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OVERVIEW OF SOVIET STRATEGY

Hypothesizing on the intentions of the Soviet Union can be an interesting mental exercise but, if taken too seriously, could be fatal. Given the conflict mentality of the Leninist ideology, knowing the more recent improvements in Soviet military capabilities and emphasis on military research and development, and witnessing Moscow's action in Czechoslovakia, the United States can best deal with the U.S.S.R. from a position of relative strength.

A speech given to the
 Proceedings of the
 Navy League Seminar
 on Soviet Seapower at New York
 by
 Mr. Frank R. Barnett

Perhaps the most important change in the overall equation of Soviet strategy that has taken place is the result of apparent improvement in Soviet military capabilities over the past 5 years. Thus, while Moscow's strategy in the past has been largely defense—except in terms of propaganda, subversion, and political warfare—it is likely that her newly acquired global mobility may tempt her to engage in some overseas military adventures. I would anticipate, unhappily, that we are going to have more problems with the Soviets in the seventies than we did with them in the fifties and sixties.

I think it is quite unlikely that the Soviets have any master blueprint. Some people have alleged that one exists. I know of no evidence that such a master

blueprint exists or that they have any rigid timetables. The Soviet elite tend to be patient opportunists as well as ideologists.

What I am going to say today represents *my view* of probable Soviet strategy that can be gleaned from analyzing Soviet defense budgets, from reading Russian military journals, and from studying the speeches of major party leaders. I would warn you, however, that statesmen and diplomats, particularly Communist diplomats, do not necessarily say in public what they mean in private.

In my opinion the main lines of contemporary Soviet strategy are these:

- To continue with her policy to discredit and isolate the United States, particularly to divide her from her

NATO allies, and eventually to force the United States off the Continent of Europe by diplomatic means, if possible.

• Secondly, in the world environment, to break the capitalist encirclement, which always looms large in the minds of the heirs of Lenin. They saw Mother Russia as an embattled fortress, surrounded by the great capitalist powers with their world empires. They now feel that they have broken capitalist encirclement and are, in fact, in the process of encircling the encircled. They pride themselves in their military journals on now having the power to contain and/or surround and inhibit the Western Powers, particularly the United States.

• Thirdly, they are certainly seeking to promote the strategy of peaceful coexistence. It should be noted that "peaceful coexistence" does not mean, to the Soviets, what it means to the Western World. To us "peaceful coexistence" obviously means "live and let live, and, if worst comes to worst, we will each get a lawyer and go to court and settle it." To the Leninist "peaceful coexistence" means conflict short of a nuclear exchange, but conflict by all other possible means: ideological, political, diplomatic, propaganda, in terms of practical politics and what have you; and, incidentally, a conflict that may benefit from the presence of powerful Soviet nuclear forces which, although they may not be used, are standing there in the background as potential nuclear blackmail.

• And finally, of course, they continue to wage all forms of that particular Leninist specialty of theirs—non-military warfare, and I will come to that subject a little later in this talk.

Now this thesis is not accepted by many students of Kremlinology. There are people in the United States, perhaps even more in Europe, who profess to see Brezhnev, Podgorny, Suslov, the other current leaders of the Soviet Union as

men who are trying to lead a reformed middle-class Russia away from the dogma of Lenin. I wish that the evidence would bear that out. I do not think it does. I think the evidence shows to the contrary that, however the cast of characters may change in Moscow, the scriptwriter remains the same. The name of the scriptwriter is Lenin. Lenin, who died in 1924, still permeates the thinking, the speeches, the writings of all of the Soviet elite, both political and military. Incidentally, as most of you know, last year was the 100th anniversary of Lenin's birth. That event was celebrated all over the Communist world as a semireligious event.

So I would argue that Russia is really a far more serious threat to the United States today in a period of so-called détente or peaceful coexistence than she was under Stalin, when everybody knew that the cold war was for real. I base this position on the Soviets' most recent achievement, that of gaining at least nuclear parity with the United States and, in some areas, nuclear superiority. In a moment I will give you some statistics that will bear this out.

