidence that the Soviet line was shifting. Consonant with their stress on the need to maintain “stability” in Europe, Soviet spokesmen increasingly spoke not of abolishing the alliance systems but of gradually transforming their character, and indeed of investing them with important responsibilities for controlling the pace and scope of change.⁸ Although calls for the removal of foreign bases continued to be heard, many observers detected an emerging Soviet acceptance of—and even a desire for—a continued U.S. military presence in Europe for the foreseeable future, both for the sake of stability in general and to provide a justification for maintaining a Soviet troop presence in the East.

The reemergence of the “German question” has undoubtedly been especially vexing for the Soviet leadership. For much of the latter half of 1989, Soviet statements were careful not to rule out reunification in some undefined future but stressed that it was “not on the agenda now,” and could only be contemplated in the context of an all-European political settlement and the elaboration of a new security regime for the continent. In the meantime, East Germany was a

⁷Gorbachev's speech was broadcast on Soviet television; an English translation can be found in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Soviet Union*, July 7, 1989, pp. 29–34.

⁸Reports also began to circulate that Soviet officials were privately telling their U.S. and West European counterparts that they were no longer insisting that NATO and the Warsaw Pact be dissolved. See, for example, Stephens Broening, “Soviets No Longer Seeking End to Military Alliances,” *Baltimore Sun*, November 29, 1989, and Jim Hoagland, “New Alliance Roles Seen,” *Washington Post*, December 3, 1989.

"strategic ally" of the USSR; radical domestic change could be tolerated, as long as the country remained in the Warsaw Pact. Reunification and the preservation of the bloc structure were thus said to be incompatible.⁹

The USSR was clearly hoping to dampen the flames. However, having renounced the option of military intervention, Soviet diplomacy had to find other, political levers to safeguard the USSR's interests in the outcome. Hence their stress on preserving the "all-European processes" such as Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) and the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), their reminders of the legal rights and obligations of the Four Powers for the status of Berlin, and their frequent appeals to shared Western interests in stability (as well as to residual Western anxieties about the economic might and possible political orientation of a unified German state).

Despite these efforts to enlist Western support, by the end of the year momentum toward early reunification had intensified, and the Soviet leadership faced the prospect that their hopes for resolution of the issue would be outrun by events on the ground. In December, Foreign Minister Shevardnadze told the Political Commission of the European Parliament in Brussels that a daunting list of military and political issues would have to be resolved if reunification were to be acceptable.¹⁰ A month later, Gorbachev was reported to have accepted that reunification was likely to occur, while insisting that Germany's neighbors would have to concur, the Four Powers would have to be involved, and clear security guarantees would have to be provided to all concerned.¹¹ This last condition, MFA spokesmen

⁹Characteristic of the Soviet posture on this matter was the response by Foreign Ministry spokesman Gennadi Gerasimov to the opening of the Berlin wall: It is impossible, he said, to "talk realistically about reunification" as long as Soviet troops remain in the GDR and American and West European forces are stationed in the FRG (cited in Esther B. Fein, "The Kremlin Reacts Calmly, but Says Border Must Stay," *New York Times*, November 11, 1989).

¹⁰Shevardnadze articulated these issues in the form of seven sets of questions that had to be answered about a reunified Germany: (1) What guarantees would there be that it would pose no threat to the security of other states? (2) Will it recognize existing European borders and renounce any territorial claims? (3) What relation would it have to existing "military-political structures" in Europe (the reference here was to alliance membership)? (4) What will the military potential and doctrine of the new state be? What economic and other ties would it develop in Eastern Europe? (5) What would be its attitude toward the presence of allied troops? (6) How will it "tie in" to the Helsinki process? and (7) Will it take the "interests of other European states" into account? (The text of the speech was published in *Pravda*, December 20, 1989.)

