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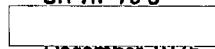
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*Soviet Doctrine for Nuclear Strikes on
Command and Communications Systems*



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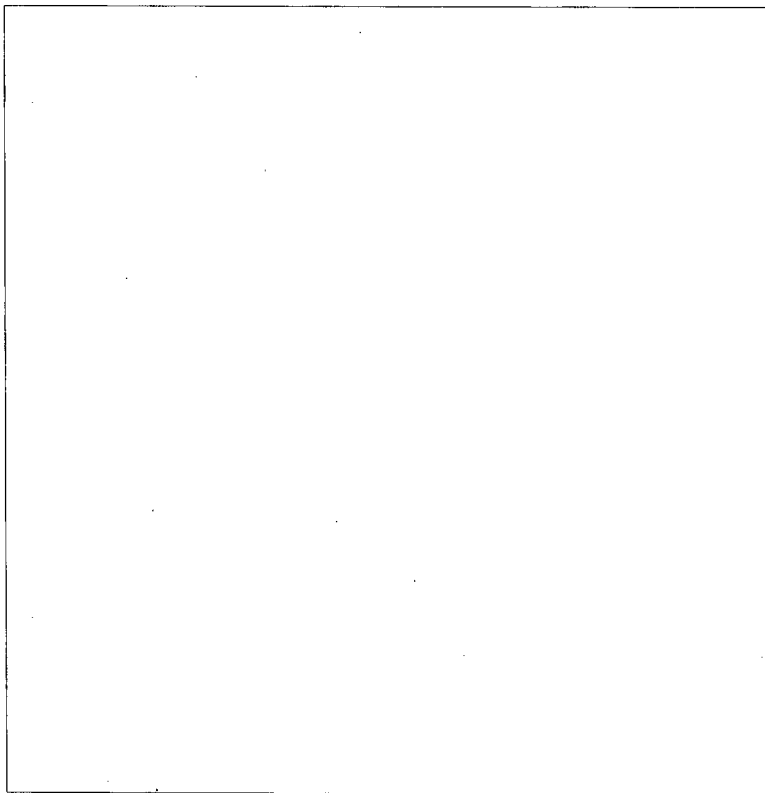
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
December 1975

RESEARCH PAPER

Soviet Doctrine for Nuclear Strikes on
Command and Communications Systems

Summary

Soviet military writings since the late fifties have consistently portrayed US and NATO command facilities as high-priority targets for nuclear attack, second in importance only to adversary nuclear forces. Soviet doctrine for both theater and strategic conflict reflects this emphasis on command systems as targets, including national command authorities and the control facilities of specific military forces and weapon systems. Soviet military analysts believe strikes against such targets would disrupt US and NATO nuclear attacks, disorganize NATO operations against Warsaw Pact forces, and impede national mobilization efforts.

At the strategic level, Soviet military analysts in the late sixties gave increasing attention to nuclear strikes against command and communications targets as US intercontinental and submarine-launched missile forces expanded. The difficulty of locating SSBNs and of destroying silo-based ICBMs led some Soviet analysts to advocate increased attacks on control facilities to neutralize these forces. Soviet discussion of a trade-off of force targets for control facilities, however, was both limited and imprecise, so that the impact on Soviet planning remained unclear. Other elements of Soviet strategic doctrine remained essentially unchanged, in-

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cluding a determination to decapitate the US command structure at the outset of the conflict, effectively precluding intrawar negotiations for ending hostilities. There is no evidence yet that this policy has changed in any significant way.

At the theater level, in contrast, the Soviets appear to leave open the possibility of intrawar bargaining, in that they contemplate the withholding of attacks on national authorities in France and possibly in other NATO countries. Moreover, in their first attention to the possibility of limited nuclear operations in Europe, dating from the late sixties, senior military analysts indicated that command sites located in or near large cities might not be targeted, although they still envisaged strikes on those control systems associated with military forces.

