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**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

25 JAN 1963

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**MEMORANDUM FOR:** Director of Central Intelligence

**SUBJECT :** Preliminary Comments on an Article from the  
Official Soviet Journal, Military Thought

1. Although this article was written almost a year ago, it represents the most comprehensive discussion available to us of the pre-emptive aspects of the new Soviet military doctrine, publicly enunciated by Marshal Malinovskiy in October 1961, and the implications for the general force levels, weapons systems, and operational status of the Soviet strategic offensive and defensive forces. The author, military theorist Colonel V. V. Larionov, was one of the authors of the Soviet Ministry of Defense book on military strategy published in 1962 and he has written periodically in the Soviet military press in recent years.

2. The article advocates a military posture for the USSR which will enable it to fight and win a thermonuclear war by striking first. The USSR's initial attack should be in sufficient strength to render the enemy incapable of recapturing the initiative. Thus, the author defines more explicitly than is apparently possible in overt Soviet publications the necessity for an essentially pre-emptive strategic capability. He also believes that the problems

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of seizing and retaining the strategic initiative in nuclear warfare have not received sufficient study in the USSR.

3. As a result of these requirements, according to the author, the USSR must have strategic forces in a high state of combat readiness which are both quantitatively and qualitatively superior to those of the enemy. These forces should be sufficient in number "to give a complete guarantee of success in seizing the initiative" and to enable the USSR to successfully continue the conflict if necessary. The article also provides additional evidence that the Soviet view of pre-emption includes attacks against major urban centers and that the Soviets consider strong air defense and ABM forces an essential element of a pre-emptive strategy.

4. Although some Soviet forces have reached the levels advocated in this article, other programs are far short of the implied objectives. With respect to strategic missiles, for example, the magnitude of the IREM/AREM force now deployed in the Western USSR seems consistent with the views expressed in the article. On the other hand, although the Soviet ICBM force has grown significantly, there is no evidence that the Soviet ICBM deployment program to date has been designed to achieve numerical superiority or even parity relative to US ICBM forces. We continue to believe that the USSR could not engage in an ICBM race without jeopardizing other

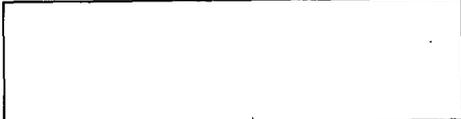
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military and economic objectives. However, in presenting the logical consequences of current Soviet military doctrine, this article probably reflects the pressures being exerted on the Soviet leadership by the military for larger advanced weapons programs requiring a still greater share of national resources.

  
RAY S. CLINE  
Deputy Director (Intelligence)

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WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (SECRET): "The Struggle  
for the Strategic Initiative in Modern  
Warfare", by Colonel V. Larionov

1. Enclosed is a verbatim translation of an article from the SECRET Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought" published by the Ministry of Defense, USSR, and distributed down to the level of division commander.

2. For convenience of reference by USIB agencies, the codeword IRONBARK has been assigned to this series of CSDB reports containing documentary Soviet material. The word IRONBARK is classified CONFIDENTIAL and is to be used only among persons authorized to read and handle this material.

3. Requests for extra copies of this report or for utilization of any part of this document in any other form should be addressed to the originating office.

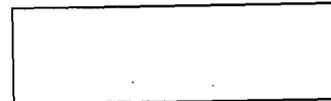
*Richard Helms*

Richard Helms  
Deputy Director (Plans)

Enclosure



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**Original: The Director of Central Intelligence**

**cc: Special Assistant to the President for  
National Security Affairs**

**The Director of Intelligence and Research,  
Department of State**

**The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency**

**The Director for Intelligence,  
The Joint Staff**

**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,  
U. S. Air Force**

**The Director, National Security Agency**

**Director, Division of Intelligence  
Atomic Energy Commission**

**National Indications Center**

**Chairman, Guided Missiles and Astronautics  
Intelligence Committee**

**The Deputy Director of Central Intelligence**

**Deputy Director for Research**

**Deputy Director for Intelligence**

**Assistant Director for National Estimates**

**Assistant Director for Current Intelligence**

**Assistant Director for Research and Reports**

**Assistant Director for Scientific Intelligence**

**Director, National Photographic Interpretation Center**

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COUNTRY : USSR

SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (SECRET): "The  
Struggle for the Strategic Initiative  
in Modern Warfare", by Colonel  
V. Larionov

DATE OF INFO : Mid - 1962

APPRAISAL OF  
CONTENT : Documentary

SOURCE : Reliable source (B).

