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November 6, 2015

Registrar: R. Worth

First-Tier Tribunal – General Regulatory Chamber: Information Rights

Re: FOI Appeal, in reply refer to Archive# 20140795BRI004/ Tribunal Reference: EA.2015.0080)

Dear Registrar,

In response to my request for the release of JIC(84)(N)45, “Soviet Union: Concern about a surprise NATO Attack,” the Cabinet Office – by letter of November 6, 2015 – makes a number of claims in favor of this document’s withholding.

I wish to make the following arguments in favor of the document’s release:

Concerning the Cabinet Office’s point 5, arguing that the “vast majority of the document’s content falls directly into the section 23(1) exemption,” it is by no means a certainty that all of the information being withheld is from an exemption 23 agency. The JIC is not listed in exemption 23, for example. While this document may include information from some bodies that are protected under exemption 23, it also includes information from agencies that are not, including, at the very least, the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence.

Regarding point 6, that the document provides “no further information of any substance capable of illuminating public understanding of the matter” and that release of the “relatively little” information would point to the content of the report that engages in the section 23 exemption, the fact remains that releasing all segregable information possible is in the public interest. The Ministry of Defence has done this with related records (<http://nuclearinfo.org/blog/peter-burt/2013/11/thirty-years-ago-nuclear-crisis-which-frightened-thatcher-and-reagan-ending>), casting doubt on the argument that a similar Cabinet Office release could confuse the public or would not be in the public interest.

Similarly, in response to point 4 that exemption 23 is an absolute exemption and does not require a public interest test, it should nonetheless occur in order to be in accordance with the spirit of open government, the UK’s FOI law, and the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010’s twenty-year-rule. Just because a document can be withheld on purely technical grounds does not mean that it should, or that the public benefit from its disclosure does not outweigh such technicalities. In fact, per its letter of July 31, 2015, the Cabinet Office itself stated that it would review the document to see if “some of the disputed information could be disclosed”, but abandoned this reasoned stance for reasons unknown.

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I would also underscore that this document is thirty-two years old and was requested in the first place because a reference to it was found at the British Archives. Treating this document as if it were a modern intelligence source, rather than the historical record that it is, is a dangerous precedent to set and not one that the Tribunal should facilitate.

The Cabinet Office's November 6, 2015, letter, containing a number of justifications for this document's withholding, should not withstand the scrutiny of the Tribunal. The Tribunal's independent review of whether the entirety of the information in this important document should be withheld is much needed.

If you have any questions, please call me at (202) 994-7000 or email me at foiamail@gwu.edu.

Sincerely,

Nate Jones
FOIA Coordinator

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October 21, 2015

Registrar: R. Worth
First-Tier Tribunal – General Regulatory Chamber: Information Rights

Re: FOI Appeal, in reply refer to Archive# 20140795BRI004/ Tribunal Reference: EA.2015.0080)

Dear Registrar,

In my October 15, 2015, appeal of the Cabinet Office's ongoing refusal to disclose any part of JIC(84)(N)45, "Soviet Union: Concern about a surprise NATO Attack," I argued that one of the factors in favor of this document's disclosure was the US Interagency Security Classification Appeals Panel's confirmation that it would release to our office a 100-page 1990 President's Intelligence Advisory Board retroactive and comprehensive report on the subject of this request.

The document was delivered to our office today, and is enclosed here for your reference. I apologize that this addition to my appeal is late, however this document is extremely important and renders entirely moot any arguments that JIC(84)(N)45 must be withheld based on intelligence sharing with the US. The declassification of the President's Intelligence Advisory Board report very likely makes public that information which the Cabinet Office is attempting to unnecessarily conceal.

If you have any questions, please call me at (202) 994-7000 or email me at foiamail@gwu.edu.

Sincerely,

Nate Jones
FOIA Coordinator

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The Soviet "War Scare"

President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board

February 15, 1990

Classified by Multiple Sources
Declassify OADR

PFIAB Control # 1-90
Copy # 3

DECLASSIFIED IN PART
PER E.O. 13526
2012-0238-MR
SCS 10/14/15

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Never, perhaps, in the postwar decades has the situation in the world been as explosive and, hence, more difficult and unfavorable as in the first half of the 1980's.

Mikhail Gorbachev
February 1986

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This document is classified ~~TOP SECRET~~/UMBRA/GAMMA/WNINTEL/
NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON in its entirety.

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Executive Summary

From the late 1970's to the mid-1980's, the military forces and intelligence services of the Soviet Union were redirected in ways that suggested that the Soviet leadership was seriously concerned about the possibility of a sudden strike launched by the United States and its NATO allies. These changes were accompanied by leadership statements -- some public, but many made in secret meetings -- arguing that the US was seeking strategic superiority in order to be able to launch a nuclear first strike. These actions and statements are often referred to as the period of the "war scare."

The changes in Soviet military and intelligence arrangements included: improvements of Warsaw Pact combat readiness (by recalling reservists, lengthening service times, increasing draft ages, and abolishing many draft deferments), an unprecedented emphasis on civil defense exercises, an end of military support for gathering the harvest (last seen prior to the 1968 Czech invasion), the forward deployment of unusual numbers of SPETSNAZ forces, increased readiness of Soviet ballistic missile submarines and forward deployed nuclear capable aircraft, massive military exercises that for the first time emphasized surviving and responding to a sudden enemy strike, a new agreement among Warsaw Pact countries that gave Soviet leaders authority in the event of an attack to unilaterally commit Pact forces, creation within the GRU of a new directorate to run networks of illegal agents abroad, an urgent KGB (and some satellite services') requirement that gave the highest priority the gathering of politico-military indicators of US/NATO preparations for a sudden nuclear attack, establishment of a special warning condition to alert Soviet forces that a surprise enemy strike using weapons of mass destruction was in progress, and the creation of a special KGB unit to manage a

computer program (the VRYAN model) that would objectively measure the correlation of forces and warn when Soviet relative strength had declined to the point that a preemptive Soviet attack might be justified.

During the November 1983 NATO "Able Archer" nuclear release exercise, the Soviets implemented military and intelligence activities that previously were seen only during actual crises. These included: placing Soviet air forces in Germany and Poland on heightened alert,

3.3(b)(3); (b)(3)

3.3(b)(3); (b)(3)

The meaning of these events obviously was of crucial importance to American and NATO policymakers. If they were simply parts of a Soviet propaganda campaign designed to intimidate the US, deter it from deploying improved weapons, and arouse US domestic opposition to foreign policy initiatives, then they would not be of crucial significance. If they reflected an internal Soviet power struggle -- for example, a contest between conservatives and pragmatists, or an effort to avoid blame for Soviet economic failures by pointing to (exaggerated) military threats -- then they could not be ignored, but they would not imply a fundamental change in Soviet strategy. But if these events were expressions of a genuine belief on the part of Soviet leaders that the US was planning a nuclear first strike, causing the Soviet military to prepare for such an eventuality -- by, for example, readying itself for a preemptive strike of its own -- then the "war scare" was a cause for real concern.

During the past year, the President's Foreign Intelligence

Advisory Board has carefully reviewed the events of that period to learn what we (the U.S. intelligence community) knew, when we knew it, and how we interpreted it. The Board has read hundreds of documents, conducted more than 75 interviews with American and British officials, and studied the series of National Intelligence Estimates (NIE's) and other intelligence assessments that have attempted over the last six years to interpret the war scare data. Additionally, we have offered our own interpretation of the war scare events.

We believe that the Soviets perceived that the correlation of forces had turned against the USSR, that the US was seeking military superiority, and that the chances of the US launching a nuclear first strike -- perhaps under cover of a routine training exercise -- were growing. We also believe that the US intelligence community did not at the time, and for several years afterwards, attach sufficient weight to the possibility that the war scare was real. As a result, the President was given assessments of Soviet attitudes and actions that understated the risks to the United States. Moreover, these assessments did not lead us to reevaluate our own military and intelligence actions that might be perceived by the Soviets as signaling war preparations.

In two separate Special National Intelligence Estimates (SNIE's) in May and August of 1984, the intelligence community said: "We believe strongly that Soviet actions are not inspired by, and Soviet leaders do not perceive, a genuine danger of imminent conflict or confrontation with the United States." Soviet statements to the contrary were judged to be "propaganda."

The Board believes that the evidence then did not, and certainly does not now, support such categoric conclusions. Even without the benefit of subsequent reporting and looking at the 1984 analysis of then available information, the tone of the intelligence judgments was not adequate to the needs of the President.

A strongly stated interpretation was defended by explaining away facts inconsistent with it and by failing to subject that interpretation to a comparative risk assessment. In time, analysts' views changed. In an annex to a February 1988 NIE, analysts declared: "During the late 1970's and early 1980's there were increasing Soviet concerns about the drift in superpower relations, which some in the Soviet leadership felt indicated an increased threat of war and increased likelihood of the use of nuclear weapons. These concerns were shaped in part by a Soviet perception that the correlation of forces was shifting against the Soviet Union and that the United States was taking steps to achieve military superiority." The Soviets' VRYAN program was evaluated as part of an effort to collect data and subject it to computer analysis in a way that would warn the USSR when the US had achieved decisive military superiority.

Reporting from a variety of 3.3(b)(1) sources, including Oleg Gordiyevskiy (a senior KGB officer who once served as second in command in the London Residency and who has since defected to Great Britain), taken as a whole, strongly indicates that there was in fact a genuine belief among key members of the Soviet leadership that the United States had embarked on a program of achieving decisive military superiority that might prompt a sudden nuclear missile attack on the USSR.

Although some details of that belief became known only recently, there was at the time evidence -- from secret directives and speeches by Soviet authorities -- that a major change in Soviet political and strategic thinking had probably occurred. For example, we knew by 1984 at the latest that a Soviet general had interpreted President Carter's PD-59 as preparing US strategic forces for a preemptive strike, that the Head of the KGB's First Chief Directorate, General Kryuchkov had told key subordinates that the KGB must work to prevent the US from launching a surprise attack, that KGB and Czechoslovak intelligence Residencies had been

tasked to gather information on US preparations for war, and that missile submarines had been placed on shortened readiness times.

Many of these facts were summarized in a memorandum from the National Intelligence Officer for Warning (NIO/W) to DCI William Casey in June 1984, a memo that Casey then forwarded to the President.

[REDACTED]

Neither the NIO/W nor the [REDACTED] altered the official position of the intelligence community as expressed in the May 1984 SNIE and as reasserted, in almost identical language, in the August 1984 SNIE.

Analysts will always have legitimate disagreements over the meaning of inevitably incomplete and uncertain intelligence reports. Moreover, part of the confidence that PFIAB has in its own assessment of the war scare derives from information not known at the time. Our purpose in presenting this report is not so much to criticize the conclusions of the 1984 SNIE's as to raise questions about the ways these estimates were made and subsequently reassessed.

In cases of great importance to the survival of our nation, and especially where there is important contradictory evidence, the Board believes that intelligence estimates must be cast in terms of alternative scenarios that are subjected to comparative risk assessments. This is the critical defect in the war scare episode. By "alternative scenarios," we mean a full statement of each major, possible interpretation of a set of intelligence indicators. In this case, these scenarios might have included the following:

1. Soviet leaders had not changed their strategic thinking but were attempting by means of propaganda and intelligence deceptions to slow the US military build-up, prevent the deployment of

new weapons, and isolate the US from its allies.

2. Soviet leaders may or may not have changed their strategic thinking, but a power struggle among Kremlin factions and the need to deflect blame for poor economic conditions made it useful to exaggerate the military intentions and capabilities of the US.

3. Soviet leaders had changed their strategic thinking and, in fact, believed that the US was attempting to gain decisive strategic superiority in order, possibly, to launch a nuclear first strike.

By "comparative risk assessment," we mean assigning two kinds of weights to each scenario: one that estimates the probability that the scenario is correct and another that assesses the risk to the United States if it wrongly rejects a scenario that is, in fact, correct.

In 1984, one might reasonably have given the highest probability of being correct to the first or second scenario (even though, as we argue in this report, we believe that would have been an error). But having done this, it would surely have been clear even then that if the third scenario was in fact correct and we acted as if it were wrong, the risks to the United States would have been very great -- greater than if we had rejected a correct first or second scenario. As it happened, the military officers in charge of the Able Archer exercise minimized this risk by doing nothing in the face of evidence that parts of the Soviet armed forces were moving to an unusual level of alert. But these officers acted correctly out of instinct, not informed guidance, for in the years leading up to Able Archer they had received no guidance as to the possible significance of apparent changes in Soviet military and political thinking.

By urging that some major estimates be based on a comparative

assessment of fully developed alternative scenarios, we are not arguing for "competitive analyses" or greater use of dissenting opinions. An intelligence estimate is not the product of a governmental debating society in which institutional rivals try to outdo one another in their display of advocacy skills. We are arguing instead for adopting the view that since it is very hard to understand the present, much less predict the future, it is a mistake to act as if we can. On the most important issues, it is difficult if not impossible to say with confidence that we know what is happening or will happen. We can, however, say that there are a small number of possibilities, each of which has a (rough) probability and each of which presents to the policymaker likely risks and opportunities.

When analysts attempt to arrive at a single strong conclusion, they not only run the risk of being wrong, they run two additional and perhaps more worrisome risks. They are likely to underestimate the possibility of change (the safest prediction is always that tomorrow will be like today) and they are likely to rely on mirror-imaging (our adversaries think the way we do). In this era of unprecedented, breakneck change, the first error grows in importance. And since we cannot know what individuals will next hold power in the USSR or when, it is an especially grave error to assume that since we know the US is not going to start World War III, the next leaders of the Kremlin will also believe that -- and act on that belief.

In short, our criticism of the 1984 SNIE's, though in part substantive, is in larger part procedural. We do not think there is any simple organizational change that will correct that procedure. If strategic intelligence estimates are to give policymakers a better sense of risks and opportunities, it will only happen if policymakers insist that that is what they want and refuse to accept anything less.

This review of the war scare period also suggests another lesson. It is quite clear to the Board that during the critical years when the Kremlin was reassessing US intentions, the US intelligence community did not react quickly to or think deeply about the early signs of that change. The war scare indicators began appearing in the early 1980's; the first estimate to address this was not written until 1984. At the time it was written, the US knew very little about Kremlin decisionmaking.

33(b)(1)

the SNIE authors wrote confidently about "Soviet leadership intentions."

We recommend that the National Security Council oversee a reassessment of the intelligence community's understanding of Soviet military and political decisionmaking, both in general terms and in light of the judgments made in the 1984 estimates. Our own leadership needs far better intelligence reporting on and assessments of the mindset of the Soviet leadership -- its ideological/political instincts and perceptions. As part of this reassessment, it should exploit the current opening in the Iron Curtain to interview past and present East Bloc and Soviet officials about the sources and consequences of the war scare in order to obtain a better understanding of the perceptions and inner conflicts of Soviet decisionmakers.

Finally, we suggest that the US review the way in which it manages military exercises, its own intelligence collection efforts,

3.3(b)(1)

33(b)(1)

to insure that these are carried out in a way that is responsive to indications and warning for war.

In 1983 we may have inadvertently placed our relations with the Soviet Union on a hair trigger. Though the current thaw in US-Soviet relations suggests that neither side is likely in the near

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term to reach for that trigger, events are moving so fast that it would be unwise to assume that Soviet leaders will not in the future act, from misunderstanding or malevolence, in ways that puts the peace in jeopardy.

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PART I US HANDLING OF THE "WAR SCARE": THE
ESTIMATIVE PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

The Board has divided its presentation into two parts. The first (Part One) deals with a review of what the US (and the British) thought about the war scare both at the time and subsequently. It also summarizes some of the key characteristics of the estimative process and offers our conclusions for improvement. The second half (Part Two) summarizes the evidence that leads to the conclusion that the Soviet leadership genuinely developed a "war scare" in the early 1980's. We believe this to be a plausible version of events based upon new information as well as a reconsideration of evidence known then. Inevitably, there is some duplication between the two parts, but this is necessary in order to tell the story in an orderly way.

Part One, then, is a summation of what we knew, when we knew it, and how we interpreted it. It is not a competitive estimate. Rather than catalog the actual events in detail, we chose to summarize them and to focus instead on how the intelligence community reacted, as manifested in its analysis. Our conclusions mirror our profound dismay at what we believe to be the intelligence community's single largest failing -- the failure to provide policymakers with an adequate understanding of the risks and consequences associated with alternate scenarios involving uncertain events of grave import.

There were many other directions that we, given unlimited time, would have liked to embark. Intelligence issues that impacted upon our review of the war scare are identified in the

final section of Part One. We regret that these important issues received short shrift; we encourage a complete review of them so that US indications and warning might be improved as we enter into the evermore complex, polycentric, and uncertain 1990's.

EARLY PERCEPTIONS OF THE SOVIET "WAR SCARE"

As the Carter years wound to a close, America's bilateral relationship with the USSR was on the downswing from the earlier detente. The Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan brought bitter NATO condemnation, and SALT II languished unratified. As the new Republican Administration took up the reins, President Reagan announced in his State of the Union speech a major peacetime military buildup. By May 1981, the "era of self-doubt," personified by the failed Iran hostage rescue attempt, had ended. United States foreign policy took on a new assertiveness: President Reagan declared that arms control treaties were no substitute for military preparedness and characterized the Soviet Union as an "evil force," the antithesis of the US. Soviet meddling in Afghanistan, Poland, Central America, and elsewhere increasingly proved a constant irritant to the new Administration, and seemed only to reinforce its "get tough" posture.

Recriminations flew between Moscow and Washington, and relations continued to slide. As the Administration settled into its first term, an intense "war scare" theme began to emerge in the Soviet media and in private fora, accompanied by anomalous and often provocative USSR behavior.

At first, such activity was easily dismissed as predictable Soviet responses to US efforts to deploy INF missiles in Europe in order to counter Soviet SS-20's and to modernize its strategic and conventional forces. United States officials understandably were suspicious of Soviet motivations as Washington struggled to gain public support in Western Europe and in the US for these force

improvements.¹

In 1983, Soviet rhetoric had sharpened. Moscow had accused President Reagan and his advisors of "madness," "extremism," and "criminality" in the conduct of relations with the USSR. The United States was portrayed as a nation singularly pursuing a first-strike nuclear capability as a prelude to eradicating communism. Westerners, including some well-known experts on the Soviet Union, reported alarming conversations with Soviet citizens and officials that indicated a large portion of the Soviet population believed nuclear war was dangerously close. As diplomatic relations ebbed to near a postwar low, US analysts attributed Soviet anxieties and belligerence to a number of factors: initiation of INF deployments; a strong US posture in the START talks; US action in Grenada; deployment of Marines in Lebanon; US aid to insurgencies against Soviet client regimes; the Reagan Administration's perceived political "exploitation" of the KAL shootdown; and the Administration's perceived unwillingness to acknowledge the legitimacy of the Soviet regime or to treat the Kremlin with the "superpower" deference it desired.²

Moreover, US analysts concluded that certain developments could have heightened Moscow's uncertainties about its long-term geostrategic position:

- o A possible adverse shift in the overall strategic balance, precipitated by resolute US moves to significantly bolster its strategic posture as well as its conventional capabilities.

¹US officials detected a vigorous Soviet "active measures" campaign intended to thwart US strategic objectives.

²Grey Hodnett's memorandum of Dec. 22, 1983, entitled "Soviet Thinking on the Possibility of Armed Confrontation with the United States," Foreign Policy Issues Branch, Policy Analysis Division, Office of Soviet Analysis, Central Intelligence Agency.

o The perceived lower priority accorded by the Reagan Administration to arms control negotiations, as "evidenced" by its unwillingness to accommodate Soviet interests and its apparent intention to proceed with weapons programs Moscow may have thought were on hold.

o The end of the "Vietnam syndrome" and readiness of Washington to use force once again in the Third World, either by supporting insurgencies against Soviet client regimes, as in Nicaragua, or acting directly, as in Lebanon and Grenada.³

Although US analysts aptly identified signs of emotional and paranoid Soviet behavior and offered an analysis of the potential causes, they reasoned that Moscow was fundamentally concerned not about any hypothetical near-term US nuclear attack, but about possible shifts in the strategic balance five-to-ten years hence. It was easy to distrust the USSR, they reasoned, because Soviet leaders had many plausible motives for trying to cleverly manipulate Western perceptions:

o To foster the "peace movement" in Western Europe so as to derail INF deployments and encourage neutrality within NATO.

o To portray President Reagan as an incompetent warmonger so as to deepen cleavages among nations in the West.

o To increase public pressure in the United States for providing a more conciliatory posture toward the USSR via lower defense spending, arms control concessions, and less "interventionist" policies.

Analysts also estimated that, for the Soviets, the Reagan Administration was the "least loved of any US Administration since

³Ibid.

that of President Truman." It would be just like them to try to "undercut the President's reelection prospects."⁴ Thus, the abnormal, emotional Soviet behavior could be, and was, viewed essentially in political terms in minor analytical products.

At the same time, US analysts often tended to characterize Soviet leadership decisionmaking as rational, even omnipotent. United States intelligence clearly did not have sufficient sources to derive a precise picture of the Kremlin's decisionmaking process, nor did it have a thorough understanding of the aging leadership's strengths and weaknesses. United States analysts, nevertheless, described Soviet policy as "driven by prudent calculation of interests and dogged pursuit of long-term objectives, even in the face of great adversity, rather than by sudden swells of fear or anger." Furthermore, analysts concluded that, "However disturbed Soviet policymakers might be by the Reagan Administration, they also have a sense of the USSR's strengths and of [US] vulnerabilities . . . the perception from the Kremlin is by no means one of unrelieved gloom." Moscow's economic problems, while described as "taut," were judged not likely to deter them from accelerating the pace of military spending to challenge the US.⁵

Undeterred by what was termed the "Soviet propaganda campaign" and very concerned about the threat posed by the large numbers of SS-20 deployments, America continued to firm up her defenses by, for example, deploying cruise missiles and Pershings in Europe, adopting a forward-based military strategy, embarking on a path of force modernization and improved readiness, and invigorating a strong "continuity in government" strategy designed to protect US leadership during a nuclear exchange.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

As the second Reagan/Bush campaign swung into high gear, US intelligence analysts began to compile solid evidence from within the Soviet bureaucracy of growing concern about nuclear war:

- o In a briefing to Soviet and East European officials in the fall of 1983, a Soviet diplomat warned that the world was on the brink of war.

- o Immediately following Brezhnev's death, KGB and GRU Residencies in Soviet missions abroad received orders to monitor US installations for indications of US military mobilization.

- o Shortly after the second inauguration, Moscow enjoined KGB Residencies worldwide to work to detect any sign that the United States and its allies were about to unleash a first strike on the USSR. Already in mid-1981, reporting on possible US preparations to launch a first strike had been added to KGB collection requirements worldwide. In early 1983, Moscow warned KGB residencies that the United States was positioning itself for war.

- o In early 1983, Soviet military intelligence, the GRU, created a new directorate to organize and manage "illegal" agent networks worldwide. The urgency of this move reportedly reflected perceptions of an increased threat of war. 3.3(b)(1)

3.3(b)(1) working-level officers treated the subject of wartime confrontation seriously, because they believed war could break out at any moment. 3.3(b)(1)

3.3(b)(1) while preparedness for war was not a new notion, it had taken on a sense of urgency not seen in the past. Directives from GRU Headquarters constantly reminded field elements to prepare for war. As a result, all Residency operations were geared to work under both peacetime and wartime conditions.

- o 3.3(b)(1)

^{3.3(b)(1)} [redacted] had been tasked with obtaining information on a major NATO exercise (believed to be Able Archer 83). This order reportedly followed from a high-priority requirement ^{3.3(b)(1)} [redacted] by Moscow a year before to look for any indication of US preparations for a nuclear first strike. Warsaw Pact leaders reportedly were convinced that the Reagan Administration was actively preparing for nuclear war and was capable of launching such an attack. [redacted]

^{3.3(b)(1)} [redacted]

By the fall of 1983, the beat of Soviet "war scare" drums was almost lost in the cacophony of the international thunderstorm. Massive demonstrations erupted in Germany and other NATO countries to protest the INF deployments. The Soviets shot down KAL-007; the Marine barracks in Beirut was bombed; and the US invaded Grenada.

Against this backdrop, NATO held its annual command post exercise to practice nuclear release procedures in early November, 1983. This recurring exercise, known as Able Archer, included NATO forces from Turkey to England. Although past Able Archer exercises were monitored by Soviet intelligence, the reaction by Warsaw Pact military forces and intelligence services to the 1983 exercise was unprecedented. Air armies in East Germany and Poland were placed on alert. ^{3.3(b)(3); (b)(3)} [redacted]

^{3.3(b)(3); (b)(3)} [redacted]

At the same time, the Soviets conducted significantly more reconnaissance flights than in previous years, and sent special intelligence requirements to KGB

and GRU Residencies in western countries to report any unusual military activity that might signal an impending NATO surprise attack.

This abnormal Soviet behavior to the annual, announced Able Archer 83 exercise sounded no alarm bells in the US Indications and Warning system. United States commanders on the scene were not aware of any pronounced superpower tension, and the Soviet activities were not seen in their totality until long after the exercise was over. For example, while the US detected a "heightened readiness" among some Soviet air force divisions, the extent of the alert as well [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(3); (b)(3)

[REDACTED] 3.3(b)(3); (b)(3) was not known until two weeks had passed after the completion of the exercise. The Soviet air force standdown had been in effect for nearly a week before fully armed MIG-23 aircraft were noted on air defense alert in East Germany.

There were plenty of reasons why the Soviet military response to Able Archer was missed; there was no context by which to judge the behavior. First, Moscow's "war scare" activity was not yet the focus of intelligence or policy attention. Additionally, Soviet intelligence requirements against the exercise, [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1)

[REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) were not learned until long [REDACTED] Moreover, the air standdown was not at first perceived abnormally because it occurred during the Soviet Revolution holiday; about midway through the exercise, [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(3); (b)(3)

[REDACTED] Despite the late-developing information, the intelligence community evaluated the Soviet response as unusual but not militarily significant. Analysts reasoned that more indicators should have been detected if the Soviets were seriously concerned about a NATO

attack.⁶

But beyond the puzzling Soviet reaction to the Able Archer 83 exercise, US analysts, by spring of 1984, had also detected a clear trend: Soviet forces, over the past decade, had "made an effort to respond more rapidly to the threat of war and to develop the capability to manage all aspects of a nuclear war."⁷ In fact, Soviet exercise activity in 1983 highlighted "the continued testing of concepts necessary for avoiding surprise attack" Common to all these exercises were the themes of continued concern over force readiness and vulnerability to attack; ensuring that dispersal and launch orders were complied with; and testing what previously had been paper or small-scale wartime concepts under actual operational conditions using larger numbers of forces. Analysts estimated that the attainment of the above objectives could increase the Soviet military's capability to respond quickly to an enemy surprise attack or launch an attack of their own.

BRITISH ASSESSMENT

By March, 1984, the issue of the war scare broke into Allied relationships.

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⁶In fact, a potentially dangerous analytic assumption was also apparently at work. Despite indications of increased readiness with some units, other units upon which no positive intelligence existed regarding readiness were assumed to have not increased readiness.

⁷SNIE 11-10-84 "Implications of Recent Military-Political Activities."

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Despite -- or perhaps because of -- its disturbing message,

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the ^{3.3(b)(1)} report was not well received in the US intelligence community ^{3.3(b)(1)}

^{3.3(b)(1)} Additionally, some officials in the British Ministry of Defense were also skeptical.

The British Foreign Ministry, however, was sure that something was amiss. The British Ambassador to the US paid a visit to the State Department's Under Secretary for Political Affairs, Lawrence Eagleburger, to discuss the issue. But according to the responsible briefing official from State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), INR's position at the time (and thus State's position) was that the Soviets were pursuing a massive propaganda campaign. The INR officer presented to Eagleburger a skeptical version of events, designed, in his words, to "discourage the British." The British case apparently was not helped by the Ambassador's presentation; he was not entirely clear about events, and his intelligence aide most familiar with the war scare was out of country. There was even suspicion in some American quarters that the Foreign Office was simply capitalizing on a good political occasion to force President Reagan to tone down his rhetoric and delay deployments of the INF missiles. Thus, the Foreign Office's expressions of worry fell on deaf ears.

US PERCEPTIONS ENTRENCHED

In May 1984, US intelligence addressed for the first time in a national estimate the possibility that the Soviets were fearful of a preemptive first US nuclear strike -- a full six months after the Able Archer NATO exercise. Despite the evidence of secret directives and speeches by Soviet authorities to prepare for sudden nuclear attack and of unique Soviet military activities,

^{3.3(b)(1)}

the issue was not treated as an evolutionary process. In fact, several intelligence officers told the Board that the estimate was undertaken essentially to explain a series of short-term abnormal events, rather than to examine the accumulated long-term reporting on the war scare. In the estimate's "Key Judgments," the intelligence community noted, "During the past several months, a number of coincident Soviet activities have created concern that they reflect abnormal Soviet fear of conflict with the United States, belligerent intent that might risk conflict, or some other underlying Soviet purpose." The "coincident" activities consisted of:

- o Large-scale military exercises -- including a major naval exercise in the Norwegian Sea, unprecedented SS-20 launch activity, and large-scale SSBN dispersal;
- o Preparations for air operations against Afghanistan;
- o Attempts to change the air corridor regime in Berlin;
- o New military measures described as responsive to NATO INF deployments; and
- o Shrill propaganda attributing a heightened danger of war to US behavior.

United States analysts categorically concluded: "We believe strongly that Soviet actions are not inspired by, and Soviet leaders do not perceive, a genuine danger of imminent conflict or confrontation with the United States. This judgment is based on the absence of force-wide combat readiness or other war preparation moves in the USSR, and the absence of a tone of fear or belligerence

3.3(b)(3); (b)(3)

(Underlining added.)⁹ The estimate boldly declared that "Recent Soviet war scare propaganda . . . is aimed primarily at discrediting US policies and mobilizing 'peace' pressures among various audiences abroad." In a more piecemeal fashion, it was judged that "Each Soviet action has its own military or political purpose sufficient to explain it." The accelerated tempo of Soviet live exercise activity was explained simply as a reflection of "long-term Soviet military objectives."

The Soviet reaction to Able Archer 83 was dismissed as a "counterexercise," but analysts acknowledged that the "elaborate Soviet reaction" was "somewhat greater than usual." 3.3(b)(1)

3.3(b)(1)

3.3(b)(1)
the Warsaw Pact intelligence services, especially the KGB, were admonished "to look for any indication that the United States was about to launch a first nuclear strike," analysts concluded that "by confining heightened readiness to selected air units, Moscow clearly revealed that it did not, in fact, think there was a possibility at this time of a NATO attack." The assessment, however, was not specific about what type of defensive or precautionary Soviet activity might be expected -- and detected -- were they preparing for an offensive NATO move. (Some intelligence officials have since told us that the West could very well have been witnessing a careful, deliberate Soviet defensive posturing designed to achieve improved readiness for attack, while not simultaneously escalating tensions.)

As for leadership instability, again analysts rejected the hypothesis that weak central leadership could account for Soviet actions. While acknowledging that either a Soviet military or

⁹The commentary did note that 3.3(b)(1); 3.3(b)(3); (b)(3)
3.3(b)(1); 3.3(b)(3); (b)(3) but neglected to explain that we had not seen a "force-wide" Soviet alert since World War II.

hard-line foreign policy faction could possibly exert more influence on a weak Chernenko, the experts concluded that this was not, in fact, happening. It is unclear what evidence for this conclusion was used, since the estimate admitted that there was inadequate information on "the current mind-set of the Soviet political leadership" and on "the ways in which military operations and foreign policy tactics may be influenced by political differences and the policy process in the Kremlin."

Finally, analysts dismissed [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) on the war scare, including the KGB's formal tasking to its Residencies. "This war scare propaganda has reverberated in Soviet security bureaucracies and emanated through other channels [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) We do not believe it reflects authentic leadership fears of imminent conflict." Instead, analysts viewed the Soviet talk about increased likelihood of nuclear war, as well as military actions, as designed to speak "with a louder voice" and show "firmness through a controlled display of muscle." Such judgments were made even though the analysis was tempered "by some uncertainty as to current Soviet leadership perceptions of the United States, by continued uncertainty about the Politburo decisionmaking processes, and by our inability at this point to conduct a detailed examination of how the Soviets might have assessed recent US/NATO military exercises and reconnaissance operations" -- which, of course, included the previous Able Archer exercise. In other words, US analysts were unsure of what the Kremlin leadership thought or how it made decisions, nor had they adequately assessed the Soviet reaction to Able Archer 83. This notwithstanding, the estimate concluded: "We are confident that, as of now, the Soviets see not an imminent military clash but a costly and -- to some extent -- more perilous strategic and political struggle over the rest of the decade."

But these bets were hedged. Deep in the body of the assess-

ment, analysts conceded: "It is conceivable that the stridency of Soviet 'war scare' propaganda reflects a genuine Soviet worry about a near-future attack on them. This concern could be inspired by Soviet views about the depth of anti-Soviet intentions in Washington combined with elements of their own military doctrine projected onto the United States, such as the virtues of surprise, striking first, and masking hostile initiatives in exercises. Some political and military leaders have stressed the danger of war more forcefully than others, suggesting that there may have been differences on this score -- or at least how to talk about the issue -- over the past half year."

AN ALTERNATIVE OPINION

One month later, in June 1984, DCI Casey sent to the President a memorandum with a differing view of events. Uncertain whether the Soviets were preparing for a crisis or merely trying to influence events in the United States, Casey attached "a rather stunning array of indicators" of an "increasing aggressiveness in Soviet policy and activities." Prepared by the DCI's National Warning Staff, the events studied were described as "longer term" than those considered in the May NIE. In the Warning Staff's view, "the Soviets have concluded that the danger of war is greater and will grow with additional INF emplacements and that the reduced warning time inherent in Pershing II has lowered Soviet confidence in their ability to warn of sudden attack. These perceptions, perhaps driven by a building US defense budget, new initiatives in continental defense, improvements in force readiness, and a potentially massive space defense program may be propelling the USSR to take national readiness measures at a deliberate pace."

The indicators of abnormal Soviet behavior ranged in scope from domestic to international. They included:

- o Preparing Soviet citizens for war through civil defense activities and media broadcasts;
- o Tightening of security procedures against Westerners, such as increased travel restrictions and isolation from the Bloc populace;
- o Conducting political harassment;
- o Improving military logistic systems;
- o Shifting the economy more toward a wartime footing, such as terminating military support to the harvest, converting farm tractor plants to tank production, and reducing commercial aircraft production in favor of military transports;
- o Conducting out-of-the-ordinary military activities, such as delaying troop rotations, increasing deployments of SPETSNAZ forces, and expanding reservist call-ups, as well as extending active duty tours; and
- o Promulgating extraordinary intelligence directives for the purpose of warning.

Casey advised: "It is important to distinguish in this category those acts which are political blustering and those which may be, but also carry large costs . . . The military behaviors we have observed involve high military costs in terms of vulnerability of resources for the sake of improved national military power, or enhanced readiness at the price of consumer discontent, or enhanced readiness at the price of troop dissatisfaction. None of these are trivial costs, adding thereby a dimension of genuineness to the Soviet expressions of concern that is often not reflected in intelligence issuances."

According to former National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane, President Reagan expressed surprise upon reading the Casey memorandum and described the events as "really scary." However, McFarlane himself was less convinced. He questioned Soviet motivations and wondered if their actions were part of an effort to drive a wedge in Europe to counter the Administration's SDI objectives. He also found it difficult to believe that the Soviets could actually fear a nuclear strike from the US, since he knew how preposterous that was. McFarlane wondered, if the war scare was real, why had the Soviets not raised it through diplomatic channels in Washington? (Yet, even the President's own personal emissary dispatched to Moscow months earlier with a message for Chernenko was frozen out of the Kremlin.)

On the other hand, McFarlane was "concerned" about reporting he had received from US citizens returning from the Soviet Union during the early 1980's. Many of them told of extreme Soviet paranoia over US intentions. In fact, one close friend who had visited Moscow said that the Soviets spoke of "going to general quarters" during the 1983 to 1984 time frame. McFarlane expressed surprise to us about the November 1983 Able Archer exercise; he could remember hearing nothing about it, including the Soviet 33(b)(3);(b)(3) during his tenure at the National Security Council. (No President's Daily Brief during this period mentioned it either.)

In a memorandum to Director Casey in June 1984, McFarlane called for a new intelligence estimate that would develop hypotheses to "anticipate potential Soviet political or military challenges during the coming six months." Clearly, the Administration viewed the indicators of unusual Soviet activity in the context of "the utility to the Soviets of interfering in various geographic trouble spots." One month later, the Casey memorandum of indicators was leaked to the Washington Times. It was fully reported as "Russia at high level of battle readiness."

