

On *Perestroyka*: Gorbachev, Yazov, and the Military

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THE SELECTION of Dmitriy Yazov to replace the aging Sergey Sokolov as USSR defense minister on May 30, 1987, though perhaps a surprise to Western observers, was probably no shock to those inside the Soviet military establishment. Not only did Yazov have an excellent military record, but also several years before Mikhail Gorbachev's accession to power, he had taken a public stance in favor of a number of the factors that were to become key elements in the General Secretary's policy of *perestroyka* (restructuring). Beginning in mid-1986, Yazov's support of *perestroyka* caused him to be singled out for special attention in the military press. Indeed, by January 1987, he was being held up as a model commander.

Yazov's selection came at a time when the military's stance was generally less than enthusiastic about *perestroyka*. No doubt, Gorbachev would have preferred to allow Yazov more time to "season," but the landing of a small private West German airplane in Red Square on May 28 of this year left Gorbachev with no alternative. The military had to be held accountable for its actions or shortcomings just like every other segment of Soviet society. The immediate impact of the Yazov appointment has been to intensify the restructuring process within the military. Over the long run, assuming Yazov is successful, *perestroyka* could produce a far more efficient and formidable Soviet military machine.

To understand the context of Yazov's appointment, it is essential to trace the emergence of Gorbachev's

proposals for *perestroyka*, their implications for the military, and the nature of the military's initial response to these demands.

Perestroyka—Initial Reactions

Gorbachev outlined the key elements of his policy of *perestroyka*, or *uskoreniye* (acceleration) as it was called at the time, in his speech to the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in April 1985, shortly after becoming general secretary.¹ In this address, Gorbachev criticized the Soviet economic system—and especially the party-political apparatus—for failing to keep up with the demands of the times. He called for acceleration of social and economic progress "by making use of the achievements of the scientific-technological revolution and by making the forms of socialist economic management accord with contemporary conditions and demands"

His appeal focused on the need for more effective use of both human and material resources; a more creative approach to management; the acceleration of the tempo of work; and the revitalization of the party apparatus. He also stressed that ideological-political education should emphasize "acceleration of the country's socio-economic development." With regard to the human factor, Gorbachev spoke of the need to reinforce order and discipline, to hold workers responsible for their actions, and to develop a more creative leadership style:

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¹"On Convening the Regular 27th CPSU Congress and Tasks Connected with Preparing and Holding It—Report of M.S. Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee," *Krasnaya Zvezda* (Moscow), Apr. 24, 1985. (Though the word *perestroyka* appears several times in this speech, primarily in connection with the need to improve management, the emphasis is on *uskoreniye*. *Perestroyka* figures more centrally in subsequent addresses, particularly those to the 27th Congress and to the January 1987 CC Plenum [see below].)

It is now no longer sufficient merely to be able to take executive action . . . the significance of such business-like qualities as competence, a sense of what is new, initiative, boldness, a readiness to take on responsibility for oneself, the ability to set a task and to see it through to the end, and the ability not to lose sight of the political meaning of management is growing greater and greater.²

Implicit in this speech was the view that the existing Soviet system—with the help of science and technology, improved discipline and work habits, and other measures—was fully capable of putting the country's economy back on its feet.

The military press was ambivalent in its response to this speech and Gorbachev's new emphasis. On the one hand, the military tended to view economic acceleration as a problem, not for the military, but for the civilian world in general and for the party in particular.³ On the other hand, even though there were indications that Gorbachev's new emphasis meant that the military would have to do more with fewer resources,⁴ the military leadership accepted that it was necessary to improve the level of military preparedness and efficiency. In the words of *Krasnaya Zvezda*:

In accordance with the decision of the April Plenum of the CPSU CC, Soviet soldiers are responsible to strive even more persistently to master combat skills, to raise vigilance and combat readiness, to strengthen discipline and regulatory order, to organize and with a high degree of expertise conclude the winter period of training.⁵

With regard to military management, three specific areas were singled out for attention in editorials in the military press: closeness to people (*blizkost' k lyudyam*), exactingness (*trebovatel'nost'*), and personal responsibility (*lichnaya otvetstvennost'*).

The first of these themes emphasized that officers who work closely with their subordinates and thereby know their strengths and weaknesses, and who set high standards for themselves and their troops, can expect fewer disciplinary problems and a greater willingness on the part of the troops to achieve given missions. To

quote from a *Krasnaya Zvezda* editorial of May 23, 1985, entitled "Closeness to People":

Combat tasks and political training are successfully accomplished and a higher level of organization and discipline exists where it is known how to get people engaged in interesting, open discussions about what makes them happy and what bothers them, where factual thoughts are always supported, where a healthy atmosphere of morale is maintained.