Following is a verbatim translation of an article entitled "The Struggle for the Strategic Initiative in Modern Warfare", by Colonel V. Larionov. It appeared in Issue 3 (64) of 1962 of a special version of the Soviet journal Military Thought which is classified SECRET by the Soviets and is published irregularly. Issue 3 (64) of 1962 was probably sent to press in May or June of 1962.

Comment: Military Thought is published by the USSR Ministry of Defense in three versions, classified RESTRICTED, SECRET, and TOP SECRET. The RESTRICTED version has been issued monthly since 1937, while the other two versions are issued irregularly. The TOP SECRET version was initiated in early 1960. By the end of 1961, 61 issues of the SECRET version had been published, 6 of them during 1961.

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The Struggle for the Strategic Initiative  
in Modern Warfare

by

Colonel V. Larionov

The struggle for the strategic initiative has always been considered the most important factor in attaining victory. It is not an accident that the entire history of warfare is marked by a persistent search for the most effective ways and means of achieving the initiative. Proceeding from their economic and military capabilities, some countries have striven to win the initiative by means of surprise attack, while others counted on winning it as a result of successive exertion of efforts on the fields of battle.

The question of selecting the methods of fighting for the strategic initiative in a war was, and to a certain degree remains, problematical. It arises particularly acutely in contemporary conditions, when the imperialist aggressors are seeking to seize the initiative by means of a surprise nuclear attack on the Soviet Union and other countries of the Socialist Camp. The importance of studying this problem is also due to the increased capabilities of the weapons of armed conflict, which, by their destructive power, are able at the very outset of a war to inflict irreplaceable losses.

An extremely limited number of works can be counted in our military press which examine the essence of the concepts connected with the struggle for the strategic initiative, the characteristic features of this struggle in the past and in present-day conditions, and also the conditions which assure seizure of the initiative.

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For some reason, the investigation of problems of seizing and gaining possession of the initiative is considered reprehensible for Soviet military strategy, as not corresponding to our peace-loving policy.

In our view, it is quite wrong to equate research into the theory of the problems of the struggle for the strategic initiative in a war with any aggressive political aspirations. While aggression is alien to the Soviet policy of peace, the struggle for the initiative always has been and remains the most important requirement of Soviet military art.

*Politically content of doctrine is defensive, military-technical is offensive in its orientation*

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In a broad sense the initiative is the beginning, the first step in some matter or undertaking. If one adheres strictly to such a definition, then the strategic initiative is the beginning of a war or one of its phases. Consequently, whoever initiates a war or campaign seizes the strategic initiative.

In the military dictionary, besides the expression "seizure of the initiative", there also occur such concepts as the struggle to retain and win possession of the strategic initiative, and also its recapture. What then is the essence of and relationship between these concepts?

Seizure of the strategic initiative may be defined as a one-act occurrence, connected with the outset of a war. It is difficult to extend this process further than the single act of delivering a strike or going over to the offensive in a decisive sector of a strategic front or theater of military operations. The very fact of one of the sides beginning military operations in itself signifies the seizure by it of the initiative.