The following day, the Washington Times reported on a controversial split of opinion within military and intelligence circles over the significance of the Soviet behavior, saying CIA officials tended to downplay it.

THE REBUTTAL

Some officials on the National Intelligence Council were upset over the Casey memorandum. After all, they had just addressed the war scare in May through a fully coordinated SNIE that determined it was purely "propaganda." The Casey memorandum was not coordinated, refuted the SNIE, and yet had received Presidential attention.

By August 1984, the estimate called for by McFarlane was completed. Entitled "Soviet Policy Toward the United States in 1984," it was far more comprehensive than he initially requested. A "central concern" of the estimate was "the possibility of major Soviet initiatives to influence the November election," since "the motivation for Soviet policy . . . lies in the perception that the . . . current [US] Administration is a more consistently hostile opponent of the USSR's interests and aspirations than it has faced in many years." Thus, the Soviets could be expected to "combat and, if possible, deflect US policies, and create a more permissive environment in which Soviet relative military power and world influence can continue to grow."

The war scare, characterized in the SNIE as "hostile propaganda, which blames the United States for an increased danger of war and for diplomatic rigidity . . . is used to put the US Administration on the defensive where possible and to excite opposition to Washington's policies." In fact, such hostility toward the West was judged to serve Soviet leaders conveniently for "exhorting greater discipline, sacrifice, and vigilance on the Soviet home front" Analysts were, again, categoric in

their conclusion: "We strongly believe that Soviet actions are not inspired by, and Soviet leaders do not perceive, a genuine danger of imminent conflict or confrontation with the United States. Also, we do not believe that Soviet war talk and other actions 'mask' Soviet preparations for an imminent move toward confrontation on the part of the USSR." (Underlining added.)

While acknowledging that "there may be debates among Soviet leaders about tactics toward the United States," analysts asserted that "current Soviet policy . . . is based on consensus in the Politburo." In fact, there was "indirect evidence of Soviet leadership debate over future policy direction, largely in the form of varying lines on the danger of war. . . ." The estimate admonished that such debates should not be taken to indicate sharp controversy in the Politburo because "showdown situations" were avoided in order to protect the Kremlin's hold on power. Gorbachev was lumped with Romanov, Ogarkov, and Ligachev as differing "from their elders only in the belief that they can pursue traditional Soviet aims more skillfully and successfully at home and abroad."

Analysts readily acknowledged that the previous six months had seen extraordinary, unprecedented Soviet activities. Large scale military exercises, "anomalous behavior" during the troop rotation, withdrawn military support for the harvest (last seen prior to the 1968 Czech invasion), new, deployed weapons systems (termed "in response to INF deployments"), and heightened internal vigilance and security activities were noted. These events, however, were judged to be "in line with long-evolving plans and patterns, rather than with sharp acceleration of preparations for a major war."

The NIE authors professed high confidence in the intelligence community's ability to detect widespread logistics, supply, and defense-economic preparations obligated by Soviet war doctrine and

operational requirements. Such indicators, they insisted, were noteworthy by their absence. In seeming contradiction, however, the authors pointed out that US strategic warning indicators and methodologies are oriented toward providing "warning of war within a short period of time; at most, one to two months." But, "because we give less emphasis to defense-economic and other home front measures that might provide strategic warning . . . and because a pattern of such activities is inherently difficult to detect in their early stages . . . we have less confidence in longer range warning based on military and defense-related activities alone." Nonetheless, the authors asserted that, even without the capability to detect such indicators, the developments in Soviet foreign and domestic affairs made it "very unlikely" that they were preparing for a war. Both NSA and National Warning Staff officials confirmed to us recently that US technical systems in particular were not, in fact, tuned to long-range military, economic, and defense-related activities at the time.

The estimate concluded with a list of indicators detected at the time that strongly suggested unusual Pact military activity. Nearly all of them were dismissed as explainable for ordinary reasons. The Board did not conduct a retrospective of each indicator but we believe that such a review would prove useful to the continued validation of the assessment. We believe that some of the explanations given at the time will be found to be mistaken. For example, the estimate explained the appearance of high-level Warsaw Pact command posts in 1984 as part of a one-time exercise. The command posts remained in operation, however, long after the estimate was published and the exercise was completed.

In reviewing both estimates, the Board was struck by how categorical and unqualified were the judgments made about the likelihood of the war scare, particularly given the extremely important consequences of those assessments. In fact, the NIO for Warning in 1984 made the same point in his commentary on the draft

August estimate. Although unable procedurally to comment in the estimate itself, he sent a memorandum to the NIE drafter arguing:

3.3(b)(1)



This episode highlights a latent conflict between Soviet analysts and warning specialists. Most intelligence officers involved in the warning process are not necessarily trained Soviet experts; indeed, the staff tends to come from a military pool for a two-year rotational assignment. Within the intelligence community, an assignment to the Warning Staff has not always been viewed as career-enhancing. Disputes with geographic or other "substantive" analysts are often not resolved in favor of the warning officers. We have been told by senior intelligence officials that the problem of establishing credibility for warning experts, particularly in the Soviet affairs arena, is one that is

recognized but not solved easily.¹⁰ Conversely, Sovietologists are not often likely to have a deep grounding in warning issues.

NEW INFORMATION

The Board found that after the 1984 assessments were issued, the intelligence community did not again address the war scare until after the defection to Great Britain of KGB Colonel Oleg Gordiyevskiy in July, 1985. Gordiyevskiy had achieved the rank of Acting Resident in the United Kingdom, but he fell under suspicion as a Western agent. Recalled to the Soviet Union, he was placed under house arrest and intensely interrogated. Able to flee his watchers, Gordiyevskiy was exfiltrated from Moscow by the British Secret Intelligence Service.

During lengthy debriefing sessions that followed, Gordiyevskiy supplied a fuller report on the Soviet war hysteria. This report, complete with documentation from KGB Headquarters and entitled "KGB Response to Soviet Leadership Concern over US Nuclear Attack," was first disseminated in a restricted manner within the US intelligence community in October, 1985. Gordiyevskiy described the extraordinary KGB collection plan, initiated in 1981, to look for signs that the US would conduct a surprise nuclear attack on the Soviet Union. He identified and reviewed the factors driving leadership fears. Based on the perception that the US was achieving a strategic advantage, those in the Kremlin were said to believe that the US was likely to resort to nuclear weapons much earlier in a crisis than previously expected. They also were concerned that the US might seek to exploit its first-strike capability outside the

¹⁰We note that the National Warning Staff does tend to view events with a long-range perspective. Clearly, we believe this to be an asset in evaluating the Soviet war scare.

context of a crisis, probably during a military exercise. He described the leadership's worries of a "decapitating" strike from the Pershing II's, and its belief that the US could mobilize for a surprise attack in a mere seven to ten days. He explained how the London Residency responded to the requirements, and the effects that reporting had back at Moscow Center in reinforcing Soviet fears. He described conversations he had held with colleagues from Center and from the GRU. The next month, President Reagan held his first summit with Mikhail Gorbachev and relations began to thaw.

PERCEPTIONS EVOLVE

Some in the intelligence community have argued that the war scare was a massive Soviet propaganda and deception campaign that not only included attempts to manipulate public opinions but intelligence community perceptions as well. Central to this theory is that the Soviets intended for secret intelligence directives -- like the taskings sent from Moscow Center to London Residency -- to become known to the US. In July 1985, a National Intelligence Estimate entitled "Denial and Deception in Soviet Strategic Military Programs: Implications for US Security" (NIE 11-11-85), however, dashed cold water on this assumption. Analysts judged: "We strongly doubt that the Soviets intended for official documents to reach intelligence sources." Further, Soviet reliance on verbal disclosures of secret communications was also judged unlikely: "The uncertainty of the potential for such disclosures . . . combined with the lack of control over timing and content probably would have led the Soviets to conclude that such a device represents an unreliable means of communicating with the West." The estimate concluded that, "The intelligence directives probably represent efforts by the Soviet intelligence services to respond to concerns of Soviet leaders that since at least 1980 worsening relations with the United States increased the danger of war."

Although Gordiyevskiy's reporting remained closely held, by June 1986, assessments giving more credence to the legitimacy of the war scare began to surface in intelligence products.¹¹ By August, the Washington Post broke Gordiyevskiy's story to the American public.¹² The article quoted informed sources as saying that many high-level officials with extensive experience in East-West relations were still unaware of Gordiyevskiy's information. It maintained that many Western specialists, some with access to the Gordiyevskiy material, attributed Soviet anxieties in the early 1980's to genuine apprehension about Reagan Administration policies and to a tactical decision to exploit that concern through propaganda channels. The CIA then downgraded and re-released the Gordiyevskiy material. Despite the public disclosure and the broader circulation of Gordiyevskiy's material within government channels, the issue remained strangely dormant as a national intelligence topic.

Other [REDACTED] sources supported Gordiyevskiy's reporting. Perhaps the most important [REDACTED] information on the war scare became available in the spring of 1987. [REDACTED] a KGB computer model called VRYAN (meaning Sudden Nuclear Missile Attack), and how it was used as a tool to predict US strategic intentions in the early 1980's. At the same time, [REDACTED] the accompanying Pact-wide emphasis on collecting strategic intelligence against the US, including efforts to enhance illegal agent operations to detect US plans for a surprise nuclear attack. [REDACTED] the seemingly improbable, but apparently widespread, Soviet belief that the US leadership would attack first to a deeply-seated Soviet fear of foreign invasion.

¹¹Warsaw Pact Military Perceptions of NATO Nuclear Initiation, CIA Intelligence Assessment.

¹²Defector told of Soviet Alert, Aug 6, by Murrey Marder.

3.3(b)(1)

CIA's

Science and Weapons Daily Review in which analysts declared: "We believe that the existence of the VRYAN model is likely and that it may have contributed to a 'war scare' in the Soviet Government from 1981 until about 1985."

BUT DOUBTS REMAIN . . .

Conflicting opinions on the validity of the war scare continued to rage within the intelligence community. Analysts stated in the NIE entitled "Soviet Forces and Capabilities for Strategic Nuclear Conflict Through the Late 1990's" (11/3-8) issued in December, 1987: "Taking all the evidence into consideration, we judge that some leaders may have become more concerned in the early 1980's that the United States had lowered the threshold somewhat for nuclear escalation, but that the top leaders on the whole did not believe a surprise nuclear attack on the West in peacetime had become a serious prospect." The authors made clear their views of the war scare: ". . . the attempted manipulation . . . is highly disturbing as an indication of the potential for irresponsible behavior by some prominent Soviet leaders in dealing with the grave issue of nuclear war." (Underlining added.) Moreover, the authors repeated phrases from their earlier estimates, including one in 1984. They said that the Soviets were confident that the open nature of US society made "unlikely" a successful US surprise strike. Analysts' assessments then of Soviet leaders belief on the survivability of their strategic forces differs markedly from recent analysis of the same period (see Part Two, page 46). In fact, analysts at the time assessed that the Soviets had confidence that their forces would be capable of mounting massive retaliatory strikes after a US surprise attack -- an interpretation now viewed to have been probably erroneous.

THE LAST WORD

By 1988, the intelligence community had received reporting -- in some detail -- on Soviet fears of a surprise US strike during the early 1980's from [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1)

[REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) A new assessment was evident in a NIE (Soviet Intelligence Capabilities [NIE 11-21-88]) that clearly accepted the validity of the reporting on VRYAN. While acknowledging that available information was incomplete, the community said, "We consider the information we have to be reliable" and "consistent." In providing a comprehensive analysis of the VRYAN program, the estimate made explicit its view of leadership involvement in the war scare and of the Kremlin-KGB relationship: "It is essential to note . . . that the VRYAN collection requirement resulted from high-level political concern, and was not solely an intelligence initiative."

As for the VRYAN computer model, the authors said: "KGB analysts working on VRYAN operated under the premise that the United States, when it had decisive overall superiority, might be inclined to launch an attack on the Soviet Union. In light of this assumption and because the program was supposed to determine, in a quantifiable way, when such a situation might be approaching, they believed it could provide strategic warning when the USSR was in a critically weak position relative to the United States, and conditions therefore were potentially conducive to a US attack. These views reflected a widespread Soviet belief that definitive US superiority over the Soviet Union was inherently unstable." The authors also believed that ". . . it is possible that the results of this analysis [from the VRYAN computer model] themselves were a factor in the air of immediacy surrounding KGB Headquarters' concern over the possibility of a US surprise nuclear strike."

However, this estimate received extremely limited dissemina-

tion. Access to the publication was strictly need to know: this was the first estimate of its kind, and US assessments of Soviet intelligence capabilities would be of keen interest to the KGB. Moreover, the discussion of the VRYAN program was contained in an annex that was even more tightly controlled than the estimate itself.

The more widely disseminated and most recent edition of NIE 11/3-8 ("Soviet Forces and Capabilities for Strategic Nuclear Conflict Through the Late 1990's," issued in December of 1988) failed to reflect the presumably changed community position. While this edition acknowledged that Soviet intelligence services had been tasked to look for indications of US preparations for a surprise nuclear attack, it nonetheless echoed doubts expressed in earlier publications: "Soviet leaders failed in any event to take certain precautionary measures that would appear to have been an appropriate response to such a situation." It did note, however, under the section entitled "Soviet Concern Over a US Surprise Attack From a Peacetime Posture," that "in a mid-1980's Soviet classified military discussion," Soviet expectations of a crisis stage were "described as potentially being as short as a few hours." This marked a change in normal expectation stages from several days to months.

THE RECORD MUDDIED

The last, most definitive intelligence community word on the Soviet war scare seemed destined to languish in an annex to a National Intelligence Estimate on Soviet intelligence capabilities that was unintended for policymakers' eyes. However, in January 1989, former DIA Director, Lieutenant General Leonard Perroots, sent -- as his parting shot before retirement -- a letter outlining his disquiet over the inadequate treatment of the Soviet war scare to, among others, the DCI and this Board. General Perroots personally experienced the war scare as Assistant Chief

of Staff for Intelligence, US Air Forces Europe, during the 1983 Able Archer exercise. Following the detection of the Soviet Air Forces' increased alert status, it was his recommendation, made in ignorance, not to raise US readiness in response -- a fortuitous, if ill-informed, decision given the changed political environment at the time.

The Board was puzzled by the intelligence community's response to the Perroots letter. In March, 1989, the National Intelligence Council (NIC) sent a memorandum to the DCI that seemed to reflect unresolved opinions. In the covering note, the Chairman of the NIC acknowledged that the 1984 SNIE on the war scare concluded "while Moscow was very unhappy with Ronald Reagan's policies, it was not gearing up for a military confrontation." Expressing his personal view, he said: "the failing here was not grave." However, the "thoroughly researched" commentary that followed portrayed the judgments of the May and August 1984 SNIE's -- which downplayed the war scare -- as synonymous ("reached the same broad conclusions") with the judgment of the 1988 National Intelligence Estimate (Soviet Intelligence Capabilities) that said the war scare was real. In fact, it was noted that the 1984 estimates "judged that the Soviets displayed a heightened sense of concern . . . because . . . of the leadership instability in the USSR from the successive deaths of three general secretaries between 1981 and 1985" -- an impossibility since Chernenko did not die until seven months after the last 1984 SNIE was issued. It was noted that the Perroots letter "neither raises new issues nor contains new data that change the strategic judgments already written." But in a reversal from previous, coordinated judgments written about the significance of USSR military developments during the war scare, and in refutation of the covering NIC note itself, the commentary included: "The Soviets had concern that the West might decide to attack the USSR without warning during a time of vulnerability -- such as when military transport was used to support the harvest -

- thus compelling the Soviets to consider a preemptive strike at the first sign of US preparations for a nuclear strike." Moreover, it noted: "From Brezhnev's death in 1982 through late 1984, the Soviets ordered a number of unusual [military and civil defense] measures not previously detected except during periods of crisis with the West . . .", and "The cumulative effect of these . . . was to reduce the Soviet and Warsaw Pact vulnerability to a surprise attack."

CONCLUSIONS: THE ESTIMATIVE PROCESS

In (ironically) December 1983, the DCI's Senior Review Panel (SRP) issued a prescient study of intelligence judgments preceding significant historical estimative failures. We believe key parts of that report merit reiteration:

In the estimates that failed, there were a number of recurrent common factors which, in retrospect, seem critical to the quality of the analysis . . . each involved historical discontinuity and, in the early stages, apparently unlikely outcomes.

The Board is deeply disturbed by the US handling of the war scare, both at the time and since. In the early stages of the war scare period, when evidence was thin, little effort was made to examine the various possible Soviet motivations behind some very anomalous events. Later, when enough intelligence existed on the abnormal Soviet behavior to create conflicting views within the community, no national intelligence assessments were prepared until after tensions began to subside. When written, the 1984 SNIE's were overconfident, particularly in the judgments pertaining to Soviet leadership intentions -- since little intelligence, human or technical, existed to support them. In its review of previous estimates, the SRP was equally troubled by this very same "process"

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shortcoming:

The basic problem in each was to recognize qualitative change and to deal with situations in which trend continuity and precedent were of marginal, if not counterproductive value. Analysts . . . clearly lacked a doctrine or a model for coping with improbable outcomes . . . and [were] unchallenged by a requirement to analyze or clarify subordinate and lesser probabilities. Too many of the analyses were incident-oriented and episodic; too few addressed the processes that produced the incidents or speculated about underlying forces and trends . . . addiction to single-outcome forecasting defied both estimative odds and much recorded history. It reinforced some of the worst analytical hazards -- status quo bias and a prejudice towards continuity of previous trends; 'playing it safe,' mirror-imaging, and predispositions towards consensus intelligence.

Reasonable people can disagree about the conclusions of the 1984 SNIE's. The PFIAB does disagree with many of them. More worrisome to us, however, is the process by which the estimates were made and subsequently reassessed. Although both estimates were reportedly reviewed by outside readers -- and both, but particularly the first, contained alternative scenarios -- strongly worded interpretations were defended by explaining away facts inconsistent with them. Consequently, both estimates contained, in essence, single outcome forecasting based in large part on near-term anomalous behavior. Moreover, neither alerted the reader to the risks of erroneously rejecting the correct scenario.

Archivist's Note: This page is not present in the LP-GB original. It was added by ISCAP during their review.

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We understand that analysts will always have legitimate disagreements over the meaning of inevitably incomplete and uncertain events. This is as it should be. But we believe that when analysts attempt to arrive at a single strong conclusion, they not only run the risk of being wrong, they run two additional and perhaps more worrisome risks. They are likely to underestimate the possibility of change (the safest prediction is always that tomorrow will be like today) and they are likely to rely on mirror-imaging (our adversaries think the way we do). In this era of increasing instability in the USSR, we cannot know who may long retain or quickly assume the mantle of Soviet leadership. Will he understand that US leaders are not going to start World War III and behave as if he understands? Again, from the SRP report:

The world will stay a chancy and changeable place and the only rule is perhaps that there is an inevitability of uncertainty which we ignore at our peril. Information at best will always be in some part fragmentary, obsolete, and ambiguous.

The Board believes that in cases of grave importance to US survival, intelligence estimates must be cast in terms of alternative scenarios that are in turn subjected to comparative risk assessments. This is the most critical flaw in the war scare episode. By "alternative scenarios," we mean a full statement of each major possible interpretation of a set of intelligence indicators. In this case, these scenarios might have included (but not limited to) the following:

1. Soviet leaders had not changed their strategic thinking but were attempting by means of propaganda and deception to slow the US military build-up, prevent the deployment of new weapons, and isolate the US from its allies.

2. Soviet leaders may or may not have changed their strategic thinking, but a power struggle among Kremlin factions and the need to deflect blame for poor economic conditions made it useful to exaggerate the military intentions and capabilities of the US.

3. Soviet leaders had changed their strategic thinking and in fact believed that the US was attempting to gain decisive strategic superiority in order, possibly, to launch a nuclear first strike.

By "comparative risk assessment," we mean assigning two kinds of weights to each scenario: one that estimates (in rough approximation, like "slightly better than even" or "two to one") the probability that the scenario is correct; and a second that assesses the risk to the United States if we wrongly reject the correct scenario. While any of the three scenarios, or a portion thereof, could have been true to some degree, a risk assessment could have helped focus subsequent US actions. If Soviet leaders did not believe a US attack was possible, and we erroneously imputed that view to them, then it is unlikely we would have taken actions that would have increased the risk of war. If Soviet leaders did have that belief, and we wrongly denied that they had it, then we could have materially but inadvertently increased the risk of war by (for example) conducting provocative military exercises or redeploying forces in ways that would trigger the Soviet indications and warning system.

We emphasize that we are not arguing for "competitive analysis," greater use of dissenting opinions, or policy guidance from the intelligence community. Rather, in special cases like the Soviet "war scare," it is less important to arrive at a single consensus than it is to identify a small number of possibilities associated with rough probabilities that allows policymakers to understand the risks and opportunities.

We also want to emphasize that by comparative risk analysis, we do not wish to encourage the formulation of watered-down, bland assessments whereby the reader is unable to determine what conclusions the authors have drawn. Instead we urge that when information is inadequate to allow reasonable people to draw conclusions relating to our adversary's intentions, analysts should withstand the pressure to arrive at a single judgment and thereby avoid turning an acknowledged collection deficiency into an analytic problem.

The SRP report recommended that estimates incorporate what we view as an extremely vital "road-map" perspective for policymakers:

A list of future indicators should invariably be included. Its aim should be to underline those contingent developments, decision points, and future policy crossroads which could affect the durability of the analysis, alter its major judgments, or influence the odds on outcomes.

Other than vague references to a full-force mobilization and more strident 33(b)(3); (b)(3) the SNIE analyses of the war scare, unfortunately, did not offer such signposts. Moreover, the Soviet response to Able Archer 83 was dismissed as an exercise, despite an acknowledged inability to conduct a thorough examination of the events. Again, the SRP report:

It [the problem] was compounded by what the British call 'perseveration' (a tendency for judgments made in the early stages of a developing situation to be allowed to affect later appraisals and an unreadiness to alter earlier views even when evidence requiring them to be revised becomes available) which

narrowed collection requirements and froze their priorities to overtaken analytical frameworks. The practice invited failure.

After 1984, and as new evidence started emerging that began clarifying anomalous Soviet behavior, succeeding intelligence analyses seesawed between giving credence to the war scare and completely dismissing it. Despite the conflicting views, no comprehensive intelligence collection requirements were levied that might have revealed even more information.

When the intelligence community did offer a revised community position in 1988, it was buried in an annex of a tightly-held assessment not authored for policymakers. Narrow in scope, it did not include a comprehensive review of the political, military, and economic factors impacting the Soviet Union at the time, nor did it attempt to match US activities with anomalous Soviet behavior. Thus it is incomplete. Despite laudable individual efforts to address VRYAN -- and the importance of a "real" war scare to our understanding of the Soviet Union today -- it has never become the subject of a national intelligence assessment since the earlier 1984 judgments.¹³

A recent piece of reporting on dangerous Soviet thinking during the Andropov period maintains that many Soviet officials were discussing the possibility of a USSR preemptive, desperation strike to "level the playing field." The Chairman of the National Intelligence Council was right to point out to us that "the leak of this material would occasion politically very unfortunate charges that the Administration is either fabricating or concealing frightening perceptions of the USSR." We understand the political sensitivities associated with this study. At the same time, we

¹³See Special Program Intelligence Exploitation Study "Sudden Nuclear Missile Attack" authored by (b)(3)

believe the implications of the war scare period -- chiefly that Soviet leaders, despite our open society, might be capable of a fundamental misunderstanding of US strategic motives and increase the likelihood of nuclear war -- need to be brought to the attention of senior US policymakers. Honest intellectual discourse must take place, using all available data, about the pivotal and dangerous period of US-USSR relations in the early to mid-1980's. Lessons learned from these events cannot be truly understood nor course corrections made until such analysis takes place, including a possible dialogue with the Soviets.

AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS . . .

During the course of our study, we identified a number of related intelligence issues that, in our judgment, could withstand closer scrutiny.

3.3(b)(3); (b)(3)

Had we not obtained this piece of intelligence, the Able Archer exercise likely would have been viewed in even more benign ways than it was. We believe this calls into question the kinds of signals we are likely to get from national technical means when, in times of internal Soviet crisis, the USSR military behaves in a defensive, reactive manner, particularly to US or NATO maneuvers.

We noticed a tendency for most to describe the annual Able Archer exercise simply as "a command and control" exercise, and thus, clearly nonthreatening to the Warsaw Pact. Not only was Able Archer 83 unique in some significant ways from earlier ones, it also incorporated live mobilization exercises from some US military forces in Europe. For example, we are told that some US aircraft practiced the nuclear warhead handling procedures, including taxiing out of hangars carrying realistic-looking dummy warheads.

We are concerned about the human intelligence collection effort regarding the Soviet war scare, particularly the lack of coordinated intelligence community strategy in the exploitation of double agents. For example, we found evidence that while the Warsaw Pact intelligence services changed their targeting and collection in significant ways in response to Soviet leadership fears, this information derived from double agent operations was not linked to the national warning system's key indicators list. Moreover, the FBI noted: "In some double agent operations, US-controlling agencies have supplied materials that bear on current or proposed military programs or strategies that could be interpreted to imply US capabilities and intentions to initiate a preemptive attack."

We now know that KGB Headquarters tasked the Residency in the US with extensive requirements to find evidence of an imminent US attack, which in turn necessitated the creation of a large VRYAN unit within the Residency. While the FBI did not detect the establishment of the new unit, it did note an increase in Soviet targeting and collection of US military plans beginning in 1982. Domestically, it also was aware of a marked and aggressive increase in Czechoslovak intelligence efforts to obtain indications and warning data, particularly during 1983 and 1984. However, this information did not find its way into community analysis.

Similarly, many US officials have described an inability to equate US secret or "blue force" activity with Soviet activity that might be in response. United States military commanders had a great deal of autonomy to exercise their forces in ways they saw best -- some more aggressively than others, we are told. The Board did not specifically match "blue force/red force" activity or probe US strategic deception programs underway at the time. We did, however, learn enough about them to realize such a review would be highly helpful to the study of the Soviet war scare.

PART II: THE SOVIET "WAR SCARE"

INTRODUCTION

Over the last year, as PFIAB endeavored to come to a better understanding of events surrounding the war scare episode, it examined intelligence available at the time as well as considerable subsequent reporting of direct relevance. While some of the anomalous Soviet behavior that remains unclarified by subsequent reporting can be explained in singularly unthreatening ways, we chose not to assume them as individual events. Rather, we see these "anomalies" as a pattern, which, taken in totality, strongly indicates that the war scare was real, at least in the minds of some Soviet leaders.

The following discussion, therefore, is what we view as a plausible interpretation of events based upon a sizable, but incomplete, body of evidence. It tries to put into context and draw parallels among developments inside the Soviet political hierarchy, the intelligence apparatus, and the military establishment that, to us, strongly point to genuine Soviet concern and preparations for hostile US action. We also try to show that Soviet media pronouncements of the danger of war with the US -- dismissed by US analysts at the time as "propaganda" -- probably did, in fact, mirror private and secret communications by senior Soviet officials.

The Board does not intend this discussion to constitute the "final word" on the war scare. Instead, we hope it prompts renewed interest, vigorous dialogue, and rigorous reanalysis of the events.

ORIGINS OF THE SCARE

Vulnerability of Soviet Nuclear Forces to a US Surprise Attack

Although the Soviet strategic nuclear force in the late 1970's was powerful and versatile (over 7,000 strategic nuclear weapons), it was nonetheless highly vulnerable to a US surprise attack -- a so-called bolt from the blue. Deficiencies in the early warning network, an inadequate, highly centralized command and control system, and a strategic force that was never at full readiness left sizable chinks in the USSR's strategic armor. Until the latter half of the 1970's, the Soviets did not appear to be overly concerned about this shortfall, probably in part because they did not see a US surprise attack as a likely scenario for the outbreak of hostilities.

The USSR may have felt confident that the open nature of US society and Soviet intelligence capabilities made any prospect of the US achieving complete surprise quite remote. Whatever the underlying reasons, Soviet military doctrine at the time generally posited that a strategic nuclear war would probably occur in escalating stages: from a major political crisis, to conventional conflict, to theater nuclear war, to intercontinental exchange. The Soviets' early warning system, command and control network, and strategic forces were geared accordingly: complete wartime readiness could be achieved only after several days of preparation. Nevertheless, as prudent planners, they hedged; part of their strategic forces, particularly silo-based ICBM's, were always held at a high-level of readiness.¹⁴

¹⁴For a complete listing of reference documents, see originator.

Strategic Warning System

Before the early 1980's, the Soviet early warning system probably could not provide its leaders with much advance warning of a surprise US nuclear attack outside the context of a political crisis. Ballistic missile early warning (BMEW) radars, located along the periphery of the Soviet Union, were probably able to give about 13 minutes of warning against US ICBM's and about 5 to 15 minutes against SLBM's.

The Soviets apparently came to recognize that they would need much more time to initiate a response. They began several improvement programs in the late 1970's, including the addition of several new BMEW radars -- to extend coverage to nearly all threat corridors -- as well as the development of two over-the-horizon (OTH) radars and launch-detection satellites.

The completion of the OTH radars in 1981 and the comprehensive coverage of US ICBM fields by launch-detection satellites in 1983 significantly increased warning time -- about 30 minutes for US ICBM's and a little over 15 minutes for SLBM's attacking Moscow. However, the introduction by NATO of Pershing II missiles into Europe in late 1983 by Soviet calculations probably reduced their warning of a US first strike on Moscow to about 8 minutes -- less time than they had before their improvement program began.¹⁵

¹⁵The Pershing II missile 1800 km range would not have reached Moscow from planned deployment sites in West Germany. Warsaw Pact sources, however, attributed to this system a range of 2500 km, an accuracy of 30 meters, and an earth-penetrating warhead. With a range of 2500 km the Soviets feared it would have been able to strike command and control targets in the Moscow area with little or no warning.

Command and Control

Once warning of an intercontinental nuclear strike is received, Moscow's ability to initiate a response depends on how quickly the leadership can authorize a retaliation and communicate the orders. [REDACTED] the Soviet nuclear release process, [REDACTED] it hinges directly on the survival and, indeed, performance of the top leadership. Probably no more than three political leaders can authorize the use of nuclear weapons. Under severe time constraints -- such as a short-warning preemptive strike or a "launch on tactical warning" -- that authority probably resides with only the General Secretary and the Minister of Defense. When response time is extremely limited, the General Secretary alone may order a launch. There is no evidence that nuclear release authority has devolved to the General Staff or the nuclear force commanders. This strict centralization (along with a nuclear warfighting strategy) undoubtedly was a prime reason for the elaborate measures the Soviets have taken over the last 30 years to ensure leadership survival -- particularly the construction of numerous hardened underground command posts in and around Moscow.

In responding to a surprise US attack, the Soviet decision-making process would be extremely compressed. After confirmation of an incoming attack, the Soviet leadership in most circumstances may have no more than ten minutes to decide on the appropriate response. In that time, they would need to confer, come to an agreement, and issue commands to the General Staff. While this process was under way, if near the Kremlin, they would probably be moving to one of the nearby underground command posts.

If the leadership failed to initiate the appropriate authorization procedures, the USSR's strategic arsenal would probably sit by, helpless. With regard to strategic missiles,

only the top leadership can release special "unlocking" codes that permit launch. Similar procedures are in place for the other Soviet strategic nuclear forces.

Once a decision to launch is made, however, orders to the operating forces would be transmitted quickly and accurately. The Soviets introduced several automated communication networks to ensure rapid and reliable command dissemination at the same time they were upgrading their early warning system. All nuclear-capable elements of the Soviet armed forces would receive launching orders: land-based missiles under the control of the Strategic Rocket Forces (SRF); ballistic and cruise missile submarines in the Navy; and bombers of the Strategic Air Force (SAF). Theater nuclear forces would also receive strike commands to counter the anticipated NATO offensive in Europe.

We believe the evidence, therefore, strongly indicates that Soviet nuclear release authority during the war scare period (1980-1984) was held captive to the tumultuous series of leadership successions at the very top. The post of party General Secretary changed hands three times in three years.¹⁶ The only "constant" in the line of authority was Defense Minister Ustinov, who also died in late 1984.

Some high-ranking Soviet military leaders at the time apparently doubted whether the political leadership was up to the task. Marshal Ogarkov, chief of the General Staff in the early 1980,s, seemed to question whether the aged and ill Soviet leadership would be willing or able to meet its strategic decisionmaking responsibilities in times of crisis. He surfaced this issue publicly on three occasions: during the waning months of Brezhnev's rule; during Andropov's short tenure; and following

¹⁶Brezhnev died 10 November, 1982; Andropov died 9 February 1984; Chernenko died 10 March 1985.

Chernenko's accession. Through these conspicuous articles, Ogarkov may have been arguing in a veiled way for some pre-delegation of nuclear release authority to the general staff.

Force Readiness

During the late 1970's and early 1980's, Soviet forces best able to respond to a surprise attack were the silo-based ICBM's. The US estimates that 95 percent of this force (approximately 4,500 weapons then) was ready to launch within several minutes' notice. In strategic war exercises during this time, some Soviet silo-based missiles were launched within three minutes of receipt of the order. In most simulations of a US first strike, without surprise, the force was usually able to leave its silos before notional US warheads struck. These quick reaction times, however, occurred during exercises when missile crews anticipated orders. They could be much slower in a real-life situation wherein a US surprise missile strike was already inbound.

We believe the high readiness of the silo-based missiles was compensation for the high vulnerability of the other parts of the Soviet strategic arsenal:

- o Soviet long-range bombers were extremely vulnerable to a US surprise attack. They were (and are still) kept at a low state of readiness -- none were on strip alert. Many hours, perhaps days, probably would have been needed to prepare a large number of bombers for a wartime footing. The Soviets may well have assumed that their entire force would be destroyed in a surprise strike.

- o The Soviets probably believed that their ballistic submarines would not fare much better. Normally most of the force were in port; only about 15-18 percent were on combat patrol or in transit to operating areas. During this period, several days may

have been required to bring the in-port force to full readiness. Moreover, the Soviets probably had grave concerns about the survivability of their submarines on patrol -- they were able to learn much about US successes at tracking their submarine movements through the Walker-Whitworth espionage ring.

o The Soviet theater nuclear forces were similarly vulnerable. Dispersing missile and artillery units from garrison and supplying them with nuclear weapons would have entailed considerable logistic support. For example, [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) it would have taken six hours to deploy all of the missiles and warheads stored at a tactical missile base.

Soviet Analysis of the US-USSR Strategic Balance

A major factor influencing Soviet leaders' perceptions about a US surprise attack probably was their reliance on one peculiar mode of intelligence analysis. [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1)

[REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) during the war scare they were highly dependent on a computer model. [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) the KGB developed the model in the mid-1970's to measure perceived changes in the "correlation of forces." Put on-line in 1979, the model's foremost function was identifying inherently unstable political situations in which a deterioration of Soviet power might tempt a US first strike.

[REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) the model became for the KGB an increasingly important analytic tool. Western scientific and technological advances, as well as the growing complexity of US-USSR relations, were evidently making accurate assessments of the US-USSR strategic balance increasingly more difficult. The KGB reportedly advised the Politburo in the late 1970's that without such a model it would be unable to provide such evaluations. The

Politburo subsequently approved the computer concept.

The computer model program was called VRYAN, an acronym for "Surprise Nuclear Missile Attack." KGB analysts responsible for assessing American strategic intentions operated under the premise that if the US ever obtained decisive, overall superiority, it might be inclined to launch a surprise attack on the Soviet Union. Because the program was supposed to determine quantitatively when such a situation might be approaching, analysts believed it would accurately provide strategic warning.

The KGB computer model was reportedly developed by military and economic specialists. Consisting of a data base of 40,000 weighted elements, its core was a complex software program that processed and continually reevaluated the data. Although we are not privy to the individual data elements, they reportedly were based on those military, political, and economic factors that the Soviets assessed as decisive during World War II.

VRYAN clearly had a high priority far beyond the corridors of the KGB. A special component of the KGB, consisting of about 200 employees, was responsible for inserting fresh data. Prominent economists and military experts from other elements of the Soviet government assisted. In addition, the State Planning Committee submitted classified data on the Soviet economy, such as details on the state budget, the labor pool, Soviet natural resources, and currency reserves. The cost of building and maintaining such a computer was presumably very high, particularly given the state of Soviet computer technology in those years.