The military press has also called for greater exactingness by commanders as a means of increasing managerial efficiency in the Soviet armed forces. In a June 6, 1985, editorial, *Krasnaya Zvezda* stated:

It is a question of activating the human factor, of the need to strive so that everyone works conscientiously at his place with full efficiency, deeply conscious of the purpose of the demands placed on him.

One might observe that persuading the leaders of a Red Army that has tended to rely on harsh discipline and unquestioning obedience of the efficacy and desirability of this approach would not be easy.

In an effort to avoid having to take responsibility when things go wrong—the key to bureaucratic success in and out of the military—some senior officers apparently routinely fail to provide clear, consistent instructions to their subordinates. This practice has led to confusion and loss of combat readiness. It is not surprising, therefore, that the linchpin of management reform in the military—as elsewhere in Soviet society—has been to raise personal responsibility. A June 11, 1985, editorial in *Krasnaya Zvezda* closely echoed Gorbachev's April Plenum speech on this point:

The importance of occupational characteristics such as competence, a sense for the new, initiative, boldness and readiness to take personal responsibility, the ability to follow the task to its final resolution is constantly increasing.

Consonant with Gorbachev's April speech, the military assigned primary responsibility for improving performance to its party apparatus. A May 1985 meeting of party activists in the USSR Ministry of Defense called for party organizations to increase their efforts to raise the level of exactingness and personal responsibility.⁶ A month later, Admiral Aleksey Sorokin, First Deputy Chief

²Ibid.

³"Toward the 27th CPSU Congress," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, Apr. 25, 1985.

⁴It is rumored that at a meeting in Minsk in July 1985, Gorbachev told senior military officers that they would have to do more with less. M. D. Popkov mentioned the meeting in the article "The Party—the Mind, Honor, and Conscience of our Epoch," *Voennoy Vestnik* (Moscow), No. 2, 1986, p. 5. On the rumored substance of the meeting, see "Gorbachev: What Makes Him Run," *Newsweek* (New York), Nov. 18, 1985.

⁵"Toward the 27th CPSU Congress."

⁶"Increase Combat Readiness, Strengthen Discipline," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, May 25, 1985.

of the Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army and Navy (MPD), complained to a directorate gathering that the political apparatus in the military had failed to meet the demands of the April Plenum in a number of areas. In particular, he stated that Communists were neither doing enough to ensure that plans for training exercises are carried out nor setting good examples by improving personal qualifications or by meeting disciplinary standards. In the future, he concluded:

*the main efforts are to be concentrated in ensuring the basic perestroika of the individual work of communists for supporting strict regulatory order, in creating in the military collective healthy conditions of morals and morale.*⁷

A week later, addressing a meeting of officers of the Southern Group of Forces, Sorokin again was critical of the work of party organs, and especially of their failure to eliminate "formalism" in political-educational work.⁸

It is clear from Sorokin's comments that the Soviet party leadership was encountering resistance—or at least passivity—on the part of the military with regard to the proposed new forms of management. A review of articles published during this period (from the April 1985 Central Committee Plenum to the opening of the 27th CPSU Congress in February 1986) by the country's three first deputy ministers of defense (Marshals Viktor Kulikov, Sergey Akhromeyev, and Vasilii Petrov) confirms a general disinterest in the subject.⁹ Even Defense Minister Sokolov's expressions of concern appear perfunctory¹⁰ and lack the sense of urgency that is evident in Sorokin's comments.

The military's low-key response could not have pleased Gorbachev. In July, he met with senior military officers in Minsk and told the generals that "we now need energetic leaders who can command and communicate, people with initiative who are competent in their work."¹¹ Despite this veiled threat, the attitude of the military toward restructuring changed little in the months leading up to the 27th CPSU Congress in February-March 1986. Although there was an increase in the number of articles devoted to restructuring appearing in the military press, the issue was still primarily viewed as one for the attention of the military's party appa-

ratus.¹² There was, however, some expansion of the meaning of the term. In fact, a fourth characteristic, that of psychological restructuring, began to emerge. This means that military personnel must learn to think in a new manner. Beyond new stress on psychological restructuring as well as on innovation,¹³ concern was expressed about "irrational expenditure of materials and goods."¹⁴ Nevertheless, Marshal Akhromeyev failed even to mention *perestroika* in his 1986 Armed Forces Day speech (published two days before the opening of the 27th Congress),¹⁵ and Defense Minister Sokolov on the same occasion limited himself to the following brief mention of the subject:

*In line with the demands of restructuring, the following are of paramount significance: in-depth knowledge and precise execution of direct official duties by every serviceman, absolute truthfulness, the faculty of self-criticism in the assessment of the state of affairs, and the ability to organize and unite subordinates in an uncompromising struggle against shortcomings and deficiencies.*¹⁶

Intensifying the Demands

Although the main focus of the 27th CPSU Congress was the economy, a number of issues were raised there that are likely to increase the impact of *perestroika* on the military. First, whereas Brezhnev in 1982 had pledged to "ensure" that the military had everything it needed,¹⁷ the new party program approved by the congress carried the less reassuring language that the party "will make every effort to ensure that the USSR Armed Forces are at a level excluding strategic superiority on the part of imperialism's forces . . ."¹⁸ Following Gorbachev's Minsk speech of the previous summer, this wording suggests that the General Secretary was serious about getting military spending under control.