Stalin's Russia was in some ways a primitive and underdeveloped country. It had large land armies but had no naval capability, virtually no air force, and had really—until after Stalin's death—no missile delivery systems. Therefore its capacity to project its military troublemaking power was confined to Europe, but now the picture has changed.

It seems to me that it is more practical to deduce a nation's intentions and strategies by looking at the profile of its defense budgets than by listening to the words of its diplomats. If one looks at the Soviet defense budget, one sees first of all that they are spending more than we are on strategic weaponry and research and development of advanced weapons. Our defense budget, totally, has been greater than the Soviet Union's only because we have been

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spending so much in Vietnam on conventional war.

It has become apparent in this age of continuing technological revolution that the corporation or nation which is spending a great deal more than its adversaries on advanced research and development is likely to forge ahead. By simply reading military journals one can see that lasers which can pierce the seas to reveal the presence of submarines may be just around the corner, and space platforms that can inspect or disarm orbiting satellites may be within reach. Geophysical warfare, itself, may be over the horizon; the cybernetic battlefield is now thinkable. I say again, any nation which is intensively allocating large resources to advanced weapon systems while its adversary stands on a plateau—talking about a détente—that nation is not to be taken lightly, and I refer to the Soviet Union.

Why? I think there is a psychological reason that many Americans do not fully understand. We value such concepts as stability or equality or parity. We live in a pluralistic society of give and take and compromise. All of these concepts are alien to a Leninist mentality. To a Leninist, there is no such thing as stability, there can only be a clash that results in victory for one side, and then that victory in turn, through the process of the dialectic, meets with another clash. So when you talk about stability and parity to a Communist, you are using words that have very little relevance to his whole value system and way of thinking. Human life, to a Leninist, progresses through conflict—through the annihilation of an old system and then more conflict onto a higher level of development. The Russians simply are not geared toward achieving stability or parity. It would appear that former Secretary of Defense McNamara's theory that we rest on our oars and allow the Soviet Union to catch up with us in the field of strategic weapons, thereby giving them the

psychological confidence to taper off, simply cannot withstand rigorous inspection of these facts.

The Soviets have matched us in certain categories of strategic weapons and are moving ahead. They continue to deploy their ICBM's, some of which have very much larger megaton warheads than ours do, with great speed.

I want to give you some facts and statistics which are published annually by the Institute of Strategic Studies in London. Those of you who are serious students of defense and international security matters would be well advised to spend the \$2.50 for this annual publication. It is very highly regarded. The Institute is a civilian organization, yet its estimates of comparative military strengths are generally regarded as so accurate that many copies are purchased by our own Pentagon, by the British Ministry of Defense, and the other NATO ministries.

As long ago as 1968, the Institute for Strategic Studies prefaced its annual report with these words:

During the year 1968 the Soviet Union achieved numerical equality in intercontinental missiles, which as late as 1965 Secretary McNamara had rated as improbable. The Soviet Union must now be treated as a full equal in terms of strategic power and of her ability to control conflict in the developing world.

We have heard much about the Soviet's new ability, through their navy, to extend limited war capability to other parts of the world instead of being confined to the Eurasian heartland. Here are some statistics from last year's (1970) Balance of Military Power by the Institute for Strategic Studies. Bear in mind as we talk about these defense expenditures, defense items, that the United States has roughly twice the gross national product of the Soviet

Union. We have very close to a trillion dollars GNP; the Soviet Union has very close to 500 billions. We have twice the GNP, and yet the Soviet Union has been outspending us in the field of strategic weaponry. One may seriously question the prudence of such a policy on the part of the United States.

The United States now has 1,054 intercontinental ballistic missiles, while the Soviet Union has 1,300, 240 of which are SS-9's which carry a 20- to 25-megaton warhead. By comparison, most of our intercontinental ballistic missiles carry a 1-megaton warhead. Some of our armchair strategists say that a 1-megaton warhead is surely big enough to do the job, so why worry about the overkill capability of a Soviet warhead that is 20 times the size of an American warhead.