The model reportedly assigned a fixed value of 100 to the combined economic-military-political power of the United States. On this scale, the program experts believed that the USSR would be safe against a US first strike at a value of 60 (i.e., 60 percent of overall US power), though they felt that a level of 70 would

provide a desirable margin. The data base was constantly updated, and force correlations could be assessed at any time. Reports derived from VRYAN reportedly were sent to the Politburo once a month.

Before long, VRYAN began spewing very unwelcome news -- which brought dire predictions. Initially, there was some optimism within the KGB that, with technological progress, the Soviet Union would gradually improve its position vis-a-vis the US. However, by 1984 VRYAN calculated that Soviet power had actually declined to 45 percent of that of the United States. Forty percent was viewed as a critical threshold. Below this level, the Soviet Union would be considered dangerously inferior to the United States. [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) if the Soviet rating fell below 40 percent, the KGB and the military leadership would inform the political leadership that the security of the USSR could not be guaranteed. [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1)

[REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) the USSR would launch a preemptive attack within a few weeks of falling below the 40-percent mark.

The extent to which VRYAN was driving Politburo thinking is not clear. The computer model apparently was not tied to any military operational plans, nor is there evidence that the Politburo ever established any contingency plans based on its assessments. Nevertheless, [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) Politburo deliberations on security issues during this time involved only a few members. [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1)

[REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1)

We believe that if VRYAN accurately depicted the strategic balance of the time, it would have shown the USSR highly vulnerable to a US surprise attack. Recent US intelligence

computer simulations approximating the VRYAN model suggest that the Soviets would have expected only a fraction of their strategic nuclear forces to survive a coordinated US attack. Figure 1, for example, shows how Soviet military planners may have viewed the status of their forces if caught by surprise and forced to ride out a massive attack. We believe the VRYAN model would have shown that after such an attack, Soviet strategic forces could have delivered only about a quarter of the 6,100 warheads necessary to achieve wartime military objectives.

Although it may seem absurd to some that the Soviets would put much stock in a computer model to assess something as complex as the strategic balance, we suspect this approach may have been especially appealing to top Soviet leaders at the time. Almost all were formally trained as engineers. A computer model which purported to be scientifically based and capable of quantifying the seemingly confusing strategic balance may therefore have had a high degree of credibility, particularly during a period in which the Soviet leadership seemed genuinely and increasingly wary of a US surprise attack.

We believe Soviet strategic doctrine also played a key role in how the leadership reacted to VRYAN assessments. Soviet military writings consistently assert that overwhelming advantage lies with the side that launches massed nuclear strikes first. In their exercises and classified writings, the Soviets regularly depict the transition from conventional to nuclear war in Europe occurring when Soviet forces preempt an imminent NATO large-scale nuclear strike. The inherent danger of this doctrine of preemption is that in a period like the war scare, strong misperceptions could easily precipitate a strong, ill-founded reaction.

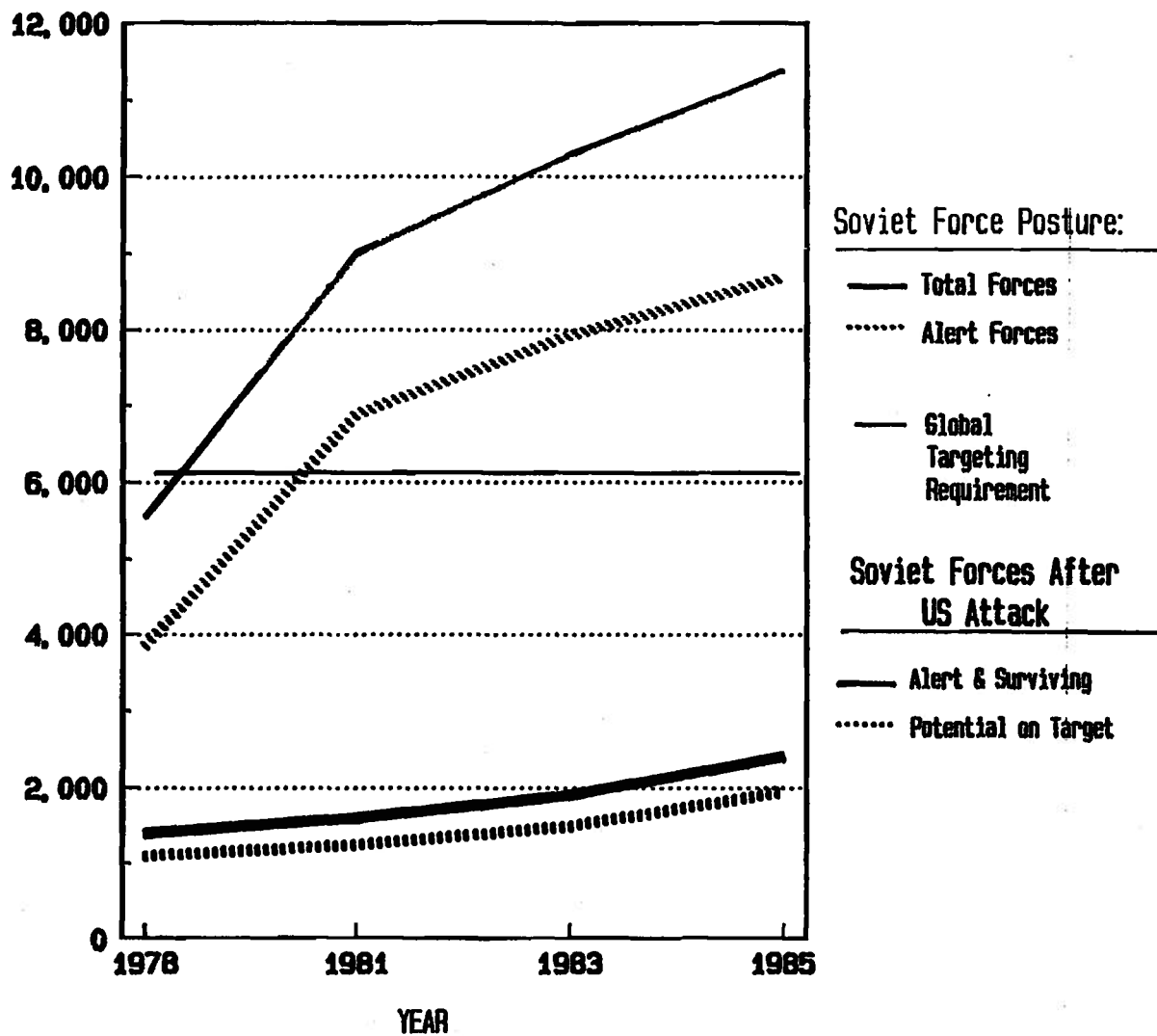
"THE WAR SCARE"

Late 1970's: Changing Soviet Perceptions of US Intentions

Figure 1

Soviet Strategic Retaliatory Capabilities Given a US "Bolt from the Blue"

Number of Soviet Strategic Warheads



Although Soviet leadership anxieties about US military intentions reached a crescendo in 1983-1984, concern may have been manifest by the late 1970's, when detente began to unravel. Long before the invasion of Afghanistan, Soviet political leaders publicly charged that US policy seemed aimed at "applying the brakes" to detente and increasing the level of competition with the Soviet Union. This shift, they argued, began during the mid-1970's and intensified during the last few years of the decade.

The Soviets' public response to US punitive measures following the Afghanistan invasion seemed to highlight a growing concern and confusion about the direction of US-Soviet relations.¹⁷ [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) reports indicate that they were genuinely surprised at the intensity of the US reaction to Afghanistan -- they apparently thought that Washington would recognize their security concerns as legitimate. [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) reporting also suggests that the Soviet leadership was becoming seriously perplexed by the perceived shift in US policy: was it a continuation of the tougher tactics they had been witnessing for some time, or did it reflect a calculated turn away from detente and toward increased confrontation?

United States nuclear force modernization plans may have been particularly vexing to Moscow. In the late 1970's, the US made public its plans to field new generations of ICBM's (MX), SLBM's (D-5), and intercontinental bombers (stealth). The Soviets apparently viewed these new systems as highly lethal against their silos and most other hardened targets, providing the US with more strategic nuclear power than was necessary for its long-held strategy of mutually assured destruction. Evidence from sensitive reporting suggests Soviet analysts calculated that the US intended

[REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1)

them as a means for developing a first-strike force. In addition, the Soviets perhaps calculated that NATO's decision to field 600 Pershing II's and cruise missiles was not to counter their SS-20 force, but yet another step toward a first-strike capability.

Party Secretary Suslov and Defense Minister Ustinov, the senior guardians of Soviet ideology and national security, were among the first to express these apparent misgivings. In an address before the Polish party congress in February 1980, Suslov asserted that there was a "profound interconnection" to recent US-inspired actions: the "aggression" by China against Vietnam, the NATO decisions "aimed at a new arms race," the deployment of "enormous numbers" of US armed forces around Iran, and the "training and sending of armed terrorist groups" into Afghanistan. Several days later, Ustinov condemned alleged US and Chinese interference in Afghanistan, US delay in ratification of the SALT II treaty, the NATO theater nuclear force decision, and the buildup of US naval forces in the Persian Gulf as "interconnected elements of an aggressive US policy."

Not long after, Premier Kosygin, a more moderate member of the top leadership, echoed the same misgivings. He charged that US policy had become a "fully defined political policy calculated to undermine detente and provoke conflict situations. We cannot but draw the necessary conclusions from this for our practical activities." As a CIA analyst has pointed out, Kosygin's remarks may have mirrored the uncertainty underlying many Politburo members' perceptions of US intentions and behavior in the post-Afghanistan period. On the one hand, he seemed to be joining Suslov in suggesting that "reactionary forces" had gained the upper hand in US policymaking and were determined to force a confrontation. On the other hand, he seemed to be fervently reassuring domestic and East European audiences that this was not necessarily the case and that US policy could moderate:

It must be said that realistic representatives of the ruling circles in the West, not to mention broad sections of the population, are concerned with the consequences of the present course of the US Administration Clearly it would be wrong to assume that in the United States there are no soberminded politicians who are aware of the significance of detente.¹⁸

1980: Heightened Concern

By the summer of 1980, Soviet public pronouncements on the future of US-USSR relations had soured markedly. A 23 June Central Committee resolution referred to "adventuristic actions of the United States," which it asserted led to a "heightening of the danger of war." Claiming the United States was undermining detente, attempting to form an anti-Soviet alliance with China, and refusing to acknowledge legitimate Soviet security interests, the resolution called for "constant vigilance and all-round strengthening of defense."

Public and private statements by top Soviet leaders suggested that many did not expect any near-term improvements in US-Soviet relations. In June, Politburo member Andrei Kirilenko alluded to the need for "augmenting the country's economic and defense potential," because "imperialist circles, primarily those in the United States, are causing considerable complications in the international situation." In a private meeting with visiting Indian communists in July, Kirilenko and other officials reportedly described the world situation as "grim," and accused the US

33(b)(1)

Administration of creating a "war psychosis" by trying to "isolate" and "encircle" the Soviet Union. In a June address to the heads of government of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance, Kosygin seemed to be preparing his audience for the possibility that NATO-Warsaw Pact tensions might require greater Bloc expenditures for military programs. He charged that the United States has already embarked on "a course hostile to the cause of detente, a course of cranking up the arms race, leading to the intensification of the war danger in the world." Brezhnev seemed to be alone in expressing limited optimism. In August, for example, he noted that "sooner or later" the US would conclude that "sabre rattling" would fail.

After the US Presidential election, the Soviet leadership sent out feelers to determine if the tough speeches delivered during the campaign indeed indicated the future course of Reagan Administration foreign policy. In a 17 November, 1980, speech, Brezhnev said that he would not dwell on statements made by the President-elect during "the heat of the election struggle" and would welcome any "constructive steps" on ways to improve US-Soviet relations. This opening was repeated privately by Soviet diplomats, officials, and foreign policy analysts, who stressed to their US contacts that Moscow was interested in bilateral exchanges and a good start in "businesslike" relations. United States-Soviet relations were dealt a blow in December, however, with the death of the usually moderate Premier Kosygin.¹⁹

* * *

Behind the scenes, the Soviet intelligence services were giving equally dour assessments on the future of US-Soviet relations. A secret Soviet intelligence document prepared in

3.3(b)(1)

October for General Ivashutin, Chief of Soviet military intelligence, the GRU, stated that the US and NATO, rather than "maintaining the approximate parity" that had developed, were trying to tip the strategic balance of forces in their favor. The document also assessed a US Presidential directive (PD-59) signed by President Carter as a "new nuclear strategy" intended to enhance "the readiness of US strategic nuclear forces to deliver a sudden preemptive strike against . . . the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact." Vladimir Kryuchkov, then head of the KGB's foreign intelligence directorate, evidently shared this evaluation. In a secret speech in late 1980, he reportedly declared that "US imperialism is again becoming aggressive and is striving to change the strategic balance." He also revealed that the party had admonished its intelligence organs not to "overlook the possibility of a US missile attack on our country."

* * *

Meanwhile, the Soviet Navy began to implement steps to reduce the missile launch readiness of "duty status" submarines. Prior to 1980, submarines were required to be able to launch their missiles within 4 hours after receiving orders. In the summer of 1980, a much reduced launch readiness, perhaps as low as 30 minutes, was being considered by Northern Fleet commanders. By October 1980, they had achieved a readiness of 3 hours, and sometime between 1982 and 1985, duty status submarines were able to launch within 20 minutes.

1981: Reducing Vulnerabilities

By early March 1981, the Soviet leadership may well have concluded that a period of US-Soviet confrontation had arrived. Moscow's trial balloon suggesting an early summit never got off the ground. The US declared that Brezhnev's proposals on arms control did not provide a basis for serious negotiations and insisted that

future talks would be contingent upon Soviet behavior in Poland, Afghanistan, Central America, and other trouble spots.

Moscow's response was hard line. The first salvo appeared in Pravda on March 25 in an article by "I. Aleksandrov" -- a pseudonym signifying leadership endorsement. It attacked US foreign policy on a broad front -- the first such barrage since the Reagan Administration had entered office. Increasingly strident attacks followed in April and May. Brezhnev took the US to task in major speeches on 7 and 27 April, as did his protege, Chernenko, at a Lenin Day address on 22 April. Brezhnev's delivery commemorating Soviet VE day charged that the Reagan Administration no longer belonged to the "sober-minded" forces in the West and that Washington had made military superiority its "main political credo" -- while relegating arms control to the bottom of the priority list. [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) senior Soviet officials with high-level contacts said that during this time Soviet leaders formally cautioned the bureaucracy that the new US Administration was considering the possibility of starting nuclear war, and that the prospect of a surprise nuclear strike against the Soviet Union had to be taken seriously.

In August 1981, Brezhnev met secretly in the Crimea with each of the Warsaw Pact leaders to obtain signatures on a strategic war planning document that streamlined the decisionmaking process to go to war. This top secret accord in essence codified the Soviet Union's authority to order Warsaw Pact forces to war without prior Pact consultations. It included a discussion of likely Soviet responses to possible changes in the correlation of forces. Soviet preemption of an attempted US surprise attack was one of the scenarios depicted. [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) the Soviets had become concerned that there might be little time to react in a fast-moving political crisis and that the upper hand could be lost militarily if Pact consultations were required before committing forces.

* * *

Probably reflecting the rising concern among the political leaders, the Soviet intelligence services clearly began girding its officers for difficult times ahead. In a secret February speech, Vladimir Kryuchkov -- on this occasion to a group of mid-level KGB officers -- stressed that ". . . the political situation world-wide is going from bad to worse and there is no end in sight . . . China continues to be a threat . . . the general situation in East Europe, both politically and economically, is not good . . . the Soviet economy is currently in a poor position resulting from poor harvests, bad planning and a general lack of discipline." He also exhorted all KGB Residencies to work to "prevent the US and its allies from deciding to make a first strike attack on the Soviet Union and the KGB."

By the spring, unease at the top of the political hierarchy evidently had become so pronounced that it called for extraordinary efforts from its foreign intelligence apparatus. In late May, then KGB chief and Politburo member Yuriy Andropov declared to a major KGB conference that the new US Administration was actively preparing for war and that a nuclear first strike was possible. Andropov disclosed that, in response, the KGB was placing strategic military intelligence at the top of its collection priorities list. The KGB had always been tasked to report on US political intentions, but this was the first time it had been ordered to obtain such strategic military information. Thus, VRYAN took on a new dimension, and now both the KGB and the GRU had as their foremost mission the collection of intelligence to protect the USSR from strategic nuclear attack. 33(b)(1)

Kryuchkov and several of his key officers in the First Chief Directorate -- including the Chief of the "US Department" -- increasingly became strong VRYAN proponents.

The rank and file began to respond. While many senior KGB specialists in US and military affairs apparently had serious reservations about some of Andropov's views on this matter, there reportedly was general accord on two important points. First, KGB officers in the Center agreed that the United States might initiate a nuclear strike if it achieved a level of overall strength markedly greater than that of the Soviet Union. And many apparently were convinced that events were leading in that direction. A group of technocrats advising Andropov reportedly persuaded him that the USSR would continue to fall behind the US in economic power and scientific expertise. Second, there was common concern that the Soviet domestic situation, as well as Moscow's hold on Eastern Europe, was deteriorating, further weakening Soviet capacity to compete strategically with the US.²⁰

Andropov hastily ordered a special "institute" within the KGB to implement the new strategic military intelligence program. The institute was told -- despite protestations for more time -- to quickly define the task, develop a plan, and be ready to levy the initial collection and reporting requirements to KGB Residencies by November 1981. Some KGB officers in the field reportedly felt that the short, arbitrary deadlines for developing VRYAN requirements resulted in poorly conceived requirements.²¹

As the KGB mobilized, it also began pressuring its East European allies for strong support. Both Andropov and Kryuchkov actively lobbied the Czechoslovak intelligence service on this score. Andropov approached Czechoslovak Interior Minister Obzina early in 1981 regarding the VRYAN collection effort, presenting it as an unprecedented KGB collection effort that demanded the "best intelligence techniques." He followed up with a private visit to

3.3(b)(1)

²¹Ibid.

Prague, where he expressed strong disappointment with the Czechoslovak response and solicited the direct intervention of senior intelligence officials.

Andropov's efforts at personalizing the issue evidently paid off. Obzina subsequently gave an emotional presentation to the Czechoslovak Politburo describing the immediacy of the threat from the US, which he said sooner or later would result in a surprise nuclear attack. Reflecting Moscow's urgency, Obzina described the requirement as the biggest and most important strategic task the Czechoslovak service had ever undertaken. Not long after, Prague issued to its field offices a "Minister's Directive of Top Priority" to collect VRYAN-related data on five substantive areas -- political, economic, military, science and technology, and civil defense.

* * *

Developments within the Soviet military, meanwhile, also strongly suggested a growing apprehension about a possible US strategic first-strike. Military leaders began to improve the readiness of nuclear forces most vulnerable to surprise attack.

3:3(b)(1) in May, 1981, for example, Soviet Navy officials initiated a program to shorten launch times for ballistic missile submarines in port. Submarines undergoing repairs were ordered to be ready to launch within 48 hours notice (as opposed to 8 days), and boats awaiting redeployment were told to be ready to launch within 3 to 4 hours. Lower-level Navy officials reportedly viewed these new readiness times as unrealistic because they would strain maintenance capabilities and be difficult to sustain indefinitely. In addition, the Navy began experimenting with missile launches from submarines pierside, reportedly achieving a notice-to-launch time of one hour.

Furthermore, the Soviet military took several steps during

this time to improve their theater nuclear forces. All-weather capable SU-24 bombers were deployed in East Germany, Poland, and Hungary, greatly enhancing the availability of nuclear strike forces in the forward area. The Soviets for the first time also deployed nuclear-capable artillery to the front-line ground forces opposite NATO.²²

1982: Strategic Preparations

Signs of disquiet within the Soviet military hierarchy over national strategic vulnerabilities became more openly pronounced in 1982. Marshal Ogarkov, in particular, publicly expressed his concern over the readiness of Soviet society to respond to US challenges. Notably, he called for moving Soviet economic priorities from business-as-usual to a prewar footing. In his book History Teaches Vigilance, he sternly admonished his countrymen:

The element of surprise already played a certain role in World War II. Today it is becoming a factor of the greatest strategic importance. The question of prompt and expeditious shifting of the Armed Forces and the entire national economy to a war footing and their mobilization deployment in a short period of time is much more critical today

. . . coordination between the Armed Forces and the national economy as a whole is required today as never before, especially in . . . ensuring the stability and survivability of the nation's entire vast economic mechanism. Essential in this connection is a constant search for improving the system of co-production among enterprises producing the

²²Warning of War in Europe, NIE 4-1-4.

principal types of weapons . . . to establish a reserve supply of equipment and materials in case of war.

The view of impending nuclear war with the United States was apparently seeping into the mid-level officer corps. A Soviet emigre who attended a 1982 training course at the Moscow Civil Defense Headquarters quoted one instructor -- a lieutenant colonel -- as saying that the Soviet Union intended to deliver a preemptive strike against the United States, using 50 percent of its warheads.

The Soviet leadership convened a conference in late October, perhaps in part to reassure the military. Top political deputies, ministry officials, marshals, service commanders, regional military commanders and commanders of Soviet forces abroad were in attendance. Defense Minister Ustinov, in his introduction of General Secretary Brezhnev, declared that "the acute intensification of the aggressive nature of imperialism threatens to incite the world into flames of a nuclear war." In his address to the conference, Brezhnev promised the Soviet armed forces that the Central Committee would take measures "to meet all your needs."²³

* * *

Meanwhile, KGB Headquarters had issued formal instructions to KGB Residencies abroad to strengthen significantly their work on strategic warning. 3.3(b)(1) these instructions were sent first to KGB elements in the US, and within a month, an abridged version was sent to Residencies in Western Europe. Reflecting the same concerns expressed by Andropov at the March 1981 KGB conference, the tasking from Moscow primarily focused on detecting US plans to launch a surprise attack:

²³FBIS TV Report, 28 October 1982.

The current international situation, which is characterized by a considerable strengthening of the adversary's military preparations as well as by a growing threat of war, requires that active and effective steps be taken to strengthen intelligence work dealing with military-strategic problems. It is of special importance to discover the adversary's concrete plans and measures linked with his preparation for a surprise nuclear missile attack on the USSR and other socialist countries.

The cable went on to specify information to be collected in direct support of the VRYAN requirement, including NATO war plans; preparations for launching a nuclear missile attack against the USSR; and political decisionmaking leading to the initiation of war (see Figure 2 for VRYAN requirements).²⁴

Indeed, KGB bosses seemed already convinced that US war plans were real. A former KGB officer said that while attending a senior officer course, he read an order to all departments of the KGB's foreign intelligence arm -- but especially those targeting the US and NATO -- to increase their collection efforts because there was information indicating NATO was preparing for a "third world war."

The reactions of Soviet intelligence to the death of General Secretary Brezhnev on November 10 suggests to us that there was serious concern that the USSR was militarily in jeopardy and that the US might take advantage of the confusion concomitant with a leadership change. 3.3(b)(1) KGB and GRU Residencies in at least two Soviet missions abroad were placed on

3.3(b)(1)

Figure 2. VRYAN Collection Requirements

Throughout the early 1980's, VRYAN requirements were the number one (and urgent) collection priority for Soviet intelligence and, subsequently, some East European services as well. They were tasked to collect:

- Plans and measures of the United States, other NATO countries, Japan, and China directed at the preparation for and unleashing of war against the "socialist" countries, as well as the preparation for and unleashing of armed conflicts in various other regions of the world.
- Plans for hostile operational deployments and mobilizations.
- Plans for hostile operations in the initial stage of war; primarily operations to deliver nuclear strikes and for assessments of aftereffects.
- Plans indicating the preparation for and adoption and implementation of decisions by the NATO political and military leadership dealing with the unleashing of a nuclear war and other armed conflicts.

Some specific tasking concerning the United States included:

- Any information on President Reagan's "flying headquarters," including individual airfields and logistic data.
- Succession and matters of state leadership, to include attention to the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- Information from the level of Deputy Assistant Secretary on up at the Department of State, as it was believed that these officials might talk.
- Monitoring of activities of the National Security Council and the Vice President's crisis staff.
- Monitoring of the flow of money and gold on Wall Street as well as the movement of high-grade jewelry, collections of rare paintings, and similar items. (This was regarded as useful geostrategic information.)

alert. Intelligence officers were tasked with monitoring US installations, both military and civilian, for indications of US military mobilization or other actions which might portend a move against the USSR, and to report frequently to Moscow. This alert, [REDACTED] continued until Brezhnev was buried on November 15. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] considerable anxiety within the Soviet military during this time over who had nuclear release authority in case of a feared US surprise attack.

* * *

As Yuriy Andropov settled into the General Secretaryship, Soviet strategic forces continued to improve their readiness posture. In December, for example, the Strategic Air Force Commander-in-Chief authorized a plan for the improvement of the combat readiness of Arctic air bases. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] this initiative provided greater flexibility in dispersing the Soviet bomber force and reducing the flight time for attacks on the US.²⁵ Moreover, beginning at about this time and continuing through 1985, Soviet bomber training was devoted largely to the problem of enemy surprise nuclear strikes. One solution that evolved was launching aircraft on tactical warning.

1983: Nearing the Precipice

Growing Pessimism, Additional Precautions

The new Soviet leadership's public reaction to two major US Presidential speeches early in 1983 seems to indicate that its concern about American strategic intentions was mounting markedly. In response to the President's so-called "evil empire" speech on

²⁵Soviet Forces and Capabilities for Strategic Nuclear Conflict Through the Late 1990's, NIE 11-3/8, December, 1987.

March 8, the Soviet press charged that Reagan "can think only in terms of confrontation and bellicose, lunatic anti-communism." Later that month, Andropov responded in Pravda to the President's Strategic Defense Initiative speech:

On the face of it, layman may even find it attractive, since the President speaks about what seem to be defensive measures In fact, the strategic offensive forces of the United States will continue to be developed and upgraded at full tilt and along quite a definitive line at that, namely that of acquiring a nuclear first-strike capability.

In the early 1980's, many "civilian" Soviet foreign affairs experts apparently looked upon US actions as aggressive and diplomatically hostile, but not necessarily as precursors to strategic war. By early 1983, however, these specialists, probably realizing they were out of step with Soviet officialdom, also seemed to take a bleaker view of the US-USSR relationship. In January, the Soviet Institute of the US and Canada (IUSAC) held a conference on "strategic stability," and the overall mood was characterized [REDACTED]^{33(b)(1)} as "pessimistic." The group appeared particularly disturbed by the planned Pershing II deployments and underlying US motivations: "The Pershing II, with a flight of 5-6 minutes, represents surprise, and cruise missiles in great numbers also are first-strike weapons." But some optimism prevailed. Evidently expressing the views of many of his colleagues, one participant reportedly commented, "Strategic stability is being disturbed in the 1980's, but is not broken."

Also early in the year, Marshal Ogarkov began to earn a reputation: his pessimism toward relations with the US was almost unequalled among senior Soviet officials. Ogarkov's strident advocacy for increased military expenditures to counter the US

military buildup led one 33(b)(1) to call him a "dangerous man." In a February press article, he cited the US "Defense Directive of Fiscal 1984-1985" as proof of "how far the 'hawks' have gone," and implied that procuring new, sophisticated military hardware had to proceed apace in the USSR. Sometime thereafter, in a meeting with a Deputy Minister of Defense Industry, he urged that Soviet industry begin preparing for war, 33(b)(1) In a speech in March, Ogarkov revealed that his pressure on the political leadership seemed to be having an effect:

The CPSU Central Committee and the Soviet Government are implementing important measures to further increase the defense potential and the mobilization readiness of industry, agriculture, transport, and other sectors of the national economy, and to ensure their timely preparation for the transfer to a war footing

By late summer, General Secretary Andropov's own attitudes seemed to be increasingly accentuated by the same foreboding, judging from the signals he apparently was sending Washington. In August, he told a delegation of six US Democratic Senators that "the tension which is at this time characteristic of practically all areas of our relationship is not our choice. The United States' rationale in this is possibly clearer to you." Moreover, in a comment to the Senators but probably directed at President Reagan, Andropov warned:

There may be someone in Washington who believes that in circumstances of tension, in a 'game without rules,' it will be easier to achieve one's objectives. I do not think so. In the grand scheme of things it is not so at

all. It will not work for one side to be the dominant one. Would the United States permit someone to achieve superiority over them? I doubt it. And this is why we would not tolerate it either.²⁶

* * *

And there apparently was little doubt at the top of the Soviet intelligence services about where US policy was heading. In February, KGB headquarters issued a new, compelling operational directive to the KGB Residence in London, as well as to other Residences in NATO countries. The "Permanent Operational Assignment to uncover NATO Preparations for a Nuclear Attack on the Soviet Union" reaffirmed the Residency's task of "discovering promptly any preparations by the adversary for a nuclear attack (RYAN) on the USSR." It also included an assessment of the Pershing II missile that concluded that the weapon's short flight time would present an especially acute warning problem. Moscow emphasized that insight on NATO's war planning had thus become even more critical:

Immediate preparation for a nuclear attack begins at the moment when the other side's political leadership reaches the conclusion that it is expedient to use military force as the international situation becomes progressively more acute and makes a preliminary decision to launch an attack on the Soviet Union . . . the so-called nuclear consultations in NATO are probably one of the states of

²⁶Dangerous Stalemate: Superpower Relations in Autumn 1983, a Report of a Delegation of Eight Senators to the Soviet Union, September, 1983.

immediate preparation by the adversary for
VRYAN.

The time between NATO's preliminary decision to launch a surprise attack and when the strike would occur was assessed to be 7-10 days. Residents were also requested to submit reports concerning this requirement every two weeks -- regardless of whether there was any new information. This marked the first time that KGB Residencies were required to submit "negative" collection reports.

The immediacy of the threat also permeated GRU reporting requirements. Directives from Soviet military intelligence headquarters stated that war could break out at any moment. Residencies were constantly reminded that they must prepare for war and be able to recycle their operations to a war footing in a moment's notice.

About the same time, the GRU also took direct steps to ensure that intelligence reporting would continue after the outbreak of war. It created a new directorate to oversee illegal agents (assets operating in a foreign country without diplomatic or other official status). This unit, [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) was tasked to move quickly to form agent networks that could communicate independently with headquarters in Moscow. [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1)

[REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) "The idea of creating such illegal nets was not new, but the urgency was." [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) the urgency reflected Soviet perceptions of an increased "threat of war"

Throughout the summer of 1983, Moscow pressed KGB and GRU Residencies hard to collect on the VRYAN requirement. A June dispatch from KGB Center in Moscow to the Resident in London, for example, declared that, "the US Administration is continuing its preparations for nuclear war and is augmenting its nuclear potential." [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) KGB and GRU Residents world-wide were also instructed to increase operational

coordination with each other and "define" their relationship with ambassadors and chiefs of mission. [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) that this was designed to improve the overall effectiveness of the intelligence effort. In August, the Center dispatched additional VRYAN requirements, some quite specific. It alerted Residencies to increased NATO intelligence activities, submarine operations, and counterintelligence efforts.

But not everyone was on board. [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) some KGB officers overseas during this time became increasingly skeptical of the VRYAN requirement. Its obsessive nature seemed to indicate to some in the London KGB Residency, for example, that something was askew in Moscow. None of the political reporting officers who concentrated on VRYAN believed in the immediacy of the threat, especially a US surprise attack. In fact, two officers complained to the Resident that Moscow was mistaken in believing the United States was preparing for a unilateral war. They felt that the Residency itself might be partly to blame -- it had, willy-nilly, submitted alarmist reports on the West's military preparations, intensified ideological struggle, and similar themes to try to satiate Moscow's demands for VRYAN reporting.

* * *

Inside the Soviet armed forces, commanders evidently had sufficiently voiced alarm regarding their forces' state of preparedness against a surprise attack. In January 1983, Moscow issued a new key element to its military readiness system: a condition called "Surprise Enemy Attack Using Weapons of Mass Destruction in Progress." It augmented the four existing levels of readiness: (1) Constant Combat Readiness, (2) Increased Combat Readiness, (3) Threat of War, and (4) Full Combat Readiness. This fifth condition could be declared regardless of the readiness stage in effect at the time. It involved a wide variety of immediate defensive and offensive measures -- such as dispersing forces,

taking shelter, and preparing to launch forces.

Probably in response to new US and NATO strategies and equipment upgrades, the Soviet military forces also initiated a number of steps to reduce vulnerabilities to attack:

- o A crash program to build additional ammunition storage bunkers at Bulgarian airfields. This would improve capabilities to preposition air ammunition for Soviet aircraft deployed to support the air defense force against an improved NATO air threat on the Southern Front.

- o The institution of a new regulation to bring tactical missile brigades from peacetime conditions to full readiness within eight hours. (In the late 1970's, a day or more was needed.) Moreover, improvements were introduced at nuclear warhead storage facilities that halved the time needed to remove warheads.

- o Creation of a unique Soviet naval infantry brigade on the Kola peninsula to repel amphibious landings -- probably a direct response to the US Navy's new forward maritime strategy.

- o For the first time, a test of combat and airborne command post aircraft in a simulated electromagnetic pulse (EMP) environment. Soviet planners evidently had come to recognize the serious EMP threat to their command and control systems posed by a US nuclear strike.

Reflecting the heightened emphasis on defense preparedness, Moscow increased procurement of military equipment in 1983 by 5 to 10 percent, apparently by reducing production of civilian goods. Commercial aircraft production, for example, was reduced by about 14 percent in favor of military transports. To overcome this particular shortfall, the Soviets reportedly bought back airframes from East European airlines. They also converted some vehicle

plants from tractor to tank production. One such plant -- at Chelyabinsk -- had not produced tank chassis since World War II.

Mounting Tensions

By September 1983, in a sign probably reflecting perceptions at the top that the USSR was increasingly in peril, military officers began assuming more of a role as official spokesmen. Marshal Ogarkov, for example, was the Soviet official who offered explanations for shooting down KAL-007. In the past, high-ranking officers rarely commented in public on major defense issues. The increased public role of the military, particularly by Ogarkov, coincided with the deterioration of Yuriy Andropov's health. The General Secretary was suffering from long-standing hypertension and diabetes, complicated by kidney disease. Kidney failure in late September led to a long period of illness, which ended in his death in February 1984.

Typical of the Soviet military attacks against US policy during this period, Marshal Kulikov, Commander of the Warsaw Pact, warned in Pravda that the deployment of US Pershing II and cruise missiles "could give rise to an irresistible temptation in Washington to use it against the socialist community countries." An Ogarkov Tass article on 22 September, in which he warned that a sudden strike against the USSR would not go unpunished, was particularly vitriolic:

The USA is stepping up the buildup of strategic nuclear forces . . . to deal a 'disarming' nuclear blow to the USSR. This is a reckless step. Given the present development and spread of nuclear weapons in the world, the defending side will always be left with a quantity of nuclear means capable of responding to the aggressor with a retaliatory

strike causing an 'unacceptable damage'.

He further warned that "only suicides can stake on dealing a first nuclear strike in the present-day conditions . . . and . . . new 'Pershings' and cruise missiles in Western Europe are a means for a first strike." Perhaps most ominous, however, was the comparisons Ogarkov made between the US and prewar Nazi Germany.

The conspicuous public appearance of Soviet military leaders and their relentless, often crude attacks on US policy seemed to spread the fear of war among the population. In Moscow, programs highlighting the seriousness of the international situation and the possibility of a US attack were broadcast on radio and television several times a day. At least some Westerners living in Moscow, 3.3(b)(1) have said that these programs appeared not for external consumption, but to prepare Soviet citizens for the inevitability of nuclear war with the US. The propaganda campaign seemed to work. Conversations by Westerners with Soviet citizens at the time revealed that the "war danger" line was widely accepted.²⁷

From September onward, the Kremlin offered up increasingly bitter public diatribes against the US. Its language suggested that there was almost no hope for repairing relations. Soviet spokesmen accused President Reagan and his advisors of "madness," "extremism," and "criminality." By this time, Moscow evidently recognized that its massive propaganda campaign to derail the Pershing II and cruise missile deployments had failed. According to press reports, Soviet officials had concluded that the Reagan Administration deliberately engineered the KAL incident to poison the international atmosphere and thereby ensure the missiles would be deployed -- i.e., a demonstration of resolve. Yuriy Andropov,

²⁷Soviet Thinking on the Possibility of Armed Confrontation with the United States, CIA, 22 December 1983.

commenting in late September on the KAL-007 shutdown, wrote in Pravda: "Even if someone had illusions as to the possible evolution for the better in the policy of the present Administration, the latest developments have finally dispelled them."