¹²It is important to emphasize that the military press—like all military media—comes under the control of the Main Political Directorate. Consequently, editorials published in papers like *Krasnaya Zvezda* are generally prepared under the supervision of the MPD.

¹³"To Act—That Is the Approach Today," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, Aug. 9, 1985; and "The Great Responsibility Is An Innovative Approach," *ibid.*, Dec. 31, 1985.

¹⁴"Improve Military Life," *ibid.*, Aug. 1, 1985.

¹⁵S. Akhromeyev, "Guarding Peace and Socialism," *ibid.*, Feb. 23, 1986.

¹⁶S. L. Sokolov, "Decisive Source of Combat Might," *Pravda*, Feb. 23, 1986.

¹⁷"A Meeting of Military Commanders in the Kremlin," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, Oct. 28, 1982.

¹⁸"CPSU Program New Edition Adopted by the 27th CPSU Congress," *Pravda*, Mar. 7, 1986, trans. in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Soviet Union* (Washington, DC—hereafter FBIS-SOV), Mar. 10, 1986, p. 0/12.

⁷"A Worthy Greeting For the 27th CPSU Congress," *ibid.*, June 25, 1985.

⁸"Raise the Effectiveness of Political Work," *ibid.*, July 2, 1985.

⁹See, for example, V. Kulikov, "Our Pride, Our Glory," *Izvestiya* (Moscow), Feb. 23, 1986; V. Petrov, "Having Learned the Severe Lessons," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, Sept. 1, 1985; S. Akhromeyev, "Guarding Peace and Socialism," *ibid.*, Feb. 23, 1986.

¹⁰Speech by Marshal of the Soviet Union Sergey Sokolov, *Pravda* (Moscow), Nov. 8, 1985.

¹¹"Gorbachev: What Makes Him Run."

Second, Gorbachev addressed at the congress the question of military doctrine. He spoke of the impossibility of winning a nuclear war, of the need to hold military forces "to a reasonable sufficiency," and of the need raised by the destructiveness of nuclear weapons to create "new forms of relations between different social systems, states, and regions."¹⁹

Finally, Gorbachev refocused on the human aspect of *perestroika* with new vigor. The call at the April 1985 Plenum to improve economic performance by making use of reserves had not worked. Gorbachev now emphasized that progress depended on modifying behavioral patterns, on developing a new Soviet-style meritocracy in which party or family connections had little or no weight. As he put it, "the criteria for all advancements and transfers are the same—the political and business-like qualities, abilities, and real achievements of a worker and his attitude toward the people."²⁰

In contrast to its response to the April 1985 Plenum, the high command now appeared to take the General Secretary somewhat more seriously. On the economic front, greater attention was paid to explaining the mechanics of economic restructuring to the average serviceman in articles written by civilian specialists.²¹ An August 28, 1986, front-page editorial in *Krasnaya Zvezda* called on military personnel to get "maximum benefit from a minimal outlay of time and resources."

Moreover, Army General Aleksey Lizichev, who had taken over as head of the MPD in July 1985, echoed Gorbachev in stating that "the CPSU is doing everything necessary to ensure that the armed forces of the USSR are at a level that precludes strategic superiority by imperialist forces."²² The concept of sufficiency had now become an official canon of Soviet military doctrine—one that could be used to justify limits on military spending. Moreover, on June 18, 1986, Premier Nikolay Ryzhkov declared the leadership's intention to involve all machine-building industries, including defense industries, in the production of light-industrial products.²³ Similarly, Lev Zaykov, a Politburo member and Central Committee secretary, stated in Irkutsk:

*It has been decided that the military sectors of industry will not only take an active part in the production of civilian production and nationally needed goods, but also combine it with the technical reequipping of light and food industries, public services, and trade.*²⁴

The message was clear. The military, like the rest of Soviet society, would be expected to contribute directly to the country's economic revitalization.

On the personnel front, Lizichev's March 19 *Krasnaya Zvezda* article marked the beginning of an intensified

effort by the military's political apparatus to push *perestroika* within the armed forces. The new emphasis was evident in an increasing number of articles dealing with the topic in military journals and newspapers. *Krasnaya Zvezda* inaugurated a special section devoted to problems of *perestroika* and published a number of letters to the editor on the topic as well.