Military strategists will tell you that there is a great difference if one is concerned about trying to develop a first-strike capability. There is no question that a 1-megaton warhead will wreak fearful havoc on any open city. However, if someone is interested in striking first and trying initially to devastate his adversary's deterrent force—a deterrent force in hardened missile silos—then even the short-range error of a 1-megaton warhead may not destroy weapons in hard emplacements. Since our opponent has deployed a 20-megaton warhead in his SS-9 missile, there is good reason that we are faced with a potential first-strike, counter-force weapon. What I am saying is that the Soviets are now in the process, through their SS-9's, of building not a deterrent force, but a first-strike weapon capable of disarming our own force.

In the field of intermediate- and medium-range missiles, which the United States no longer employs, the Soviets have 100 and 600, respectively. These are in Eastern Europe and Western Russia, zeroed in on NATO targets. We still have an advantage at sea with 656 missiles on Polaris submarines

against some 400 Soviet submarine-based missiles. And in long-range bombers we outnumber them by 500 to 140.

These statistics, it seems to me, have to be looked at in terms of history and comparative trends. In 1964 the United States had a 4 to 1 advantage in ICBM's—a 4 to 1 advantage 7 years ago, 834 to 200 for the U.S.S.R. In 1967 we still had a 2½ to 1 advantage, 1,054 to 460. However, the United States has remained at the level of 1,054 ICBM's for the last 4 years. We have maintained ourselves at that plateau of missile deployment, and in that same period the Soviets have increased their ICBM stockpile from 460 to 1,300.

I think it is important to ask why. Why, from a base of GNP that is only half that of ours are the Soviet commissars and space marshals continuing to squeeze their people to build that level of weaponry?

Also, since 1967 we have maintained the same number of missiles in our Polaris fleet (656), and during that 4-year period the Soviets have increased their submarine-launched missiles from 130 to 400. So even in a field in which we still have an advantage, they are rapidly trying to catch up.

When one looks at air defense, one sees also a bleak picture. If the Soviet Union were planning a first strike, using their very heavy SS-9 weapons against our Minutemen and using their Yankee submarines close off our coast to catch our SAC bombers on the ground, then they would still have to cope with our Polaris missiles. Their only chance of doing that, presumably, would be with an adequate ABM system and/or fighter interceptors with air-to-air missiles.

In the U.S.S.R. the Air Defense Command is a separate command, enjoying great prestige and its own autonomy, with antiaircraft artillery, anti-ballistic missiles, and fighter interceptors. The Air Defense Command of the Soviet Union has a total personnel

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of 500,000 men, compared with roughly 85,000 who are in the Air Force and Army Air Defense Commands of the United States. While this does not tell the whole story, the investment in 500,000 men as opposed to 85,000 men at least gives you some notion of who thinks air defense, anti-ballistic missile defense, might actually be feasible. There are some 67 Galosh ABM launchers deployed around Moscow. They have a range of slightly over 200 miles and a warhead in the megaton range, which would be suitable obviously only for interception in the outer atmosphere. I do not think anyone really feels that the Soviet ABM is yet that effective. Yet what counts in technology is initiating the research, working on our generation of weapons, keeping your scientific teams together and beginning work on the next generation.

The Soviets have always—perhaps owing to their experience of being invaded by Napoleon and Hitler—thought very seriously about defense. Whereas in the past that defense was through trading vast areas of space for time, invoking the aid of “General Winter,” today Soviet military people are thinking very seriously of defense. They do not discount the possibility that there can be breakthroughs in the field of an antiballistic missile system that really will make for a workable and effective system.

Turning now to Europe, NATO has historically been our blue-chip alliance, the great alliance of the Western democracies, with all their economic and technical and professional skills. Russia keeps continuing diplomatic and political pressure on NATO. I am sorry to say that after several trips to NATO theaters in the past year, I came away with the rather melancholy conclusion that many of our European allies, despite their affluence, do not have the will to pay for adequate defense. We are certainly doing our share, and some of the

European countries are doing theirs, but as Europe becomes more and more affluent there is less and less desire among our allies to maintain NATO as a really effective instrument.