By late summer, the leadership appeared to be bracing the population for the worst. [REDACTED] 33(b)(1)

[REDACTED] 33(b)(1) the population was being prepared for a possible war. [REDACTED] 33(b)(1)

[REDACTED] 33(b)(1) signs were being posted everywhere showing the location of air raid shelters. Factories reportedly were required to include air raid drills in their normal work plans. Moreover, a Western visitor to Moscow reported that Andropov sent a letter to all party organizations declaring that the motherland was truly in danger and there was no chance for an improvement in relations with the United States. This letter was reportedly read at closed party meetings throughout the country. In October, Marshal Kulikov announced that preparations for deploying new nuclear missiles to Czechoslovakia and East Germany had begun. The US invasion of Grenada brought a renewed shrillness to the Soviets' public attacks on the US. The Kremlin said it held the President personally responsible for what it described as a "bandit attack" and a "crime against peace and humanity."

* * *

Also toward the end of the year, clear evidence of the Soviet military's preoccupation with readiness again surfaced. The 4th Air Army in Poland received orders to reduce arming times for aircraft with nuclear missions. This apparently stemmed from a new readiness directive issued in October, which ordered several procedural reviews, including: the time needed to prepare nuclear weapons for transport; the time needed to transport nuclear weapons from storage sites to the aircraft; and the time needed to hand

over nuclear weapons to aircraft crews. The instructions also included maximum allowable times for loading nuclear weapons onto aircraft -- 25 minutes for one weapon, 40 minutes for two. In October, the 4th Air Army apparently exercised these new procedures during an inspection by Marshal Ogarkov.

* * *

Within the Soviet leadership, another crisis of transition was in the offing. Andropov apparently became gravely ill and, sometime during October, may have had one of his kidneys removed. His failing health very likely caused the cancellation of a state trip to Bulgaria -- even though the official reason given was the intense international climate. The seriousness of Andropov's condition was apparent when he failed to appear in Kremlin celebrations on November 7 commemorating the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution.

33(b)(1)

This event, code-named "Able Archer," occurred at a time when some Soviet leaders seemed almost frantic over the threat of war. According to press accounts, Politburo member Gregory Romanov grimly stated in a speech at the Kremlin on the same day that Able Archer commenced: "The international situation at present is white hot, thoroughly white hot."

Able Archer 83

From 7-11 November, NATO conducted its annual command post exercise to practice nuclear release procedures. This is a recurring event that includes NATO forces from Turkey to England,

and is routinely monitored by Soviet intelligence. Typical Soviet responses in the past have included increased intelligence collection and increased readiness levels at select military garrisons.

The 1983 version of Able Archer, however, had some special wrinkles, which we believe probably fueled Soviet anxieties. NATO tested new procedures for releasing nuclear weaponry that emphasized command communications from headquarters to subordinate units. In addition, unlike previous scenarios wherein NATO forces remained at General Alert throughout, the 1983 plan featured pre-exercise communications that notionally moved forces from normal readiness, through various alert phases, to a General Alert.

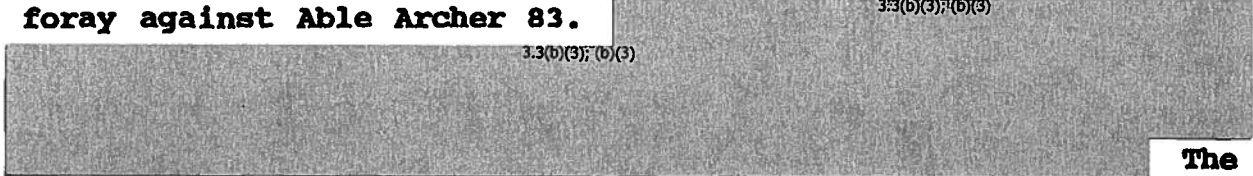
Soviet intelligence clearly had tip-offs to the exercise, and HUMINT elements underwent a major mobilization to collect against it. On 8 or 9 November, Moscow sent a circular telegram to KGB Residencies in Western Europe ordering them to report on the increased alert status of US military bases in Europe. Residencies were also instructed to check for indications of an impending nuclear attack against the Soviet Union; the London KGB Residency interpreted this as a sign of Moscow's VRYAN concern. Similar messages to search for US military activity were received by GRU Residencies.²⁸

Other Warsaw Pact intelligence services reacted strongly as well. 3.3(b)(1) intelligence officer intimated that during the Able Archer time frame he had been, "particularly occupied trying to obtain information on a major NATO exercise" The officer said that his efforts were in response to a year-old, high-priority requirement from Moscow "to look for any indication that the United States was about

3.3(b)(1)

to launch a preemptive nuclear strike against the countries of the Warsaw Pact."

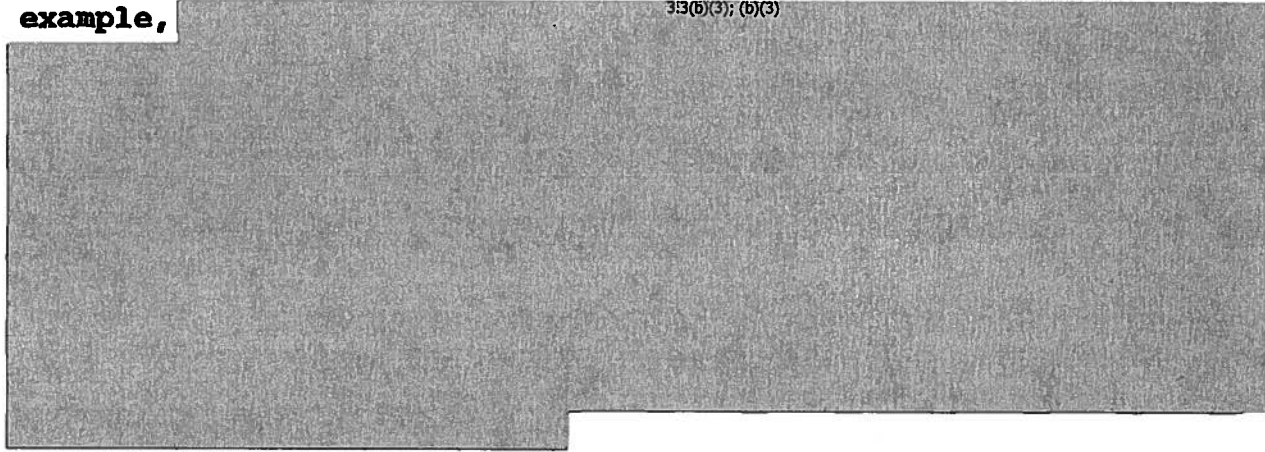
The Pact also launched an unprecedented technical collection foray against Able Archer 83. 3.3(b)(3); (b)(3)

3.3(b)(3); (b)(3)


The Soviets also conducted over 36 intelligence flights, significantly more than in previous Able Archers. These included Soviet strategic and naval aviation missions over the Norwegian, North, Baltic, and Barents Seas -- probably to determine whether US naval forces were deploying forward in support of Able Archer.

Warsaw Pact military reactions to this particular exercise were also unparalleled in scale. This fact, together with the timing of their response, strongly suggests to us that Soviet military leaders may have been seriously concerned that the US would use Able Archer 83 as a cover for launching a real attack.

The Soviets evidently believed the exercise would take place sometime between 3 and 11 November, but they initiated significant military preparations well in advance. Beginning October 20, for example, 3.3(b)(3); (b)(3)



These 3.3(b)(3); (b)(3) were highly unusual. Most notably, they probably

involved [REDACTED] activity
seen only during crisis periods in the past. Moreover, [REDACTED]

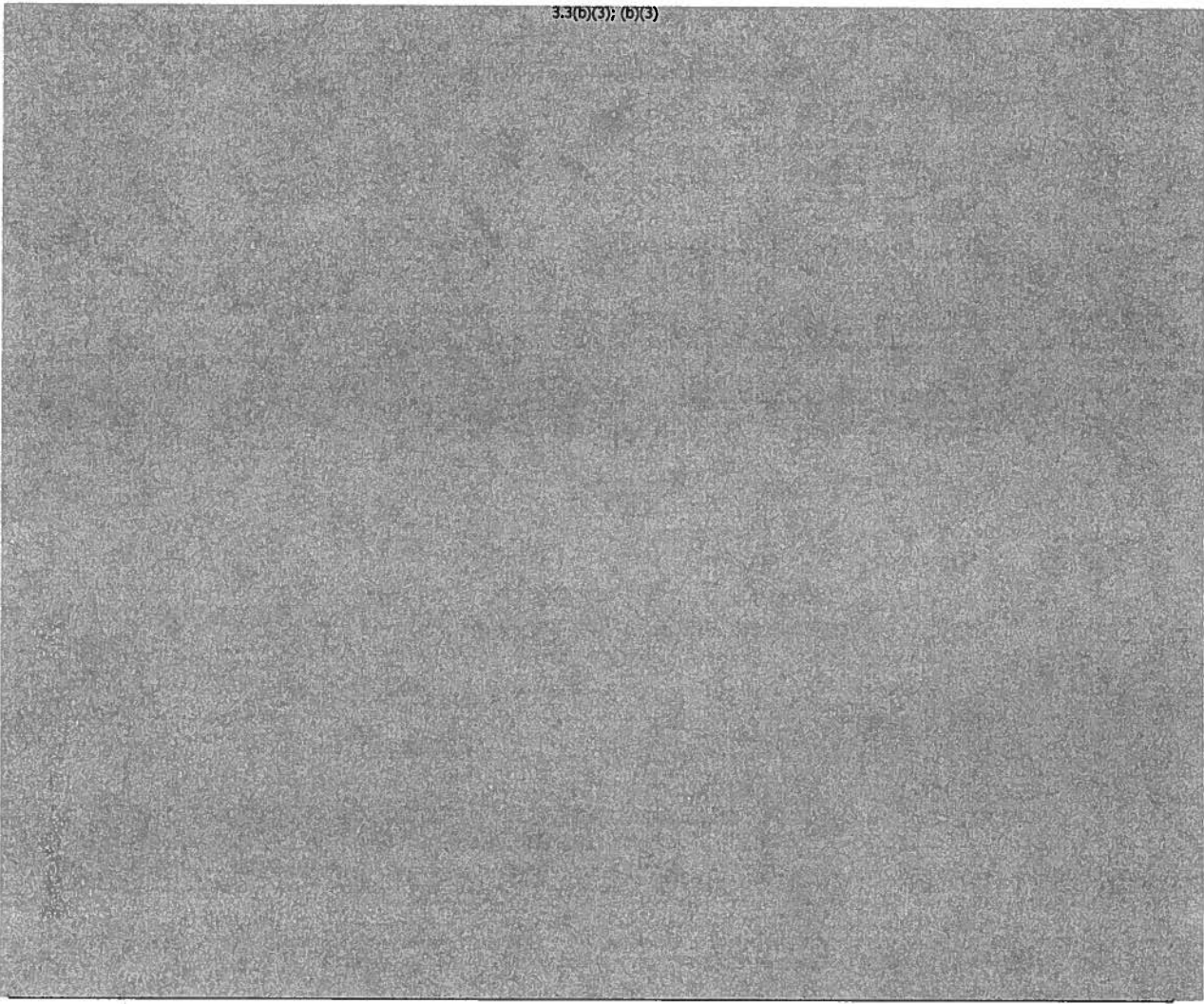
o Transporting nuclear weapons from storage sites to delivery units by helicopter.

o A "standdown," or suspension of all flight operations, from 4 to 10 November -- with the exception of intelligence collection flights -- probably to have available as many aircraft as possible for combat.

o Invoking a 30-minute, around-the-clock readiness time and assigning priority targets [REDACTED]

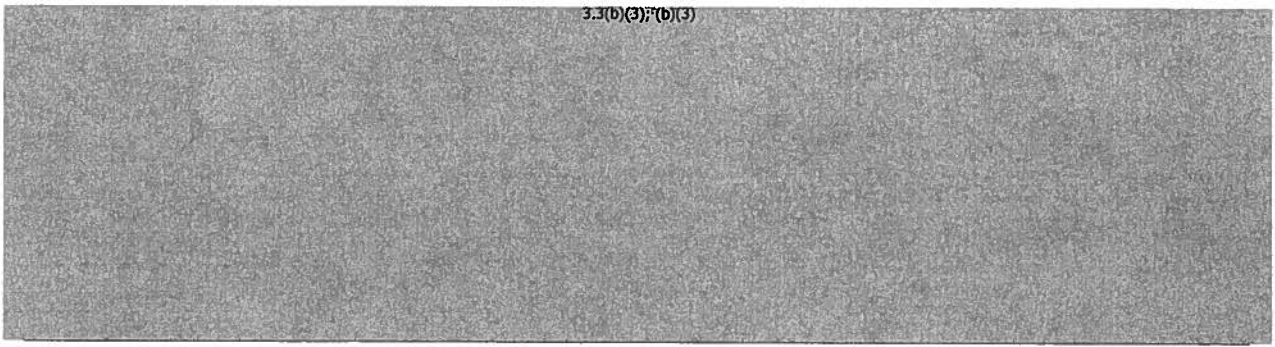
Similar measures were taken by about a third of the Soviet Air Force units [REDACTED]

3.3(b)(3); (b)(3)

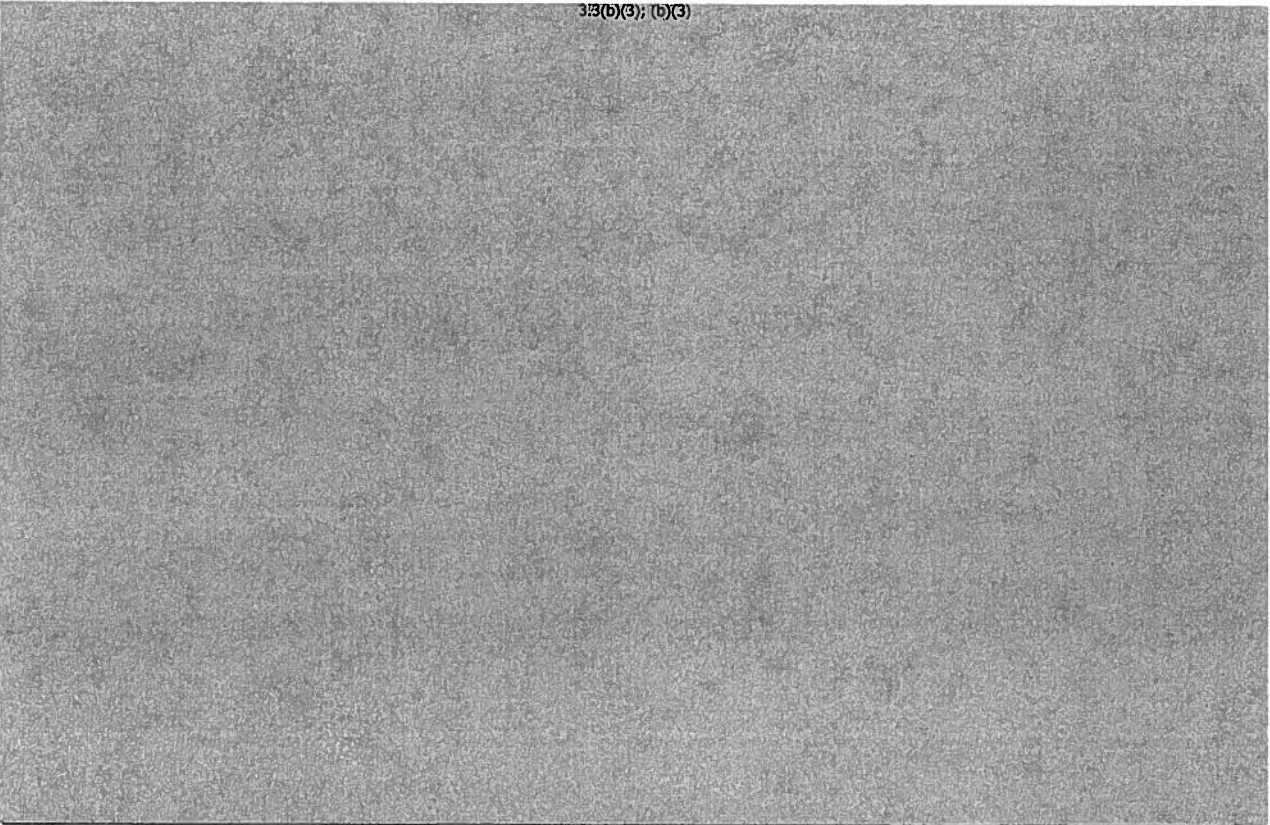


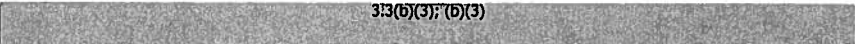
There were a number of other unusual Soviet military moves that, taken in the aggregate, also strongly suggest heightened concern:

3.3(b)(3); (b)(3)



3:3(b)(3); (b)(3)



By November 11, the Soviet alert evidently was withdrawn. Flight training by Soviet Air Force units in East Germany returned to normal on the 11th 

3:3(b)(3); (b)(3)

On the same day that Soviet forces returned to normal status, Marshal Ustinov delivered a speech in Moscow to a group of high-ranking military officers that, in our view, offers a plausible explanation for the unusual Soviet reactions to Able Archer 83. Calling the US "reckless" and "adventurist," and charging it was pushing the world toward "nuclear catastrophe," Ustinov implied that the Kremlin saw US military actions as sufficiently real to order an increase in Soviet combat readiness. Finally, possibly referring to the use of an exercise to launch a surprise attack, he warned that "no enemy intrigues will catch us unawares."

Ustinov also voiced his apparent conviction that the threat

of war loomed heavy. Exhorting his forces, he declared that the international situation -- "the increased danger of an outbreak of a new world war" -- called for extraordinary measures:

We must actively and persistently foster high vigilance and mobilize all servicemen both to increase combat readiness . . . and to strengthen military discipline.

There is little doubt in our minds that the Soviets were genuinely worried by Able Archer; however, the depth of that concern is difficult to gauge. On one hand, it appears that at least some Soviet forces were preparing to preempt or counterattack a NATO strike launched under cover of Able Archer. Such apprehensions stemmed, in our view, from several factors:

o US-Soviet relations at the time were probably at their lowest ebb in 20 years. Indeed, the threat of war with the US was an ever-present media theme throughout the USSR, especially the armed forces.

o Yuriy Andropov, probably the only man in the Soviet Union who could authorize the use of nuclear weapons at a moment's notice, was seriously ill [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1)

[REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1)

[REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1)

[REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1)

[REDACTED] Pact exercises to counter a NATO surprise attack always portrayed NATO "jumping off" from a large training maneuver before reaching full combat readiness. Soviet doctrine and war plans have long posited such a scenario for a Warsaw Pact preemptive attack on NATO.

On the other hand, the US intelligence community detected no evidence of large-scale Warsaw Pact preparations. Conventional

thinking assumes that the Soviets would probably undertake such a mobilization and force buildup prior to a massive attack on NATO. The Board questions, however, whether we would indeed detect as many "indicators" as we might expect, [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(3);(b)(3)

[REDACTED] 3.3(b)(3); (b)(3)

The "mixed" Soviet reaction may, in fact, directly reflect the degree of uncertainty within the Soviet military and the Kremlin over US intentions. Although the Soviets usually have been able to make correct evaluations of US alerts, their increased number of intelligence reconnaissance flights and special telegrams to intelligence Residencies regarding possible US force mobilization, for example, suggests to us serious doubts about the true intent of Able Archer. To us, Soviet actions preceding and during the exercise appear to have been the logical steps to be taken in a period when suspicions were running high. Moreover, many of these steps were ordered to be made secretly to avoid detection by US intelligence. This suggests that Soviet forces were either preparing to launch a surprise preemptive attack (which never occurred) or making preparations that would allow them a minimum capability to retaliate, but at the same time not provoke the attack they apparently feared. This situation could have been extremely dangerous if during the exercise -- perhaps through a series of ill-timed coincidences or because of faulty intelligence -- the Soviets had misperceived US actions as preparations for a real attack.

Winter, 1983-84: Winter of Crisis


[REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1)

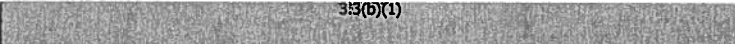
[REDACTED] by December 1983, rumors of imminent war were circulating at all levels of Soviet society. For example, at the Warsaw Pact Defense Ministers' Conference in Sofia, Pact Commander Kulikov characterized the international situation as "prewar." He called for more active

reserve training, as well as stockpiling of ammunition, food, and fuel in case of an "emergency." In Moscow, a respected US expert on the USSR, after extensive conversations with Soviet government officials, came away convinced that there was an obsessive fear of war, an emotionalism, and a paranoia among his contacts.

3.3(b)(1)



Nevertheless, the General Secretary continued to participate actively in foreign policy matters. In late November, he sent a toughly worded letter to Margaret Thatcher, calling the cruise missiles slated for Greenham Common a "threat" to the Soviet Union that had to be removed. This letter, undoubtedly a last ditch effort to prevent cruise missile deployments in England, was characterized  as "resentful to the point of anger, and even threatening." When the first Pershing II's arrived in West Germany in December, Andropov reportedly ordered his negotiators to leave the Geneva strategic arms talks and not return until the missiles were removed.

Andropov's lengthy infirmity very possibly left the USSR with a feckless leader for several months thereafter, a situation that could have exacerbated any uneasiness among his colleagues over international tensions. 

3.3(b)(1)



3.3(b)(1)



He died on 9 February.

Konstantine Chernenko's ascent to power left the reins of the USSR in the hands of another seriously ill man. Chernenko had long suffered from emphysema, complicated by pulmonary cardiac insufficiency, as well as from chronic hepatitis. His weak condition was clearly visible during his televised acceptance speech.

3.3(b)(1)



* * *

The change at the top had no outward effect on the leadership's apparent preoccupation with the danger of war. The media campaign, intelligence collection efforts, and military preparations, in fact, appeared to accelerate in Chernenko's first months in office.

Speeches by Soviet military leaders in February continued to warn that US policies were flirting with war. The major themes gave notice to Washington that a surprise attack would not succeed, and exhorted the Soviet population to steel itself for a possible confrontation. Marshal Kulikov warned in a 24 February Red Star article that,

3.3(b)(1)



When the United States and NATO play with fire, as they are now doing, theirs is not simply an irresponsible activity, but . . . an extremely dangerous one . . . the US-NATO military and political leadership must realize that whatever they create and whatever means they elaborate for unleashing an aggressive war and conducting combat operations, the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies will be capable of a fitting response

Two days later, in a statement commemorating the Soviet armed forces, Marshal Ustinov made public, in vague but pointed language, efforts underway to bolster the national defense:

The CPSU Central Committee and the Soviet government have adopted the necessary measures to strengthen the country's defense, enhance the armed forces' combat readiness, and do all they can to prevent the forces of aggression from wrecking the military equilibrium which has been achieved.

He also quoted General Secretary Chernenko as justifying these measures "to cool the hot heads of the bellicose adventurists."

Judging from his exhortations to the Soviet bureaucracy, we conclude that Chernenko probably shared his predecessor's apparent concerns. In early March, for example, a circular telegram to Soviet diplomats abroad continued to emphasize the same war scare themes. Chernenko was quoted as declaring, "The present tension in the world is caused by the sharply stepped-up policies of the more aggressive forces of American imperialism, a policy of outright militarism, of claims to world supremacy." He reiterated earlier charges that the US deployment of nuclear missiles in

Europe had "seriously increased the threat of war."

* * *

Intelligence collection on VRYAN also continued apace during this period. [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) 50 KGB officers were assembled into a new "strategic section," expressly to process VRYAN information. At a special KGB conference in January, the VRYAN requirement received special emphasis. In his speech to the conference, General Kryuchkov told KGB officers that the threat of nuclear war had reached "dangerous proportions."

The White House is advancing on its propaganda the adventurist and extremely dangerous notion of 'survival' in the fire of a thermonuclear catastrophe. This is nothing else but psychological preparation of the population for nuclear war. . . .

Urging the KGB officers to increase their efforts, he added:

Everything indicates that the threshold for using nuclear weapons is being lowered and the significance of the surprise factor has sharply increased. For the intelligence service this means that it must concentrate its efforts to the maximum extent on the principal task to be pursued -- it must not fail to perceive direct preparation by the adversary for a nuclear missile attack against the USSR nor overlook the real danger of war breaking out.

The fear that seemed to grip the KGB leadership evidently had a hold on many lower-level officials as well. [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1)

3.3(b)(1) [REDACTED] a KGB official 3.3(b)(1) [REDACTED] told him in April 1984, that the US and USSR were on the brink of war. This same official also confided that it was very important that the Soviet Union guard against surprise nuclear attack. Moscow Center generated even more, often curiously esoteric, VRYAN tasking to the field. The Residency in London received instructions to watch for government efforts to build up anti-Soviet feelings among the public; monitor activities at Greenham Common; and conduct surveillance of military and civilian groups, as well as banks, slaughterhouses and post offices.

There was also a clear signal of VRYAN's significance among the high echelons of Soviet government. Moscow dispatched a circular telegram to all ambassadors and chiefs of mission instructing them not to interfere in or obstruct the work of KGB or GRU personnel. 3.3(b)(1) [REDACTED] this cable, signed by Foreign Minister Gromyko, was unprecedented.

Indeed, a self-reinforcing cycle seemed to have taken life, wherein leadership concern was provoking more VRYAN reporting, and increased VRYAN data, in turn, was adding fuel to leadership anxieties. Because Moscow continued to demand every tidbit of information that might bear on NATO war preparations, many of the London KGB Residency's reports, 3.3(b)(1) [REDACTED] contained information that had, at best, only tenuous connections to real military activities. Ambiguous information went to Moscow without clarification and, as is customary in KGB field reporting, without specific sourcing. In March, for example, the KGB Resident in London instructed the officer in charge of VRYAN data to forward a report on a cruise missile exercise at Greenham Common. Although the Residency had gleaned the story from a British newspaper, the report arrived in Moscow as a top-priority cable, marked "of strategic importance" -- the first use of this format by the Residency in over three years. That same month London Residency

sent a second "flash" message to Moscow, this time on the initiative of a junior officer who had been listening to a BBC report on cruise missiles.

Because VRYAN reports were very selective, and usually not put into context, they tended to corroborate Headquarters' fears, further building the "case" of NATO war preparations. Even innocuous information from overt sources found their way into the data base. [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) [REDACTED] one such story about a local campaign for blood donors met a VRYAN requirement to report evidence of blood drives; and the information was duly submitted.

And Moscow kept stoking the fire. In praising the London Residency for its VRYAN reporting in March 1984, Headquarters cited the "blood donor" report as especially interesting. Even though by this time most Residency officers had grown increasingly skeptical of the VRYAN effort, they nonetheless adopted a "can do" approach, forwarding any "evidence" they could find. Still, London Residency often failed to submit its mandatory bi-weekly reports, and Moscow repeatedly had to issue reminders.

The Center sometimes tried to spur on London Residency by sharing information from other sources. On one occasion, it offered an assessment of a NATO document that called for improvements in crisis-related communications links. According to the Center, this was yet another "significant sign of preparations for a sudden nuclear missile attack against the Soviet Union and socialist countries."

Moscow also heaped praise on its allies' efforts. [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) [REDACTED] the head of the KGB's VRYAN program singled out Czechoslovak reporting on the US Federal Emergency Management Agency as "priceless." The same official also lauded Prague for its collection of military intelligence, which, he said, helped make its civilian service second only to the KGB in fulfilling the

VRYAN requirement. The East Germans reportedly placed third.

In addition, GRU Residencies geared up. In fact, there were some indications that Residencies were about to be placed on wartime readiness.

3.3(b)(3); (b)(3)

3.3(b)(3); (b)(3)

As a result, Residencies put as many agents as possible in direct radio contact with Moscow. This measure was intended to ensure that Headquarters could handle the agents directly should a rupture in diplomatic relations occur and an embassy had to be abandoned. To timely monitor military developments abroad, the GRU implemented a special 24-hour watch staff at Headquarters. These tasks, according to GRU training, were to be implemented during time of war.

Moscow's emphasis on wartime preparedness was reflected in training exercises throughout 1984. For the first time that year, the Soviet strategic forces training program concentrated on surviving and responding to a surprise enemy strike. This seeming obsession with wartime preparedness really came to the fore in March and April: the Soviet armed forces conducted the most comprehensive rehearsal for nuclear war ever detected.

3.3(b)(1); 3.3(b)(3); (b)(3)

3.3(b)(1); 3.3(b)(3); (b)(3)

Indeed, several of the component events were, by themselves, the largest, or most extensive of their type ever observed. This activity included

3.3(b)(3); (b)(3)

3.3(b)(3); (b)(3)

The naval exercise involved over 148 surface ships and probably close to 50 submarines. At one stage, approximately 23 ballistic missile submarines were activated, making it the most extensive dispersal of its kind ever detected. The Northern and

Baltic Fleets were especially active, conducting dispersals, defensive maneuvers, anti-submarine operations, simulated reactions to nuclear attack, and offensive nuclear strikes.

The naval exercises ended just as the Strategic Aviation and Strategic Rocket Force maneuvers jumped off. Here, too, the level of effort was impressive:

o The Strategic Rocket Force exercise and associated naval activity involved 33 missile launches, including SLBM's, MRBM's, and ICBM's. 3:3(b)(3); (b)(3)

o The Soviet Strategic Aviation exercise involved at least 17 bombers deployed to various staging bases. On one day alone, over 80 bombers conducted a large-scale strike exercise.

Summer, 1984: Preparations for War

In mid-May Ustinov, in response to a series of questions published by Tass, continued the media attack against the US by accusing Washington of trying to "achieve military superiority" to blackmail the Soviet Union. He warned that "any attempts at resolving the historical dispute with socialism by means of military force are doomed to inevitable, utter failure." In addition, he reemphasized the military's readiness theme by quoting Chernenko: "No military adventure of imperialism will take us by surprise, any aggressor will immediately get his deserts." And he called upon the Soviet people to work even more "perseveringly" and "purposefully" to strengthen the economy. Finally, Ustinov revealed that "the Army and Navy are in permanent readiness for resolutely repelling any aggressor."

About this time, Chernenko's leadership position may well have been significantly impacted by his declining health. 3:3(b)(1)

3.3(b)(1)

Chernenko's physical deterioration and lack of stamina could well have accelerated the accumulation of power by younger Politburo members, namely Mikhail Gorbachev.

3.3(b)(1)

Moreover, according to a public statement by the then Deputy Director of IUSAC, Gorbachev, during this period assumed the responsibility for "strategy formulation" on defense matters.

We do not know how strongly Gorbachev subscribed to the same view on the threat of a surprise attack apparently held by many of his Politburo colleagues. There are some very slim pieces of evidence suggesting the opposite.

3.3(b)(1)

some officials in Soviet intelligence believed he was less bellicose toward the US, and might even "surrender" if conditions in the USSR continued to deteriorate.

3.3(b)(1)

by "surrender," meant retreat or withdrawal from an expanding Soviet empire, not military submission.

Gorbachev's speech to the people of Smolensk in late June betrayed no obvious obsession with the war scare. He was there to award the city the Order of Lenin for its citizens' bravery during

the Second World War -- presumably a good setting in which to attack the US publicly. The speech, however, focused primarily on improving the economy and the standard of living. Rather than exhorting the people to increase military readiness, he called for the mobilization of "creative potentialities of each person; the further strengthening of discipline and the increase of responsibility at work; and the implementation of school reform and an integrated solution to the contemporary problems of education."

Nevertheless, the fear of a US attack apparently persisted among some Soviet leaders into the fall. [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1)

[REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) the Politburo secretly forbade the Minister of Defense, the Chief of the General Staff, and other responsible military and KGB leaders from being absent from their offices for any length of time. [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1)

General Akhromeyev, then First Deputy Minister of Defense, was quoted during this period as saying that war was "imminent." Akhromeyev reportedly compared the situation in Europe to the weeks preceding the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union in 1941. He asked GRU Chief Ivashutin whether, in case of war, there were sufficient agents in place in NATO's rear areas. He also asked whether the GRU had agents in NATO General Staffs who could give twenty days warning of hostile action.

* * *

In fact, Soviet military actions into the early fall suggested continued deep concern about Western hostility. Presumably at the behest of the Soviet military leadership, Warsaw Pact security services increased harassment of Western attaches and imposed greater restrictions on their travel. [REDACTED]

3.3(b)(3); (b)(3)

3.3(b)(3)?(b)(3)

Through early summer, Moscow's emphasis on preparedness evidently led to a number of military developments aimed at increasing the Warsaw Pact's ability to go to war:

- o In March, to avoid reducing readiness among combat troops, the Politburo decided for the first time since the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia not to use military trucks and personnel to support the harvest.

- o In April, the East German ammunition plant in Luebben increased to 24-hour production and more than doubled its output.

- o In May, Polish women in several cities were called up for a short military exercise. In some families with young children, both husband and wife were called. Reservists were told that readiness alerts would be expanded and occur more frequently in factories and relief organizations.

- o In Hungary, a recall of an undetermined number of reservists was conducted in May.

- o In June, [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) [REDACTED] during the previous 6-12 months additional SPETSNAZ troops had arrived in Hungary. [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) [REDACTED] an increase of SPETSNAZ forces in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, as well as an ongoing "aggressive indoctrination" of Warsaw Pact forces.

- o Also in June, the Soviets conducted their largest ever

unilateral combat exercise in Eastern Europe. At least 60,000 Soviet troops in Hungary and Czechoslovakia were involved.

o A mobilization exercise in June in Czechoslovakia involved the armed forces, territorial forces, and civil defense elements.

o During the spring, according to Western press reports, Soviet civil defense associations were activated. Volunteers were knocking on apartment doors explaining what to do when sirens go off.

o For the first time in 30 years, Soviet railroad troops in the Transcaucasus conducted an exercise to test their ability to move supplies to the forward area while under air attack.

o [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) the Soviets abolished draft deferments, even at defense plants.

o Both the Soviets and Czechs separately practiced modifying mobilization procedures in exercises to facilitate call-up of civilian reservists earlier in the force readiness sequence.

o In Poland, the length of required military service for new reserve officers was increased from 12 to 18 months.

o In an effort to limit contact with foreigners, the Supreme Soviet decreed, effective 1 July, that Soviet citizens who provided foreigners with housing, transportation, or other services would be fined.

o [REDACTED] 3.3(b)(1) since 1983 men up to 35 years old had been drafted without consideration of family difficulties or their profession.

* * *

Inside the intelligence bureaucracy, however, there were signs by midyear that attention was shifting away from "surprise nuclear attack." 3.3(b)(1) Moscow Headquarters continued to press for VRYAN reporting, but the previous sense of urgency had dissipated. Both in London and at Moscow Center KGB officers were beginning to sense that official guidance on VRYAN was becoming ritualistic, reflecting less concern. KGB officers returning from Moscow to London had the clear impression that the primary strategic concern was focused on the possibility of a US technological breakthrough. This was expressed in tasking to both the KGB and GRU. Information on US scientific-technical developments that could lead to a weapons technology breakthrough began to assume a high priority.³⁰

Autumn, 1984: Reason Restored

By late summer, there were public hints of possible differences inside the Kremlin over how to deal with Washington on strategic matters. In an interview on September 2, Chernenko omitted any reference to the removal of US Pershing II or cruise missiles as a condition for resuming strategic arms talks. Gromyko, however, reiterated this condition in a tough speech to the UN on 27 September. On 6 October, Gromyko gave a characteristically harsh speech to the United Nations in which he attacked the Reagan Administration's "reckless designs" and "obsession" with achieving military superiority. Chernenko's interview with the Washington Post on 17 October was lighter in tone.

By that time, a number of factors may have prompted some serious reflecting within the Politburo. Probably most important, the imminent US nuclear attack -- expected for more than two years

³⁰Ibid.

-- did not materialize. Likewise, the massive VRYAN collection effort, we presume, ultimately did not yield the kind of concrete indicators of US war preparations for which the Soviet leadership was searching. Other events that also may have prompted some policy reexamination included:

- The ineffectiveness of "countermeasures" in slowing US INF deployments or significantly stimulating the West European "peace" movement.
- Moscow's inability to match the US military buildup -- because of severe economic problems.
- Growing concern for possible US technological breakthroughs in space weaponry.
- Soviet perceptions of the increasing likelihood of President Reagan's reelection.

In addition, several leadership personalities perhaps most suspicious of US intentions departed the scene. Notably, Chief of the General Staff Ogarkov, whose public statements on US-USSR relations were particularly onerous, was sacked and reassigned. Although we do not know for certain, Ogarkov may have been the casualty of a changing Politburo, which seemed to want improved relations with the US and greater control over the military.