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However, the seizure of the initiative cannot be equated, as is frequently done, with winning possession of it, as the seizure still does not guarantee firm and conclusive transfer of the initiative into our hands, and what is more, does not predetermine the outcome of the war as a whole, or of that phase, which was the goal of winning the initiative. For, having seized the initiative, it is possible not to retain it. There are many examples when the successful seizure of the strategic initiative at the very outset of a war still did not lead to final victory. Thus, in 1941, Japan made a surprise attack on the American naval base at Pearl Harbor and seized the initiative in the strategically important basin of the Pacific Ocean, but did not manage to hold it up to the decisive turning point of the war, and suffered defeat. Fascist Germany, in spite of initial successes in seizing the initiative on many fronts in the Second World War, was also defeated.

The struggle to retain the strategic initiative, as follows from the logical interrelationship of the concepts "seizure" and "retention", can only be carried on after its seizure. In order to retain the initiative, it is essential to consolidate the initial success by all possible means. However, the enemy, who has not managed to seize the initiative at the very beginning of a war, also exerts all his efforts in order to grasp it and then to retain it. In other words, retaining the initiative is always attended by a stubborn and long struggle.

The varied nature and intensity of this struggle can be seen from the fact that during the course of it, on individual strategic axes and theaters of military operations, the initiative in active operations may be lost, and troops may temporarily go over to the defensive even on an operational scale.

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Misunderstanding of the proposition stated above may sometimes lead to erroneous conclusions. Thus, it is frequently asserted that in the second period of World War II the Soviet Army seized the strategic initiative only in July 1943, going over to the counteroffensive around Kursk. Actually the battle of Kursk began under circumstances when the strategic initiative was already held by the Soviet Armed Forces. However, the initiative in offensive operations on this sector of the front was deliberately, and with a definite advantage to the Soviet forces, given up to the German-Fascist army. As we know, after inflicting heavy losses on the German-Fascist forces in the subsequent defensive battle, the Soviet Army went over to the counteroffensive, and to the end of the war did not again resort to defense on such a scale. In spite of the fact that the battle of Kursk marked the beginning of the final defeat of the enemy, it was only one (not the only one) of the great episodes in the struggle to retain the strategic initiative in the war.

Consequently, retaining the initiative is sometimes a long process of intensive struggle arising from military operations, various in type and scale, carried on by the side which has seized the initiative, with the object of denying the enemy the possibility of regaining it once more. This struggle is carried on up to that moment when this side, having the advantage in the selection of the methods of action, takes possession of the strategic initiative and thereby decides the outcome of the armed conflict in its own favor.

However, it is only possible to determine whether winning possession of the strategic initiative is complete and conclusive from an analysis of the general situation on all sectors of the front, the theater of military operations, and even of the war as a whole. Otherwise it is possible to fall into error.

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The criterion or signs of winning complete possession of the strategic initiative in modern conditions is the infliction on the enemy of such damage as will deprive him of the capability of undertaking a countering nuclear strike that is superior in force, of rebuilding his economy which has suffered colossal loss as a result of the damage, and also of making the armed forces capable of organized resistance, and of restoring control over them and the country as a whole. As a result, the enemy is deprived of the freedom of choosing methods and forms of action, cannot recover the initiative in operations on land, sea or air, or win back lost territory.

Thus, in our view, is it possible to define in a general theoretical framework the basic concepts connected with the struggle for the strategic initiative.

\* \* \*

A knowledge of the special features of the struggle for the strategic initiative during the First and Second World Wars, and thorough analysis of the conditions of modern warfare, will help one to understand the whole process of this struggle.

The struggle for the strategic initiative in past world wars took place in battles on land, sea and air. At the same time in different wars the significance of the results of this struggle in each separate sphere was differently assessed.

Thus, in the First World War, operations in the air in general did not have any noticeable influence on the struggle for the strategic initiative. In the Second World War the relative importance of air forces operations increased so much that the

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success of the operations of the ground forces was already dependent on previously gaining supremacy in the air. Massed air strikes on airfields, in conjunction with the operations of fighters in the air, were the main method of gaining supremacy.