Russian power has moved forward into Central Europe through the invasion of Czechoslovakia, where the Russians still maintain highly equipped, modern divisions. When Soviet armor pushed into Prague in August of 1968, even those Western intellectuals who had been busy building bridges of friendship to Moscow were temporarily astonished by what seemed to be a return to neo-Stalinist foreign policy. All the lessons of Czechoslovakia have been forgotten and have been swept once more under the rug of détente politics. This trend is embodied in what the Germans called “ostpolitik,” the opening in the East, the negotiating with the Soviet Union, which for the most part will have the end result of sending Western technology to the U.S.S.R. It seems to me that 6 months is about as long as the West can remember Soviet duplicity or Soviet atrocities. It almost appears that we really need a small nation liquidated about every 6 months in order to keep the threshold of our consciousness at a level needed to continually perceive the real meaning of Lenin’s policies.

Here are the lessons that I think should have been derived from Czechoslovakia and which are still valid:

- The Russians care absolutely nothing about world opinion when their own vital interests are at stake. The commissars certainly calculated that *temporarily* they would be criticized for invading Czechoslovakia, but only temporarily. Therefore, those people who would restrain the Soviets with the alleged pressures of world opinion or international law as opposed to the American deterrent, I think, have the burden of proof on their shoulders.

- In 1945, as a young infantry soldier, the author had the somewhat

dubious pleasure of meeting the Red Army at the Elbe River in Germany. I noted that the 58 Ukrainian guards who marched across that river and into Leipzig were using the same sort of horse-drawn equipment that had been used by the armies of Genghis Khan centuries before. I suppose that this image of the logistic capabilities of the Red Army stayed in my mind through the decades. What is more surprising is that apparently it stayed in the minds of some NATO intelligence officers because almost everybody was astonished by the sheer military efficiency employed by the Russians in the invasion of Czechoslovakia. The airdrop was very good, and the coordination of infantry and armor was excellent. It was well done, it was up to the highest standards of the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth. No one ought to underestimate the sheer military skill of the modernized Red Army, which is very good. I regret to tell you that in many instances in the NATO theaters not only are we outnumbered, but we have equipment which is obsolete compared to the Soviets and the Warsaw Pact powers.

• The last lesson, the one I believe is most important of all—in terms of looking at strategy—is that in the 2 weeks that preceded the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia the world was astonished by the spectacle of the whole Soviet Politburo moving by train down to the Czech border, there to negotiate with Dubcek and his colleagues. A lot of people said, "Isn't this a wonderful example of a great power that is willing to humble itself, not to demand that the Czechs should come to Moscow but going hat in hand to try to negotiate peace." As the Soviet Politburo negotiated peace, the Soviet marshals were putting their finishing touch on the surprise invasion because, of course, that sort of military invasion has to be planned months in advance.

While I cannot predict the future any

better than you, I shall leave you with the question: Do you think that the Soviet Union, which in the case of Czechoslovakia was willing to betray a small Communist ally with a military stab in the back—do you think the same Soviet Union would treat the Anglo-Saxon Racquet Club with more courtesy and consideration if Soviet science should leapfrog us in advanced weaponry, get ahead of us on the sea or under the sea, or develop a really effective antimissile system which could counteract our deterrents?

I, for one, would not like to have history pose that question, and therefore I think it is absolutely imperative that we maintain the shield of American military strength.

BIOGRAPHIC SUMMARY



Mr. Frank R. Barnett did his undergraduate work at Wabash College and as a Rhodes scholar earned a master's degree from Merton College, Oxford University. While on active duty with the U.S.

Army he received training in the Russian language and history and has done graduate work in English at the University of California at Berkeley, in geopolitics and military government at Zurich University; and he earned an LL.D. from the University of South Carolina. Mr. Barnett has been active as a foundation executive and in Government in the promotion of U.S. national security programs. From 1955 to 1962 he served as Director of Research and Vice President of The Richardson Foundation of Greensboro, N.C., and New York City; and from 1962 to 1967 he served as the Program Manager for the Committee on Education of the American Bar Association. His publications include co-editor of *Peace and War in the Modern Age* (Doubleday) and contributor to *American Strategy for the Nuclear Age* (Doubleday) and *National Strategy in an Age of Revolutions* (Praeger). Mr. Barnett is President of the National Strategy Information Center, Inc., New York City.