Doctrinal writings on theater operations have continued to emphasize strikes on command and communications targets, but have noted that means exist by which the adversary might maintain or quickly restore these systems. Thus, Soviet writers have come to see the destruction of control systems as a more complicated and protracted process than they had previously envisaged.

Overall, Soviet military writers regard US and NATO command systems as lucrative targets whose destruction would paralyze opposing forces, especially nuclear forces, although they realize the difficulty of destroying these systems completely.

Preface

This paper examines Soviet views since the late fifties on the target value of US and NATO command systems for strategic and theater conflict. It draws upon open Soviet publications, the restricted-circulation journal *Military Thought*, and other, more sensitive doctrinal commentaries. The study focuses primarily on Soviet military doctrine rather than on political considerations, technical criteria, or the characteristics of specific command systems as the Soviets describe them. It discusses the role that nuclear operations against Western command and communications facilities would play under Soviet concepts of warfighting.

As a basis of comparison, this study summarizes Soviet views of the treatment of command and communications in Western strategic and theater doctrine. These views reflect Soviet perceptions of the vulnerability of their own command systems to US and NATO attack and their consideration of ways to restore these systems following attack.

The Soviet military treats Western command and communications on three levels: national authorities, operational forces, and weapon systems. The first is concerned with governmental and military direction of the conduct of war--not only the actions of the armed forces, but the civilian war effort as well. The second deals with the command structures of military organizations--the level at which field commanders direct the actions of specific forces. The Soviets discuss control at this level primarily in terms of fronts, armies, and divisions in the ground forces, and equivalent organizations in other services. The third level covers the control of given weapon systems or groups of systems.

Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Strategic Doctrine	5
Views on US Command and Communications	5
Targeting Doctrine	6
Targeting to Neutralize US Forces	7
Protection of Soviet Facilities	8
Theater Doctrine	10
Soviet View of NATO Doctrine	11
Targeting Against Weapon Systems	11
Targeting Against Major Headquarters	12
Changing Doctrine in Late Sixties	13
Soviet View of NATO Targeting	15
Vulnerability to NATO Attacks	16
New Flexibility in Targeting	17
Conclusions	19

Strategic Doctrine

Views on US Command and Communications

Soviet military doctrine under Khrushchev rested on the threat of a surprise US strategic nuclear attack against Soviet forces and urban-industrial targets, aimed at "disorganizing control and disrupting the mobilization and buildup" of Soviet forces (according to Major General Klyukanov in a 1961 Top Secret publication). The Soviets described US strategic command and communications systems as designed to direct such an attack, providing unity of command, flexibility, and effective control for the full use of all types of armed forces in combined operations. They ascribed a key role to the US network of dispersed command posts equipped with reliable communications.

Soviet writers noted that the US was devoting particularly great efforts to improving communications of the Strategic Air Command because existing systems could not handle the demands resulting from additional overseas bases, increased data volume, and greater numbers of aircraft on high operational alert. To accommodate these needs, the US was developing automated control systems and airborne command posts. If the main control centers were put out of action in an attack, the airborne command post, maintaining direct communication with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, would control the actions of all strategic aircraft. In the Soviet view, this measure "considerably increases the strength and effectiveness of the control of SAC units." The Soviets expected that the US would adopt a similar system of alternate command posts for the Minuteman missile force. In addition, senior Soviet military writers cited the US concern that communications systems employing cable and radio relay links might be vulnerable, and they noted US research on the hardening of radio stations and antennae by installing them in underground shelters.

Public Soviet commentary noted Soviet as well as US interest in the automation of command and communications systems, although without the detail provided by the classified military press. In the book *Military*

Strategy (1963 edition), Marshal Sokolovskiy noted that the "biggest countries" were devoting increasing attention to the "creation of comprehensive automated command systems." This general reference noted that specialized communications and computer systems were being designed for use in all branches of the military and at all levels, from national military headquarters down to individual missiles and aircraft. It did not speculate on the implications of automated command, but clearly indicated that the Soviets were aware of US developments and were attempting to keep pace with them.