In general, *perestroika* began to be tied more directly to military life. On March 25, *Krasnaya Zvezda* reported a high-level meeting of officials from the Ministry of Defense and the MPD that endorsed Gorbachev's call for "accelerating the country's socio-economic development." The report stated that the congress documents would form the basis of the political-military activity in the coming months, and that professional competence (including efficient management), the quality of officer education, and personal responsibility would be emphasized. In calling on military officers to "think and work in a new manner (*po novomu*)," the report complained that "some officers speak of *perestroika*, but in practice nothing changes."

However, there was still considerable complacency. In a lengthy article published shortly after the 27th CPSU Congress, the Chief of the Main Personnel Directorate of the USSR Ministry of Defense, Army General Ivan Shkadov, mentioned *perestroika* only once. His comment that "in recent years, a series of steps have been taken to modernize the system of training officer cadre, to improve the complex of military-training establishments for officers and cadre" suggested that he had the situation well in hand.²⁵ Even the party organization within the military appeared to be lukewarm toward *perestroika*, if one is to believe Lizichev. At a November 1986 meeting, he complained:

Even the election-and-report meetings are far from taking a demanding look at perestroika, from fully collective work in the search for new forms and methods on the way to effectively resolving tasks. In places, criticism

¹⁹See "The Political Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Report of General Secretary of the CC CPSU Comrade M. S. Gorbachev," in *XXVII S'yezd kommunisticheskoy partii Sovetskogo Soyuz: stenograficheskiy otchët* (The 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union: Stenographic Report), Moscow, Politizdat, 1986, Vol. 1, pp. 24, 98.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 107.

²¹See, e.g., V. Kulikov, "The Main Jumping-Off Point," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, May 22, 1986.

²²A. Lizichev, "At a Turning Point in History," *ibid.*, Mar. 19, 1986.

²³N. I. Ryzhkov, "On the State Plan for the Economic and Social Development of the USSR for the Years 1986–1990," *Pravda*, June 19, 1986.

²⁴"The Reward of the Homeland—A Stimulus for New Achievements," *ibid.*, June 29, 1986.

²⁵I. Shkadov, "A Matter of Great Importance," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, Mar. 16, 1986.

carries a formal, superficial character. At many meetings, criteria characteristic of bygone days, an insufficiently fresh form of analysis, a lack of sharp conclusions and self-criticism predominate.²⁶

By the beginning of 1987, then, it was clear that if the military—like most of the rest of Soviet society—was not openly resisting *perestroyka*, neither was it rushing to embrace the approach.

Gorbachev Gets Tough

The comments of General Secretary Gorbachev at the January 1987 Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee betrayed his irritation with the slow progress in implementing *perestroyka*. Acknowledging that "the cause of *perestroyka* is more difficult and the problems that have accumulated in society more deep-rooted than we first thought," Gorbachev called for "truly revolutionary, comprehensive transformations in society." The key to his approach was cadres:

*It . . . happens that certain executives find themselves in the wrong position and in no way up to the mark It seems essential to admit such errors, to rectify them, and without dramatizing them, to assign the person concerned to a job that corresponds to his abilities.*²⁷

Gorbachev's speech clearly sent a shock wave through the military, as did the two important developments that followed in its wake. Toward the end of January 1987, General Shkadov was relieved as personnel chief and replaced by the hitherto little-known General Yazov. In addition, in recognition of his efforts on behalf of *perestroyka*, General Lizichev was given the honor of authoring the annual article devoted to military affairs in the authoritative party journal *Kommunist*.²⁸

In response to these unequivocal signals from Gorbachev, other top Soviet generals began to clamber onto the *perestroyka* bandwagon. Numerous articles on the subject written by the Soviet military leadership appeared in the Soviet press early in 1987. Defense Minister Sokolov devoted an unusually large part of his Armed Forces Day article in *Sovetskaya Rossiya* to restructuring, while Marshal Akhromeyev, who generally avoids discussing personnel issues, singled out the importance of restructuring for developing efficiency, initiative, exactingness, sober assessments, and personal responsibility.²⁹ First Deputy Minister, Army General Pëtr Lushev, wrote several articles devoted to cadres and psychological restructuring. Similarly, Chief of the Strategic Rocket Forces, Army General Yuriy Maksimov; the head of the Navy, Admiral Vladimir Chernavin;

and the head of the Air Defense Forces, Marshal Aleksandr Koldunov, all published articles citing *perestroyka* as a key factor in maintaining a high level of combat readiness.³⁰

Perestroyka now became a prominent issue in the military press, and those who did not support it wholeheartedly were severely criticized. Marshal Sokolov indicated to a meeting of the Defense Ministry's party activists that the decisions made at the January CC Plenum were "all-embracing." After reciting a litany of shortcomings within the military, the Defense Minister observed that some individuals had already been relieved of their duties, and implied that others who failed to show adequate responsibility, exactingness, and discipline would suffer the same fate.³¹ At the same time, General Lizichev called on party activists to bear "direct responsibility for work and the practical implementation of the most important measures connected with resolving defense tasks, the development and training of the armed forces," and complained that party organs showed "rudeness, inaction, and contempt for relations with people, for their needs and questions."³² A May 28 editorial in *Krasnaya Zvezda* noted that "the increased responsibility of Communists—commanders, political workers, engineers, economic planners—for the maintenance of order" is the key to a high degree of military efficiency.