In order to ensure seizing the initiative, and at the same time to ensure the success of the ground forces' offensive from the very first days of the war, Hitlerite Germany began its operations against the Soviet Union with just such surprise air strikes on airfields, fuel dumps, control points and garrisons. These air strikes achieved their objective to a considerable degree, secured a long period of air superiority for the German-Fascist Army, and facilitated seizure of the strategic initiative. As long as the German-Fascist Army had superiority in aircraft on other fronts of the Second World War as well, it could carry out any air operations without hindrance, and its overall successes on a front were assured.

Thus, in the Second World War air superiority became one of the most important signs of possession of the strategic initiative. Military operations in land theaters also occupied a most important place in the struggle for the initiative.

For maritime powers, winning possession of the initiative at sea acquired decisive importance in achieving victory in the war.

The main events in the First and Second World Wars developed on ground fronts, and consequently, the ground forces played a decisive part in the struggle for the strategic initiative. It was exactly for this reason, along with the destruction of the covering troops, that great importance was attached to deep penetration of enemy territory with the purpose of disrupting the planned strategic

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deployment of his armed forces. The great role of the seizure of territory in the struggle for the strategic initiative was then caused largely by the absence of long-range weapons of destruction, and by the predominance of ground forces in the armed forces of the combatant continental powers.

A different picture is seen in contemporary conditions, when the decisive role in war, including the struggle for the strategic initiative, is passing to the strategic missile troops, and in a number of instances also to other branches of the armed forces equipped with nuclear/missile weapons. In our opinion, winning possession of the initiative now should not necessarily be connected with the seizure of territory; rather the seizure of territory becomes the consequence of seizing the initiative. Having superiority in nuclear weapons, it is possible to be successful in the struggle for the initiative without setting foot on enemy territory, and even with the temporary loss of some part of one's own territory. (Of course this does not mean that the latter should be given up). It is sufficient to say that several nuclear strikes on vitally important centers of a country with high population density and a large concentration of industry in two or three areas may bring catastrophe upon the enemy.

One should also bear in mind that the tendency to reduce the role of ground forces in comparison with their role in the Second World War is, in our view, correct for the initial period of a war, for the moment of seizing the strategic initiative, but in the struggle to retain it in the course of the war, the role of ground armies and their operations in capturing enemy territory will be increased, and in the end their success will contribute to winning conclusive possession of the initiative.

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Thus, the striking manifestation of the decisive role of ground forces in the First World War, the increase of the role of the air forces and of the struggle for air supremacy during the Second World War, the shifting of the struggle to seize the strategic initiative to other continents, into the stratosphere and into space at the beginning of a modern war -- such is the characteristic process of the evolutionary change of the role of the various branches of the armed forces in the struggle for the strategic initiative.

In the struggle for the initiative in modern warfare, the role and relationship of the factors of time and space are also changing. It is evident that the speed and impetus of the first strike, i.e., time, will now be the basis of success. It is assumed here that the first strike will be sufficiently powerful.

One must not underestimate the importance of constant readiness for action and of speed in delivering the first nuclear strikes, which are undoubtedly one of the most important prerequisites for the success of the struggle for the strategic initiative, together with such an essential support system as reliable anti-air defense (anti-missile defense), without which it is impossible to count on keeping the initiative which has been seized as a result of these strikes.

As regards space, consolidation of the initiative that has been seized is inconceivable without possession of territory and freedom of action in the air and at sea. At the same time, one should obviously take into consideration outer space, which, in modern warfare in general, and, consequently, also in the struggle for the strategic initiative, may acquire colossal significance.

"In the very near future, if not already", writes one American magazine, "powerful hydrogen bombs will

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almost certainly be placed in earth satellites".\*  
It is not an accident that in the 1959/60 American manuals appeared the term "aerospace power", which is defined as a capability to use aerodynamic flying devices, ballistic missiles and spacecraft in order to win the initiative "in the aerospace at the outset of a war".

In any case, the question of the struggle for the strategic initiative increasingly touches upon the problem of the struggle in space, the more so as the successful flights of the Soviet spacecraft "Vostok I" and "Vostok II" open up wide possibilities of using them for military purposes also.