¹¹Gorbachev's conditions for German reunification come from a TASS account of his January 30 meeting with GDR Prime Minister Hans Modrow, as reported in Michael Parks, "Gorbachev Sees United Germany," *Los Angeles Times*, January 31, 1990.

suggested, required that a reunited Germany be neutral.¹² The USSR's anxieties about a reunified Germany were dramatically conveyed once again by Shevardnadze, who told a Soviet television audience of his fears of a "revival of sinister shadows of the past" and then—in what had every appearance of being an act of desperation—proposed that an international referendum be held to allow the people of the United States, Canada, and Europe to vote on the matter.¹³ Shortly thereafter, however, Gorbachev reiterated to Chancellor Kohl in Moscow that the Soviet Union was prepared to accept early reunification, and Genscher and Shevardnadze agreed on a negotiating framework to bring this about.¹⁴

These developments in East Germany and elsewhere in Eastern Europe have almost certainly intensified internal Soviet debates about the implications of Gorbachev's foreign-policy priorities for the USSR's defense posture and have undoubtedly sharpened the dilemmas and challenges Soviet military officials now feel they face. Internally, there are signs of a nascent "Who lost Germany?" debate, with fingers being pointed in Shevardnadze's (and, by implication, Gorbachev's) direction.

In any case, the issues for military planners are already clearly outlined. The new governments in Czechoslovakia and Hungary have initiated bilateral negotiations with the USSR to press for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from those countries, independent of the conventional arms negotiations in Vienna. Many Western analysts expect Poland to take a similar course before very long. Nor—with East German elections having now been moved up to March 18, 1990, and formal reunification negotiations likely to accelerate shortly thereafter—can senior Soviet officers be very sanguine about the prospects for containing similar pressures on their troops in East Germany.

¹²In the words of Yuri Gremitskikh, at a news conference in East Berlin, a united Germany in NATO would be "unrealistic ... the two [East and West Germany] should leave the military blocs" (cited by William Tuohy, "Soviets Tell New Ideas for Unifying Germany," *Los Angeles Times*, February 3, 1990). Chancellor Kohl and other West German leaders had already rejected this idea.

¹³"All peoples," Shevardnadze said, "especially those of the Soviet Union, must have a guarantee that the war threat will never come from German soil." (Francis X. Clines, "World Vote Urged by Shevardnadze on Germany Unity," *New York Times*, February 3, 1990.)

¹⁴According to Western press reports, the negotiating framework involved early negotiations between West Germany and East Germany on the terms for reunification, the results of which were to be presented to the Four Powers and then tabled at an all-Europe summit conference in late 1990 (see Craig R. Whitney, "Kohl Says Moscow Agrees Unity Issue Is Up to Germans," *New York Times*, February 11, 1990; and Michael Parks, "Soviets Endorse Early German Reunification," *Los Angeles Times*, February 11, 1990).

Even if the USSR is able to maintain a military presence in that country, the Soviets must worry about the potential vulnerability of forces, stationed among a hostile local population, whose lines of communication back to Soviet territory could be made fragile by withdrawals elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

With the political basis for Soviet deployments thus eroding, at stake for the Soviet military is the military viability of the Warsaw Pact. Though the precise character of the military balance in Europe remains to be determined, the High Command must plan against the real contingency that defense of the homeland will have to be ensured largely, if not entirely, from Soviet territory.

VII. SOME FINAL OBSERVATIONS

Workshop participants thus agreed that some long-standing prerogatives and preferences of the Soviet military are under great stress. Politically, the pressures have been reflected in a series of defense and security policy decisions that have run counter to apparent military preferences, in sustained and powerful challenges to military roles and claims in the making and implementation of defense policy, and in trends in personnel policy within the military itself. Socially, the armed forces have had to confront a blizzard of criticism about their internal practices, indications that general public support for the military and military values has declined, and the ethnic and national ferment unleashed by the Gorbachev reforms. Moreover, cutting across these factors has been a set of difficult policy challenges, deriving from some of the practical implications of Gorbachev's broader foreign and domestic agendas and priorities.