Targeting Doctrine

Writing in 1961, Soviet Admiral Tributs declared that the Soviet strategic mission in the early sixties was to "frustrate" or "repulse" a US global nuclear attack and to mount an overwhelming counterstrike against US forces and warmaking potential. According to Colonel General Pavlovskiy, also in 1961, one of the most important tasks of Soviet strategic forces during a war's initial period was the destruction of US and NATO "political-administrative centers" and the "disorganization of governmental and military command." This task would be accomplished by direct targeting of US strategic forces and command posts, and by attacks on urban-industrial targets. The Strategic Rocket Forces, submarines carrying SLBMs, and Long Range Aviation would have the primary responsibility for these missions, but Naval Aviation would also deliver strikes--on communications and control centers associated with US nuclear-armed naval forces. Soviet military leaders saw attacks on US command and communications facilities not as separate operations, but as part of an integrated campaign. Marshal Sokolovskiy observed in *Military Strategy*, "The annihilation of the opponent's armed forces, the destruction of targets deep in his territory, and the disorganization of the country will be a single, continuous process of the war."

During the remainder of the sixties and the early seventies, Soviet writers continued to emphasize the importance of national command and communications facilities as targets of strategic nuclear strikes

in the initial period of an intercontinental war. Attacks on the enemy's "system of governmental and military administration" would be intended to disrupt his ability to continue organized fighting or mobilize his economy and populace, and especially to frustrate his ability to deliver nuclear attacks. In one of many statements of this theme, Marshal Krylov, then commander of Strategic Rocket Forces, wrote in 1967:

In a future war with the use of nuclear-missile weapons, strikes will be inflicted simultaneously both against the armed forces and administrative-political and military-industrial centers of the country, the destruction of which will disorganize state and military control, undermine military-economic potential, deprive the enemy of the opportunity to conduct extended combat operations, and lead to his destruction.

Targeting to Neutralize US Forces

Some Soviet military commentators--notably in writings since the mid-sixties--have regarded attacks on command and communications systems as a substitute, in part, for strikes against strategic missiles that are difficult to destroy by direct attack. In 1967 Major General of Engineering and Technical Services Anureyev noted that the sustained high combat readiness of US Minuteman ICBMs made them less vulnerable to attack because it reduced the time necessary for launch preparation and the period during which the missiles could be destroyed at the launch sites. As a result, Anureyev maintained, attempts to destroy US strategic missiles during launch preparations--as in a Soviet preemptive attack--had become "even more difficult" than before. The way to counter this US development, he concluded, was not to attempt to destroy the missiles themselves, but to attack other facilities on which a successful firing depended:

Under these conditions, various supporting systems, and primarily control systems, become important enemy targets during the accomplishment of tasks for changing the correlation of forces in one's own favor.

The writers recognized that suppression of submarine-based missiles was more complicated than attacking fixed land-based missiles. Because Polaris submarines were difficult to locate, operations against them would not be limited to a single plan, although they would be part of the first mass strategic strike. Instead, separate operations were envisaged, including attacks on all enemy nuclear submarines (to avoid problems of distinguishing those carrying missiles), ABM interceptions of SLBM warheads, and strikes against land-based installations. The latter, conducted in the mid-sixties scenario primarily by long-range bombers and SSBNs, would include strikes on submarine bases, construction facilities, and control systems.

In addition to neutralizing strategic forces, the disruption of command and communications systems could blind the enemy's defenses and make him more vulnerable to preemptive attack. Soviet writers conjectured that an aggressor was likely to use such tactics shortly before he launched a massive attack. Writing in 1968, Major General Vasendin and Colonel Kuznetsov noted:

High-altitude nuclear explosions can be carried out in the beginning and in the course of a war to destroy systems of control and communications and to suppress antimissile and anti-aircraft defense radar systems and aircraft control systems.