3.3(b)(1)

the impetus for improved US-USSR relations was coming from the "younger" generation -- specifically Gorbachev, Romanov, and Aliev -- whose views had prevailed over those of Gromyko and Ustinov.

3.3(b)(1)

Ogarkov was replaced with Akhromeyev to make the Soviet military more flexible on arms control issues.

Not long after Ogarkov was dismissed, Dimitry Ustinov -- another key believer in the US surprise attack -- became seriously ill with pneumonia. His condition worsened in the late fall, and he died on December 20. Ustinov's demise was paralleled by a softening in the Kremlin's arms control policy. In late November, Chernenko abandoned Andropov's vow not to return to the Geneva talks as long as US INF missiles remained in Europe and agreed to resume talks in January 1985.

* * *

Attitudes were also changing inside Soviet intelligence. By late 1984, a new KGB collection requirement (levied during the summer) for scientific-technical intelligence had acquired equal standing with VRYAN. By early 1985, 3.3(b)(1)

3.3(b)(1) the threat of surprise nuclear attack was not being taken seriously at all in the KGB, even within the First Chief Directorate. On a visit to Moscow in January 1985, the Acting Resident from London reportedly attempted to discuss the VRYAN requirement with a senior First Chief Directorate friend, but was put off by "a strong Russian expletive." Officers at the London Residency reportedly welcomed the decline of VRYAN because it would diminish the possibility of misperceptions about US preparations for nuclear attack.³¹

By early 1985, Soviet leadership fears of a US surprise attack seemed to evaporate steadily. Chernenko's health eroded throughout the early months of 1985 and he died on March 10. Within hours, Gorbachev became General Secretary.

* * *

For some time after Gorbachev assumed power, tensions remained

³¹Ibid.

high between Washington and Moscow. However, Soviet public expressions of fear that the US was plotting a sudden nuclear attack eventually subsided. A new, more upbeat mood among the leadership began to emerge. In July 1985, Gorbachev delivered a speech to a group of military officers in Minsk in which, according to a Western reporter, he distanced himself from the policies of his immediate predecessors and placed a high priority on achieving arms agreements -- to facilitate a reduction in arms spending and help bail out the disastrous economy.

In the military arena, however, the vestiges of the war scare seemed to have a lasting effect. The Soviets continued until 1987 the forward deployment of their ballistic missile submarines. In late 1984, they also began conducting strategic bomber "combat" patrols over the Arctic as part of their "analogous" response to US INF deployments. And they continued to reduce their vulnerabilities to a surprise nuclear attack -- in 1985, for example, by moving the SRF alternate command post at Smolensk eastward to Orenburg and out of Pershing II range.

The Legacy

Indeed, the Soviet military's experience during this period may well have had at least some influence in subsequent policy decisions regarding strategic force modernization and training. Soviet strategic military developments and exercises since then have particularly emphasized improving capabilities to survive and retaliate against a surprise nuclear attack. Such efforts have included:

- o The orchestration of five SRF exercises in 1986 and 1987 to test the ability of mobile missile units to respond to a US surprise attack.

- o Beginning in March 1986, a change in strategic aviation

exercises that featured "takeoff on strategic warning," i.e., aircraft were sent aloft during the onset of heightened international tensions.

o Impressive improvements in the survivability of their strategic arsenal. By the late 1990's, 75 percent of the force will be highly survivable mobile platforms -- compared to 25 percent in 1979. Although much of this change reflects the introduction of land-based systems, the sea-based and bomber forces have also greatly enhanced their ability to survive a sudden first strike.

The legacy of the war scare, however, has perhaps been most obvious within the Soviet intelligence establishment. 3.3(b)(1)

3.3(b)(1) while the VRYAN collection requirement is no longer at the top of the KGB's priority list, it nonetheless ranks third -- behind only (1) US/NATO strategic and political-economic issues, and (2) significant international political changes. These updated priorities were stipulated in a paper jointly issued last summer by the new chief of the First Chief Directorate (FCD) and the new KGB party secretary. Moreover, the FCD evidently continues to process VRYAN reporting through a "situation room" at its headquarters, and still requires the larger Residencies abroad -- such as Washington -- to man VRYAN "sections." The same source says that the KGB's "illegals" and counterintelligence components have become major contributors of VRYAN reporting. Inside the GRU, warning of imminent nuclear attack remains the (traditionally) top collection objective, but 3.3(b)(1) a headquarters directive late last year reemphasized its importance.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY

Recent events in Europe reinforce the Board's deep concern that US intelligence must be better able to assess likely Soviet

attitudes and intentions. Today, the dark clouds of political instability inside the Kremlin loom far heavier than even during those evidently precarious days of leadership transition in the early 1980's. Popular political expectations -- more often, demands -- throughout the Bloc have almost certainly outdistanced even Mikhail Gorbachev's reform-minded vision. As the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe crumbles, prospects are very good that strongly anti-communist governments will eventually emerge, making very likely a total realignment of the European political landscape. Domestically, ethnic strife threatens to rip the very fabric of the Soviets' socialist "Union." The economy continues to slide, while the leadership invokes so-called reforms that, at best, are only half-measures. All the while, Gorbachev is trying to project an image of control, but is probably barely able to hang on to the reins. And his political opposition may be preparing to pounce at the earliest, most opportune moment.

It's no news to our policymakers that this turmoil in the USSR makes for very unsettled and virtually unpredictable governmental relationships -- a conundrum that will probably last for some time. In such a charged atmosphere, particularly if events degenerate into a Kremlin power struggle that favors the "conservatives," misperceptions on either side could lead willy-nilly to unwarranted reactions -- and counterreactions.

It is clear to this Board that the US intelligence community, therefore, has a compelling obligation to make a determined effort to minimize the chances that future Soviet actions will be misinterpreted in Washington.

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October 14, 2015

Registrar: R. Worth
First-Tier Tribunal – General Regulatory Chamber: Information Rights

Re: FOI Appeal, in reply refer to Archive# 20140795BRI004/ Tribunal Reference: EA.2015.0080)

Dear Registrar:

I am writing to appeal the Cabinet Office's ongoing refusal to disclose any part of JIC(84)(N)45, entitled "Soviet Union: Concern about a surprise NATO Attack." It is my intention to argue that the Cabinet Office's actions flout Britain's twenty-year-rule, that the continued secrecy is rendered moot by ongoing declassification under both the US and the UK's FOI laws, and that the Cabinet Office's administrative maneuverings suggest the need for the Tribunal's independent review of whether the entirety of information in this document should be withheld public.

The continued withholding of every line in a thirty-one-year-old document of immense historical importance not only goes against the spirit of Britain's open government and its FOI law, it damages the credibility of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010's twenty-year-rule if these documents can be censored without review.

The incredulousness of the claim that the entirety of the document must remain secret – much less reviewed – is underscored by the abundance of documents already released by the US and UK governments on the 1983 Soviet "War Scare" – including human intelligence and signals intelligence. The documents already released under British and U.S. Freedom of Information laws, which I included in my May 7, 2015, appeal include:

- Photographs and records of Oleg Gordievsky, the spy who revealed the danger of this event, meeting and debriefing President Reagan.
- Dozens of pages of British Ministry of Defence documents released under Britain's FOIA law confirming the "unprecedented Soviet reaction" during this event, as well as intelligence sharing between US and the UK.
- A classified CIA 1996 Studies in Intelligence article "The 1983 War Scare in US-Soviet Relations" by Ben B. Fischer, a History Fellow at the CIA's Center for the Study in Intelligence.
- A Department of State document confirming a British source alerted the US to the nuclear danger.
- A US Air Force After Action Report of the NATO Command Post Exercise Able Archer 83.

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- Michael Herman, head of the Soviet Division at Government Communications Headquarters from 1977 to 1982, has recently discussed the contents of this document at length and argued for its disclosure as it benefits the public interest.

Additionally, this month the US Interagency Security Classification Appeals Panel has confirmed that it will release to our office a 100-page 1990 President's Intelligence Advisory Board retroactive and comprehensive report on the subject of this request (letter attached). This document's upcoming declassification renders moot any arguments that this information must be withheld based on intelligence sharing with the US.

I would also draw attention to the Cabinet Office's changing justifications for withholding this document. The Cabinet Office initially cited three reasons the document should be withheld, only to later cite one justification as the basis for withholding. The Cabinet Office also repeatedly missed deadlines in this matter, and refused to review the document after stating they would review it to see if a partial release was possible (see attached letter of July 31, 2015). All of these maneuvers on the part of the Cabinet Office strongly suggest that the Tribunal's independent review of whether the entirety of information in this important document should be withheld from the public for the foreseeable future is very necessary.

If you have any questions regarding the scope of the request or any other matters, please call me at (202) 994-7000 or email me at foiamail@gwu.edu.

Sincerely,

Nate Jones
FOIA Coordinator

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May 7, 2015

First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights)
GRC & GRP Tribunals
PO Box 9300
Leicester
LE1 8DJ

Re: Reply to the Information Commissioner's Response, in reply please refer to Archive# 20140795BRI004/ EA/2015/0080; Nate Jones v Information Commissioner; FOI319810; FS50559792;)

Dear Tribunal:

This is a reply to the Information Commissioner's response under the Freedom of Information Act. I am requesting a review of the April 24, 2015, decision by the Information Commissioner's Office to uphold the September 15, 2014, affirmation of the Cabinet Office to deny FOI319810. This request sought the 23 March 1984 Joint Intelligence Committee report, reference JIC(84)(N)45, entitled, "Soviet Union: Concern About a Surprise NATO Attack," which was written in response to NATO military exercise Able Archer 83.

When considering this appeal please note that while this request was denied under Freedom of Information exemption sections 23, 24, and 27, in this particular case those exemptions should not apply. The Information Commissioner in *Evans -v- Information Commissioner* ordered the release of Prince Charles' memos to cabinet heads on the grounds that the Commission found that the release of the documents encouraged "the promotion of good governance through accountability and transparency." The same should be the case here. Factors in favor of this document's disclosure include:

- Promoting governmental accountability and transparency. Specifically, the disclosure of this document encourages the "promotion of good governance through accountability and transparency;"¹
- Challenging Departments who withhold information that is in the public interest "because they can" promotes the Information Commission's credibility;
- Disclosure of this document would increase the public understanding of the influence, if any, of this event on public policy;
- Disclosure of this document has a particular significance in the light of recent US and British declassifications; that there is already declassified information available on the general topic of my request does not preclude the importance of *this specific document* and unique information contained within (see p. 35 of the Commissioner's response).
- Furthering the public debate; and
- Informing the broader debate surrounding this Cold War, 30-year-old touchstone.

¹ Appeal Number: GI/2146/20101; Neutral Citation Number [2012] UKUT 313 (AAC) Comprising 7 transfers by the First-tier Tribunal of appeals from decision notices issued by the Information Commissioner (see Open Annex 1)

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Despite the Commissioner's findings that "in the circumstances of this case, the assurance provided by the SO with regards to the application of section 23(1) to most of the information in the report is sufficient", exemptions 23, 24, and 27 should not be used to deny the entirety of this document under the Freedom of Information Act because of the extreme public interest the release of the information in this document will serve. Moreover, this record should also not be withheld in its entirety because of the multitude of British, American, Russian, and other documents already declassified and released on the topic.

Records to which the absolute exemption does not apply, which includes those denied under section 24 and section 27, are listed by the Ministry of Justice as subject to a public interest test. Based on this record's historical value, the release of the requested records is in the best interest of the general community due to an intense and pressing public interest to understand the events that occurred during the Cold War.

Even if some information must remain withheld, it is entirely likely that the document holds much information that can be segregated and released with great benefit to the public interest. The Ministry of Defense did this with its FOI release to the Nuclear Information Service.

In your review of my appeal, please take note of the abundance of documents already released by the US and UK governments on the 1983 Soviet "War Scare" referencing information on the Soviet defector Oleg Gordievsky and British and US intelligence – including human intelligence and signals intelligence. Along with a copy of the denials, I have attached examples of relevant documents released under British and U.S. Freedom of Information laws. These include:

- Photographs and records of Oleg Gordievsky meeting and debriefing President Reagan.
- British Ministry of Defence documents released under FOI to the Nuclear Information Service confirming the "unprecedented Soviet reaction" as well as intelligence sharing between US and the UK.
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- Declassified real time US DOD reports of Warsaw Pact SIGINT activities during Able Archer 83.

Furthermore, please note that Michael Herman, head of the Soviet Division at Government Communications Headquarters from 1977 to 1982, has recently discussed the contents of this document at length. He also strongly recommended its declassification as it benefits the public interest. A summary of his recent comments is attached.

The bottom line is the UK Cabinet Office is improperly citing National Security concerns to withhold information already well-known about a subject much in need of elucidation.

If you have any questions regarding the identity of the records, their location, the scope of the request or any other matters, please call me at (202) 994-7000 or email me at foiamail@gwu.edu.

The National Security Archive

The George Washington University
Gelman Library, Suite 701
2130 H Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037



Phone: 202.994.7000
Fax: 202.994.7005
nsarchiv@gwu.edu
<http://www.nsarchive.org>

Sincerely,

Nate Jones
FOIA Coordinator

The National Security Archive

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<http://www.nsarchive.org>

March 24, 2015

First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights)
GRC & GRP Tribunals
PO Box 9300
Leicester
LE1 8DJ

Re: FOI Appeal, in reply refer to Archive# 20140795BRI004/ FOI319810; FS50559792)

Dear Tribunal:

This is an appeal under the Freedom of Information Act requesting a review of the March 9, 2015, decision by the Information Commissioner's Office to uphold the September 15, 2014, affirmation of the Cabinet Office to deny FOI319810. This request sought the 23 March 1984 Joint Intelligence Committee report, reference JIC(84)(N)45, entitled, "Soviet Union: Concern About a Surprise NATO Attack," which was written in response to NATO military exercise Able Archer 83.

When considering this appeal please note that while this request was denied under Freedom of Information exemption sections 23, 24, and 27, in this particular case those exemptions should not apply.

Despite the Commissioner's findings that "in the circumstances of this case, the assurance provided by the SO with regards to the application of section 23(1) to most of the information in the report is sufficient", exemptions 23, 24, and 27 should not be used to deny the entirety of this document under the Freedom of Information Act because of the extreme public interest the release of the information in this document will serve. Moreover, this record should also not be withheld in its entirety because of the multitude of British, American, Russian, and other documents already declassified and released on the topic.

Records to which the absolute exemption does not apply, which includes those denied under section 24 and section 27, are listed by the Ministry of Justice as subject to a public interest test. Based on this record's historical value, the release of the requested records is in the best interest of the general community due to an intense and pressing public interest to understand the events that occurred during the Cold War.

Even if some information must remain withheld, it is entirely likely that the document holds much information that can be segregated and released with great benefit to the public interest. The Ministry of Defense did this with its FOI release to the Nuclear Information Service.

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Washington, D.C. 20037



Phone: 202.994.7000
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<http://www.nsarchive.org>

In your review of my appeal, please take note of the abundance of documents already released by the US and UK governments on the 1983 Soviet “War Scare” referencing information on the Soviet defector Oleg Gordievsky and British and US intelligence – including human intelligence and signals intelligence. Along with a copy of the denials, I have attached examples of relevant documents released under British and U.S. Freedom of Information laws. These include:

- Photographs and records of Oleg Gordievsky meeting and debriefing President Reagan.
- British Ministry of Defence documents released under FOI to the Nuclear Information Service confirming the “unprecedented Soviet reaction” as well as intelligence sharing between US and the UK.
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Sincerely,

Nate Jones
FOIA Coordinator

The National Security Archive

**The George Washington University
Gelman Library, Suite 701
2130 H Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037**



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nsarchiv@gwu.edu
<http://www.nsarchive.org>**

October 20, 2014

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Re: FOI Appeal, in reply refer to Archive# 201402331BRI001/ FOI319810)

Dear Commissioner:

This is an appeal under the Freedom of Information Act requesting a review of the July 23 Decision by the Cabinet Office, and September 15, 2014, affirmation, to deny FOI319810, which sought the 23 March 1984 Joint Intelligence Committee report, reference JIC(84)(N)45, entitled, "Soviet Union: Concern About a Surprise NATO Attack," which was written in response to NATO military exercise Able Archer 83.

When considering this appeal please note that while this request was denied under Freedom of Information exemption sections 23, 24, and 27, in this particular case those exemptions should not apply.

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Sincerely,

Nate Jones
FOIA Coordinator



C4 1835

FACKELMAN

21 JULY 1987

Oleg Gordievsky (KGB Defector)



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTONSYSTEM II
91139

27514

October 30, 1985

~~SECRET~~INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ROBERT C. MCFARLANE *RM*
SUBJECT: Gordiyevsky's Suggestions*RR*

You will recall that Margaret Thatcher gave you a paper summarizing points made by Soviet KGB defector Gordiyevsky regarding dealing with Gorbachev. Gordiyevsky worked for British Intelligence for years before his defection and provided the information on which the recent mass expulsion of Soviet agents from the UK was based. Therefore, there seems no reasonable doubt of his bona fides. His view would be that of a person who worked in the most "sensitive" Soviet security organization and was well informed about the attitudes of those around him and of his superiors, but one who did not have direct access to the highest policy making levels.

His observations and assessments are in general accord with my own. I would agree with him that the principal Soviet concern over SDI is not so much that they consider it a threat as that they feel that it forces them to accelerate their own program in a way that they cannot afford if they are to tackle the economic problems plaguing their economy. But there can be little doubt that they will try to keep up with us if they feel they have to.

I also think that Gordiyevsky is right when he says that they will not be persuaded by the argument that we would share the results of our research with them. Soviet leaders (like many other people) tend to judge others by their own standards. They know that they would under no circumstances share such information and cannot be persuaded that such offers on our part are made in good faith. Rather, they would be inclined to view such arguments as a blatant attempt to deceive them.

Gordiyevsky's suggestions for dealing with this problem, however, are a bit unclear. When he speaks of removing Soviet "paranoia" "by making lots of practical suggestions for bureaucratic devices," we cannot be certain of the precise meaning. However, he may have in mind certain types of confidence-building measures, proposals for specific negotiations, and proposals for cooperative efforts in areas of Soviet interest. If so, we are well off in this respect, having made a number of suggestions in these areas.

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NLRR 97-013/3 #27314

BY KML NARA DATE 11/29/11

On the other hand, I am dubious about his suggestion regarding the argument that money saved on reducing offensive weapons can be applied to strategic defense. I don't see how Gorbachev could find this persuasive; it would be asking him to forego an area where his military-industrial complex has an excellent track record (turning out offensive weapons) for one where he knows they would be competing at a disadvantage (developing new complex technologies).

I would think that a better way to approach this problem is to press Gorbachev to tell you exactly what he finds threatening about SDI. Why does he think it might be part of a first-strike strategy on our part? A discussion along these lines might give us some further clues to his real concerns and reveal whether there are practical steps we could take to meet them (in exchange for sharp reductions in offensive weapons, of course) without crippling our SDI program. It is conceivable -- though not likely -- that Gorbachev is looking for a fig leaf to justify turning down demands by the Soviet military for massive increases in their SDI budget. Even though the odds are that this is not the case, we should probe to make sure, since if it is the chances of reaching an agreement for radical nuclear arms reduction would be much improved.

I agree with Gordiyevsky that the Soviets are to a degree under the influence of their own propoganda. Often, of course, they manipulate the truth quite cynically, but over time the perpetrators of lies often begin believing them -- or at least half believing them. Therefore, I agree that you need to be very clear and forceful (though at the same time reasonably tactful) in pointing out how we see Soviet actions and why we see them as a threat.

Gorbachev's need for a "personal diplomatic success" -- which I believe is real -- does give us a certain leverage, if we apply it correctly. This may incline Gorbachev to pay some concrete prices in areas of interest to us in return for the appearance of having extracted U.S. respect and treatment as an equal. Such leverage is limited, however, and will not be very effective on the larger issues. One relatively cheap way to flatter Soviet egos without running into larger problems is to praise their role in World War II.

Gordiyevsky's comment about the Soviet military becoming increasingly dissatisfied about the deterioration of the economy is interesting. If true, and if agreements with the U.S. can be "sold" as improving Soviet ability to cope with their economic problems, this attitude could mitigate to some degree the traditional reluctance of the Soviet military to agree to real arms reduction.

~~SECRET~~

- 3 -

George Shultz and I will probably have a better feel for some of these matters following our trip to Moscow next week, and we will keep them in mind as we prepare the materials for your Geneva meeting.

Attachment:

Tab A Summary of Gordievskiy's Points

Prepared by:
Jack F. Matlock

~~SECRET~~

SUMMARY OF GORDIEVSKIY'S POINTS

1. Strongest wish of the Soviet Union not to be involved in strategic defence, which would impose a terrible economic strain.
2. They would see the American proposal for sharing information about the SDI but not stopping research and development as a trick. They would believe that the United States was trying to ruin the Soviet economy.
3. The Russians could be brought aboard only if the Americans could remove Russian paranoia about the aims of the United States and of the West generally. This could be done by making lots of practical suggestions for bureaucratic devices.
4. Another argument would be to say that money saved on reducing offensive nuclear missiles can be devoted to strategic defence. This would avoid the need for an overall increase in military expenditure.
5. But the Soviets will invest heavily in strategic defence if it has to. The leadership would justify this to their people by means of a greatly stepped up propaganda campaign against the United States.
6. The Soviet leaders are too self-confident and too much under the influence of their own propaganda. The United States needs to set out its views on permissible Soviet behaviour more forcefully.
7. The President also needs to explain to Gorbachev the real nature of developments in various parts of the world. Gorbachev's own information will be heavily influenced by propaganda.
8. Gorbachev's priorities are arms control and Soviet/United States relations. Everything else is secondary.

DECLASSIFIED

9. Gorbachev's main motives for improving Soviet-United States relations will be to gain better access to Soviet U.S. technology and science; and to score a personal diplomatic success. It is also psychologically important for the Russians to feel that they are the equal of the United States. United States/Soviet co-operation in World War II was very flattering for them.

10. They need to have the security of feeling equal above all in the nuclear field. They think there is nuclear parity at present but fear the situation is changing in favour of the United States.

11. It will be very difficult for the Soviet leaders to improve the functioning of the Soviet economy, and much more so if they have to go for the SDI. But the Russian people are probably prepared to accept further hardship if necessary.

12. Gorbachev and the Party are not dependent on the people. The military complex is a real power: and the military are increasingly dissatisfied with the deterioration in the economy.

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20508

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE/EYES ONLY~~

October 29, 1985

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR ROBERT C. MCFARLANE

SIGNED

FROM:

JACK MATLOOK *JM*

SUBJECT:

Gordiyevsky's Suggestions

As you requested in your PROFs note, I have prepared a Memorandum (TAB I) for the President which discusses the points made in the paper which Prime Minister Thatcher gave the President last week.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you sign the Memorandum to the President at Tab I.

Approve

Disapprove

Attachments:

TAB I Memorandum to the President

Tab A Summary of Gordiyevsky's Points

dlh

8/7/06

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Declassify on: OADR

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NICK CULL

70

ID	Doc Type	Document Description	No of Pages	Doc Date	Restrictions
27314	MEMO	DUPLICATE OF #7938; ROBERT MCFARLANE TO THE PRESIDENT, RE: GRODIYEVSKY'S SUGGESTIONS <i>R 11/29/2011 F1997-013/3</i>	3	10/30/1985	B1
27315	PAPER	DUPLICATE OF #7944; SUMMARY OF GORIEVSKIY'S POINTS <i>R 11/29/2011 F1997-013/3</i>	2	ND	B1

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- B-1 National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- B-2 Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- B-3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
- B-4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
- B-6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
- B-7 Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- B-8 Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- B-9 Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

Berlin2014-04

Conference on the Able Archer crisis, 1983, Berlin May 2014

I was the head of the Soviet Division at GCHQ for five years, from 1977 to 1982, but by the time of Able Archer I had moved to do something else, so my knowledge of it is second-hand, based on conversations with Harry Burke who died some years ago. Harry was a member of GCHQ who was seconded to become a member of the Joint Intelligence Committee's Assessments Staff in London and who in a sense 'discovered' the whole Able Archer crisis.

His family – then Burkovitch – had come to Britain before the war as Jewish émigrés from what was then Yugoslavia. He went to a good London school, served in the RAF at the end of the war, and read Serbo-Croat and Russian at Cambridge. He joined GCHQ as an analyst in the early 1950s and had a successful career, mainly though not entirely on Soviet targets. He had considerable presence in a British public school-Oxbridge style, allied with a determined, disputatious Slav temperament; he was not easily put down. With his background it is not surprising that he was suspicious of Soviet moves and motives.

He had worked for me in the past, and I eventually managed to get him made my deputy, effectively as the chief Soviet analyst. He was a great strength in the period 1980-81, of the Soviet and Warsaw Pact preparations for military moves against Poland that were eventually abandoned in favour of Polish martial law. In 1982 the JIC considered the Nicoll report with its criticisms of the committee's earlier warning record, plus the lessons of the Falklands invasion, and Sir Antony Duff, its Chairman and Intelligence Coordinator, had Harry appointed to the Assessments Staff with special responsibility for warning.

That was the background to Able Archer as Harry subsequently related it to me. He was aware of Gordievsky's reports on RYAN, but his moving force as described to me was the unusual activity described in some of the Sigint reports. Apparently this had not been highlighted by the Sigint agencies. He put this together with Gordievsky's evidence to argue for the evidence of Soviet fears of Able Archer. He then fought single-handed against almost everyone to get this set out as a JIC report some time later. If my memory is correct Harry also told me that the JIC produced another more general report on Soviet views of the West, and that the two reports went to high levels in Washington. On his final visit to Washington in 1990 Harry was invited to discuss Able Archer with the PFIAB (the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board), presumably in connection with the Board's re-examination of Able Archer, and its conclusion that intelligence's previous confidence about Soviet posturing had been misplaced.

I have only one other piece of evidence. Some years ago I was shown a redacted copy of the JIC's Able Archer report by the then GCHQ historian. My recollection is that it was much more tentative than I expected from Harry's account; but the weakness was consistent with his account of the scepticism within the committee, presumably leading to compromise wording. I have tried to get a sight of this and the other JIC report under the Freedom of Information Act, but failed.

My own comments include the following

1. The most surprising thing about the whole episode was that Burke, usually the arch-hawk in his Soviet judgments, was arguing for Soviet fears. It is a striking example of professional conscience. There are morals here for the staffing of the top-level assessment units.

2. It is surprising that Gordievsky's evidence of RYAN, plus the Soviet speeches from 1981, did not lead to an earlier assessment of Soviet fears. The UK view of the Soviet Union had got into a rut: the JIC machinery had only one Soviet expert, and it had perhaps become preoccupied with Afghanistan and Poland. A weakness in the UK was that the assessors didn't know the extent of US confrontation/provocation in Reagan's first administration. The Russians were quite right to be frightened!

3. But how big was the crisis? Until all the evidence is declassified how do we judge? Gates's listing of military actions (p272 of his softback edition) is impressive; but in reviewing Cold War crises there was always a risk of sweeping quite innocent activities into the picture. On the other hand the patterns of valid Soviet indicators could have a patchiness about them. I recall a complete stand-down in Soviet flying in August 1969 that was part of preparations for military action against China, but there were none of the other military indicators one might expect. Perhaps the Soviet military system was less closely orchestrated than we sometimes think.

Michael Herman

16 May 2014

INTELLIGENCE STAFF
(CS) RESISTANCE
DEFENCE

- 8 MAY 1984

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

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Page No 1 of 6
Copy No 5 of 9

ETA

SOVIET UNION: CONCERN ABOUT A SURPRISE NATO ATTACK

I INTRODUCTION

1. This paper considers whether specific options exist for minimising the risk of Soviet misinterpretation of NATO Command Post Exercises (CPXs), particularly nuclear ones. Although it has been prepared in the context of an unprecedented Soviet reaction to Able Archer 83 and other reports of alleged concern about a surprise NATO attack (JIC(84)(N)45), the paper examines the inherent advantages and disadvantages of prior notification of nuclear CPXs as an overall Confidence Building Measure (CBM).

2. [REDACTED]

3. Although the JIC reached no firm conclusion, we cannot discount the possibility that at least some Soviet officials/officers may have misinterpreted Able Archer 83 and possibly other nuclear CPXs as posing a real threat. Quite apart from their reaction to Able Archer and [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

If their response involves the taking of actual precautions against what

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/they

they judge to be threatening and ambiguous warning indicators, should we seek to establish a system which makes the holding of high level nuclear CPXs subject to an obligation to notify in advance? Should the practice of promoting military transparency through Confidence Building Measures be extended from field exercises and the movement of actual forces to CPXs themselves? Provided a proposal can be assembled which does not constrain nuclear CPX activity, (which is militarily vital for the training of commanders and their staffs in extremely complicated procedures), could there be advantage in exploring this with the Russians?

[REDACTED]

II SUBJECTS FOR NEGOTIATION

4. While an element of uncertainty is implicit in the concept of deterrence, it is assumed that there is mutual benefit in ensuring that each side does not misconstrue the other's CPXs as posing a real threat. Since certain notification measures relating to test ICBM launches already exist for reducing the possibility of misinterpretation (SALT II, Chapter XVI) there seems no inherent reason why similar procedures could not be devised which extended to certain nuclear CPXs as well. Prior warning of field exercises has become an accepted feature of the conventional arms control process, and as such, could be capable

of expansion, although not perhaps within existing fora (see paragraph 7 below). It is for discussion whether notification of nuclear CPXs would have to be balanced (the reciprocal nature of conventional notification is an important factor which needs to be taken into account) or whether notification might be asymmetric or even unilateral.

5. It is also for discussion what CPXs might be notified and the extent of information which might be provided. It may for example be asked whether awareness of the existence of a nuclear CPX would of itself generate confidence. In our view simple notification could indeed be effective in reassuring the other side if it was given sufficiently far in advance to make it clear that such exercises formed a normal pattern of activity and took place in relative isolation from the changing temperature of political relationships between the major powers. It might prove possible to construct notification in such a way as to avoid giving details of particular scenarios or inhibit in any way US or NATO exercises.

6. Although the Russians appear to have reacted in an unprecedented way to the NATO exercise Able Archer 83, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This, coupled with the fact that the Soviet Union is the only nuclear power in the Warsaw Pact, indicates that super-power nuclear CPXs should form the centrepiece of any notification procedure, supplemented perhaps on the West's side with notification of NATO-wide exercises involving a substantial American nuclear role. We do not consider that every exercise

involving simulated nuclear release would require notification

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In the immediate future it might

be enough to attempt early discussions with the Russians. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

III FRAMEWORK FOR DISCUSSION

7. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] There may

be a requirement for speed [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This effectively rules out most of the existing arms

control negotiations as suitable fora since discussion of CBMs

in any of these is likely to be unduly prolonged (MBFR),

complicated by an involvement of extraneous participants (CDE,

CSCE) or indefinitely delayed (START). A number of existing

bilateral US/USSR agreements theoretically provide a framework

('hotline' agreements 1963/71, Article XVI of SALT II or

Prevention of Nuclear War Agreement 1973), but none of them seem

easily adaptable to current requirements.

8. An ad hoc forum may therefore be required. A special

contact between the US and the USSR seems the most practical

option in terms of speed, simplicity and security. Although it was a NATO CPX about which the Soviets appear to have been concerned, prior consultation within a NATO forum, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. Although we could fully justify attempts to increase confidence about nuclear matters and anticipate considerable support for such efforts, on balance the search for CBMs is likely to be more effectively pursued [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

However recent experience suggests that a bilateral discussion involving possible notification of NATO and US national nuclear CPXs is unlikely to cause problems within the Alliance. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] strengthen the case for discussion of CBMs relating to Command Post Exercises, specifically nuclear ones, to be conducted bilaterally between the United States and the Soviet Union. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

9. The President's Commission on Strategic Forces (the Scowcroft Report, 21 March 1984) proposes a bilateral exchange

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Page No 6 of 6
Copy No of

information between US and Soviet Defence officials about steps which could be misconstrued as indications of an attack. The Report proposes that a variety of measures should be constructed to improve communication and predictability which would 'contribute to stability by improving mutual understanding and reducing surprise and misinterpretation'. It is our view that [REDACTED] should be acted upon as soon as possible.

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Interview with former ████████ hand, at Madison, May 22, 1990

SNIE's of May and August 1984, essentially reached conclusion that the war scare of 1983-4 was part of a Soviet propaganda campaign designed to intimidate the US, deter it from deploying improved weapons, arouse opposition in US and Western Europe to US foreign policy objectives. If this so, not of crucial significance.

Another potential conclusion partially adopted is that the war scare also reflected an internal Sov power struggle between conservatives and pragmatists or an effort to avert blame for economic failures by pointing to military threats. If so, events could not be ignored but would not imply a fundamental shift in strategy.

Third conclusion, not adopted at the time but closer to the retrospective view of PFIAB, that war scare was an expression of a genuine belief on the part of Soviet leaders that US was planning a nuclear first strike, causing Sov military to prepare for this eventuality, for example by readying forces for a Sov preemptive strike. If so, war scare a cause for concern.

In SNIE's, intell comty believed Sov actions were not inspired by and Sov leaders did not perceive a genuine danger of imminent conflict with US. Sov statements to the contrary were judged to be propaganda.

But PFIAB said 2/90 that Sovs perceived "correlation of forces" turned toward USA, and were convinced that US was seeking military superiority, and thus chances were growing for US preparedness to mount a preemptive 1st strike vs USSR.

Gordievsky info was very closely held at the time but there was some consciousness at top of the general upshot of it.

US intel knew that Sovs had mounted a huge collection effort to find out what Amers were actually doing. They were taking actions to be able to sustain a surprise attack, especially increased protection for their leadership in view of reduced warning time of P2s etc. Improved bunkers, special communications etc.

Gordievsky said they had set up a large computer model in the Min of Defense to calculate and monitor the correlation of forces, including mil, econ, psychological factors, to assign numbers and relative weights.

At time US saw:

Evidence of Sov collection effort.

Placing of Soviet aircraft in Germany and Poland on a higher alert status, readying nuclear strike forces, in period of 2-11 Nov. 83.

In 1984, (JUNE) failue to send the trucks as usual from military to help with the harvest. 85 send them but not from forward areas.

An ominous list of indicators in early 1984. Some from warning people in Pentagon. David McManis, one of thse in charge. Also psb see Gen. Peroots, was DIA director; John McMahon, was DDI and later deputy director CIA.

28 March 2013

Exercise ABLE ARCHER 83: Information from SHAPE Historical Files

Exercise ABLE ARCHER was held from 7-11 November 1983. It was an annual Command Post Exercise (thus involving only headquarters, not troops on the ground) of NATO's Allied Command Europe (ACE), and it was designed to practise command and staff procedures, with particular emphasis on the transition from conventional to non-conventional operations, including the use of nuclear weapons. Overall responsibility for the exercise lay with the Supreme Command Allied Powers Europe (SACEUR). The participants in the exercise were SACEUR's own headquarters SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Power Europe), its immediate subordinate headquarters known as Major Subordinate Commands, their subordinates known as Principal Subordinate Commands, and other lower-level War Headquarters throughout ACE.

One of the goals of Exercise ABLE ARCHER 83 was to practice new nuclear weapons release procedures, which had been revised as a result of ABLE ARCHER 82. The exercise scenario provided for less nuclear exercising than in the previous ten years and was designed to concentrate on decision-making processes. However, this was a purely military exercise and NATO Headquarters – thus the Alliance's political authorities – did not participate in ABLE ARCHER 83. Instead the exercise's Directing Staff (DISTAFF) simulated the NATO political authorities. There was also no involvement of national leaders in the exercise, and no such involvement was ever planned, despite some recent allegations to this effect. National involvement was limited to two small Response Cells at the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington and the Ministry of Defence in London, whose role was to simulate the nuclear powers' political authorities. Thus all participants in the exercise were military personnel, some of whom simulated the political authorities at NATO headquarters and in the national capitals.


The exercise scenario began with Orange (the hypothetical opponent) opening hostilities in all regions of ACE on 4 November (three days before the start of the exercise) and Blue (NATO) declaring a general alert. Orange initiated the use of chemical weapons on 6 November and by the end of that day had used such weapons throughout ACE. All of these events had taken place prior to the start of the exercise and were thus simply part of the written scenario. There had thus been three days of fighting and a deteriorating situation prior to the start of the exercise. This was desired because – as previously stated – the purpose of the exercise was to test procedures for transitioning from conventional to nuclear operations. As a result of Orange advances, its persistent use of chemical weapons, and its clear intentions to rapidly commit second echelon forces, SACEUR requested political guidance on the use of nuclear weapons early on Day 1 of the exercise (7 November 1983).