In the Second World War the surprise unleashing of military operations and resultant seizure of the initiative by countries which really did not have the prerequisites for winning the war, permitted them as a rule to keep the initiative in their hands for a long time. But the countries that were victims of surprise attack had to carry on a long and stubborn struggle in order to capture the initiative. The old, classical methods of struggling for the initiative, such as reducing the periods of mobilization readiness, more rapid full mobilization and deployment of the armed forces, skillful regroupings on internal operational lines, particularly in the initial period of a war, extolled by bourgeois military science as most effective methods right up to 1940, did not always bring success in the Second World War.

In modern warfare, the role of surprise in seizing the initiative is constantly increasing, because lost initiative is difficult to regain. While the effect of the surprise factor previously lasted until the enemy had become organized, had brought up fresh reserves, and had ensured superiority in forces and weapons, with the high effectiveness

\* The Saturday Review, September 10th, 1960.

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~~of weapons of mass destruction a situation may arise when the temporary advantages achieved as a result of a surprise attack will become a decisive factor.~~

Of course there are many ways of decreasing the danger of surprise attack and reducing its consequences to a minimum. Thus, dispersed disposition, concealment and a high degree of combat readiness of the main forces and weapons for delivering the first nuclear/missile strike, and for exploiting the success achieved, constant readiness of all antiair forces and weapons, including antimissile defense, make it possible to frustrate enemy preparation for a surprise attack and to deliver an annihilating strike against him in good time.

It is advisable to examine in theory the problem of seizing and keeping the strategic initiative, without, however, belittling all the complexity of the struggle to regain the initiative in the event of its loss for any reason on individual fronts or even in theaters of military operations.

As is known, the repeated passing of the strategic initiative from one side to the other was a characteristic occurrence in the Second World War that is confirmed by the whole course of military operations on the Soviet-German and other fronts.

An analysis of the experience of the struggle for the strategic initiative in the Second World War leads to the conclusion that a great role was played in this struggle by the movement of strategic reserves. This movement naturally resulted in the creation of superiority of forces in the main theater of military operations or on the most important strategic axis for a specific period of time. But as this period was generally the critical one, the turning point in the situation on a front, such superiority usually created the prerequisites for success in the further struggle to consolidate the initiative.

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However, depending on the availability of strategic reserves to one side, or their exhaustion on the other, the conditions of the struggle for the initiative changed radically. The experience of military operations on the Soviet-German front showed that availability and commitment of fresh reserves sharply changed the balance of forces, in which favorable conditions were created for regaining the initiative. Thus the final loss of the strategic initiative by the German-Fascist Army in the autumn of 1943 was a direct result of the exhaustion of its reserves at that very time, though the Hitlerite command, at the cost of incredible efforts and total mobilization, still managed to form several new divisions before the end of the war.

In modern conditions the role of reserves in the struggle for the strategic initiative is no less important. At the same time, just counting on potential reserves, capable only subsequently of changing the balance of forces and the whole situation on the front, will hardly be correct. This becomes particularly obvious if one considers that to regain the initiative that has been lost at the beginning of a war will be considerably more difficult than in the last war, as irreplaceable losses in personnel and armament may be inflicted at the very start of the war. But in the event of losing the first engagements, incredibly difficult circumstances will be created for recapturing the lost initiative. Therefore, it is not an accident with us, as with NATO countries, that the main part of the armed forces, also including the reserves of the first strategic echelon, are now kept deployed and can be brought into action in the very first days of war. In the European theater of military operations the NATO commanders intend to concentrate up to 100 divisions by the end of the second month of war. But the readiness of the armed forces of the Warsaw Pact countries in this theater is several times higher.