Why is this happening? As the workshop discussions made clear, some of the difficulties the military is now facing are by-products of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, including in particular the vastly widened scope for public debate and criticism of official institutions and policies, across virtually all areas of public life in the USSR. Other difficulties, such as the effects of ethnic upheaval and nationalist demands, are manifestations of deep-rooted social forces and tensions, given freer rein in the Gorbachev era but not created by it.

Yet much of the challenge to the Soviet military's institutional status seems to reflect a more-or-less conscious design on Gorbachev's part. His own views—not only on defense matters per se but also in other policy areas bearing on the military—have become increasingly radical over time, and he has evidently allowed, if not encouraged, much of the pressure the armed forces are now feeling. As several participants stressed, it can hardly be a coincidence that the severity of these pressures has grown in parallel with a deepening leadership perception of the gravity of the country's economic situation. In short, a critical impulse underlying the challenge to the military has been the perceived imperatives of Gorbachev's domestic program and priorities.

Moreover, the Soviet political leadership has evidently come to believe that the requirements of *perestroika* at home entail a set of foreign-policy goals that also have implications for defense policy and

for the institutional status of the military as a whole. They appear to have recognized the other side of this coin as well, i.e., that Soviet domestic policies and processes, including the nature and weight of the military sector, play an important role in validating Soviet policy objectives abroad. In short, most participants believed that the military is feeling the effects of converging internal and external policy impulses. Gorbachev and his like-minded political allies have thus sought to constrain the military's drain on the state budget, to limit its right to claims on scarce resources, to reduce the political leadership's dependence on the military for information and advice, and to assert and maintain control of the Soviet security policy agenda and policymaking process.

The workshop participants emphasized, however, that the picture for the Soviet military establishment is not necessarily as bleak as a simple recitation of the new challenges it faces would suggest. Several qualifications are in order, and numerous uncertainties remain.

First of all, it is important to note that the workshop discussions focused on trends in the status of the Soviet military, not on providing a net assessment. Indeed, the developments described above are striking precisely because of their contrast with the past—a past in which the Soviet military enjoyed a near-monopoly on information and advice on defense matters, highly preferential claims on resources, and an exalted social status. To varying degrees, all of these privileges appear to be under challenge and subject to erosion, but they have by no means disappeared.

Second, participants identified a number of significant countervailing factors which seem likely to offset, at least in part, the forces that are tending to erode the military's institutional weight and political status. It is clear, for instance, that in spite of criticisms of the armed forces' internal practices, there remains an important reservoir of support for the military in society at large. While the role of civilian analysts is growing, the military continues to be the central repository of critical defense information, analytical experience, and operational expertise, and it will wield considerable leverage through its role in implementing new defense policies. Though it must operate in an increasingly constrained economic environment, the defense sector is looked to as an important source of management skills and high technology for upgrading and modernizing the economy as a whole, and thus has been assigned a crucial role in Gorbachev's program of domestic reconstruction. In any case, the sheer weight of bureau-

cratic mass, inertia, and vested interest will make institutional change difficult.

An additional important qualification is the simple fact that the military will continue to serve as the ultimate guarantor of the security of the Soviet state and system. Internally, the importance of this role may grow, as the regime grapples with economic and national unrest. Externally, although negotiated force reductions, the "new thinking" in security policy, and developments in Eastern Europe will have important effects on the size and missions of the defense establishment, perceived Soviet military requirements will continue to be substantial. The USSR still wields formidable military power and will do so for the foreseeable future.

In short, the pressures on the military are considerable and for the moment at least appear to be continuing to grow. But the counter-vailing factors are real as well. How will the balance between them play itself out over time? As one participant pointed out, the longer-term prospects for the military's status could depend greatly on matters of timing and degree. Will the net "squeeze" on the military become larger or smaller? Will it be manifested in ways that are abrupt, or will it be attenuated and spread out over time? The answers could make a considerable difference.