Protection of Soviet Facilities

Soviet writers, aware of the utility of attacks on command and communications systems, realized that Soviet facilities, as well, would be vulnerable to attacks. By the early-to-mid-sixties, if not before, military analysts recognized that Soviet command posts and communications centers would be among the principal targets of initial nuclear strikes and electronic warfare, in the event of a US strategic attack. And in their writings, they stressed the necessity of "the efficient functioning and stability of the governmental apparatus and the entire national economy under conditions of massive nuclear strikes by the enemy."

The Soviets hoped to reduce the vulnerability of their systems primarily by dispersing, hardening, and providing redundancy of command and communications centers. In the mid-sixties, naval writers, for example, proposed that a system be developed to permit control over naval strategic and theater forces with a minimum of command echelons and communications links. At the national level, in this view, a main command post should ensure reliable control of all naval forces regardless of location and should supervise reconnaissance prior to the initial massive nuclear strike. It would remain in reserve in peacetime, with normal operations handled by an alternate command post. When war broke out, the main command post would assume full control, and the alternate command post would cease functioning. In addition, fleet command posts should be capable of assuming the functions of the main command post if it were destroyed.

Below the national level, according to these analysts, the Soviets should establish a similar system of wartime command posts, with alternate command posts for peacetime operations. Lower echelon command posts would be equipped to take over for higher level ones in case they were destroyed or ceased to function, and senior commanders would have the capability to control operational units directly, by skipping intermediate echelons. The writers emphasized that this system should be fully developed in peacetime and staffs trained in the rapid transfer of control between different command units; only in this way could command stability be ensured.

To supplement this system of redundant and interconnected command posts, the writers called for the establishment of a series of radiocommunications centers throughout the Soviet Union. These centers would provide alternative links to preserve contact with the various forces and each other. To ensure security, jam-proof equipment should be used and messages transmitted in short bursts of condensed information. The reliability of communications would thus be guaranteed, even if one or several centers should be destroyed. Analysts apparently proposed similar systems to ensure the continued

functioning of command systems in other Soviet forces.

In the late sixties the Soviets began to construct hardened command and communications centers in the USSR and Eastern Europe. These centers enhance the survivability of Soviet command over widely deployed forces for strategic and theater conflict and apparently would provide the reliable, redundant capabilities that Soviet writers had proposed in the mid-sixties.

Soviet writers regarded reliable control as especially important for submarine-based strategic forces. The commentaries noted that these forces had become heavily dependent on long-range communications. By 1971, according to Vice Admiral Krupskiy, the Soviets had developed a "far-flung network of communications systems to direct" these forces.

Theater Doctrine

The available evidence provides a more comprehensive portrayal of Soviet doctrine concerning command and communications systems in a European conflict than in an intercontinental war, both under Khrushchev and in the decade since his fall. During the late fifties and early sixties, Soviet doctrine envisaged theater conflict as subordinate to global war, and the two as beginning virtually simultaneously. Thus, intercontinental exchanges would decide the outcome of the war, and medium-range strategic forces would provide the principal theater firepower. Following massive nuclear strikes, Soviet ground forces would advance rapidly against the remnants of opposing armies and would occupy NATO territory in continental Europe.

Perhaps because the Soviets linked theater conflict so closely to intercontinental exchanges, their theater doctrine paralleled their strategic thinking during this period. Along with enemy nu-

clear forces, command posts constituted a priority target for theater attack. Rear targets, to be attacked by long-range forces, included major political and economic centers as well as reserves. The aim was to frustrate a massive theater nuclear strike, neutralize enemy conventional forces, interdict lines of communication, and disrupt attempts to mobilize additional forces.

Soviet View of NATO Doctrine

The Soviets saw NATO's doctrine concerning war in Europe as derived from US strategic thinking. From an analysis of NATO documents and maneuvers, Soviet writers concluded that, in the initial period of a possible conflict, NATO would conduct

a global nuclear attack with the maximum use of all available forces and weapons for the massive delivery of nuclear weapons in the shortest possible time against targets and objectives in the theater.