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It is not without interest to note that in the Second World War a strategic movement of forces along a front and the commitment of fresh reserves resulted in a change in the balance of forces and the seizure of the initiative only when superiority over the enemy in the forces and weapons of ground forces and aviation was created in the main theater of military operations or the most important strategic axis. Superiority in forces and weapons, with a ratio, for example, of 3:1, meant at that time that a side was capable of active offensive operations, which were the essential condition for gaining possession of the initiative. } ✓

Such concepts now appear out of date. Seizing the initiative is possible even without achieving superiority in ground forces. The decisive role in the first strike now belongs to nuclear/missile weapons, and success in seizing the initiative depends primarily on their effective employment. The absence of superiority in ground forces cannot serve as an obstacle to, or reason for, giving up the struggle to seize the initiative. At the same time, it is necessary to exploit the possibilities opened up as a result of seizing the initiative by employing strategic weapons, by means of active operations by tank and combined-arms formations, and air and sea landings. The importance of the latter proposition was convincingly proved during the 1961 operational-strategic exercise.

So, in the First and Second World Wars the most characteristic features during the struggle for the initiative were: the decisive importance of operations on land fronts and the destruction of those enemy forces and the destruction of those of his weapons (for example, aircraft) which could successfully fight for the initiative, with the simultaneous seizure of certain lines, bases and territory; surprise in attack as a prerequisite for seizing the initiative; repeated

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shifting of the strategic initiative from one side to the other as the result of a stubborn struggle; and the exceptional role of the strategic movement of forces during the war.

In modern conditions the struggle for the strategic initiative has the following special features:

-- In the seizure of the strategic initiative, the main place is assigned to the strategic missile troops, which have become an independent means of fulfilling strategic tasks.

-- The role of surprise in seizing the initiative is greatly increasing; however, a surprise attack still far from guarantees the outcome of the struggle for the initiative, in spite of the great advantages it gives.

-- Speed and impetus of operations acquire decisive importance, and initial success in seizing the initiative largely predetermines the result of the whole struggle.

-- The possibilities of regaining lost initiative are becoming more complicated.

\* \* \*

Let us consider what is the essence of the struggle for the strategic initiative in modern conditions, and what are the concrete measures which ensure obtaining possession of it.

The struggle for the strategic initiative does not produce any isolated operations on a strategic scale; it is manifested in the first engagements and operations in the main theaters of military

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operations and on the most important independent operational axes. Seizure of the initiative creates the prerequisites for carrying out the plan chosen and ensures the successful conduct and conclusion of the war. In other words, to seize the initiative means to fulfil the tasks given to the armed forces, denying the enemy the opportunity to interfere with the execution of these tasks or preventing his achieving his aims. Thus, no specific training of the armed forces to carry on the struggle for the strategic initiative is required.

The creation of the prerequisites for seizing the strategic initiative is connected in the closest way with general governmental measures for the preparation of the country and the armed forces for war. A comprehensive and objective evaluation of the military-political situation, a correctly worked-out concept and operational plan for the operations of the armed forces, the creation of superiority in nuclear/missile weapons and the means of delivering them to the target, and a high degree of combat readiness in the armed forces -- all these are important factors in the successful struggle to seize and retain the strategic initiative in modern warfare.

What then are the preparatory measures in this connection which can be considered to have a direct influence on the success of the struggle for the strategic initiative?

In our view the following are in this category: first, early, complete mobilization of the armed forces in such composition and numbers as are able to fulfil the tasks of the initial period of a war without additional deployment when the war has started, and the creation for these forces of essential reserves of materiel, particularly of missiles and nuclear charges for them; secondly, ensuring overall superiority over the enemy in military equipment;

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thirdly, bringing the armed forces to a degree of combat readiness which would eliminate the possibility of a surprise enemy nuclear strike, i.e., would guarantee a warning of it.

The necessity for early deployment of the armed forces is quite obvious, in order that they should be able to carry out the main tasks in the initial period of a war, and thereby seize and retain the strategic initiative securely. In the past, a country striving to win the initiative in warfare based its calculations on the utilization of its military-economic potential during the war by more rapid transition of industry to a war footing than the enemy, complete mobilization and deployment of the army in a shorter period of time, and the creation of better transport facilities for moving troops and equipment to a theater of military operations. Now all these advantages can play a definite role only if they are carried out before the outbreak of a war.