There are, moreover, a number of large uncertainties bearing on the future prospects for the military's institutional status and health. Even in the near term, much will depend on the evolution of Soviet decisionmaking processes in defense and security policy. These are currently in flux. Other traditional loci of decisionmaking power, such as the Central Committee Secretariat, have also lost some of their earlier influence, but new arrangements have not yet become firmly institutionalized. Important variables here will be whether the Foreign Ministry is able to make good on its claims to an oversight role over the implementation of defense policy, and whether the new Supreme Soviet Committee on Defense and State Security will succeed in exercising an effective mandate not only over defense programs but—as some delegates apparently intend—over the defense budget as well.

Another set of uncertainties derives from the military's own complex views of Gorbachev's agenda and priorities. Many senior officers have made clear their resentment of the criticisms the armed forces are now receiving, and there is considerable evidence of military unhappiness with several important policy decisions the Gorbachev team has taken. Yet many Western analysts would argue that the military establishment has generally accepted Gorbachev's argument

that its long-run interests—including the military's ability to sustain the technological competition with the West—require *perestroika* or something much like it. Other observers have suggested that the USSR's social and demographic problems could have induced an appreciation that the military's institutional interests would likewise be served by a transformation to a "leaner" but more modern force—as long as Soviet diplomacy is able to manage the external challenge in the meantime.

As with other institutions—and indeed the Soviet population at large—the military's sense of its stakes in *perestroika* depends on how it weighs sacrifice and risk now against the promise of benefit later. The perspectives even of senior officers on these matters appear far from uniform, and they intersect with wider intraelite controversies over the scope and pace of reform. The politics of defense policy have become intertwined with the politics of *perestroika*, so that the resolution of policy debates and political struggles among the leadership will inevitably have a major impact on the evolving role and status of the military.

A related source of uncertainty concerns the fate of Gorbachev and his program. Many of the pressures on the military's status and prerogatives have come with his blessing, or as the by-products of his policies (even if the policies have often been adopted for quite different reasons). If Gorbachev were to fall from power, and/or if his policies were reversed, the explicit elite political challenges to the military's status could decline. On the other hand, the longer-term social, economic, and national challenges to the military would not disappear; in fact, they could well intensify if their underlying causes are not effectively addressed. Hence the implicit promise Gorbachev appears to have made to the military: Over the longer run, the social and economic threats to the military's well-being will ease if his program of reconstruction is allowed to run its course.

Inherent in this promise is what workshop participants viewed as the largest and arguably the most important imponderable of all: the future evolution of the Soviet political and social system in general. Will present trends continue, with no major disruptions in the system? Or will dramatic discontinuities—internal upheaval and/or political backlash—occur instead? On this question, there was little consensus and even less certainty.

Some participants cautioned against extrapolating current trends too far, arguing that a degree of political and social turmoil is an inevitable by-product of systemic change, not necessarily the manifestation of systemic crisis. They pointed out that these are difficult but

also heady times in the USSR: People are taking advantage of new opportunities to press old grievances and are getting a lot off their chests. As this process runs its course, we may well see a new equilibrium emerge, embodying a societywide resolution about what the proper role of the military should be. Other participants, however, stressed the real potential for upheaval, especially the risk of instability in Eastern Europe and further upheavals in the non-Russian republics, and what they viewed as the lack of a coherent leadership strategy for dealing with such events. These factors are inherently unpredictable, but they inevitably would have serious consequences for the military, for Gorbachev, and for Gorbachev's program.

Whatever uncertainties and disagreements exist about the future, the experience of the past few years has driven home—to Soviet generals and Western analysts alike—one elemental point: The Soviet military is not hermetic, isolated from the larger social fabric within which it exists. Predictions about the future status of the military as an institution, or even about the weight of the military factor in Soviet policymaking, are hard to separate from predictions about the future of the Soviet society and polity as a whole.

Appendix
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Robert Nurick	Political Science Department
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