By the evening of 7 November the situation of the Blue forces had deteriorated further, particularly in the northern region, and increased Orange use of chemical weapons had been reported. On the morning of 8 November SACEUR requested initial use of nuclear weapons against fixed targets in Orange satellite countries. SACEUR's request was agreed late on 8 November and the weapons were fired/delivered on the morning of 9 November.

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Blue's use of nuclear weapons did not stop Orange's aggression. Therefore, SACEUR requested follow-on use of nuclear weapons late on 9 November. This request was approved in the afternoon of 10 November and follow-on use of nuclear weapons was executed on the morning of 11 November. That was the final day of the exercise, which ended in accordance with the long-planned schedule, not early as has sometimes been alleged. An after action report noted that because the exercise scenario began at a low crisis level, there was actually less nuclear play than in previous years.

In 2006 the SHAPE Historian interviewed a number of senior participants in Exercise ABLE ARCHER 83. None of them recalled any "war scare" or even any unusual Soviet reaction to the exercise. Air Chief Marshal Sir Peter Terry, the Deputy SACEUR who played the role of SACEUR during ABLE ARCHER 83, stated quite categorically that "no such scare arose at that time."



Dr. Gregory Pedlow
SHAPE Historian

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SEVENTH AIR DIVISION



HEADQUARTERS

7th AIR DIVISION (SAC)

RAMSTEIN AB GERMANY

FORM 100
December 1953

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SACEUR Exercise ABLE ARCHER 83 (U)

After Action Report (U)

I. (U) General.

A. ~~(S)~~ ABLE ARCHER (AA) is an annual SACEUR-sponsored Allied Command Europe CPX to practice command and control procedures with particular emphasis on the transition from purely conventional operations to chemical, nuclear and conventional operations. It is the culmination of SACEUR's annual AUTUMN FORGE exercise series.

B. ~~(S)~~ ABLE ARCHER 83 was conducted 7-11 Nov 83 with three days of "low spectrum" conventional play followed by two days of "high spectrum" nuclear warfare. Due to the low spectrum lead-in for AA 83, SAC was invited to provide liaison officers/advisors to observe and comment on operation of B-52 and KC-135 assets in accordance with SACEUR OPLANs 10604, FANCY GIRL and 10605, GOLDEN EAGLE.

C. (U) SAC Participation (Background)

1. ~~(S)~~ SAC participated in a previous AA with two observers. Due to the nature of the exercise and the possible political implications or inferences of B-52 involvement, future SAC participation was discouraged.

2. ~~(S)~~ SHAPE announced that AA 83 scenario had been changed to include three days of low spectrum activity and requested that SAC take an active part in the exercise. SAC proposed sending a team of two observers to each MSC, SHAPE and UK RAOC. SHAPE accepted this proposal, with the understanding that personnel were to act as observers/advisors to the staff at each level. A description of ADVON activities at these locations is contained in Section II.

D. (U) SAC objectives for ABLE ARCHER 83 were to:

1. ~~(S)~~ Observe NATO play of B-52 and KC-135 employment in accordance with SACEUR OPLANs.

2. (U) Determine if future participation is warranted, and if so, to what extent.

3. (U) Interface with SACEUR and MSC War Headquarters' staffs for mutual education.

4. (U) Update location guides.

E. (U) SAC ADVON composition for ABLE ARCHER 83 was as follows:

1. (U) AFNORTH:

Maj Paul J. Erbacher, 7AD/DOO, Bomber Planner
Maj Arunas Siulte, 7AD/DO8, Tanker Planner

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2. (U) AFCENT:
Lt Col Arthur J. Lindemer, HQ SAC/DOO, Bomber Planner
Maj Ronald J. Valentine, HQ SAC/XOO, Tanker Planner
3. (U) AFSOUTH:
Lt Col Michael J. DePaul, 8AF/DOX, Bomber Planner
Lt Col John P. Bateman, 8AF/DOX, Tanker Planner
4. (U) SHAPE:
Lt Col William N. Maxwell, 7AD/DOX, Bomber Planner
Maj Peter W. Hardin, 8AF/DOO, Tanker Planner
5. (U) UK RAOC:
Maj Geoffrey C. Wenke, 15AF/DOXX, Tanker Planner

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II. (U) ADVON OBSERVATIONS

A. (U) SHAPE

1. ~~(S)~~ GENERAL. ABLE ARCHER is too short for ADVON training, or participation. The level of play PSC to MSC only dilutes the B-52 targeting process and the allocation of support packages. The level of SAC procedures training is almost nonexistent. Since ABLE ARCHER is primarily a nuclear procedures exercise, the viability of SAC play also comes into question. The AA Ops Order excepted SAC as players and stated they would act as observers (TAB C to APP III to Annex C). SAC observers at SHAPE were forced into playing SAC ADVON roles because there was no coordinated starting position for SAC assets. Each PSC was directed by SHAPE Op Order to develop unique Air Directives prior to SAC observer arrival. SHAPE started with full SAC force of bombers and tankers. Since the PSCs had developed their Air Directives for the first exercise day and published day two Air Directive at exercise initiation there were no requirements for B-52 allocation requests for days one and two. The underlying reason for the delay was a SACEUR B-52 allocation message for real-world tasking that had exercise information as the last paragraph. The last para (in summary) stated "Allocation from SACEUR was good for 48 hours." Thus, there were no requests from the PSCs for 7 and 8 Nov. However, CS SHAPE (Gen Dalton) wanted B-52 play. So the observers became ADVON players by default.

2. ~~(S)~~ ADVON OBSERVATIONS. Because of the level of play and the individual PSC scenarios only the bomber monitor had activity. The tanker planner at SHAPE had almost no activity due to use of SACEUR OPLAN, GOLDEN EAGLE, preallocations and no SACEUR direction to reallocate. The bomber observer acted as an advisor to the Air Operations Officer. Slides reflecting bomber beddown were initiated and updated with aircraft available daily. Since the USAFE OSC was not playing and units were not playing, a "Best Estimate" on bomber availability was made daily by the bomber observer. Attrition was neither planned for nor expected to be played, however, Southern Region reported one loss. During nuclear strikes SACEUR would only deconflict B-52s and strike assets plus or minus two hours of the TOT. The bomber planner also had to review B-52 targets for deconfliction with strike targets. SHAPE is the only place this can be done totally. PSCs can deconflict targets in their regions but a bomber strike near the border between two regions cannot be deconflicted at the PSC level. SACEUR bomber allocation messages were drafted and finalized for the Air Ops Officer. One mining request was received from AFNORTH but time lines would have made the mission occur after ENDEX. The request was denied because the TOT requested was far ahead of mine availability. An AFCENT request to disperse KC-135s to other UK bases was not acted upon due to SHAPE scenario inputs for chemical attacks and airfield attacks on the requested bases.

3. ~~(S)~~ FUTURE PARTICIPATION. SAC ADVON participation is not recommended for future AA exercises because the duration of play is too short for training; the exercise is primarily designed to exercise nuclear release procedures; the level of play does not allow the full target request allocation process to be exercised; the OSC does not play for logistics support; response cell and unit reports are not available and each region designs its own scenario.

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4. ~~(S)~~ OTHER COMMENTS. An interesting sidelight was a request by SACEUR's Action Cell to provide a real-world type answer to a scenario situation. The problem was to relieve pressure on northern Norway. B-52 capabilities and F-111 capabilities were briefed to the team for their knowledge and consideration. The area to be targeted would have been the Kola Peninsula. Based on the scenario, the massed troops and mobile defenses coupled with static defenses made high altitude attacks highly questionable and low altitude better. However, the F-111 with 24 bombs and hard TFR would be the optimum air delivery vehicle. (My opinion).

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B. (U) AFCENT.

1. ~~(S)~~ GENERAL. NATO was heavily engaged in conventional warfare at STARTEX. In the Central Region (CR), ORANGE (OR) forces were attacking along the entire German border with air attacks against BLUE (BL) airfields in Germany. OR attacks on UK airfields disrupted B-52 and KC-135 operations as well as destroying some aircraft. OR conducted chemical attacks throughout the exercise. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

2. (U) ADVON ACTIVITY. ADVON observer activities during AA 83 included:

(a) (U) Inputting correct data into the CCIS data base.

(b) (U) Observe the exercise and provide assistance. ERWIN desired 24-hour bomber and tanker coverage but it was impossible with two players. The 0600 to 1800L time frame was covered. We performed ADVON functions of drafting bomber request/allocation messages, tanker FCE allocation requests and coordinated on Air Directive inputs.

(c) ~~(S)~~ On E+1, we were directed to go to the Alternate War HQ (CREST-HIGH) which was located, for this exercise, at Heinrich Hertz Kaserne in Birkenfeld. The alternate staff desired SAC force expertise while they were in charge of OR operations which lasted all day E+1.

(d) (U) Helmets, gas masks and chemical suits were required. Gas masks were used by players at CREST HIGH for several hours after an OR chemical attack.

(e) (U) ERWIN was sealed for several hours during the evening of E+2.

3. (U) OPERATIONS.

(a) ~~(S)~~ Bomber Operations. SHAPE MSG 040900Z Nov established the initial CR bomber allocation at nine sorties per day along with tactical control for use against mobile targets. Nine sorties were also allocated for 8-10 Nov. The 11-12 Nov allocation was 18 sorties. B-52s were allocated to 2ATAF and 4ATAF to apply almost exclusively against mobile troop concentrations by using the target change tactic. There was incomplete information at AAFCE to determine the exact targets or the results of the attacks.

(1) (U) The B-52s were not included in the initial AAFCE data base and were added 7 Nov.

(2) ~~(S)~~ AAFCE did not receive any bomber request messages from 2 and 4ATAF even though they were requested several times. The ATAFs were addressed on the SHAPE message providing the initial allocation and new

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procedures. As a result, the AAFCE players examined the battle situation and made the bomber request to SACEUR as well as the subsequent suballocation to 2/4ATAF. The ADVON observer assisted with the process. Bombers were included in the Air Directive.

(3) ~~(S)~~ It is extremely difficult for the ATAFs to identify a mobile target in the detail requested by SHAPE for them to base the B-52 allocation. This may be the reason the ATAFs did not submit request messages.

(4) ~~(S)~~ A major BL counterattack was planned and conducted by 2ATAF. They requested 30 B-52s to provide support of their objectives. SACEUR denied the request because of heavy commitment of B-52s to the Northern Region. Nine sorties previously allocated were employed in the counterattack.

(b) ~~(S)~~ Tanker Operations. In the STARTEX AAFCE Air Directive the KC-135 force was suballocated to 2ATAF and 4ATAF by base. The status of the allocated force, with pre-exercise scenario attrition, was as follows:

BEDFORD	13	2ATAF
GREENHAM COMMON	26	2ATAF
BRIZE NORTON	12	4ATAF
FAIRFORD	<u>17</u>	4ATAF
TOTAL	68	AAFCE

Tankers were employed at an average sortie rate of 1.0 due to sortie generation degrade at all tanker bases IAW exercise scenario, high daily first-wave sortie requirements, and DISTAFF OPSTAT inputs. On E+2 AAFCE planners realized that the remaining allocated tankers would not meet their planned air refueling requirements on E+3 and 4. The refueling requirements increased due to increased effort given to air defense and OCA. AAFCE requested from SACEUR allocation of FCE assets from Mildenhall to provide 20 additional sorties for the next two days. SACEUR allocated 15 aircraft from Mildenhall to satisfy this urgent requirement. On E+3 AAFCE sent request to SACEUR/USCINCEUR/USAFE/3AF for authorization to use civilian UK airports Gatwick and Stanstead for gas and go operations. This request was prompted to increase survivability and sortie offload capability. By ENDEX this proposal was not approved.

4. (U) FUTURE PARTICIPATION. Future CR SAC ADVON participation in ABLE ARCHER is recommended only with the following stipulations:

(a) (U) Scenario must include at least three days of conventional activity.

(b) (U) Two bomber and two tanker planners participate at ERWIN/2ATAF/4ATAF (six personnel) for 24-hour coverage.

(c) (U) No B-52 fragging of sorties.

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(d) (U) Two DISTAFF representatives (24-hour coverage) are provided to input unit reports.

(e) (U) SAC ADVON bags are complete and available at 7 AD so minimum preparation is required.

(f) (U) ADVON players must be experienced.

(g) (U) ADVON support is strongly desired by COMAAFCE/SACEUR.

5. (U) OTHER COMMENTS. This exercise again reinforced the need to improve the SAC ADVON capability to conduct wartime operations. Emphasis must be placed on completing the following:

-- CINCOSAC OPLAN 4102

-- SAC ADVON bags built/maintained and in readiness for real-world crisis situations.

-- SACR 55-7 Vol VII/VIII (staff conventional directive)

-- Integration of B-52/KC-135 reporting procedures into the NATO system.

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C. (U) AFNORTH

1. (U) GENERAL.

(a) (U) The AFNORTH staff received the SAC ADVON with great enthusiasm but were somewhat disappointed when we were unable to provide 24-hour coverage. It was finally agreed that we would cover the day shift, since it would provide the majority of our activity.

(b) (U) The tanker representative took up a position in the RAOC (Regional Air Operations Center). The bomber representative was asked to divide his presence between the Targets Division and the RAOC, since his expertise and coordination would be required in both areas.

(c) ~~(S)~~ The target staff at AFNORTH appeared to be perfectly willing to manage the bomber allocation, select targets, and make request to SHAPE, in accordance with SHAPE message. They were relieved to have the SAC ADVON, since they were unsure of the mechanics to make such a request. Had the SAC Reporting Guide been available to them, they could have accomplished necessary messages.

2. (U) ADVON ACTIVITIES.

(a) ~~(S)~~ The bomber representative was involved in the Target Action Group Meeting, as an observer, since this dealt primarily with the deconfliction of NATO nuclear strikes and B-52/other aircraft conventional attacks. Both representatives attended Shift Changeover/Update Briefing, and Air Resources meeting. Level of questions for ADVON could have easily been answered by AFNORTH target staff.

(b) ~~(S)~~ With PSCs at COMMON, COMSONOR, and COMBALTAP at minimal manning levels, requests from AFNORTH staff for B-52 target nominations went unanswered. COMBALTAP did make one request for attacks and implementation of "EBB HORN" mining in CCMLAND ZEELAND area.

(c) (U) Overall activity for the ADVON in the exercise was extremely limited.

3. (U) OPERATIONS.

(a) (U) BOMBER

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and execution time, and lack of escort on a heavily defended target, support could not be provided.

(b) (U) TANKER

(1) ~~(S)~~ AFNORTH was allocated 20 tankers to support operations in the Northern European Command (NEC). These were all used at a sortie rate of 1.5 each day. On 8 Nov AFNORTH requested that five KC-135s be positioned at Sola Airfield in Norway. These were used to provide more responsive refueling to marine and air defense aircraft in region. They also became an integral part of massed raid to extend range of F-111, F-4 and F-16 aircraft involved.

4. (U) FUTURE PARTICIPATION.

(a) ~~(S)~~ With PSCs at COMMON, COMSONOR, and COMBALTAP operating at minimum manning levels, requests from AFNORTH for target nominations for all aircraft went, for the most part, unanswered. What did filter up was oriented to the nuclear/chemical aspect of the exercise. The low play level at these locations did not allow for the feedback that should be available. Without increased NATO and US manning at all levels, we cannot justify expanded SAC ADVON participation.

(b) ~~(S)~~ As cited in paragraph 1c, the AFNORTH staff was willing to try operating without the SAC ADVON. Since in an actual conflict, the SAC ADVON may be delayed in arrival at locations, ABLE ARCHER would give NATO staffs an opportunity to at least become familiar with operations without SAC ADVON assistance. A small ADVON DISTAFF Cell at SHAPE could monitor inputs and act on them accordingly.

(c) ~~(S)~~ The presence of the SAC ADVON, especially in large numbers for an exercise of this nature, raises a sensitive, political issue concerning the role of the B-52. One may see an implication or make the inference that if B-52 aircraft are present in a nuclear scenario exercise, are they being used to perform strike missions? Numerous times during the exercise, the word "strike" was used in reference to B-52 sorties. While this is an obvious slip of the tongue and was quickly corrected, in most cases, it does serve to fuel any inference should a remark be made in a nonsecure environment. A large, if not fully manned, ADVON team which would be required to properly support ABLE ARCHER, being deployed to the many locations would only again give rise to speculation about the B-52 role.

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D. (U) AFSOUTH

1. (U) GENERAL.

(a) (U) MG Brown (AIRSOUTH C/S) (USAF) was briefed on the capabilities and tactics for the B-52 and KC-135. The briefing was based on the WINTEX 83 briefing in the "RED BOOK" updated for B-52G only operations. The briefing was then given to LG Brown (COMAIRSOUTH) (USAF) who later offered the briefing to Admiral Small (AFSOUTH) (USN) and his C/S LG Blont (USA).

(b) ~~(S)~~ Due to the numerous new personnel in AIRSOUTH, the published timelines were modified to gain maximum training to all personnel involved in B-52 operations. MG Brown was particularly helpful in guiding the AIRSOUTH planners to select targets that not only provided optimum utilization of the B-52, but also had significant impact on the overall war plan.

(c) ~~(S)~~ We worked with AIRSOUTH personnel to encourage composite attack profiles for maximum disruption of enemy air and mutual support for Allied aircraft. A coordinated attack against Verna and Burgas Harbors (B-52s), airfields in the harbor areas (fighters) and F-111 airfield attacks on the Crimean Peninsula were planned providing maximum mutual defense. Support packages utilizing F-4Gs, EA-6Bs and fighter cap were included in the attack. NOTE: The harbor attacks were planned three days earlier. Unconventional warfare personnel were inserted into the area two days prior to pass the updated DMPI to the planners for maximum effectiveness of the sortie. Beacon bombing was also discussed, but not used.

(d) ~~(S)~~ The level of play required us to be more than advisors and observers. To provide the coordination required we split into two shifts shortly after arrival. We had to press people to get the required data. This was an artificiality created since the ATAFs did not have SAC ADVON representation. AFSOUTH is extremely interested in B-52 operations and the added capability it presents. Personnel participating in Dense Crop need to aggressively justify B-52 allocation requests to insure AFSOUTH has proper representation during the allocation cycle.

(e) ~~(S)~~ AFSOUTH needs data to update DIRE JUMBO. Recommend aircraft location and timelines be sent from HQ SAC to Maj Richard M. Meeboer, AIRSOUTH Plans and Policy (AIRSOUTH/PPPL). Also need a remark about E-3A refueling support, i.e., SHAPE will allocate E-3s and direct PSC/MSC to support.

(f) ~~(S)~~ Recommend "Red Book" be sent to US plans shops, PSCs and MSCs. The "Red Book" needs to be releasable to NATO (Print on cover). Also NATO Reporting Guide needs to be sent to PSCs and MSCs.

(g) ~~(S)~~ There is no set procedure for the AIRSOUTH/AFSOUTH staffs (OPS, IN, TGTS, ADVON) to get together to review the ATAF bomber requests, to have a coordinated, prioritized listing to send to SHAPE NLT 1100Z. There is little collective memory in the AIRSOUTH staff, even from the last WINTEX, hence it's been an education process to attempt to try to get the staffs together. The appearance is that the ATAFs sent their priority

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lists to AFSOUTH, who passes it to AIRSOUTH and it comes down to the AIRSOUTH Intel, Ops and SAC ADVON to select the targets. The targets are then selected by the Ops Chief who was at the AFSOUTH briefing (in most cases the targeting philosophy is different). As a result target nomination lists are late or not sent and the only request sent is the BOMREQ, which does not provide SACEUR with the required data to make proper allocations.

(h) ~~(S)~~ A complete review of COMAIRSOUTH OPLAN 45604, "DIRE JUMBO" was completed. The COMM, Restricted areas, ECM, safe passage, emergency fields, procedures, etc. should be reviewed for possible inclusion in SAC 4102 or a SACR. This also applies to review of all MSC/PSC/SACEUR plans impacting SAC 4102. 45604 also requires backup targets from the ATAFs. It was explained that this should be removed from their plan.

(i) ~~(S)~~ We received only one written answer to the BOMREQ during the exercise. This mission was coordinated requiring all aircraft in the same time block. As it turned out half of the aircraft were in a different time block, and during daylight hours (SHAPE MSG 081315Z Nov for 10 Nov allocation). For staff training, to keep from destroying the combined, coordinated attack on Vara and Burzan we flew as planned.

(j) ~~(S)~~ No message allocation for 11 Nov was received. Telecon received on morning of 10th from Col Brown (SHAPE) cut the precoordinated number with LTC Hass from 15 to 9.

(k) ~~(S)~~ E-3A refueling were coordinated at the AFSOUTH level. I feel the refueling should be handled at the ATAF level to afford the tanker scheduler the opportunity to manage his scarce refueling assets. Each E-3 is using one and one half tankers (three sorties) each per day. We consistently had one in FIVE ATAF and one in SIX ATAF. At one point we had one in each ATAF, which would be a heavy load on the AFSOUTH tankers.

2. (U) ADVON ACTIVITY.

- (a) (U) Attend TGT selection meeting (held one in AIRSOUTH last day).
- (b) (U) Prepare slides for AIRSOUTH update briefing 1900L/0900L.
 - (1) (U) BDA (yesterday's missions).
 - (2) (U) Bomber activity (Today--actually next morning).
 - (3) (U) Bomber activity (Tomorrow--actually two days away).
 - (4) (U) Tanker activity.
- (c) (U) Prepare TGTs message.
- (d) (U) Prepare BOMREQ.
- (e) (U) Prepare SUBALL.

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- (f) (U) Prepare TFG tasking to ATAFs (artificial due to exercise).
 - (g) (U) Tanker messages to support E-3 (artificial due to exercise).
 - (h) (U) Input to COMAIRSOUTH ASSESSREP due by 1700L.
3. (U) OPERATIONS.

(a) ~~(S)~~ Bomber. A total of 71 sorties were requested, 59 scheduled (based on final allocation) 50 of the 59 were flown by ENDEX. A total of four aircraft were lost due to ground and shipborne SAMs. Targets attacked included massed troops, soft armor, choke points and supply routes. One three-ship sortie was against a helicopter landing area prior to ADVON arrival (a total of on three helos were destroyed on that mission).

(b) ~~(S)~~ Tanker. The only tanker involvement was with E-3A refueling. We received sporadic tanker inputs from ATAFs due to no SAC participation at that level.

4. ~~(S)~~ FUTURE PARTICIPATION. With only a few locations with a SAC ADVON, too many simulations are required. It is confusing to the MSCs because they expect it to work like WINTEX. Recommend SHAPE allocate the B-52s and KC-135s to the MSCs at start of exercise and the MSCs work the exercise without the SAC ADVON.

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E. (U) UK RAOC

1. ~~(S)~~ GENERAL. I was in place at exercise location at STARTEX. I visited 3 AF Liaison Cell, DISTAFF, and RAF tanker personnel to determine level of exercise play. Although the Master Scenario Events List indicated a significant requirement for KC-135 air refueling support of UK Air Defense operations and multiple vertical dispersals, UK AIR staff personnel viewed ABLE ARCHER as a "nuclear procedures" exercise and chose not to play actively from the ADOC and SOCS during the conventional phase (7-9 Nov). The first KC-135 air refueling missions took place at 0600Z on 9 Nov. Since the ADOC and SOCS are the prime employers of air refueling and direct vertical dispersals their lack of participation left little requirement for SAC participation in this exercise.

(U) I spent the majority of my time learning how to use the Air Staff Management Aid (ASMA) computer system, becoming familiar with the RAOC layout and what each cell does, and discussing present and future concepts with RAF and 3 AF liaison personnel.

2. (U) ADVON ACTIVITY. The following represents Tanker ADVON duties based on my WINTEX 83 participation at UK RAOC:

(a) (U) Coordinate KC-135 allocation to the SOCS with the ADOC.

(b) ~~(S)~~ Prepare ATOs for TPW. (NOTE: This is only done for planned missions such as E-3A support or fighter deployments. OPCON of UK tanker assets supporting Air Defense rests with the SOCS and they launch the tankers unless sufficient warning is available, then the tanker cell will direct the launch by telecon. In lieu of an ATO for Air Defense we pass an alert response condition (60 min, 30 min, or 15 min) for the required number of KC-135s for a time block and the controlling SOCs.

(c) ~~(S)~~ Coordinate dispersal bases for all U.K. based airborne KC-135s and vertically dispersed KC-135s with 3 AF Liaison Cell, Ground Defense Cell, Contingency Plans Cell, and the Operations Support Cell when under air attack.

(d) ~~(S)~~ Coordinate air refueling requirements with the Tactical Air Support for Maritime Operations (TASMO) Cell.

(e) ~~(S)~~ Provide backup to 3 AF Liaison Cell in notifying TPW response cells of airborne dispersal when directed by ADOC.

(f) (U) Provide 3 AF Liaison Cell with a daily operations summary for CINCUKAIR's daily briefing.

As noted in para 1f only a limited amount of item 1 was played during ABLE ARCHER 83 due to reduced play by UKRAOC cells.

3. (U) OPERATIONS.

~~(S)~~ KC-135 Activity

DAY	NO. OF SORTIES	TOTAL FLY TIME	NO. RCVRs	TOTAL OFFLOAD
7 Nov	0	0	0	0

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<u>DAY</u>	<u>NO. OF SORTIES</u>	<u>TOTAL FLY TIME</u>	<u>NO. RCVRs</u>	<u>TOTAL OFFLOAD</u>
8 Nov	0	0	0	0
9 Nov	8	24.0	32 F-4	192.0M
10 Nov	11*	39.0	12 F-4	72.0M
11 Nov	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	19	63.0	44	264.0M

*Eight KC-135s launched for survival.

4. ~~(S)~~ FUTURE PARTICIPATION. The CINCUKAIR Staff's decisions not to man all RAOC cells or actively respond to exercise events during ABLE ARCHER 83 made it non cost effective for SAC ADVON participation. CINCUKAIR personnel view this exercise as strictly a nuclear procedures CPX. A SACEUR decision (sometime between EXORD development and STARTEX) to reduce the level of nuclear exchange between Blue and Orange cancelled most of the British interest in ABLE ARCHER. The British also view that if Blue is resorting to the use of nuclear weapons to stop the Orange advance, then most of their Air Defense assets have been lost (fighter and tanker) and there is no requirement for air refueling. Also, the lack of unit response cell play (BOTH US TPWs, and RAF SOCS and tanker bases) makes SAC ADVON play unrealistic. The tanker advisor is reduced to simulating all coordination required between TPWs, SOCs and the UKRAOC cells on ATOs, airborne dispersal, and daily Ops summaries. This is not a good exercise for SAC ADVON training if procedural play by participants does not change for future exercises.

(U) SAC ADVON participation at UKRAOC for future ABLE ARCHERS should be eliminated unless the following conditions can be met:

(a) ~~(S)~~ Full manning and active participation by UKRAOC cells in ADOC, Ground Defense, Tanker, USAFE, and contingency plans.

(b) (U) Active response cell play from the SOCs and a TPW for UKAIR allocated KC-135s.

(c) (U) 7 AD, 306 SW or 11 SG provide the tanker advisor to reduce the cost of sending CONUS-based ADVON personnel and provide flexibility if UKAIR reduces its enthusiasm during future exercises.

5. (U) OTHER

(a) (U) Tanker beddown in UK.

(1) ~~(S)~~ Discussion: I was briefed we would use the CRESTED EAGLE 84 tanker beddown for ABLE ARCHER. The MSEL called for a beddown based on the ENDEX position for WINTEX 83 which was based on FY 82 UK beddown. This caused concern among several strike command personnel over (1) the use of Scampton by both RAF Victors and US KC-135s (they claim Scampton can't

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support both); (2) The ability of Cottesmore to support KC-135s presently (they are delighted that UKAIR-allocated KC-135s are not collocated with other MSCs' assets) and (3) that the 84 position was not officially sanctioned or approved. I had a long discussion with SQ LDR John Ward, CINCUKAIR/Contingency Plans about future initiatives for US COB's in UK. Basically they are as follows: (1) Replace Scampton with Elvington, (2) move US A-7s from Finningly to Manston opening up Finningly for KC-135s, (3) reduce the base loading at Fairford, Greenham Common, and Mildenhall by using other UK airfields not specifically identified for KC-135. NOTE: SQ LDR Ward's views, however, may only be Strike Command's position and not that of MODUKAIR or USAFE.

(2) ~~(S)~~ Recommendations: (1) More preexercise coordination between SAC and 7 AD and UKAIR ADVON players on tanker beddown to be used. It would also be helpful if RAOC ADVON players were given as much background information as possible on the actual tanker beddown status of negotiations to preclude future embarrassment. (2) None. SQ LDR Ward's comments are provided for your information.

(b) (U) Status of CINCUKAIR Air Refueling Plan.

(1) ~~(S)~~ Discussion: The CINCUKAIR Air Refueling Plan is still in the conceptual stage. SQD LDR Graham Lanchbury has been the only tanker planner assigned to Strike Command/Plans since March 1983. His daily involvement with the Ascension Island to Falkland Islands refueling missions has precluded any work on the MSC plan. FLT LT Paul McKernan has recently been assigned to Strike/Plans on a temporary basis until a permanent second position is filled (in about three months). He has been given the MSC refueling plan as his top priority. I spent an entire day with him over GOLDEN EAGLE, COTTON CURE and AFNORTH's BENT BOOM (Draft), providing recommendation on plan format and content, and providing points of contact at 11 SG and 7 AD to get assistance in plan development. I recommended he use BENT BOOM as a model since operations to be conducted in AFNORTH are the most similar to UKAIR. The unique procedures used by UKAIR in Command control, airborne dispersal/survival scramble, enroute communications, and air refueling during hostilities required they be formulated into a written plan for use by our TPWs and all MSC tasking UK-based KC-135s as soon as possible.

(2) (U) Recommendation: That 7 AD actively monitor the progress of CINCUKAIR's air refueling plan and provide any expertise in tanker operations/command control required by Strike Command to expedite plan completion.


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III. FUTURE PARTICIPATION

A. ~~(S)~~ The preceding section contained the critiques written by the ADVON representatives. Due to travel restrictions, only an informal meeting was held at 7 AD, which not all members were able to attend. The comments and observations are printed virtually verbatim--only editorial changes made--from the reports received. The critiques were prepared in isolation, yet the same themes occur in all. These themes are: short duration of exercise does not allow for real allocation cycle to be played; time lines are unrealistically reduced; short duration demands experienced personnel since there is no time for training; low level of play at most headquarters does not allow for realistic play or appraisal; and the sensitive issue of B-52 operations being conducted in conjunction with an exercise primarily designed to test nuclear release procedures.

B. (U) Based on above comments and our participation in ABLE ARCHER 83, 7AD recommends no further SAC ADVON participation in the ABLE ARCHER series of exercises.


GARY G. DURKEE, Colonel, USAF
Director of Operations

APPROVED FOR RELEASE DATE:
08-01-2011

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(b)(1)
(b)(3)

Threat Perception, Scare Tactic, or False Alarm?

The 1983 War Scare in US-Soviet Relations

Ben B. Fischer

Never, perhaps, in the postwar decades was the situation in the world as explosive, and hence, more difficult and unfavorable, as in the first half of the 1980s.

*Mikhail Gorbachev,
February 1986*

“
Reagan was repeatedly
compared to Hitler and
accused of “fanning the
flames of war”—a more
sinister image than
Andropov as a Red Darth
Vader.
”

US-Soviet relations had come full circle in 1983. Europeans were declaring the outbreak of a Cold War II, and President Mitterrand compared the situation to the 1962 Cuban crisis and the 1948 Berlin blockade. Such fears were exaggerated. Nowhere in the world were the superpowers squared off in a conflict likely to erupt into war. But a modern-day Rip Van Winkle waking up that year would not have noticed much change in the international political landscape or realized that a substantial period of détente had come and gone while he slept.

The second Cold War was mainly a war of words. In March, President Reagan referred to the Soviet Union as the “focus of evil in the world,” as an “evil empire.” General Secretary Andropov suggested Reagan was insane and a liar. Then things got nasty. Following Andropov’s lead and no doubt his direction, the Soviet media launched a verbal offensive of a kind not seen since Stalin that far surpassed Reagan’s broadsides. Reagan was repeatedly compared to Hitler and accused of “fanning the flames of war”—a more sinister image than Andropov as a Red Darth Vader

The Soviet War Scare

Such rhetoric was the consequence rather than the cause of tension, but frightening words masked real fears. The Hitler analogy was more than an insult and may have been a Freudian slip, because war was on the minds of Soviet leaders. Moscow was in the midst of a “war scare” that had two distinct phases and two different dimensions—one concealed in the world of clandestine intelligence operations since 1981, and the other revealed in the Soviet media two years later.

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The KGB assessment was more of a storm warning than a hurricane alert. But Politburo forecasters reached a stark political judgment: the chances of a nuclear war, including a US surprise nuclear attack, were higher than at any time during the entire Cold War. In May 1981, General Secretary Brezhnev and then KGB chief Andropov briefed the Politburo assessment to a closed KGB conference. Then Andropov took the podium to tell the assembled intelligence managers and officers that the KGB and the GRU were being placed on a permanent intelligence watch to monitor indications and warning of US war-planning and preparations. Codenamed RYAN, this alert was the largest Soviet peacetime intelligence effort []

During 1982, KGB Center assigned RYAN a high, but not overriding, priority. Then, on 17 February 1983, KGB residents already on alert received "eyes only" cables telling them that it had "acquired an especial degree of urgency" and was "now of particularly grave importance." They were ordered to organize a permanent watch using their entire operational staff, recruit new agents, and redirect existing ones to RYAN requirements. A circular message from the Moscow Center to all KGB residencies put on alert status stated:

Therefore one of the chief directions for the activity of the KGB's foreign service is to organize detection and assessment of signs of preparation for RYAN in all possible areas, i.e., political, economic, and military sectors, civil defense and the activity of special services. Our military neighbors [the GRU] are actively engaged in similar work

“
And, for the first time since 1953, a Soviet leader was telling the Soviet people that the world was on the verge of a nuclear holocaust.
”

in relation to the activity of the adversary's armed forces. []

Moscow's urgency was linked to the impending US deployment of Pershing II intermediate-range missiles in West Germany. Very accurate and with a flight time under 10 minutes, these missiles could destroy hard targets, including Soviet command and control bunkers and missile silos, with little or no warning. Guidance cables referred to RYAN's critical importance to Soviet military strategy and the need for advance warning "to take retaliatory measures." But Soviet leaders were less interested in retaliation than in pre-emption and needed RYAN data as strategic warning to launch an attack on the new US missile sites. []

The overt war scare erupted two years later. On 23 March 1983, President Reagan announced a program to develop a ground- and space-based, laser-armed, anti-ballistic-missile shield designated Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) but quickly dubbed "Star Wars" by the media. Four days later—and in direct response—Andropov lashed out. He accused the United States of preparing a first-strike attack on the USSR and asserted that Reagan was "inventing new plans on how to unleash a nuclear war in the best way, with the hope of winning it." The war scare had joined the intelligence alert. []

Andropov's remarks were unprecedented. He violated a longstanding taboo by describing US nuclear weapons' numbers and capabilities in the mass media. He referred to Soviet weapons and capabilities—also highly unusual—and said explicitly that the USSR had, at best, only parity with the United States in strategic weaponry. And, for the first time since 1953, a Soviet leader was telling the Soviet people that the world was on the verge of a nuclear holocaust. If candor is a sign of sincerity, Moscow was worried. []

The War Scare as an Intelligence Issue

The Soviet war scare posed two questions for the Intelligence Community: was it genuine, that is, did the Soviet leadership actually believe that the United States might attack? If so, why had the Kremlin reached that conclusion? If the alarm was not genuine, then what purpose did it serve? []

By and large, the Community played down both the intelligence alert and the war-scare propaganda as evidence of an authentic threat perception. It did so in part because the information reaching it about the alert came primarily from British intelligence and was fragmentary, incomplete, and ambiguous. Moreover, the British protected the identity of the source—KGB Col. Oleg Gordievsky, number two in the London residency—and his bona fides could not be independently established. US intelligence did have partially corroborating information from a Czechoslovak intelligence officer, but apparently it was not detailed enough or considered reliable enough to confirm what was coming from Gordievsky. []

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**Searching for an
 explanation of the war
 scare, intelligence analysts
 and other interested
 observers offered three
 answers: propaganda,
 paranoia, and politics.**
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The Intelligence Community continued to scoff at the war scare even after Gordievsky defected—actually, after MI6 exfiltrated him from the USSR—and was made available for debriefing.² But intelligence analysts were not alone in their skepticism. For example, one critic who attributes many of the problems in US-Soviet relations to the Reagan administration concluded *10 years later* and with the benefit of hindsight: “Above all, the idea that the new American administration might actually attack the Soviet Union seems too far out of touch with reality to have been given credence.”³ A Soviet émigré scholar who wrote the most perceptive article on Soviet war-scare propaganda found the analytic task so daunting that he refused to speculate on *why* the Kremlin had adopted this line or *to whom* the message was directed—West European governments, the US electorate, or the Soviet people.