Consequently, concealed, advance buildup of the armed forces becomes the main and most advisable method of mobilization deployment. It is now hardly possible to solve the problem of seizing the initiative by means of faster concentration and deployment of forces than the enemy in a theater of military operations at the outset of a war, since a theater of military operations is not just some limited zone now, but a whole country and even a whole continent.

The composition and size of the armed forces formed before the outbreak of war which are capable of seizing the strategic initiative are determined on the basis of the number of enemy objectives which have to be destroyed with the first strike, counting on depriving him of the capability of successfully carrying on the struggle to recapture the lost initiative.

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At the present time, all these forces make up the main body of the first strategic echelon of the armed forces. These are chiefly the strategic missile troops, the ground forces of constant battle readiness, which do not require any major measures to be carried out for their deployment and bringing to full combat readiness, and also the large units and formations of strategic aviation and submarine missile-carrying forces. And, as the 1961 exercises of the joint armed forces showed, the first strategic echelon must be in such a condition that in any circumstances in which war breaks out it would be possible to forestall the enemy in deployment of troops and in bringing them to complete readiness for action. This means that missile troops must be located in the siting areas, their launchers must be at launch or waiting positions, and the missiles ready for launching.

Superiority over the enemy in military equipment plays an important role in creating the prerequisites for a successful struggle for the initiative. This is particularly so in modern warfare, when the relative proportion of equipment participating in armed combat has grown immeasurably, and the rate of scientific progress in equipment and the possibilities of producing new types of equipment have become exceptionally high, and consequently its obsolescence period has been sharply reduced.

While during the Second World War and in the early postwar years, the same system of armament was kept for a fairly considerable period, now the majority of models of weapons and equipment are thought of as obsolescent almost from the moment of going into production, and some models without even having had combat training trials. Thus, the B-47 bomber remained in service with the American Air Force for ten years, and the more modern B-52 jet bomber did not last even five years. The Soviet

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MIG-15 aircraft was in the armament of fighter aviation more than ten years, but the MIG-19, produced later and with considerably greater power according to its performance data, did not last even three years. The YAK-25 aircraft was obsolete before going into series production.

Included in the concept of superiority in military equipment are such factors as the general level of development of military equipment, its actual combat efficiency, the ability of a country to mobilize production capacity for the manufacture of the most efficient models of the newest types of military equipment, and the rate of its development.

Every country carries on the struggle for superiority in military equipment over the probable enemy during the whole period between wars. However, in order to create the prerequisites for success in the struggle for the strategic initiative, it is important to have the actual results of the development of military equipment by a certain time, i.e., by the moment of accomplishing the act of seizing the initiative.

Instances in history are known when marked successes in military equipment by one of the sides did not bring it any decisive results, as they were achieved prematurely or too late.

England, for example, started to develop radar equipment before other countries, while her enemy, Fascist Germany, had the advantage in design and production of missiles (V-1 and V-2). If an advantage in military equipment is achieved long before a war and becomes known to the opposing side, then it is able to develop similar equipment itself or to prepare countermeasures. The unexpected use of highly effective new equipment at the outset of a war may well become a factor favoring the seizure of the initiative.

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There are instances when new equipment is used by one of the sides in conditions unfavorable for it, even though it is unexpected by the enemy. For example, the appearance of the V-1 and V-2 in 1944, when the outcome of the war was clear, did not bring the Germans any tangible results in the struggle to regain the strategic initiative, though it confirmed their technical superiority in a particular sphere of equipment.

The known superiority of our country over capitalist countries in the sphere of development of missile and space flight equipment gives us favorable advantages in the struggle for the initiative.

In modern conditions a rapid advance by any country in the sphere of equipment is quite possible. But it must not be forgotten that in the sense of increasing the destructive power of nuclear weapons and the range and accuracy of the means of delivering them to the target, it is now difficult to achieve an overwhelming superiority of a strategic order, as was observed, for example, at the dawn of the development of atomic weapons. This situation is obviously explained by the fact that the search for ways of achieving superiority in military equipment is carried out in the sphere of development of new, more sophisticated methods of employing existing types of weapons, and more effective methods of combining them.

