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Inside the Soviet Army

Mikhail Tsypkin

Viktor Suvorov

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Sino-Soviet rapprochement, but because its festering may make China see the United States as an unreliable strategic partner; Deng Ziaoping has said that, should Sino-American "relations regress to those prior to 1972, China will not collapse"

For the Soviet Union, Mr. Short's prescription is astringent—"the stick of encirclement must be attached to the carrot of compromise and co-existence." Economic strategies toward the USSR must be more coherent and not attempt to walk a middle path between maintaining strain in the Soviet economy (the hawkish view) or alleviating them in the hope of increasing interdependence (the Kissinger line of the seventies). The author scorns gestures of the Olympic boycott ilk, but he does point out that even with Argentinian grain, the embargo left the USSR five million tons short of animal feed and that a total Western embargo would have caused a 25 million ton shortfall.

Mr. Short's indictment (for that is what the book is) is impressive. The descriptions of daily life in the two countries are grim enough, but Mr. Short finds the realities of political power in the two communist parties even grimmer. He gives no comfort, but he is eminently readable and persuasively authoritative.

J.K. HOLLOWAY
Naval War College

Suvorov, Viktor. *Inside the Soviet Army*. New York: Macmillan, 1982. 296pp. \$15.95

Viktor Suvorov is a pseudonym of a junior Soviet Army officer, who before his recent defection to the West, had served in the Soviet Army for fifteen years. He commanded a motorized-rifle company during the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Later he graduated from the elite Frunze Military Academy and, as he claims, became an officer with the General Staff.

The author sets out by examining the Soviet military leadership. The Supreme Command (Stavka) includes several leading Politburo members and marshals. The intermediate links between the Stavka and fronts in wartime will be three High Commands of Strategic Direction: the Western, headquartered in East Germany; the South-Western, headquartered in Kiev; and the Far Eastern, headquartered in Chita. The author provides the details about which forces will be subordinated to each Strategic Direction in case of war, and provides a description of organization of the five services of the Soviet armed forces as well as of the airborne troops and military intelligence. A special section is devoted to the role of a system of deception measures, which is very important, according to Viktor Suvorov, in overall Soviet defense policies.

The next chapter deals with organization, equipment and tasks of a division, an army and a front. One especially interesting chapter examines the Soviet mobilization system. The author offers his own estimates of strength of divisions in II and III categories and they are considerably

lower than standard Western estimates. He also describes the Soviet method for establishing more divisions in wartime through combining called-up reservists and redundant active-duty elements separated from their cadre units.

One of the most interesting points related to organizational matters is the Soviet approach to neutralizing possible effects of inter-service rivalry. C-in-Cs of only two services (Strategic Rocket Forces and Air Defense Forces) have both operational and administrative control of their services. C-in-Cs of the Ground Forces, the Air Forces, and the Navy have essentially administrative responsibilities. In wartime, it is a front commander who would have operational control over the Air Army assigned to his front, not the C-in-C of the Air Forces.

In the Navy, Admiral Gorshkov would have practically no operational control: the Northern Fleet would be directly subordinated to the Stavka, while the Baltic Fleet would be commanded by the C-in-C of the Western Strategic Direction, the Black Sea Fleet by the C-in-C of the Southwestern Strategic Direction, and part of the Pacific Fleet by the C-in-C of the Far Eastern Strategic Direction. Admiral Gorshkov's role is very important in procurement, training, supplies, and so on. He is also the Stavka's main adviser on the operational use of the Navy. If ordered by the Stavka, "he may direct groups of ships operating in the open sea. But he has no independent operational planning function;

this is entirely the responsibility of the General Staff." One might add that the author views Admiral Gorshkov not as a bold initiator of a new naval policy, but as a capable agent of the Politburo, where all major military decisions originate.

The Navy demonstrates the doctrinal stability of the Soviet military. Despite the recent tremendous growth in the number and power of major surface combatants, all of them are still regarded as auxiliaries. As in the 1930s, priority is still given to submarines and naval aviation, the latter including aircraft carriers.

Viktor Suvorov's discussion of Soviet strategy and tactics again demonstrates how new technologies and traditional doctrine can co-exist in Soviet military thinking. To the author, nuclear weapons have changed the face, but not the principles of war. As in World War II, the Soviet strategic offensive (the only major operation that armies and fronts are supposed to conduct) involves a maximum concentration of forces, spearheaded by tank armies and completed by occupation of enemy territory. Any strategic offensive is conducted according to a standard plan, which requires a preemptive nuclear strike against the most important theater targets, enemy nuclear weapons in particular. Suvorov believes that the only rational approach to modern warfare is in preemptive application of all destructive strength at one's disposal. In his opinion, all theories of nuclear escalation are "incomprehensible and absurd." The implications of

such an inflexible strategy for any attempts to genuinely lower the nuclear threshold in Europe are clear. Suvorov does not, however, seem to realize that the theory of surprise maximum application of strength logically leads to an all-out exchange between Soviet and American nuclear arsenals, and to fundamental questioning of relevance of traditional military doctrine today.

The author's fervent faith in the offensive as the only reasonable course of military action is not totally convincing as far as consistency of Soviet military doctrine is concerned. One is left with a nagging suspicion that much of this emphasis on the offensive is an incantation designed to assure the Soviet officer corps that a repetition of the debacle of 1941 is impossible. Judging by Suvorov's own attitude this approach works and the chapter on weapons, which provides many interesting details, demonstrates again the author's belief in the strength of the Soviet military machine.

Authenticity is the most valuable aspect of *Inside the Soviet Army*: it introduces the Western reader to the mentality of a Soviet officer. The two last chapters, dealing with the situation of officers and enlisted men, are of particular interest in this respect. As General Sir John Hackett put it in his foreword to the book, these two chapters demonstrate to the reader "what it feels like inside" the Soviet Army.

We pay a price for this authenticity, however. Although thoroughly disappointed in the Soviet

system, Viktor Suvorov is still very much its product. In viewing the Soviet political system and the Soviet military, he might ignore contradictory evidence and historical facts, disregard current professional Western literature, and make the most sweeping and unproved generalizations. However, when limiting his discussion to purely military subjects, Suvorov writes, for the most part, clearly and logically. But his analyses of Soviet foreign and domestic policies are often unsophisticated and written in a bombastic style worthy of a *Red Star* editorial. Nonetheless, the reader will be well served to try to figure out Viktor Suvorov on his own, for it is a useful exercise in studying the "Soviet military mind."

MIKHAIL TSYPKIN
Russian Research Center
Harvard University

Halliday, Fred. *Soviet Policy in the Arc of Crisis*. Washington, DC: Institute for Policy Studies, 1981. 143pp. \$4.95 paper

In a period when the Soviet bear is more often than not seen to be on the march, and when it is fashionable to be concerned about Soviet power projection capabilities, to reject détente as impossible with an imperialistic nation like the USSR, and to believe that Moscow is directly (or at least indirectly) involved in all events in the Third World which are detrimental to US interests, this book is a breath of fresh air. Halliday argues that the United States is not involved in a zero-sum game with the Soviet