The goal of the NATO attack, in the Soviet view, would be to eliminate Soviet strategic nuclear forces that could be used against NATO armies, to disorganize control over Warsaw Pact forces, to disrupt their mobilization and deployment, and to undermine the Pact countries' ability to mount a sustained war effort. Thus, in Soviet eyes, the Soviet and NATO doctrines for theater war mirrored each other.

Targeting Against Weapon Systems

Soviet doctrine emphasized preemptive attack against NATO nuclear forces in the belief that the side which struck first with these weapons would enjoy a decisive advantage. At the same time, it recognized the difficulty of attacking NATO nuclear systems because of their mobility and readiness levels. The Soviet massive initial strike was to be directed against fixed targets with confirmed locations. Nuclear weapons at NATO launch sites would be attacked only if they had been detected immediately before the strike, an unlikely prospect in Soviet thinking.

These considerations led Soviet military analysts to regard strikes on command and communications facilities as partial substitutes for direct attacks on hard-to-target NATO nuclear systems. According to the 1960 classified handbook, *Combat Against Enemy Nuclear Artillery*, targeting of command posts and communications centers would form a major part of Soviet fire preparations for the initial massed nuclear strike. The handbook emphasized that command and communications elements were the most vulnerable components of enemy forces, so that a low-yield nuclear attack against them could put a whole group of targets out of action. Thus, a nuclear strike against the guidance post of a Corporal missile battalion would effectively neutralize the entire Matador and Mace missiles at the launch sites. The Soviets probably intended to use low-yield weapons on such targets to reduce fallout effects on their own forces. They probably attempted to allocate most efficiently the relatively small number of tactical nuclear systems they then possessed for use against NATO.

Soviet writers also advocated as a first priority a large-scale effort to disorganize NATO resistance by attacks on major radar facilities. A Soviet Top Secret publication in 1958 stated:

The neutralizing of radar stations blinds the enemy, disrupts control of his aircraft and artillery, especially his antiaircraft artillery, and sharply reduces the effectiveness of the use of means of atomic attack, all of which taken together favors the success of the [Soviet] operation as a whole.

Targeting Against Major Headquarters

Soviet writings in the early sixties contained explicit assessments of the importance of command and communications centers and the need to incapacitate them. In 1961, Chief Marshal of Artillery Varentsov argued that attacks on NATO command installations should occur during the initial massed strike, "boldly and decisively...throughout the

whole theater." Varentsov assigned command posts the same priority as long-range nuclear missiles capable of striking Pact rear targets, in view of their crucial role in NATO nuclear operations.

At command posts, all questions connected with the combat use of nuclear weapons are worked out. Specifically, reconnaissance of targets is organized and plans are made for delivery of nuclear strikes and for the direction of missile units and aviation up to the issuance of necessary commands for the delivery of nuclear strikes. Destruction of the enemy's command posts therefore makes it possible to accomplish the main task--the substantial weakening of the enemy in his organization of the use of nuclear weapons.

Soviet commentaries on theater conflict for the remainder of the Khrushchev period continued to treat command posts and communications centers as important targets of the initial massed nuclear strike. As in the strategic sphere, they noted that naval operations would include strikes on land-based control centers and support facilities as well as on naval forces. They did not, however, examine in detail the relative priority and vulnerability of command and communications targets, in contrast to combat units, as had Soviet writings in the 1958-61 period.