²⁶"Criticize Sharply, Act Decisively," *ibid.*, Nov. 15, 1986.

²⁷"Concerning Restructuring and the Party's Cadre Policy, Report of General Secretary of the CC CPSU M. S. Gorbachev to the CC CPSU Plenum of January 27, 1987," *Pravda*, Jan. 28, 1987.

²⁸A. Lizichev, "October and the Leninist Teaching on the Defense of the Revolution," *Kommunist* (Moscow), No. 3, February 1987, pp. 85–96. This annual article, published in *Kommunist*—usually on Army-Navy Day—is normally authored by the minister or a first deputy minister of defense. Though the selection of a man of Lizichev's rank is not unprecedented, he appears to have been singled out for the honor because of his support for *perestroyka*.

²⁹S. Sokolov, "Watching Over the Peace and Security of the Homeland," *Pravda*, Feb. 23, 1987; and S. F. Akhromeyev, "The Glory and Pride of the Soviet People," *Sovetskaya Rossiya* (Moscow), Feb. 1, 1987, trans. in *FBIS-SOV*, Feb. 27, 1987, pp. V/1–4.

³⁰P. Lushev, "Time-Tested," *Izvestiya*, Feb. 23, 1987; *idem*, "The Army of the Great October," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, Feb. 23, 1987; *idem*, "The Lofly Responsibility of Military Cadres," *Kommunist Vooruzhënnnykh Sil* (Moscow), No. 5, March 1987, pp. 9–17; Yu. P. Maksimov, "Restructuring Puts Everyone to the Test," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, Feb. 5, 1987; V. Chernavin, "The Standing of Seagoing Personnel," *ibid.*, Mar. 21, 1987; and A. Koldunov, "Talk," Moscow Television Service, Apr. 12, 1987, trans. in *FBIS-SOV*, Apr. 16, 1987, pp. V/2–4. Given the circumstances of his ouster a few months later, Koldunov's comment to the effect that "commanders, political organs, and staffs are acting with increased responsibility and are raising and improving combat readiness, organization, and discipline of personnel" has a certain irony.

³¹"Restructuring Is Everyone's Cause," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, Mar. 18, 1987. The significance of this article is discussed in Melanie Russell, "Restructuring in the Soviet Armed Forces," *Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty* (hereafter RFE-RL) *Radio Liberty Research* (Munich), RL 118/87, Mar. 23, 1987.

³²"On the Path of Restructuring," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, Mar. 30, 1987.

Enter General Yazov

The ability of West German civilian Mathias Rust to fly a Cessna 172 through 700 kilometers of Soviet air space and land at the gates of the Kremlin on May 28—Border Guards Day, no less!—was a humiliating experience for the Soviet Union's political and military leadership. It also suggested that Gorbachev had been right all along about the need for major changes in the way the military functioned.

Gorbachev was quick to seize on the opportunity by calling an emergency meeting of the Politburo on May 30. The result was a statement charging the Air Defense Forces with "impermissible lack of concern and resolve to intercept the intruding aircraft" and criticizing the Ministry of Defense for serious organizational shortcomings. Marshal Koldunov was relieved as commander of the Air Defense Forces, and "a decision was made on strengthening the leadership of the USSR Ministry of Defense" namely the retirement of Marshal Sokolov and his replacement by General Yazov.³³

Although Yazov never appeared on Western lists of likely successors to Sokolov, the 63-year-old general appears to be a perfect choice from Gorbachev's perspective. Indeed, in retrospect, one can find signs that Yazov had for some time been headed for bigger and better things under the new General Secretary.³⁴

Yazov was born into a peasant family on November 8, 1923, in the small village of Yazovo in Omsk province. He was one of four children (two boys and two girls); his father died in 1934. Yazov joined the army in 1941 and was sent to an accelerated course for infantry officers in Moscow. In 1942, at the age of 19, Yazov was commissioned and saw service on the Volkhov and Leningrad fronts. He was wounded during the war, but returned to combat after a short period of convalescence. After the war, he served in a variety of positions and in 1956 graduated from the Frunze Military Academy. At various times during this period, he commanded a company, then a battalion, and was in charge of training for a military district. In 1959, he was promoted to lieutenant colonel, and in 1961, he took command of a regiment in the Leningrad Military District. By 1965, he was a full colonel.