Searching for an explanation of the war scare, intelligence analysts and other interested observers offered three answers: propaganda, paranoia, and politics.

The consensus view regarded RYAN and the war scare as grist for the KGB disinformation mill—a sophisticated political-psychological scare tactic operation. Who was the KGB trying to scare? Answers differed. Most agreed that the Soviets wanted to frighten the West Europeans and above all the nervous West Germans into backing out of an agreement to deploy US intermediate-range Pershing II and cruise missiles on their territory. Besides, Moscow was engaged in an all-out, go-for-broke propaganda and covert action program that was flagging and needed a boost.

Some observers, however, believed that the campaign was inwardly, not outwardly, directed toward the Soviet people. There was evidence to support this interpretation. Andropov had launched an anticorruption and discipline campaign to get the long-suffering proletariat to work harder, drink less, and sacrifice more while cutting down on the theft of state property. War scares had been used in the past to prepare people for bad times, and, with ideology dead and consumer goods in short supply, the Kremlin was trotting out a tried and true mobilization gimmick.

A second explanation argued that the war scare was clearly bogus but potentially dangerous because it was rooted in Soviet leadership paranoia. Paranoia is a catchall explanation for Russian/Soviet external behavior that goes back to early tsarist times. But it was given credence. This was how Gordievsky explained the war scare, and the advanced age and poor health of Andropov and the rest of the gerontocracy suggested that the leadership's debilitation might be mental as well as physical.

The third explanation held that the war scare was rooted in internal bureaucratic or succession politics. The military and intelligence services might be using it as a form of bureaucratic turfbuilder to make their

budgets and missions grow at a time when the competition for resources was fierce. Or the war scare might have been connected in some way—a debate over foreign and defense policy—to a succession struggle that was continuing despite, or because of, Andropov's poor health. Explanations were plentiful, but evidence was scarce.

Although quite different, these explanations had much in common. Each started from the premise, whether articulated or not, that there was no objective threat of a US surprise attack on the USSR; therefore, the war scare was all smoke and mirrors, a false alarm being used for some other purpose. In most instances, outside observers did not give the war scare credence, refusing to imagine that the Soviet leadership could view the United States as the potential aggressor in an unprovoked nuclear war, because they themselves could not imagine the United States in that role. This idea was “too far out of touch with reality.” Reagan was not Hitler, and America does not do Pearl Harbors.

US perceptions of the US-Soviet balance of strategic power also weighed against the idea that the war scare could indicate genuine, even if greatly exaggerated, concern on Moscow's part. The United States was in the midst of the largest military buildup in its history whose aim was to close a perceived “window of vulnerability” in the mid-1980s created by US loss of superiority in delivery vehicles and then counterforce capabilities. The buildup had begun during the previous administration, but was greatly accelerated during Reagan's first term in the belief that the USSR might exploit a temporary advantage—appropriately called a

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window of opportunity—to engage in adventuresome behavior, use nuclear blackmail, or even perhaps attack the United States. Moreover, Soviet claims about the “irreversibility” of changes in the “correlation of forces” in the 1970s—a reference to both Soviet gains in the Third World and achievement of “robust parity” in strategic power with the US—did little to allay US concerns.

US observers were half right in dismissing the war scare as groundless, but also half wrong in viewing it as artificially contrived. Moscow apparently was worried about something.

Evidence From the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe

For a long time, Gordievsky was the only publicly acknowledged source of information on RYAN.

[redacted]

Meanwhile, former Soviet Ambassador to the United States Anatoly Dobrynin and ex-KGB officers Oleg Kalugin and Yuriy Shvets have published memoirs that dovetail with Gordievsky’s account. We know a lot more than we did about the war scare, even though a complete understanding is still elusive.

Gordievsky, the original source, is also the most prolific. Almost a decade after he arrived in London, he and British coauthor Christopher Andrew published a sheaf of KGB

cables that describe the alert and collection requirements. No one in the US, British, or Soviet/Russian intelligence communities has questioned these documents, so silence is tantamount to authentication.

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*light up and units would go on alert. Then, at the last minute, the squadron would peel off and return home."*⁸

The Navy played an even bigger role than SAC after President Reagan authorized it in March 1981 to operate and exercise in areas where the US fleet had rarely—or never—gone before. Major exercises in 1981 and 1983 in the Soviet far northern and far eastern maritime approaches demonstrated US ability to deploy aircraft carrier battle groups close to sensitive military and industrial areas without being detected or challenged.⁹ Using sophisticated and carefully rehearsed deception and denial techniques, the Navy eluded the USSR's massive ocean reconnaissance system and early-warning systems.¹⁰ Some naval exercises included "classified" operations in which carrier-launched aircraft managed to penetrate Soviet shore-based radar and air-defense systems and simulate "attacks" on Soviet targets. Summing up a 1983 Pacific Fleet exercise, the US chief of naval operations noted that the Soviets "are as naked as jaybird there [on the Kamchatka Peninsula], and they know it."¹¹ His remark applied equally to the Kola Peninsula in the far north.

Was there a connection between PSYOP and RYAN? There clearly was a temporal correlation. The first US missions began in mid-February 1981; Andropov briefed RYAN to the KGB the following May. Moreover, when top officials first learned of RYAN, they reportedly connected it to the Soviet border probes, noting that the Soviets were "increasingly frightened by the Reagan administration."¹²

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 Andropov's advisers urged him not to overreact, but overreact he did, accusing the President of "deliberately lying" about Soviet military power to justify SDI.
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The Intelligence Community, not clued in to the PSYOP program, could be forgiven for not understanding the cause-and-effect relationship. This is a reminder of a perennial problem in preparing estimates that assess another country's behavior in terms of its interaction with the United States and in response to US actions. The impact of the action-reaction-interaction dynamic is often overlooked or neglected, not because of analytic failure or conceptual inadequacy, but for the simple reason that the intelligence left hand does not always know what the policy right hand is doing.¹³

There may have been another problem in perception that affected policymakers as well as intelligence analysts. While the US probes caught the Kremlin by surprise, they were not unprecedented. There was a Cold War antecedent that Soviet leaders may have found troubling. From 1950 to 1969, the Strategic Air Command conducted similar operations, both intelligence-gathering and "ferret" missions aimed at detecting the location, reaction, and gaps in radar and air-defense installations along the USSR's Eurasian periphery in preparation for nuclear war.¹⁴ It is possible, though not provable, that the Soviets remembered something the American side had already forgotten.¹⁵

1983 Through the War-Scare Prism

Despite their private assessment, Soviet leaders maintained a public posture of relative calm during 1981-82. Even Reagan's erstwhile Secretary of State Alexander Haig gave them credit, saying "[t]he Soviets stayed very, very moderate, very, very responsible during the first three years of this administration. I was mind-boggled with their patience." But that patience wore thin as 1983 wore on. In September, Andropov would officially close off an internal debate over the causes and consequences of the collapse of détente in an unusual foreign policy "declaration." In it, he limned the outline of the war scare:

The Soviet leadership deems it necessary to inform the Soviet people, other peoples, and all who are responsible for determining the policy of states, of its assessment of the course pursued in international affairs by the current United States administration. In brief, it is a militarist course that represents a serious threat to peace.... If anyone had any illusions about the possibility of an evolution for the better in the policy of the present American administration, recent events have dispelled them once and for all. [emphasis added]

What were those "recent events"?

SDI. The SDI announcement came out of the blue for the Kremlin—and most of the Cabinet. Andropov's advisers urged him not to overreact, but overreact he did, accusing the President of "deliberately lying" about Soviet military power to justify SDI. He denounced it as a "bid to disarm the Soviet Union in the face

of the US nuclear threat." Space-based defense, he added,

... would open the floodgates of a runaway race of all types of strategic arms, both offensive and defensive. Such is the real significance, the seamy side of, so to say, of Washington's 'defensive conception'.... The Soviet Union will never be caught defenseless by any threat.... Engaging in this is not just irresponsible, it is insane.... Washington's actions are putting the entire world in jeopardy. []

SDI had obviously touched a sensitive nerve. The Soviets seemed to treat it more seriously than many US scientists and even some White House aides did at the time. There were two reasons. First, the Soviets, despite their boasting in the 1970s, had practically unlimited faith in US technical capability. Second, SDI had a profound psychological impact that reinforced the trend predicted by the computer-based "correlation of forces" model. In a remarkable tête-à-tête with a US journalist and former arms control official, Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, first deputy defense minister and chief of the general staff, assessed the symbolic significance of SDI:

... We cannot equal the quality of United States arms for a generation or two. Modern military power is based on technology, and technology is based on computers.

In the United States, small children... play with computers.... Here, we don't even have computers in every office of the

Defense Ministry. And, for reasons you know well, we cannot make computers widely available in our society.

... We will never be able to catch up with you in modern arms until we have an economic revolution. And the question is whether we can have an economic revolution without a political revolution. []

Ogarkov's private rumination is all the more remarkable because in his public statements he was a hawk's hawk, frequently comparing the United States to Nazi Germany and warning of the advent of new weapon systems based on entirely "new physical principles." The duality, even dichotomy, between Ogarkov's public stance calling for continuation of the Cold War and his private acknowledgment that the USSR could not compete may have been typical of other Soviet leaders and contributed to their frustration and anxiety []

KAL 007. At 3:26 a.m. Tokyo time on 1 September 1983, a Soviet Su-15 interceptor fired two air-to-air missiles at a Korean Boeing 747 airliner, destroying the aircraft and killing all 269 crew and passengers. Soviet air-defense units had been tracking KAL Flight 007 for more than an hour as it first entered and then left Soviet airspace over the Kamchatka Peninsula. The order to destroy the aircraft was given as the airliner was about to leave Soviet airspace for the second time after overflying Sakhalin Island. The ill-fated Boeing 747 was probably downed in international airspace. []

[] the White House learned about the shutdown within a few hours of the event and, with Secretary of State Shultz taking the lead, denounced the Soviet act as one of deliberate mass murder of innocent civilians. President Reagan called it "an act of barbarism, born of a society which wantonly disregards individual rights and the value of human life and seeks constantly to expand and dominate other nations."

Air Force intelligence dissented at the time of the incident, and eventually US intelligence reached a consensus view that the Soviets probably did not know they were destroying a civilian airliner. The charge should have been criminally negligent manslaughter, not premeditated murder. But the official US position never deviated from the initial assessment. The incident was used to keep up a noisy campaign in the UN and to spur worldwide efforts to punish the USSR with commercial boycotts, law suits, and denial of landing rights for Aeroflot airliners. These various efforts focused on indicting the Soviet system itself and the top leadership as being ultimately responsible []

Moscow's public response to the incident came more than a week later on 9 September in the form of an unprecedented two-hour live press conference conducted by Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov with support from Deputy Foreign Minister Georgi Kornienko and Leonid Zamyatin, chief of the Central Committee's International Information Department. The five-star spin-doctor's goal was to prove—despite 269 bodies to the contrary—that the Soviet Union had behaved rationally in

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deciding to destroy Flight 007. At first, Ustinov said the regional Soviet air defense unit had identified the aircraft as a US intelligence platform, an RC-135 of the type that routinely performed intelligence collection operations along a similar flightpath. In any event, Ogarkov asserted, whether an RC-135 or a 747, the plane was unquestionably on a US or joint US-Japanese intelligence mission, and the local Soviet commander had carried out the correct order. The real blame for the tragedy, he argued, lay with the United States, not the USSR. [redacted]

Remarkably, a classified memorandum coordinated by the Ministry of Defense and the KGB shows that privately the Soviet leadership took pretty much the same view as their public pronouncement on KAL 007. Released in 1992, the secret memorandum was sent to Andropov by Ustinov and KGB Chairman Chebrikov. It claimed that:

... We are dealing with a major, dual-purpose political provocation carefully organized by the US special [intelligence] services. The first purpose was to use the incursion of the intruder aircraft into Soviet airspace to create a favorable situation for the gathering of defense data on our air-defense system in the Far East, involving the most diverse systems, including the Ferret reconnaissance satellite. Second, they envisaged, if this flight were terminated by us, using that fact to mount a global anti-Soviet campaign to discredit the Soviet Union. [redacted]

Soviet angst was reflected in the rapid and harsh propaganda reaction,

with Andropov once again taking the lead rather than remaining silent. He moved quickly to exploit KAL 007, like SDI before it, for US-baiting propaganda. Asserting that an "outrageous military psychosis" had overtaken the United States, he declared that:

The Reagan administration, in its imperial ambitions, goes so far that one begins to doubt whether Washington has any brakes at all preventing it from crossing the point at which any sober-minded person must stop. [emphasis added]

[redacted] the Soviet air-defense commander made an honest, though serious, error because the entire air-defense system was on high alert and in a state of anxiety. He claims this was a result of incursions by US aircraft from the Pacific Fleet in recent months during a joint fleet exercise with the Japanese. He could not provide details, but he did know that there was concern about both military and military reconnaissance aircraft. [redacted]

The specific incident to which he almost certainly was referring occurred on or about 4 April, when at least six US Navy planes from the carriers Midway and Enterprise flew simulated bombing runs over a heavily fortified Soviet island in the Kuril chain called Zeleny. The two carriers were part of a 40-ship armada that was patrolling in the largest-ever exercise in the north Pacific. According to the Soviet démarche protesting the incursion, the Navy aircraft flew 20 miles inside Soviet airspace and remained there

for up to 20 minutes each time.¹⁴ As a result, the Soviet air-defense organization was put on alert for the rest of the spring and summer—and perhaps longer—and some senior officers were transferred, reprimanded, or dismissed. [redacted]

[redacted] Andropov himself issued a "draconian" order that readiness be increased and that any aircraft discovered in Soviet airspace be shot down. Air-defense commanders were warned that if they refused to execute Andropov's order, they would be dismissed. There is corroborating information for this from a curious source—an apparent KGB disinformation project executed in Japan and then fed back into the USSR. A *Novosti* news agency pamphlet entitled *President's Crime: Who Ordered the Espionage Flight of KAL 007?* revealed that two important changes—one in Article 53 of the Soviet Air Code on 24 November 1982 and the other in Article 36 of the Soviet Law on State Borders on 11 May 1993—in effect had closed Soviet borders to all intruders and made Andropov's shoot-to-kill order a matter of law, changing the Soviet (and internationally recognized) rules of engagement.¹⁵ [redacted]

This incident raised Soviet fears of a possible US attack and made Moscow more suspicious that US military exercises might conceal preparations for an actual attack. Within weeks, Soviet intelligence would react in exactly that way to a US-NATO exercise in Western Europe—with potentially dangerous consequences. [redacted]

Able Archer 83. The second significant incident of 1983 occurred during an annual NATO command post exercise codenamed Able Archer 83.

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The Soviets were familiar with Able Archer from previous years, but the 1983 version included several changes. First, in the original scenario that was later changed, the exercise was to involve high-level officials, including the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in major roles with cameo appearances by the President and Vice President. Second, the exercise included a practice drill that took NATO forces from the use of conventional forces through a full-scale mock release of nuclear weapons.

The story of Able Archer has been told many times, growing and changing with each retelling. The original version came from Gordievsky, who claims that on the night of 8 or 9 November—he cannot remember which—Moscow sent a flash cable from the Center advising, incorrectly, that US forces in Europe had been put on alert and that troops at some US bases were being mobilized. The cable reportedly said that the alert may have been in response to the recent bombing attack on a US Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon, or related to impending US Army maneuvers, or the US may have begun the countdown to a surprise nuclear war. Recipients were asked to evaluate these hypotheses. At two airbases in East Germany and Poland, Soviet fighters were put on alert—for the first and last time during the Cold War. As Gordievsky described it:

In the tense atmosphere generated by the crises and rhetoric of the past few months, the KGB concluded that American forces had been placed on alert—and might even have begun the countdown to war.... The world did not quite reach the edge of the

nuclear abyss during Operation RYAN. But during Able Archer 83 it had, without realizing it, come frighteningly close—certainly closer than at any time since the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. [emphasis added]

British and US journalists with inside access to Whitehall and the White House have repeated the same story.¹⁶ Three themes run through it. The United States and USSR came close to war as a result of Kremlin overreaction; only Gordievsky's timely warning to Washington via MI6 kept things from going too far; and Gordievsky's information was an epiphany for President Reagan, who was shaken by the idea that the Soviet Union was fearful of a US surprise attack. According to US journalist Don Oberdorfer:

Within a few weeks after...Able Archer 83, the London CIA station reported, presumably on the basis of information obtained by the British from Gordievsky, that the Soviets had been alarmed about the real possibility that the United States was preparing a nuclear attack against them. A similar report came from a well-connected American who had heard it from senior officials in an East European country closely allied to Moscow. McFarlane, who received the reports at the White House, initially discounted them as Soviet scare tactics rather than evidence of real concern about American intentions, and told Reagan of his view in presenting them to the President. But a more extensive survey of Soviet attitudes sent to the White House early in

1984 by CIA Director William Casey, based in part on reports from the double agent Gordievsky, had a more sobering effect. Reagan seemed uncharacteristically grave after reading the report and asked McFarlane, "Do you suppose they really believe that?"... I don't see how they could believe that—but it's something to think about," Reagan replied. In a meeting that same day, Reagan spoke about the biblical prophecy of Armageddon, a final world-ending battle between good and evil, a topic that fascinated the President. McFarlane though it was not accidental that Armageddon was on Reagan's mind.¹⁷

For all its drama, however, Able Archer seems to have made more of an impression on the White House than on the Kremlin. A senior Soviet affairs expert who queried Soviet political and military leaders reported that none had heard of Able Archer, and all denied that it had reached the Politburo or even the upper levels of the defense ministry.¹⁸ The GRU officer cited above said that watch officers were concerned over the exercise. Tensions were high as a result of the KAL 007 incident, and Soviet intelligence always worried that US military movements might indicate war, especially when conducted during major holidays.¹⁹ Other than that, he saw nothing unusual about Able Archer.

The Iron Lady and the Great Communicator

Did Gordievsky's reporting, especially his account of the KGB Center's reaction to Able Archer,

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influence US attitudes toward the Soviet Union? Gordievsky and coauthor Andrew believe so and have repeated the story dozens of times in books, articles, and interviews. The British agent's information, Andrew noted, "was of enormous importance in providing warning of the almost paranoid fear within some sections of the Reagan leadership that President Reagan was planning a nuclear first strike against the Soviet Union."²⁰ []

But did the British go further and put their own spin on the reporting in an effort to influence Reagan? Analysts who worked with the Gordievsky file during the war scare think so, and their suspicions are supported, if not confirmed, in British accounts. Prime Minister Thatcher was engaged in an effort to moderate US policy toward the USSR, convinced that the US hard line had become counterproductive, even risky, and was threatening to undermine the NATO consensus on INF deployments. She also was mindful of the growing strength of the peace movement in Britain and especially in West Germany []

Thatcher launched her campaign to modify US policy, appropriately enough, in Washington at the annual dinner of the Churchill Foundation Award on 29 September, where her remarks were certain to reach the White House and attract US media coverage. Her theme—"we live on the same planet and must go on sharing it"—was a plea for a more accommodating alliance policy that she repeated in subsequent addressees. As her biographer notes, Thatcher did not make an urgent plea or sudden flight to Washington to press her views, rather:

“
Stalin's heirs decided that
it is better to look through
a glass darkly than through
rose-colored glasses.
”

... the essence of the [Thatcher-Reagan] partnership at this stage was that the two governments were basing their decisions on much the same evidence and on shared assessments at professional [sic] level. In particular, both governments would have had the same intelligence. A critical contribution in this field was made over a period of years by Oleg Gordievski [sic]...²¹ []

British intelligence sources confided to a US journalist that London used the Gordievsky material to influence Reagan, because his hardline policy was strengthening Soviet hawks:

Since KGB reporting is thought to be aimed at confirming views already held in Moscow—to bolster the current line—the British worried that the impact on Moscow of the bluster in Washington would be enlarged by the KGB itself. They had cause to worry.²² []

The question is: how much spin did MI6 use? Unfortunately, Gordievsky did not include the KGB Center's flash message on Able Archer in his otherwise comprehensive collection of cables published in 1992. Gordievsky's claim to fame for influencing White House perceptions of Soviet "paranoia" is probably justified, but his assertion that a paranoid Kremlin almost went to war by overreacting to Able Archer is questionable []

RYAN and the Soviet Pearl Harbor

A Czechoslovak intelligence officer who worked closely with the KGB on RYAN noted that his counterparts were obsessed with the historical parallel between 1941 and 1983. He believed this feeling was almost visceral, not intellectual, and deeply affected Soviet thinking []

The German invasion was the Soviet Union's greatest military disaster, similar to—but much more traumatic than—Pearl Harbor. It began with a surprise attack that could have been anticipated and countered, but was not because of an intelligence failure. The connection between surprise attack and inadequate warning was never forgotten []

The historical example of Operation Barbarossa may account for the urgency, even alarm, that field intelligence officers like Gordievsky and Shvets attributed to Kremlin paranoia. This gap in perceptions may have reflected a generation gap. The Brezhnev-Andropov generation had experienced the war firsthand as the formative experience of their political lives; for younger Soviets, it was history rather than living memory []

The intelligence "failure" of 1941 was a failure of analysis, not collection.²³ Stalin received multiple detailed and timely warnings of the impending attack from a variety of open and clandestine sources. But he gave the data a best case or not-so-bad case interpretation, assuming—incorrectly—that Hitler would not attack without issuing an ultimatum or fight a two-front war while still engaged in the West. Stalin erred in part because he deceived himself and in part because German counterintelligence also deceived him. Stalin's heirs decided

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 War Scare

“
**What the Soviets feared
 most was that they were
 losing the Cold War and
 the technological arms race
 with the US.**
 ”

that it is better to look through a glass darkly than through rose-colored glasses. This was probably one reason why RYAN employed an explicit worst case methodology.

RYAN appears to have incorporated—or misappropriated—another lesson from 1941. Despite the prowess of his intelligence services, the ever-suspicious Stalin ironically distrusted clandestinely acquired intelligence, including agent reporting and even communications and signals intercepts. He did so because he believed that all sources could be controlled by the enemy and corrupted by disinformation, leading him to reject both accurate and inaccurate information. As a corrective, he insisted that Soviet intelligence select indirect indicators of war planning that could not be concealed or manipulated. His chief of military intelligence had the idea of surveying mutton prices in Nazi-occupied Europe, arguing that the Germans would need sheepskin coats for winter campaigning in Russia, and, by buying up available livestock supplies for skins, they would flood the market with cheap mutton.²⁴ This deceptively simple indicator turned out to be simply deceptive. Hitler believed he could defeat the Red Army by fall and did not prepare for wintertime operations.

RYAN requirements reveal the same kind of unorthodox thinking. For example, the KGB residency in London was instructed to monitor prices paid for blood at urban donor banks. The Center assumed that prices would increase on the eve of war as the banks scurried to stockpile supplies. But there was a problem: British donor banks do not pay donors, all of whom are volunteers. Another example: the London

residency was told to visit meat-packing plants, looking for signs of “mass slaughter of cattle and putting of meat into long cold storage” in preparation for RYAN. The parallel with 1941 is so close as to suggest that some of the RYAN requirements were dug out of the NKVD and GRU files.

Finally, there is another plausible, but unprovable, lesson learned from 1941. The prewar intelligence failure was Stalin's, but he blamed the intelligence services. This left an indelible stain on Soviet intelligence that Andropov, as KGB chief and later party chief, may have been determined not to let happen again. Soviet intelligence certainly had a vested interest in promoting a dire threat assessment of US intentions, but bureaucratic self-interest may not have been as important as professional, not to say hurt, pride.

Conclusion

RYAN was for real. Skeptics should consider Dobrynin's response to a doubting Thomas TV interviewer: “Make your conclusions from what he [Andropov] said in telegrams to his residents.” The KGB-GRU—or more appropriately the joint Warsaw Pact—alert was a crash effort to build a strategic warning system by substituting manpower for technology, HUMINT for satellites and sensors. Soviet actions were panicky, but not paranoid or unprecedented.

As one historian noted, even under the tsars Russian strategists were often quite fearful when confronted by superior Western military technology, but their fears, while exaggerated, were scarcely insane.²⁵ Dobrynin claims that Andropov worried because President Reagan was “unpredictable.” But this places too much weight on a single personality. What the Soviets feared most was what their “correlation of forces” calculations told them—that they were losing the Cold War and the technological arms race with the US.

The real war scare almost certainly was not the one the Kremlin envisioned. The presumed threat of a US surprise nuclear attack was nonexistent. The possibility of Soviet preemptive strike may have been more likely. Well-informed observers like Gyula Horn, the last Communist foreign minister and current Prime Minister of Hungary, revealed in his memoirs that Soviet marshals, fortified with a little vodka, openly advocated an attack on the West “before the imperialists gain superiority in every sphere.” The information is anecdotal, but there is a certain grim logic to it.

The war scare was the last paroxysm of the Cold War. It was a fitting end.

NOTES

1. This was a reference to the 1973 overthrow of Marxist President Salvador Allende.
2. According to interviews conducted by Murray Marder, “[m]any senior administration officials scoff now, as they did then, at the suggestion that the Soviet Union was genuinely alarmed by US military moves or

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War Scare

- public statements, or that Moscow had any justification for feeling vulnerable. The "war scare" in the Soviet Union in 1982-83 was deliberately engineered for propaganda purposes, these officials maintain—a pretext to create a siege mentality in the Soviet Union and to frighten the outside world about US intentions. ("Defector Told of Soviet Alert; KGB Station Reportedly Warned US Would Attack," *Washington Post*, 8 August 1986, p. A1.)
3. Raymond L. Garthoff, *The Great Transition: American-Soviet Relations and the End of the Cold War* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1994), p. 60. Garthoff carefully considers all the details surrounding Gordievsky's recruitment and espionage for British intelligence, his bona fides, and his defection, but still questions whether the Soviets could have really believed in the war-scare scenario. Garthoff states, wrongly, that Gordievsky's information on RYAN was given to US intelligence only after his defection in May 1985. The British shared the information—in sanitized form to conceal the source—contemporaneously with the United States. Garthoff speculates that the British had some doubts about Gordievsky's reporting and did not want to offend the Reagan administration with intelligence that might suggest that its hardline policies were raising Soviet anxiety to an unusually high level. In fact, one reason the British pressed Gordievsky's information on US intelligence was precisely to influence Reagan's views on the USSR.
 4. Vladimir Shlapentokh, "Moscow's War Propaganda and Soviet Public Opinion," *Problems of Communism*, Vol. 33 (September-October 1983), p. 88.
 5. Peter Schweizer, *Victory: The Reagan Administration's Secret Strategy That Hastened the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1994), p. xvi.
 6. *Ibid.*
 7. *Ibid.*
 8. *Ibid.*
 9. See Gregory L. Vistica, *Fall from Glory: The Men Who Sank the U.S. Navy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), pp. 105-108, 116-118, and 129-135, *passim*.
 10. Equally important, the Navy was able to offset the Soviets' ability to track the fleet by reading naval communications, which the KGB had been able to decrypt since the late 1960s, thanks to ex-sailor John Walker and his spy ring. The FBI arrested Walker in 1985.
 11. As cited in Seymour Hersh, "The Target is Destroyed": *What Really Happened to Flight 007 and What Americans Really Knew About It* (New York: Random House, 1986), p. 18.
 12. Schweizer, *Victory*, p. 190.
 13. In 1970, the United States abandoned the risky practice of flying into Soviet, Chinese, and North Korean airspace to provoke reactions by radar and air-defense installations. For recently declassified information on the US overflight program, see "Secrets of the Cold War," *U.S. News & World Report*, Vol. 114, No. 10 (15 March 1993), pp. 30-50.
 14. This incident is recounted in Seymour Hersh, "The Target is Destroyed", chapter 2, *passim*. The Soviets saw both political and military machinations in the overflight, because Zeleny is one of several islands that comprise the so-called northern territories that have been in dispute between Moscow and Tokyo since the Soviets seized them in 1945. The United States does not recognize the Soviet claim to the islands and supports Japan. The Soviets viewed the overflight as provocative and a challenge to their sovereignty over the islands. Hersh notes on p. 18 that the "Navy never publicly acknowledged either the overflight or its error; it also chose to say nothing further inside the government."
 15. This strange pamphlet was issued by a one-room Japanese "publishing" firm in editions of 1,000 each in English and Japanese. However, *Novosti* "reprinted" 100,000 copies in Russian. This suggests two things: the pamphlet was intended primarily for the internal Soviet audience, and the Soviet people did not believe their government's explanation of the KAL 007 tragedy. See Murray Sayle, "Closing the File on Flight 007," *The New Yorker*, Vol. LXIX, No. 42 (13 December 1993), pp. 90-101, especially 94-95.
 16. The two British accounts of Gordievsky's role and how British intelligence used him to influence President Reagan's thinking on Soviet policy are: Gordon Brook-Shepherd, *The Storm Birds: The Dramatic Stories of the Top Soviet Spies Who Have Defected Since World War II* (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989), chapter 18, *passim*; and Geoffrey Smith, *Reagan and Thatcher* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991), pp. 122-23. See also Nicholas Bethell, *Spies and Other Secrets: Memoirs from the Second Cold War* (New York: Viking, 1994), p. 191. Brooke-Shepard received assistance from British and US intelligence. Smith's book is an "authorized" inside account of its subject. Bethell is a Tory MP and friend and fan of Gordievsky's. The US version, which is identical in many respects, is Don Oberdorfer, *The Turn: From Cold War to a New Era* (New York: Poseidon Press, 1991), p. 67.
 17. Oberdorfer, *The Turn*, p. 67.
 18. Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, p. 139, n. 160.

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19. Able Archer coincided with October Revolution Day, the USSR's national holiday. Holidays turned into national drinking binges that incapacitated practically the entire country. This is an interesting bit of mirror-imaging, because NATO military planners almost certainly did not factor the holiday into Allied war plans.
20. Christopher Andrew, "We Will Always Need Spies," *The London Times*, 3 March 1994, Features, p. 1
21. Smith, *Thatcher and Reagan*, p. 122.
22. John Newhouse, *War and Peace in the Nuclear Age* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), p. 338.
23. For a discussion of the wealth of accurate information that was available to Stalin, see John Costello and Oleg Tsarev, *Deadly Illusions: The KGB Dossier Reveals Stalin's Master Spy* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1993), pp. 85-90. This analysis is based on declassified Soviet intelligence reports from the KGB archive. See also Barton Whaley, *Codeword BARBAROSSA* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1973), which details more than 80 indications and warnings received by Soviet intelligence.
24. Viktor Suvorov, *Icebreaker: Who Started World War II?* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1990), pp. 320-321.
25. William J. Fuller, Jr., *Strategy and Power in Russia 1600-1914* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), p. 12.



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United States Department of State

Washington, D. C. 20520

May 28, 1984

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INFORMATION MEMORANDUM
S/S

TO: The Secretary
FROM: INR - Hugh Montgomery

SUBJECT: SNIE 11-10-84

CPS

You will recall that in response to British concerns, the Intelligence Community undertook a detailed review of recent Soviet military and political moves, beginning with exercise "Able Archer 83." The result was a Special National Intelligence Estimate addressing these developments.

When the National Foreign Intelligence Board approved the SNIE earlier this month, INR requested that a sanitized version be prepared for discussion with, and ultimate release to, the British authorities. This has been done. In addition, INR also sought a further sanitized version at the NATO "SECRET" level, which you might wish to use with your NATO ministerial colleagues in your bilateral sessions with them. I have included ten copies of this paper, in the event that you decide that it would be worthwhile to give copies to your interlocutors.

I hope you will find this study useful in your discussion of recent Soviet developments.

Attachment: SNIE 11-10-84

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Director of Central Intelligence

~~Top Secret~~



Special National Intelligence Estimate

Implications of Recent Soviet Military- Political Activities

APPROVED FOR RELEASE DATE: 13-Apr-2010

~~Top Secret~~

SNIE 11-10-84/JX
~~TOP SECRET~~

18 May 1984

Copy 31

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Unauthorized Disclosure Subject to Criminal Sanctions~~

~~Top Secret~~

SNIE 11-10-84

IMPLICATIONS OF
RECENT SOVIET MILITARY-
POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

~~TCS 0047-84~~

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THIS ESTIMATE IS ISSUED BY THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE.

THE NATIONAL FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE BOARD CONCURS, EXCEPT AS NOTED IN THE TEXT.

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of the Estimate:

The Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, and the intelligence organization of the Department of State.

Also Participating:

The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army

The Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy

The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force

The Director of Intelligence, Headquarters, Marine Corps

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KEY JUDGMENTS

During the past several months, a number of coincident Soviet activities have created concern that they reflect abnormal Soviet fear of conflict with the United States, belligerent intent that might risk conflict, or some other underlying Soviet purpose. These activities have included large-scale military exercises (among them a major naval exercise in the Norwegian Sea, unprecedented SS-20 launch activity, and large-scale SSBN dispersal); preparations for air operations against Afghanistan; attempts to change the air corridor regime in Berlin; new military measures termed responsive to NATO INF deployments; and shrill propaganda attributing a heightened danger of war to US behavior. []

Examining these developments in terms of several hypotheses, we reach the following conclusions:

- We believe strongly that Soviet actions are not inspired by, and Soviet leaders do not perceive, a genuine danger of imminent conflict or confrontation with the United States. This judgment is based on the absence of forcewide combat readiness or other war preparation moves in the USSR, and the absence of a tone of fear or belligerence in Soviet diplomatic communications, although the latter remain uncompromising on many issues. There have also been instances where the Soviets appear to have avoided belligerent propaganda or actions. Recent Soviet "war scare" propaganda, of declining intensity over the period examined, is aimed primarily at discrediting US policies and mobilizing "peace" pressures among various audiences abroad. This war scare propaganda has reverberated in Soviet security bureaucracies and emanated through other channels such as human sources. We do not believe it reflects authentic leadership fears of imminent conflict. []
- We do not believe that Soviet war talk and other actions "mask" Soviet preparations for an imminent move toward confrontation on the part of the USSR, although they have an incentive to take initiatives that discredit US policies even at some risk. Were the Soviets preparing an initiative they believed carried a real risk of military confrontation with the United States, we would see preparatory signs which the Soviets could not mask. []

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- The Soviet actions examined are influenced to some extent by Soviet perceptions of a mounting challenge from US foreign and defense policy. However, these activities do not all fit into an integrated pattern of current Soviet foreign policy tactics. □
- Each Soviet action has its own military or political purpose sufficient to explain it. Soviet military exercises are designed to meet long-term requirements for force development and training which have become ever more complex with the growth of Soviet military capabilities. □
- In specific cases, Soviet military exercises are probably intended to have the ancillary effect of signaling Soviet power and resolve to some audience. For instance, maneuvers in the Tonkin Gulf were aimed at backing Vietnam against China; Soviet airpower use in Afghanistan could have been partly aimed at intimidating Pakistan; and Soviet action on Berlin has the effect of reminding the West of its vulnerable access, but very low-key Soviet handling has muted this effect. □

Taken in their totality, Soviet talk about the increased likelihood of nuclear war and Soviet military actions do suggest a political intention of speaking with a louder voice and showing firmness through a controlled display of military muscle. The apprehensive outlook we believe the Soviet leadership has toward the longer term US arms buildup could in the future increase its willingness to consider actions—even at some heightened risk—that recapture the initiative and neutralize the challenge posed by the United States. □

These judgments are tempered by some uncertainty as to current Soviet leadership perceptions of the United States, by continued uncertainty about Politburo decisionmaking processes, and by our inability at this point to conduct a detailed examination of how the Soviets might have assessed recent US/NATO military exercises and reconnaissance operations. Notwithstanding these uncertainties, however, we are confident that, as of now, the Soviets see not an imminent military clash but a costly and—to some extent—more perilous strategic and political struggle over the rest of the decade. □

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DISCUSSION

Introduction

1. There has been much Soviet talk about the increased danger of nuclear war. This theme has appeared in public pronouncements by Soviet political and military leaders, in statements by high officials targeted at both domestic and foreign audiences, in internal communications, and in other channels. Soviet authorities have declared that Washington is preparing for war, and have issued dire warnings that the USSR will not give in to nuclear blackmail or other military pressure. The articulation of this theme has paralleled the Soviet campaign to derail US INF deployment. It continues to this day, although at a somewhat lower intensity in recent months than in late 1983.