Changing Doctrine in Late Sixties

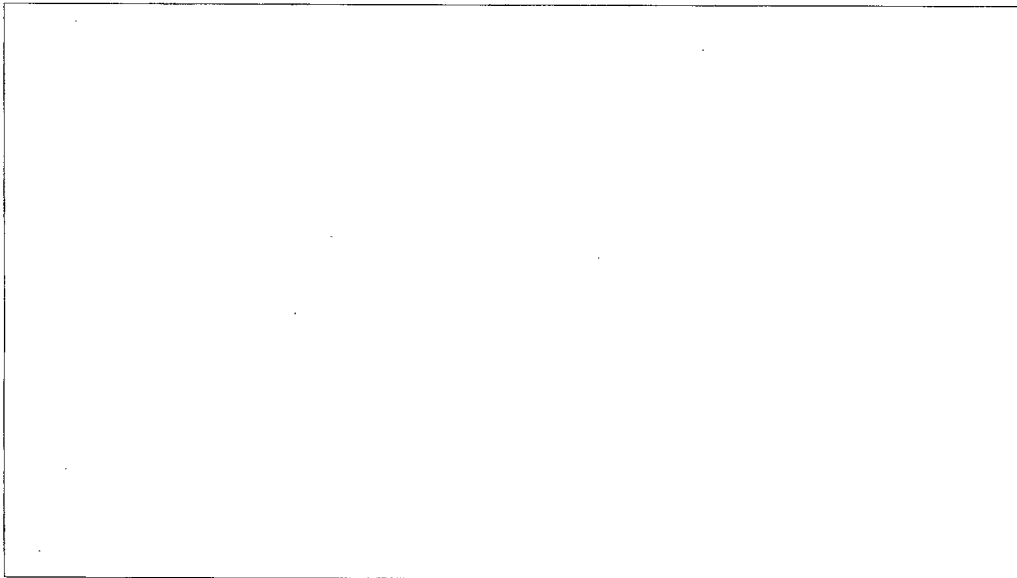
In the mid-sixties, Soviet doctrine concerning war in Europe was revised to incorporate the likelihood of a brief period of conventional (nonnuclear) fighting before the "decisive" nuclear operations. Soviet military analysts indicated that this modification was primarily a reaction to NATO discussions and exercises envisaging initial conventional defense operations under a flexible-response strategy.

Although the means of attack now varied, Soviet targeting priorities did not. Soviet doctrine emphasized that during conventional fighting, as well as in the initial, massed nuclear strike and subsequent nuclear attacks, NATO command and communica-

tions centers would be targeted along with nuclear attack forces and major troop units. At the start of conventional fighting, for example, in the attacks by Soviet Frontal and Long Range Aviation--known in Pact planning as the Air Operation--control centers and communications links would be among the most important targets, together with tactical air units assigned nuclear strike missions and major reserves.

For nuclear operations, Soviet doctrine in the late sixties and early seventies continued to emphasize the importance of early strikes against command facilities to disrupt NATO nuclear attacks and decapitate the forces. Reflecting the distribution of Soviet nuclear delivery systems by their different ranges, responsibility for nuclear strikes against command and communications centers remained divided among division, army/front, and strategic forces. Despite an increased number of delivery means available to Soviet armies in Eastern Europe, however, the Soviets in the late sixties still had a relatively low capability to conduct nuclear strikes against command and communications targets near the front line. This limitation was the effect of both the few short-range nuclear weapon systems available (compared to NATO's inventory) and the difficulty of targeting small and mobile tactical command posts. As a result, although headquarters and rear command posts probably would be destroyed by high-yield strikes, command posts of NATO units directly opposite Soviet forces might remain operational.

The Soviets believed that command and communications systems could be incapacitated by lower levels of damage than would be required to eliminate combat elements. Soviet analysts maintained that to achieve the superiority required for a decisive offensive Soviet forces might have to eliminate a high proportion of the opposing troops and combat equipment. By contrast, they estimated that NATO command posts and communications centers could be put out of action by destroying a relatively low percentage of their men and equipment, as these facilities appeared substantially softer and less numerous than the forces they controlled. Operations could thus be directed against these lucrative targets without significantly reducing Soviet capabilities for strikes against NATO combat units.