After graduating from the Voroshilov General Staff Academy in 1967, Yazov was given command of a division in the Transbaykal Military District. By 1970, he was a major general. From 1972 to 1974, Yazov commanded a unit in the Transcaucasus and was then transferred to the Main Personnel Directorate of the Defense Ministry. Subsequently, he became First Deputy Commander of the Far East Military District, and in 1979, commander of the Central Group of Forces (in Czechoslovakia). In

1980, he was appointed head of the Central Asian Military District, and in the next year gained candidate membership on the CPSU Central Committee. Yazov reportedly served with Army General Ivan Tret'yak (currently head of the Air Defense Forces) and graduated from the Voroshilov Academy with Marshal Akhromeyev and Army General Valentin Varennikov (respectively chief and first deputy chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces).

Since Yazov was commander of the Central Asian Military District at the time of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, it is possible that he played a role in that undertaking—if only in ensuring logistical support. However, there is no solid evidence directly linking him to that Soviet action. During his tour as district chief, however, Yazov is credited by one source as having introduced new techniques for combined-arms operations and having developed new training techniques for upgrading the skills of Soviet soldiers.³⁵ In February 1984, Yazov was promoted to army general and placed in charge of one of the Soviet military's prime commands—the Far East Military District. He remained there until January 1987, when he was recalled to Moscow to become deputy minister of defense in charge of personnel.

In addition to his impressive military background, Yazov's writings suggest that he is a natural ally of Gorbachev.³⁶ Yazov differs from many of his military colleagues not only in his support for the principles of

³³"At the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee," *Pravda*, May 31, 1987.

³⁴Biographical information on Yazov is drawn from a number of sources, including the author's files; *Voyenno-entsiklopedicheskiy slovar'*, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1986, p. 844; "Descended from Yazovo," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, Apr. 13, 1985; and Alexander Yanov, "Why Yazov?" RFE-RL, *Radio Liberty Research*, RL 212/7, June 1, 1987.

³⁵Yossef Bodansky in *Jane's Defence Weekly* (London), Mar. 31, 1984, p. 485, cited in Yanov, loc. cit.

³⁶For examples of Yazov's articles and speeches during the 10 years prior to his becoming defense minister, see: "Official Zeal," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, Apr. 2, 1978; "At Full Power," *ibid.*, Nov. 23, 1979; "Speech by D. T. Yazov," *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* (Alma Ata), Feb. 6, 1981, trans. in Joint Publications Research Service (Washington, DC—hereafter JPRS), No. 77681, Mar. 26, 1981; "A Sense of What's New," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, Nov. 24, 1981; "A Moral Primer," *ibid.*, July 9, 1983; "Today Is Soviet Army-Navy Day: Reliable Guard of the Homeland," *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, Feb. 23, 1984, trans. in JPRS-UMA, No. 084-032, Apr. 18, 1984; "The Great Exploit of the Soviet People," *Kommunist Tadzhikistana* (Dushanbe), May 9, 1984, in JPRS-UMA, No. 084-056, Aug. 24, 1984; "Work with the Komosomol," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, June 11, 1984; "Ready for an Exploit," *Sovetskaya Kul'tura* (Moscow), June 28, 1984; "The Proper Order Indoctrinates," *Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil*, No. 6, March 1984, pp. 34-41; "Closeness to People," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, Oct. 17, 1985; "Personally Responsible for Discipline and Order," *Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil*, No. 15, August 1985, pp. 17-24; "Yazov Speaks at Khabarovsk," Khabarovsk Domestic Service, trans. in FBIS-SOV, Nov. 12, 1986; "Address by Army General Dmitriy Yazov," Moscow Domestic Service, Feb. 23, 1987, trans. in FBIS-SOV, Feb. 26, 1987, pp. V/8-9; "An Authority Replies," *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (Moscow), Apr. 1, 1987.

perestroyka, but also in his intense interest in personnel-related questions rather than in combat operations.

In 1978, Yazov authored an article in *Krasnaya Zvezda* in which he outlined the most important characteristics of a commander. They included initiative, creativity, a spirit of innovation, competence, selflessness, good relations with the troops, a high standard of discipline, and a willingness "to assume responsibility for decisions."³⁷ The following year he wrote another article for *Krasnaya Zvezda*—this one devoted to adapting military affairs to the scientific-technological revolution. In it, he criticized officers who believe that training troops to deal with high technology is a problem only for specialists.³⁸ In 1981, he wrote of the need to develop innovative approaches to training (in this case, the use of simulators), and observed that the Military Council of the Central Asian Military District "considers its permanent task to be educating military personnel in a spirit of dissatisfaction with what had been achieved and inculcating in them a sense of the new."³⁹

In a July 23, 1983, *Krasnaya Zvezda* article, Yazov focused on the importance of the moral example set by a commander in maintaining a high level of combat readiness. In 1984, in a major article in the military's authoritative journal *Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil*, he called on officers to assume greater personal responsibility for discipline.⁴⁰ In the June 11, 1984, issue of *Krasnaya Zvezda*, he criticized the Komsomol for shortcomings in its work within the military, which had led to disciplinary problems, and in the June 28 issue of *Sovetskaya Kul'tura*, he criticized pre-conscription training and called on responsible officials to "bravely draw conclusions and take timely measures."