2. Since November 1983 there has been a high level of Soviet military activity, with new deployments of weapons and strike forces, large-scale military exercises, and several other noteworthy events:

- *INF response*: Start of construction of additional SS-20 bases following Andropov's announcement on 24 November 1983 of termination of the 20-month moratorium on SS-20 deployments opposite NATO; initiation in late December of patrols by E-II nuclear-powered cruise missile submarines off the US coast; first-ever forward deployment in mid-January 1984 of long-range missile-carrying D-class SSBNs; and the start of deployment also in mid-January of 925-km range SS-12/22 missiles in East Germany and Czechoslovakia, and continued propaganda and active measures against INF deployment.
- *Response to NATO exercise*: Assumption by Soviet air units in Germany and Poland from November 1983 of high alert status with readying of nuclear strike forces as NATO conducted "Able Archer-83," a nuclear release command post exercise.
- *Soviet exercises*: Large-scale exercise activity during spring 1984 which has stressed integrated strategic strike operations, featuring the multiple launches of SS-20s and SLBMs; survivability training including the dispersal of operational Northern Fleet SSBNs supported by

a large number of ships; and the use of survivable command, control, and communications platforms, possibly in a transattack scenario.

- *Berlin air corridors*: Periodic Soviet imposition beginning 20 February 1984 of minimum flight altitudes for the entire length of one or more of the Berlin air corridors—a unilateral change in the rules governing air access to Berlin.
- *Afghanistan*: Deployment in mid-April of several airborne units to Afghanistan, launching of a major spring offensive into the Panjsher Valley, and initiation on 21 April for the first time of high-intensity bombing of Afghanistan by over 105 TU-16 and SU-24 bombers based in the USSR.
- *East Asia*: Deployment in mid-November 1983 of naval TU-16 strike aircraft to Vietnam for the first time; positioning of both Soviet operational aircraft carriers for the first time simultaneously in Asian waters in March 1984; and the first joint Soviet/Vietnamese amphibious assault exercises on the coast of Vietnam in April.
- *Caribbean*: A small combined Soviet/Cuban naval exercise in the Gulf of Mexico, with the first-ever visit of a Soviet helicopter carrier in April/May, and Soviet/Cuban antisubmarine drills.
- *Troop rotation*: Initiation of the airlift portion of Soviet troop rotation in Eastern Europe 10 days later in April than this has occurred for the past five years.

This Estimate explores whether the Soviet talk about the increasing likelihood of nuclear war and the Soviet military activities listed above constitute a pattern of behavior intended either to alarm or intimidate the United States and its allies or to achieve other goals.

Possible Explanations

3. Specifically, in examining the facts we address five explanatory hypotheses:
 - a. Both the Soviet talk about war and the military activities have been consciously orchestrated

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across the board to achieve political effects through posturing and propaganda. The object has been to discredit US defense and foreign policies; to put Washington on notice that the USSR will pursue a hard—perhaps even dangerous—line, unless US concessions are forthcoming; to maintain an atmosphere of tension conducive to pressure by “peace” groups on Western governments; and, if possible, to undercut President Reagan’s reelection prospects.

- b. Soviet behavior is a response to Washington’s rhetoric, US military procurement and R&D goals, and US military exercises and reconnaissance activities near Soviet territory—which have excited Soviet concerns and caused Moscow to flex its own military responsiveness, signaling to Washington that it is prepared for any eventuality.
- c. Moscow itself is preparing for threatening military action in the future requiring a degree of surprise. The real aim behind its recent actions is not to alarm, but to desensitize the United States to higher levels of Soviet military activity—thus masking intended future moves and reducing US warning time.
- d. A weak General Secretary and political jockeying in the Soviet leadership have lessened policy control at the top and permitted a hardline faction, under abnormally high military influence, to pursue its own agenda, which—intentionally or not—looks more confrontational to the observer.
- e. The Soviet military actions at issue are not linked with the talk about war and are basically unrelated events, each with its own rationale.

Soviet Talk About Nuclear War

4. Our assessment of the meaning of alarmist statements and propaganda about the danger of nuclear war provides a starting point for evaluating recent Soviet military activities.

5. Soviet talk about the war danger is unquestionably highly orchestrated. It has obvious external aims:

- To create a tense international climate that fosters “peace” activism in the West and public pressure on Western governments to backtrack on INF deployment, reduce commitments to NATO, and distance themselves from US foreign policy objectives.

- To elicit concessions in arms control negotiations by manipulating the anxieties of Western political leaders about Soviet thinking.

- To strengthen cohesion within the Warsaw Pact and reinforce Soviet pressure for higher military outlays by non-Soviet member states.

The overall propaganda campaign against the United States has recently been supplemented with the boycott of the Olympic Games.

6. The talk about the danger of nuclear war also has a clear domestic propaganda function: to rationalize demands on the Soviet labor force, continued consumer deprivation, and ideological vigilance in the society. This message is also being disseminated:

within the Soviet and East European bureaucracies;

7. The central question remains: what are the real perceptions at top decisionmaking levels of the regime? Our information about such leadership perceptions is largely inferential. Nevertheless, we have confidence in several broad conclusions.

8. First, we believe that there is a serious concern with US defense and foreign policy trends. There is a large measure of agreement among both political and military leaders that the United States has undertaken a global offensive against Soviet interests. Central to this perception is the overall scope and momentum of the US military buildup. Fundamentally, the Soviets are concerned that US programs will undercut overall Soviet military strategy and force posture. Seen in this context, Moscow condemns INF deployment as a telling—but subordinate—element in a more far-reaching and comprehensive US effort aimed at “regaining military superiority.” *The threat here is not immediate, but longer term.* However, the ability of the United States to carry out its longer term plans is questioned by Soviet leaders not only to reassure domestic audiences but also because they genuinely see some uncertainty in the ability of the United States to sustain its military effort.

9. Secondly, in our judgment *the nature of the concern is as much political as it is military.* There is a healthy respect for US technological prowess and anxiety that this could in due course be used against the USSR. The Soviets are thus concerned that the United States might pursue an arms competition that could over time strain the Soviet economy and disrupt the regime’s ability to manage competing military and

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civilian requirements. More immediately, the Soviets are concerned that the United States could achieve a shift in the overall balance of military power which, through more interventionist foreign policies, could effectively thwart the extension of Soviet influence in world affairs and even roll back past Soviet gains. From this perspective, the United States' actions in Central America, Lebanon, Grenada, and southern Africa are seen as a token of what could be expected on a broader scale in the future.

10. Third, and most important for this assessment, we do not believe the Soviet leadership sees an imminent threat of war with the United States. It is conceivable that the stridency of Soviet "war scare" propaganda reflects a genuine Soviet worry about a near-future attack on them. This concern could be inspired by Soviet views about the depth of anti-Soviet intentions in Washington combined with elements of their own military doctrine projected onto the United States, such as the virtues of surprise, striking first, and masking hostile initiatives in exercises. Some political and military leaders have stressed the danger of war more forcefully than others, suggesting that there may have been differences on this score—or at least how to talk about the issue—over the past half year.

11. However, on the basis of what we believe to be very strong evidence, we judge that the Soviet leadership does not perceive an imminent danger of war. Our reasons are the following:

- The Soviets have not initiated the military readiness moves they would have made if they believed a US attack were imminent.
- In private US diplomatic exchanges with Moscow over the past six months the Soviets have neither made any direct threats connected with regional or other issues nor betrayed any fear of a US attack.
- Obligatory public assertions of the viability of the Soviet nuclear deterrent have been paralleled by private assertions within regime circles by Soviet experts that there is currently a stable nuclear balance in which the United States does not have sufficient strength for a first strike.
- In recent months top leaders, including the Minister of Defense and Politburo member Dmitriy Ustinov, have somewhat downplayed the nuclear war danger, noting that it should not be "overdramatized" (although Ustinov's recent Victory

Day speech returned to a somewhat shriller tone). At the same time, high foreign affairs officials have challenged the thesis that the United States can unleash nuclear war and have emphasized constraints on such a course of action.

Moreover, the Soviets know that the United States is at present far from having accomplished all of its force buildup objectives.

Recent Soviet Military Activities

12. *Intimidation?* It is possible that some of the Soviet military activities listed above were intended, as ancillary to their military objectives, to intimidate selected audiences:

- The East Asian naval maneuvers, deployment of strike aircraft to Vietnam, and amphibious exercises have displayed military muscle to China.
- The bombing campaign in Afghanistan could be seen not only as an operation against the insurgency but also as an implicit threat to neighboring countries—Pakistan and perhaps Iran.
- In mounting large-scale and visible exercises (such as the March-April Northern and Baltic Fleet exercise in the Norwegian Sea) Moscow would understand that they could be perceived as threatening by NATO audiences.

13. Soviet INF-related military activities have also been designed to convey an impression to the West that the world is a more dangerous place following US INF deployment and that the USSR is making good on its predeployment threats to counter with deployments of its own.

14. There is uncertainty within the Intelligence Community on the origins of Soviet behavior with respect to the Berlin air corridors. It is possible that Soviet action was a deliberate reminder of Western vulnerability. Alternatively, airspace requirements for exercises may have motivated this move. The low-key manner in which the Soviets have handled the issue does not suggest that they have been interested in squeezing access to Berlin for intimidation purposes. Nevertheless, the Soviets have been in the process of unilaterally changing the corridor flight rules and thereby reminding the West of their ultimate power to control access to Berlin. After a short hiatus in late April and early May, the Soviets declared new air corridor restrictions, indicating that this effort contin-

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ues. In a possibly related, very recent development, the Soviets declared tight new restrictions on travel in East Germany by allied missions located in Potsdam. (s)

15. In a number of instances we have observed the Soviets avoiding threatening behavior or propaganda when they might have acted otherwise, perhaps in some cases to avoid embarrassment or overcommitment. For example, they:

- Never publicly acknowledged the incident in November 1983 in which a Soviet attack submarine was disabled off the US coast as it attempted to evade a US ASW ship, and moved the sub quickly out of Cuba where it had come for emergency repairs.
- Warned Soviet ships in late January to stay away from US ships in the eastern Mediterranean.
- Took no tangible action in March when one of their merchant tankers hit a mine off Nicaragua.
- Notified Washington of multiple missile launches in early April as a gesture of "good will."

16. *Reaction to US actions?* The new Soviet deployments of nuclear-armed submarines off US coasts and the forward deployment of SS-12/22 missiles in Eastern Europe are a Soviet reaction to NATO INF deployment, which the Soviets claim is very threatening to them—although the threat perceived here by Moscow is certainly not one of imminent nuclear attack.

17. Soviet military exercises themselves sometimes embody a "reactive" element. They frequently incorporate Western operational concepts and weapon systems into exercise scenarios, including projected US/NATO weapons and systems well before these systems are actually deployed. On occasion there is real- or near-real-time counterexercising, in which US/NATO exercise activity is incorporated into "Red" scenarios, thereby sensitizing Soviet forces to the US/NATO opponent. A key issue is whether this counterexercising takes on the character of actual preparation for response to a perceived threat of possible US attack.

18. A case in point is the Soviet reaction to "Able Archer-83." This was a NATO command post exercise held in November 1983 that was larger than previous "Able Archer" exercises and included new command, control, and communications procedures for authorizing use of nuclear weapons. The elaborate Soviet

reaction to this recent exercise included:

increased intelligence collection flights, and the placing of Soviet air units in East Germany and Poland in heightened readiness in what was declared to be a threat of possible aggression against the USSR and Warsaw Pact countries. Alert measures included increasing the number of fighter-interceptors on strip alert.

Although the Soviet reaction was somewhat greater than usual, by confining heightened readiness to selected air units Moscow clearly revealed that it did not in fact think there was a possibility at this time of a NATO attack.

19. How the Soviets choose to respond to ongoing US military activities, such as exercises and reconnaissance operations, depends on how they assess their scope, the trends they may display, and above all the hostile intent that might be read into them. We are at present uncertain as to what novelty or possible military objectives the Soviets may have read into recent US and NATO exercises and reconnaissance operations because a detailed comparison of simultaneous "Red" and "Blue" actions has not been accomplished. The Soviets have, as in the past, ascribed the same threatening character to these activities as to US military buildup plans, that is, calling them preparations for war. But they have not charged a US intent to prepare for imminent war.

20. *Preparation for surprise military action?* There is one case in our set of military activities that might conceivably be ascribed to the "masking" of threatening Soviet initiatives. For the first time in five years, the airlift portion of the troop rotation in Eastern Europe began on 25 April rather than 15 April. This may have reflected a change in training and manning practices or the introduction of new airlift procedures. The change of timing of the airlift portion of the annual troop rotation could also be a step toward blurring a warning indicator—a comprehensive delay of annual Soviet troop rotations which would prevent degradation of the forces by withdrawing trained men. But the rail portion of the rotation began ahead of schedule and, in any event, the pattern of rotation was within broad historical norms.

21. In early April, when the Soviets began to assemble a bomber strike force in the Turkestan Military

District, there was some concern that it might represent masking of preparations for operations against Pakistan, or even Iran, rather than against the most obvious target, Afghanistan. At this point the force is clearly occupied against Afghanistan. It was never suitably deployed for use against Iran. We believe that, although the force could be used against Pakistan, a major air offensive against Pakistan without forewarning or precursor political pressure would serve no Soviet purpose and is extremely unlikely.

22. Soviet military exercises display and contribute to steadily growing Soviet force capabilities. These exercises have become increasingly complex as Moscow has deployed more capable and sophisticated weapons and command and control systems. The exercises have stressed the ability to assume a wartime posture rapidly and respond flexibly to a variety of contingencies. We know that this activity

is planned and scheduled months or years in advance. Typically, these plans have not been significantly affected by concurrent US or NATO exercise activity. We see no evidence that this program is now being driven by some sort of target date or deadline. Rather, it appears to respond—in annual and five-year plan increments—to new problems and operational considerations that constantly arise with ongoing force modernization. Thus, we interpret the accelerated tempo of Soviet live exercise activity as a reflection of the learning curve inherent in the exercise process itself and of long-term Soviet military objectives, rather than of preparations for, or masking of, surprise Soviet military actions.

23. *Policy impact of leadership weakness or factionalism?* The Soviet Union has had three General Secretaries in as many years and, given the age and frail health of Chernenko, yet another change can be expected in a few years. This uncertain political environment could be conducive to increased maneuvering within the leadership and magnification of policy disagreements. Some have argued that either the Soviet military or a hardline foreign policy faction led by Gromyko and Ustinov exerts more influence than it could were Chernenko a stronger figure. Although individual Soviet military leaders enjoy great authority in the regime and military priorities remain high for the whole leadership, we do not believe that the Soviet military, as an institution, is exerting unusually heavy influence on Soviet policy. Nor do we believe that any faction is exerting influence other than through Politburo consensus. Consequently we

reject the hypothesis that weak central leadership accounts for the Soviet actions examined here.

24. *A comprehensive pattern?* In our view, the military activities under examination here do tend to have their own military rationales and the exercises are integrated by long-term Soviet force development plans. However, these activities do not all fit into an integrated pattern of current Soviet foreign policy tactics. The different leadtimes involved in initiating various activities argue against orchestration for a political purpose. A number of the activities represent routine training or simply refine previous exercises. In other cases, the activities respond to circumstances that could not have been predicted ahead of time.

Conclusions

25. Taken in their totality, Soviet talk about the increased likelihood of nuclear war and Soviet military actions do suggest a political intention of speaking with a louder voice and showing firmness through a controlled display of military muscle. At the same time, Moscow has given little sign of desiring to escalate tensions sharply or to provoke possible armed confrontation with the United States.

26. Soviet talk of nuclear war has been deliberately manipulated to rationalize military efforts with domestic audiences and to influence Western electorates and political elites. Some Soviet military activities have also been designed to have an alarming or intimidating effect on various audiences (notably INF "counterdeployments," the naval exercise in the Norwegian Sea, and naval and air activities in Asia).

27. Our assessment of both Soviet talk about nuclear war and Soviet military activities indicates a very low probability that the top Soviet leadership is seriously worried about the imminent outbreak of nuclear war, although it is quite possible that official propaganda and vigilance campaigning have generated an atmosphere of anxiety throughout the military and security apparatus. The available evidence suggests that none of the military activities discussed in this Estimate have been generated by a real fear of imminent US attack.

28. Although recent Soviet military exercises combine with other ongoing Soviet programs to heighten overall military capabilities, we believe it unlikely that they are intended to mask current or near-future preparations by the USSR for some directly hostile military initiative. Moreover, we are confident that the activities we have examined in this Estimate would

not successfully mask all the extensive logistic and other military preparations the Soviets would have to commence well before a realistic offensive initiative against any major regional security target.

29. Both the talk of nuclear war and the military activities address the concerns of a longer time horizon. Moscow's inability to elicit major concessions in the arms talks, successful US INF deployment, and—most important by far—the long-term prospect of a buildup of US strategic and conventional military forces, have created serious concern in the Kremlin. We judge that the Soviet leadership does indeed believe that the United States is attempting to restore a military posture that severely undercuts the Soviet power position in the world.

30. The apprehensive outlook we believe the Soviet leadership has toward the longer term Western arms buildup could in the future increase its willingness to consider actions—even at some heightened risk—that recapture the initiative and neutralize the military challenge posed by the United States. Warning of such actions could be ambiguous.

31. Our judgments in this Estimate are subject to three main sources of uncertainty. We have inadequate information about:

- a. The current mind-set of the Soviet political leadership, which has seen some of its optimistic international expectations from the Brezhnev era disappointed.
- b. The ways in which military operations and foreign policy tactics may be influenced by political differences and the policy process in the Kremlin.
- c. The Soviet reading of our own military operations, that is, current reconnaissance and exercises.

Notwithstanding these uncertainties, however, we are confident that, as of now, the Soviets see not an imminent military clash but a costly and—to some extent—more perilous strategic and political struggle over the rest of the decade.

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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

ER 84-2648

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19 June 1984

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EO 13526 3.5(c)

MEMORANDUM FOR: The President
 The Vice President
 Secretary of State
 Secretary of Defense
 Assistant to the President for
 National Security Affairs
 Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

SUBJECT: US/Soviet Tension

1. I attach here a rather stunning array of indicators of an increasing aggressiveness in Soviet policy and activities. These include developments in the media, civil defense sector, security operations, political harassment, logistical steps, the economy, intelligence preparations and political activity.

2. The depth and breadth of these activities demand increased and continual review to assess whether they are in preparation for a crisis or merely to embarrass or politically influence events in the United States.

3. In the light of the increasing number and accelerating tempo of developments of this type, we will shortly begin to produce a biweekly strategic warning report which will monitor and assess the implications of these incidents which we report on as they occur, but have not, thus far, pulled together in any systematic way.

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William J. Casey

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~~SECRET~~U.S./Soviet Tension

The recent SNIE-11-10-84 JX examined a range of Soviet political and military activities that are influenced by Soviet perceptions or a mounting challenge from U.S. foreign and defense policy. Each Soviet action could be sufficiently explained by its own military or political purpose consistent with developing military readiness or a "get-tough" policy to counter the current U.S. stance.

This summary will consider some longer term events that may cause some reflections about the kinds of actions the Soviets could orchestrate that would create a political embarrassment for the U.S. in the wake of deployment of INF in Europe. We believe the Soviets have concluded that the danger of war is greater than it was before the INF decision; that Soviet vulnerability is greater and will grow with additional INF emplacements and that the reduced warning time inherent in Pershing II has lowered Soviet confidence in their ability to warn of sudden attack. These perceptions, perhaps driven by a building U.S. defense budget, new initiatives in continental defense, improvements in force readiness, and a potentially massive space defense program may be propelling the USSR to take national readiness measures at a deliberate pace. There is a certain consistency and coherence in the symptoms of measures being taken that suggests central decisionmaking. Some of "civilian to wartime-type" of activity suggest a broad-based plan. These activities may all be prudent precautions in a period of anxiety and uncertainty on the part of the Soviets. Some of the measures we perceive follow.

A. Media

Soviet media have portrayed the environment as dangerous to the domestic populace. The risks involved have been recognized in that in December 1983, the Soviets carefully modulated the tone to allay what appeared to be brewing hysteria. A message has been that the present state of U.S.-Soviet relations is comparable to those between Nazi Germany and the USSR prior to WWII and that the Soviets will not be surprised again.

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C. Security Procedures

--Leningrad has become a closed city to Western attaches. U.S., UK, French and Canadian attaches in Moscow have been denied travel to Leningrad on numerous occasions in 1984. The Soviets prevented attache travel by international visas from Helsinki to Leningrad to Helsinki in May 1984. Their willingness to ignore the international portion of that trip to prevent attache travel indicates high-interest activity in the Leningrad area and/or a critical time-frame.

--In May 1984, valid visas for 58 Americans planning tour travel of USSR were cancelled. Apparently, the decision was made by the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moscow. The trip included a flight from Naples to Leningrad and it appears that those with defense security clearances were denied visas.

--According to the DAO Moscow, there has been an important change in the "political atmospherics" surrounding attache operations.

The publication of an article in Red Star, 25 May 1984, against U.S. Naval Attaches suggests the Soviet campaign will be generalized and expanded.

--The Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs reportedly issued a directive in late 1983 that officials abroad should terminate contact with U.S. British and West German officials.

--In June 1984, for the first time since 1972 a portion of the City of Potsdam was included in a TRA.

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--The Soviets continue to declare multiple TRA's in addition to the PRAs.

--There have also been other travel restrictions. In Poland, there has been a perceptible increase in surveillance of attaches in the southwest corner of the country (Wroclaw, Zegnia, Swietoszow, Zagan), but not elsewhere. There has also been an increase in instances of surveillance since late 1983.

--Three recent incidents occurred in Poland where army and security personnel detained NATO attaches and then forced them to drive through a military restricted area for posed photography. In each case, the attaches were detained on public roads in an apparently well-planned effort at intimidation.

--In the Soviet Union, Pravda articles in June called for greater vigilance of Westerners and Soviet dissenters. Other reporting indicates that harrassment of Western reporters has increased. Soviet border guards are conducting more intensive searches of Western visitors.

there has been a steady increase in civilian companies apparently enforcing discipline and improving "piece rates." The greater presence of guards and security people at defense-related production plants is also reported.

D. Political Harrassment

--On 20 February 1984, the Soviets imposed new restrictions on Allied flights in the three corridors linking Berlin to West Germany. Basically, altitude restrictions apply to the entire length of the corridors, rather than the central portions as had been the practice. New traffic-identification demands have also been made and met by the Allies.

--On 22 March 1984, an East German military vehicle rammmed a French MLM vehicle killing the driver and injuring two others.

--On 18 April 1984, the Soviets briefly detained an eight-vehicle French Army convoy at an Autobahn Checkpoint.

--On 2 May 1984, a U.S. military train bound for Berlin was delayed by East German railroad officials.

--On 16 May, East Germans refused to pull a French military train to Berlin until the French protested to the Soviet Embassy.

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--On 8 June, the U.S. Consul General in Leningrad was called to a Soviet review of the assault on Ronald Harms on 17 April accusing the press coverage of being an exaggerated claim in a U.S. Government anti-Soviet campaign.

E. Logistics

The 1983 study of Soviet railroads concluded that the industry must improve its performance. The need for attention to the railroads is beyond question, but the new campaign which features early completion of the BALCOM line adds a sense of urgency to transportation improvements.

F. The Economy

--There has been a significant reduction in production of commercial aircraft in favor of military transport production since about June 1982. DIA studies show commercial aircraft production down 14 percent in 1983. Not only are traditional Soviet aircraft customers not adding new aircraft of Soviet make to their fleets, but the Soviets are buying back civil aircraft from Eastern European airlines. The increased allocation of resources for military aircraft production is supported by DIA production data.

--Other changes under way in selected segments of the economy point toward shifts to military needs. The termination of military support to the harvest, by directive of March 1984, may say that the success of the harvest is less important than the maintenance of military capabilities at high readiness. Such a decision is consistent with a leadership perception that danger is present, but inconsistent with the alleged priority of the food program and stated Soviet concerns about internal security problems owing to shortages and consumer dissatisfaction.

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--The increases in production are complemented by developments in the factors of production, especially labor and management. These have been subjected to one of the most strenuous and long-lasting campaigns to improve performance and expand output ever undertaken by Soviet authorities.

--At the same time, there has been a cutback in Soviet support for the East European economies, Soviet demands for better quality products from them, and higher prices for Soviet exports. These trends became evident in the fall of 1980 during the Polish crisis and have persisted. Although there are many sound reasons for the trends, they complement those already mentioned.

--Rationing of key products may be affecting commercial interests. State-owned trucking companies in Czechoslovakia are reported operating far below capacity due to insufficient fuel rations allotted as of 1 January 1984.

--In Poland, Jaruzelski apparently has formally agreed with the USSR to give up civilian production capacity to supply the Soviets with more military hardware.

--In a Magdeburg, East Germany metal processing cooperative, there are resource allocation shortages and increased target plans for 1984. While the imbalance could be blamed on poor management, the situation was exacerbated by a new bank law that prevents using state financial reserves since 1 January 1984.

G. Military Activity

--In June, DAO Moscow reported that rail movement in support of Soviet troop rotation, although with a slightly reduced volume, was continuing. (This extension also occurred during the last two rotation periods.) Extending the rotation seems to conflict with other Soviet efforts to minimize the impact of rotation, and the flow of personnel over three months would seem to disrupt programmed training.

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I. Political Activity

--In external relations, Soviet activity has been intense. A series of relatively low-level harrassments concerning Berlin air corridors and ground access to Berlin fall into this category and have the potential to become more escalatory. The Soviets have recently cancelled a long-standing commercial accord with the U.S. The level of official harrassment of Western attaches is high throughout the Warsaw Pact, even including a shooting incident in Bulgaria. New travel restrictions have been placed on Western diplomats in the USSR.

--A message of dissatisfaction in U.S.-Soviet relations is clear, but more than the message the Soviets may actually be paying costs--surrendering commercial contacts and their own freedom of access. Activity resembles a calculated and careful withdrawal on multiple fronts; a limitation of exposure and vulnerability.

J. Military Behavior

The behavior of the armed forces is perhaps the most disturbing. From the operational deployment of submarines to the termination of harvest support to the delayed troop rotation there is a central theme of not being strategically vulnerable, even if it means taking some risks. It is important to distinguish in this category those acts which are political blustering and those which may be, but also carry large costs. The point of blustering is to do something that makes the opponent pay

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high costs while the blusterer pays none or little. The military behaviors we have observed involve high military costs in terms of vulnerability of resources for the sake of improved national military power, or enhanced readiness at the price of consumer discontent, or enhanced readiness at the price of troop dissatisfaction. None of these are trivial costs, adding thereby a dimension of genuineness to the Soviet expressions of concern that is often not reflected in intelligence issuances.

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7 November 2014
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CINCSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE//AFCB-C(RE)//
CINCSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE//AFCB-PO-CUR//
CDB 66TH MI GP-MURICH GE//1AGPE-GO-ICC//
DCSI USDOB BERLIN GE//
CZBCECON J-2-WATLINGEN GE//CCJ//
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CDR V CORPS FRANKFURT GE//AETVGB//
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CDR NSAITAC ANS VA//TAS-YA-N// CIA WASH DC//OSR/T//
HQ USAF RMLSTEIN AB GE//INDR/IRRM//
ZEM/OCA AMEMBASSY BOMY GE//NA b6 //
ZEM/OCA AMEMBASSY BOMY GE//NA b6 //
ZEM/DATI AMEMBASSY BOMY GE//COL b6 //

DIVS SINCE 02 NOV WHILE CENTERING ON THE 2(CUR)GA, THE 3(CUR)SA AND 8(CUR)GA WERE STILL IN PROGRESS ON 09 NOV. THESE ACTIVITIES ARE PROBABLY LINKED TO THE TRG/PRACTICE OF NEWLY ROTATED COMMAND TROOPS PERSONNEL.

CSSR
THE COMMAND ACTIVITIES WHICH ELMS OF THE CSF HAVE REPORTEDLY BEEN STAGING IN NORTHWESTERN BOHEMIA SINCE 01 NOV CONTINUED ON 09 NOV.

POLAND
COMMAND ACTIVITIES IN NGF ELMS THAT HAVE BEEN OBSERVED SINCE 02 NOV STILL CONTINUED.

C. AIR FORCES
SUMMARY
THE AIR FORCES IN THE FORWARD AREA CONDUCTED FLIGHT TRG ACTIVITIES AT LOW LEVEL. THIS WAS ON THE ONE HAND DUE TO THE FACT THAT FLIGHT ACTIVITIES HAVE NOT YET BEEN RESUMED AT FULL LEVELS FOLLOWING CELEBRATIONS ON THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION AND ON THE OTHER CAUSED BY HEAVY FOG WHICH IMPDED FLIGHT ACTIVITIES.

D. NAVAL FORCES IN THE BALTIC
- NORMAL SURVEILLANCE OF THE BALTIC APPROACHES. ADDITIONAL RECC ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY ONE SIGINT SHIP IN THE CENTRAL BALTIC AND PRESUMABLY ANOTHER ONE IN THE WATERS OFF THE SKAW.
- FOUR MEDIUM-SIZED FROSCH-CLASS LANDING SHIPS AND THREE AUXILIARIES OF THE GDR NAVAL FORCES WERE OBSERVED AT THE ACTIVITIES EAST OF RUGEM.
- THE EMPLOYMENT OF AMPHIBIOUS ELMS AND GABBERY EA ACTIVITIES IN THE POMERANIAN BAY WERE OBSERVED BY THE POLISH NAVY. ASN AND SWEEPEX WERE ADDITIONALLY OBSERVED IN THE GULF OF GDAWISK.

F. FINAL ASSESSMENT
THE CONTINUED LOW LEVEL OF EX AND TRG ACTIVITIES IN THE VP GROUND, AIR AND NAVAL FORCES OVERALL REVEALS NO INTELLIGENCE INDICATING ANY CHANGE IN THE SUBSTANCE OF THE THREAT.

3. LOGISTICS, TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM
USSR
DURING A MEETING OF REPRESENTATIVES OF COMECON AIRLINE COMPANIES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ILYUSHIN ENGINEERING AGENCY, THAT AGENCY'S CHIEF DESIGNER G. KOVZHILLOV ANNOUNCED THAT A LONG-RANGE VERSION OF THE CAMBER 71-86 IS BEING DEVELOPED. HE DISCLOSED THE FOLLOWING DATA:
RANGE: UP TO 8 000 KM
TAKEOFF WEIGHT: 230 TONS (APPROX 30 TONS ABOVE THAT OF THE IL-86 PROTOTYPE)
WINGSPAN: 50 M (AN INCREASE OF 10 M IN COMPARISON TO THE BASIC VERSION)
PASSENGER CAPACITY: 300
COMMENT
THIS AIRCRAFT IS PROBABLY THE IL-96 WHICH HAS REPEATEDLY BEEN ALLUDED TO FOR SOME TIME ALREADY.
A NEW ENGINE DEVELOPMENT IS ALSO TO BE EXPECTED SINCE THE PROGRAM CANNOT BE REALIZED WITHOUT MORE POWERFUL DUCTED-FAN TURBINE ENGINES. THE USE OF FOREIGN DUCTED-FAN TURBINE ENGINES IN THE IL-86 ALREADY FAILED AND IS HARDLY LIKELY TO BE ENVISAGED SINCE IT WOULD NOT BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE USSR.
THE STEADY DELIVERY OF CAMBER AND THE PLANNED LONG-RANGE VERSION WILL RESULT IN NOT ONLY THE REPEATEDLY CALLED FOR STRUCTURAL IMPROVEMENTS OF SOVIET AIR TRAFFIC THAT ARE OF ECONOMIC RELEVANCE BUT ALSO IN AN ENHANCED CAPABILITY TO EFFECTIVELY EMPLOY THE NATIONAL AIR TRAFFIC POTENTIAL IN THE CONTEXT OF MILITARY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES.
THE PRESENTLY AVAILABLE 30 CAMBER TYPE A/C ALREADY HAVE ENOUGH LIFT CAPACITY FOR TRANSPORTING MORE THAN 7 000 TROOPS INCLUDING BAGGAGE AND SMALL ARMS IN ONE WAVE OVER A MAXIMUM DISTANCE OF 7 000 KM, ASSUMING THAT 70 PERCENT OF THE A/C ARE READY FOR TAKEOFF.
COMMENTS: ONLY IDENTIFICATION OF SOURCE AND FACT OF BI-LATERAL ADVANCE RELEASE TO U.S. REQUIRE NOFORN CAVEAT. SOURCE RELEASES THIS INFORMATION TO NATO AS NATO SECRET.

(h) (3)
10 USC 424
Per DLA

~~SECRET~~ NOFORN
SERIAL: (U) IR 2 196 0592 83
PASS: (U) DIA: FOM COL b6

COUNTRY: (U) USSR (CMT: EAST GERMANY (GC); CZECHOSLOVAKIA (CZ); POLAND (PL); ROMANIA (RO); BULGARIA (BU); HUNGARY (HU).
SUBJ: (U) IIR 2 196 0592 83/DAILY INTSON
WARNING: (U) THIS IS AN INFO REPORT, NOT FINALLY EVALUATED INTTEL.
DOI: (U) 831110
REQ: (U) (b)(7)(E)
SOURCE: (U) 2210-0009, A GE MILITARY STAFF AGENCY WHICH CONSISTENTLY PROVIDES RELIABLE ASSESSMENT INFORMATION, DETAILED INTELLIGENCE STUDIES AND CURRENT INTELLIGENCE.

SUMMARY: (U) NOFORN REPORT IS ADVANCE BI-LATERAL RELEASE TO U.S. OF SOURCE'S CURRENT INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT ON DAILY BASIS WHICH COVERS WARSAW PACT FORWARD AREA, CRISES AREAS, AND SPECIAL SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS.

TEXT: (U) (b)(7)(E)
1. HIGHLIGHTS
- CONTINUED WP SIGINT MISSIONS TO MONITOR NATO EX (CF. PARA 2.A.)
- USSR IS DEVELOPING NEW LONG-RANGE VERSION OF THE IL-86 CAMBER (CF. PARA 3.)
2. OPERATIONAL PARA WP MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN THE USSR AND IN THE FORWARD AREA
A. ARMED SERVICES
BORDER-CROSSING AND OVERLAPPING ACTIVITIES
NO CHANGE IN MISSIONS BY SIGINT ELMS TO THE GSPG AND CGF AS WELL AS THE GDR ARMED FORCES ALONG THE INNER GERMAN BORDER. ELMS OF THE CSSR ARMED FORCES WERE ONLY OBSERVED ON 08 NOV.
A/C OF THE SAF IN THE GDR AND THE SOVIET BALTIC FLEET WERE ADDITIONALLY EMPLOYED OVER THE GDR AS WELL AS THE BALTIC.
IT IS FURTHERMORE POSSIBLE THAT THE EMPLOYMENT OF SIGINT SHIPS IN THE BALTIC SERVED TO GATHER ADDITIONAL INTELLIGENCE.
ALL OF THESE ACTIVITIES MAY HAVE BEEN TARGETTED AGAINST THE NATO CPTX "ABLE ARCHER B".
B. GROUND FORCES
GDR
THE COMMAND ACTIVITIES WHICH HAVE BEEN OBSERVED IN THE GSPG, ITS SUBORDINATE UNITS AND IN SOME INSTANCES ALSO IN THE SUBORDINATE

57 7676

PROJ: (U) 911500
COLL: (U) NONE
INSTR: (U) US, NO
PREP: (U) (b)(6) & (b)(7)(E)
APPR: (U) b6 GN-14, JLD BOMY
EVAL: (U) NO, REL TO: NONE
ENCL: (U) NONE
DISSEM: (U) N/A
WARNING: (U) NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS.
OCL: OADR BT

(b) (3)
10 USC 424
Per DLA

ACTION DC 4(1) (U, P, F)
INFO -DIS(1) 3; -NOC(1) 3; SECDEF(1) SECDEF(B)
USDP(15) ASD-P&E(1) OI-1(1) -NOC(1) R13-29(1)
OS-10(1) OS-1(1) -NOC(1) J3(1) J51-58(1) BC-1/CCF(1)
AT-1(1) AT-4(1) A13(1) B10(1) DE-1(1) DB-1(1) DIA(1) DT-3(1)
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