In addition to nuclear strikes, Soviet doctrine in the late sixties envisaged the use of airborne troops in deep-rear landings to capture NATO command and communications installations and thus disorganize enemy resistance. As in other discussions of targeting, airborne operations against command and communications facilities were closely interrelated with operations against other objectives. Airborne units would both destroy enemy nuclear forces and knock out control facilities. Nuclear strikes against air defense control systems and radars would support the airborne landings. Other strikes would be directed against navigation systems and air unit command and communications systems to disrupt airlifts or reinforcements from the US.

Soviet View of NATO Targeting

Soviet perceptions of NATO theater doctrine during the mid-to-late sixties led to the expectation that a war would bring heavy NATO strikes against Pact command and communications centers. Pact military analysts recognized that NATO would regard such centers as especially lucrative targets.

NATO forces would be expected to conduct conventional attacks against Soviet command centers during



the initial fighting. In 1973, Chief Marshal of Aviation Kutakhov expected that NATO would duplicate the Pact's Air Operation by beginning its conventional attack with massive air strikes against major control posts as well as airfields and troop concentrations.

In the Soviet view, once large-scale nuclear operations began, NATO would conduct massive nuclear attacks on Pact command and communications systems. NATO would deliver about 60 percent of its nuclear weapons in the first massive strike, and first-priority targets would include command and communications facilities as well as nuclear delivery systems, nuclear weapons depots, and major troop concentrations. Tactical air units would deliver the principal strikes, but nuclear artillery would attack command installations near the front lines, and NATO commanders might also use Nike-Hercules missiles to destroy Pact headquarters commanding nuclear forces. In addition, NATO airborne forces would conduct operations in Pact rear areas aimed at, among other objectives, taking control of or destroying "large staffs and communications centers" and seizing "high-ranking military and government officials."

Vulnerability to NATO Attacks

The Soviets expected to suffer heavy losses from NATO strikes on command and communications targets. A series of studies of the effects of NATO nuclear strikes and methods for restoring Soviet combat effectiveness concluded that forward command posts would suffer especially heavy losses--over two-thirds of their personnel and equipment, and up to 90 percent of their officers. Front and army command posts would suffer similar losses if struck by high-yield weapons. Restoration of control would be the first-priority objective; unless this were accomplished rapidly, Soviet analysts believed that units could not be expected to succeed in their missions.

Even if overall unit losses were relatively light but command posts had been destroyed or sub-

jected to radioactive contamination, units would lose combat effectiveness until existing posts were restored to operation or new posts established. Units whose command posts were put out of action and disorganized by heavy personnel and equipment losses could not be restored, but would require combination with other remnants into new units. Alternate command posts could assume control of damaged units at the same organizational level within an hour, but up to 12 hours would be required for a command post to begin directing units at a higher or lower echelon.

To cope with this problem, Pact analysts, noting increased NATO reconnaissance capabilities, recommended substantially greater efforts to conceal and harden command posts than had been made in the past. They also proposed that communications be maintained by the use of aircraft and helicopters specially equipped to serve as relay stations. These sources indicated continued concern, however, that alternate command posts would lack the specialized personnel and equipment necessary to direct operations if the main command posts were destroyed.

New Flexibility in Targeting

Since the mid-sixties the Soviets have shown an interest in limited nuclear options in a European conflict. Such options include the withholding of attacks on command and communications targets, especially those serving national decisionmakers.

[redacted] the Soviets might attempt to pressure the smaller NATO countries and France (because of its ambiguous military relation to NATO) to withdraw from a NATO-Pact conflict or refrain from supporting NATO. As these sources suggest that the Soviet pressure would be strongest following initial nuclear fighting, the Soviets apparently intend to engage in some form of intrawar bargaining. This presupposes the survival of the national leaders in these countries, an ability to communicate with them, and their ability to communicate with their main forces. The sources indicate that such factors have been taken into account regarding France, through

the withholding of strikes on French territory and forces.

[redacted] withholding options may also exist regarding other NATO countries, at least during the initial, nonnuclear phase of a conflict.