Two additional articles by Yazov appeared in 1985. The first stressed the need for close ties with the troops. "Closeness to people," Yazov emphasized, "is not determined by the number of hours spent with them, but by the actual influence on them and the ability to listen to the soldier and understand him."⁴¹ In the second article, Yazov focused on the necessity for a commander to take full responsibility for his unit, something that requires a demanding attitude toward oneself and one's subordinates, no tolerance for shortcomings, a concern for people, initiative, and an irreproachable moral character. He specifically related these comments to the April 1985 Central Committee Plenum.⁴²

Reviewing these writings, one finds a striking congruence between the ideas of Yazov and those of Gorbachev. Though Yazov does not use the term *perestroyka* to interrelate his thinking, his views clearly mirror those put forth by Gorbachev.

It has been rumored in the Western press that Gorbachev first met Yazov when the General Secretary visited

the Far East in July 1986. Whether or not this is the case, Yazov was already being singled out for special attention in the military press prior to that event. On July 10, for example, *Krasnaya Zvezda* reported a meeting of party activists of the Far East Military District at which Yazov was the principal speaker. According to that account, Yazov was sounding much like Lizichev in criticizing shortcomings—in this case, in his own command! Many collectives, he stated, were passive and had failed to introduce new methods for dealing with problems; moreover, they had overevaluated their achievements and hidden their shortcomings. He reportedly "sharply criticized" leadership styles, arguing that too much reliance was being placed on paper work and a formalistic approach to dealing with subordinates. Coming at a time when most other senior military officers appeared to be avoiding discussion of *perestroyka*, Yazov's blunt comments caused him to stand out.

Yazov's meeting with Gorbachev shortly after the publication of this article certainly did nothing to hurt the General's standing in Moscow. In October, he and Army General Valeriy Belikov, Commander of the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany, were singled out for outstanding work with the Komsomol organization.⁴³

However, the most important article praising Yazov's efforts on behalf of *perestroyka* came in January 1987, only days before he was appointed chief of personnel. The article was written by a *Krasnaya Zvezda* correspondent sent to the Far East to evaluate changes introduced in that military district since Gorbachev's visit six months earlier. Yazov emerged from this article as the model commander, who is willing to go to the field with his troops, knows them and their problems, and is bluntly objective in his evaluations. The article states that during his meeting with Gorbachev, Yazov told the General Secretary that:

*discipline in the district had not improved recently and had even worsened in individual units and subunits. He presented accurate figures. Hundreds of officers and dozens of generals attended this talk. Now this talk is called in the district nothing other than a lesson in truth.*⁴⁴

The article also observes that officers under Yazov's

³⁷"Official Zeal," loc. cit.

³⁸"At Full Power," loc. cit.

³⁹"A Sense of What's New," loc. cit.

⁴⁰"The Proper Order Indoctrinates," loc. cit.

⁴¹"Closeness to People," loc. cit.

⁴²"Personally Responsible for Discipline and Order," loc. cit.

⁴³See "Character Is Required," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, Oct. 31, 1986.

⁴⁴"With the Force of Truth," *ibid.*, Jan. 16, 1987.

Table 1: Changes in Soviet High Command, 1985–87

Position	Old occupant	Date of change	New occupant
Commander-in Chief, Ground Forces	Marshal Vasiliy Petrov	February 1985	Army Gen. Yevgeniy Ivanovskiy
Chief, Main Political Directorate	Army Gen. Aleksey Yepishev	July 1985	Army Gen. Aleksey Lizichev
Commander, Strategic Rocket Forces	Army Gen. Vladimir Tolubko	July 1985	Army Gen. Yuriy Maksimov
Commander, Navy	Fleet Adm. Sergey Gorshkov	December 1985	Fleet Adm. Vladimir Chernavin
First Deputy Minister of Defense	Marshal Vasiliy Petrov	July 1986	Army Gen. Petr Lushev
Chief, Civil Defense	Army Gen. Aleksandr Altunin	July 1986	Army Gen. Vladimir Govorov
Chief, Main Inspectorate	Army Gen. Vladimir Govorov	July (?) 1986	Army Gen. Ivan Tret'yak
Deputy Minister, Personnel	Army Gen. Ivan Shkadov	January 1987	Army Gen. Dimitriy Yazov
Commander, Air Defense Forces	Ch. Marshal Avn. Aleksandr Koldunov	June (?) 1987	Gen. Ivan Tret'yak
Chief, Main Inspectorate	Army Gen. Ivan Tret'yak	June (?) 1987	Army Gen. Mikhail Sorokin
Deputy Minister, Personnel	Army Gen. Dimitriy Yazov	July 1987	Army Gen. Dmitriy Sukhorokov

SOURCES: Author's files.

command caught concealing information were given severe party and military punishments. Finally, the article noted the emergence of the first positive results: officers spending more time with the troops, the more accurate reporting of shortcomings, increased effectiveness of party organizations, a decline in disciplinary problems, and improved combat training. All sweet music to Gorbachev's ears.