New inventions in the sphere of military equipment must be assessed now from the point of view of the strategic advantages which they give the country which has made these achievements before other countries. However, even the simultaneous invention of new models in a number of countries has an unequal influence on the creation of the prerequisites for the struggle for the strategic initiative. Thus, the construction at approximately the same time of the atomic submarine in the USA, possessing a powerful

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naval fleet, and in the USSR, predominantly a continental state, gives the latter real capabilities for participating in the struggle for the strategic initiative in naval theaters as well, with considerably greater effectiveness than previously.

Besides the qualitative indices of the development of military weapons and equipment, the quantitative aspect also has important significance. The possession of a greater quantity of the latest models of military equipment than the enemy enables the armed forces to use this equipment in the first hours of a war on such a scale as to give a complete guarantee of success in seizing the initiative, and at the same time to reserve the necessary quantity of this equipment against the event of a longer armed conflict for the attainment of strategic aims.

Also, the conditions in which one country or another develops the production of new models of equipment have great importance for achieving superiority in military equipment. Obsolete or inferior equipment in the armed forces has a hindering influence. It is extremely difficult to relinquish this burden and at the same time to organize on a large scale the production of the latest, more advanced weapons. In this respect the Soviet Union has definite advantages, since the planned character of the national economy permits stopping production of old types of armament and going over at once to developing such advanced and highly effective weapons in modern conditions as ballistic missiles with nuclear charges, missile-carrying atomic submarines and surface-to-air guided missiles.

A high degree of combat readiness of the armed forces and their weapons, as we have already noted, creates the prerequisites for a successful struggle for the strategic initiative. Here it is necessary to distinguish two concepts: a general, constant,

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high degree of combat readiness of the armed forces for carrying out operations, and the capability of individual means of combat to go over to a state of complete readiness for the immediate delivery of a strike.

It is quite obvious that it is impossible to maintain all the armed forces in a high degree of constant combat readiness in peacetime. This would be to the detriment of the state budget. Therefore, only certain forces and weapons are selected (missile large units and units, bomber and fighter aviation large units, weapons of the antiair defense of the country and a certain part of the ground forces and forces of the fleets) which are in a high state of combat readiness.

In the struggle to seize the strategic initiative at the very outset of a war, it is these forces and weapons that take part, but for consolidating success, more important factors are the general level of combat readiness of all armed forces and the reduction to the limit of the time taken to go over to a status of complete combat readiness. For strategic missile troops this time must be so short that in the event of the sudden unleashing of a war by the enemy, bursts of nuclear charges on enemy territory take place simultaneously with, or even before, his strikes on our installations.

Consequently, everything now depends on the timeliness of the decision to launch, as Minister of Defense Marshal of the Soviet Union P.Ya. Malinovskiy put it at the critique of the 1961 exercise: "If we are just a little late in launching", he said, "how difficult it will then be to make up for what has been missed, and to recapture the lost initiative on the short path over which we must achieve victory". And this depends to a considerable degree on the training of the directing command personnel of the armed forces in skillful control of

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troops under the complex conditions of the initial period of war. Special attention must be paid in the process of this training to the ability of command cadres to assess in good time all the diversity of conditions in the struggle to seize and retain the initiative and also to mastering the means and determining the methods of conducting modern military operations.

Thus, the creation of the prerequisites for a successful struggle for the strategic initiative presupposes a whole series of nationwide measures within the framework of preparing the country for war, and specific measures in the armed forces aimed at increasing their combat readiness.

Anticipation in strategic deployment, seizure of the initiative and a stubborn struggle to retain it, are recognized by Soviet military art as one of the decisive conditions for achieving victory in a war against the imperialist aggressors. That is why the primary task that urgently confronts military theory is to investigate the methods of conducting armed conflict which are best able to assist in winning possession of the strategic initiative and in achieving strategic aims in modern warfare.

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