A notable shift in Soviet thinking regarding the concept of limited nuclear operations in Europe appeared at the end of the sixties. At that time, Soviet military leaders began to reexamine their doctrine for nuclear war in Europe. In their new view, Soviet forces might engage in limited nuclear strikes, on the pattern of NATO nuclear doctrine. As in the mid-sixties, when the Soviets modified their doctrine in reaction to flexible response, the magnitude of possible Soviet strike operations changed, but the targets did not. Major command posts were included with nuclear forces and troops as targets of limited nuclear strikes. There is some evidence that in such strikes the Soviets would attempt to reduce collateral damage by avoiding targets located in or near major cities.

The avoidance of attacks on major urban areas in Europe would imply the withholding of attacks on major command posts and communications centers located in or near such areas. Such facilities would probably include senior military headquarters and national political authorities. Avoidance of major cities would thus further any effort to pressure national leaders to withdraw from the conflict before it escalated to massive nuclear exchanges.

Conclusions

Since at least the late fifties, Soviet military writers have consistently regarded command and communications systems as priority targets in both theater and strategic conflicts. Only the destruction of enemy nuclear forces has had a more important place in Soviet thinking. Indeed, one of the main purposes of Soviet strikes on Western command and communications targets is to prevent or disrupt US and NATO use of nuclear weapons, both by disorganizing the forces and by destroying the control facilities of specific weapons. More broadly, Soviet strikes on command and communications systems are intended to disrupt national mobilization for war, deprive the armed forces of overall direction, and preclude their effective use against Soviet forces and territory.

The Soviets probably view the suppression of command and communications as a continual process, ending only with the final defeat of enemy forces and the capitulation of surviving national authorities. The Soviets have shown an awareness of US and NATO efforts to ensure the survivability of command and communications systems. They do not expect to destroy all US and NATO command and communications centers in the first massive nuclear strikes, but expect that surviving and newly detected targets will require later nuclear strikes and (in operations against NATO) attacks by airborne forces. The Soviets have sought to reduce the vulnerability of their own systems by greater redundancy, dispersal, and hardening and to restore command operations within a few hours of enemy nuclear strikes. This emphasis may indicate an expectation that Western systems cannot be permanently disrupted by a single strike or group of strikes and would require repeated attacks.

Some Soviet writers have indicated that strikes on command and communications systems might be partial substitutes for direct attacks on hard-to-target nuclear weapon systems. Military operations research specialists proposed such tactics as a means of neutralizing US ICBM and SLBM forces. These assess-

ments did not cite specific trade-offs of weapon expenditures for different types of targets, nor is it clear whether these proposals have been incorporated into Soviet doctrine. Thus, although the intent to destroy Western command and communications systems is clear, the level of effort the Soviets would devote to this objective cannot be determined, nor can their expectations or criteria for success.

At the theater level, the Soviets have shown some interest in limiting strikes on command and communications targets, especially those serving national decisionmakers, to facilitate political contacts during a conflict. Indications have included the

[redacted] and proposals to avoid major cities in limited nuclear operations.

By contrast, there is no clear evidence yet of similar Soviet restraint during the initial phase of a general nuclear war to ensure the survivability of US national command authorities and leave open the possibility of a negotiated end to the fighting. Although Soviet delegates at SALT One expressed the view that protection of national leaders from third-country or unauthorized missile attack would lessen the danger of catalytic war, Soviet doctrine repeatedly affirms the importance in an intercontinental war of destroying the governmental and military command structure as completely as possible from the outset, to demolish the enemy's will and ability to resist.

Soviet doctrine, as known to date, provides no place for intrawar deterrence or bargaining, but assumes that strategic war would be unlimited and would result in the adversary's elimination as a society. Even if the Soviets adopted limited strategic options for withholding attacks on national command and communications centers, they would be unlikely to restrict attacks on facilities associated with either forces or weapon systems. Destruction of these systems would, in effect, provide a hedge against the failure of negotiations for terminating a conflict and would be consistent with the acknowledged aim of limiting damage to Soviet forces and society to the maximum extent possible.