A major element in Western surprise over Yazov's appointment was that the general was junior to many other supposed candidates and did not occupy one of the key posts within the Ministry of Defense, such as a first deputy ministership. However, Yazov's was not the first surprising appointment within the upper ranks of the Soviet military under Gorbachev. Since the beginning of 1985, there have been 11 changes at the level of deputy and first deputy minister of defense (see Table 1)—most of them surprises, at least to outsiders. Only the appointments of Vladimir Chernavin and Yevgeniy Ivanovskiy were anticipated; all of the others were to one degree or another unexpected. Lizichev was selected over several more senior officers to head the MPD. Yuriy Maksimov, a ground forces officer, was put in charge of the Strategic Rocket Forces. Lushev came out of the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany to take over Vasiliy Petrov's first deputy ministership. Tret'yak, a ground forces officer who appeared to be headed for oblivion as head of the Main Inspectorate, emerged as chief of the Air Defense Forces upon Koldunov's ouster. Vladimir Govorov, Tret'yak's predecessor as Chief of the Main Inspectorate, surprisingly replaced Civil Defense Chief Aleksandr Altunin after the Chernobyl' nuclear disaster. Yazov's own move to Moscow to become a deputy minister for personnel was also a surprise, as was his replacement by Dmitriy Sukhorokov, former head of Soviet airborne forces. Similarly, the transfer of ground forces/airborne officer Mikhail Sorokin to head the Main Inspectorate came as a surprise.

The bottom line is that in appointing Yazov as defense minister, Gorbachev was not necessarily breaking new ground. Rather, he was proceeding along a course that had been established over the preceding two years. Finally, the speed with which Yazov was appointed and the increasingly higher profile he had begun to assume in the military press prior to May 30 suggest that, Gorbachev had been eyeing Yazov for some time.

Ramifications

The initial Western press reaction to the Rust incident and Sokolov's precipitate replacement by Yazov was to suggest that the military's position had been seriously weakened. As *The Economist* put it: "The vigor of Mr. Gorbachev's reaction bodes ill for the armed forces."⁴⁵ No doubt, the military's fortunes have declined under Gorbachev, but Sokolov's ouster was not simply the result of a party-military clash.

To begin with, as noted at the outset, Gorbachev had no alternative but to oust Sokolov, Koldunov, and others responsible for the very serious violation of Soviet security. To have let the generals off the hook would have made a mockery of *perestroyka*. In addition, the ousters served as a clear warning to those remaining doubters in the Soviet military that Gorbachev is deadly serious about *perestroyka*—foul up, and your career is over! It is quite conceivable that Gorbachev would have pre-

⁴⁵"Gorbachev Takes on the Generals," *The Economist* (London), June 6, 1987, p. 47; see also Gary Lee, "Flight Has Left Soviet Military Vulnerable to Public Criticism," *The Washington Post*, June 18, 1987; John Dahlbert, "A Gorbachev 'Clone' Lands at Top of Military," *The Washington Times*, June 1, 1987; Bill Keller, "For Gorbachev, A Consolidation of Soviet Power," *The New York Times*, May 31, 1987; idem, "Gorbachev Seizes the Chance to Restructure the Military," *ibid.*, June 2, 1987; and Robert Hutchinson, "Gorbachev Tightens Grip on Soviet High Command," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, No. 23, June 13, 1987, p. 1192. See also the author's "The Soviet Military in the Aftermath of the 27th Party Congress," *Orbis* (Philadelphia), Summer 1986, pp. 297–315.

ferred to leave the clearly interim Sokolov in place for somewhat more time while Yazov learned about the machinations of high-level Soviet military politics from first-hand Moscow experience, but the Rust incident forced his hand.

Though Gorbachev lacks Brezhnev's strong attachment to the military, he does not appear to be particularly anti-military. If he had wanted to civilianize—and hence further humiliate—the military, he could have appointed as defense minister someone like Lev Zaykov, the Central Committee secretary in charge of military industry. Gorbachev, however, gives the impression of one who does not care who runs the military—or any other organization—so long as they embrace *perestroyka*. If the generals are prepared to do the job, all the better.

From the vantage point of the marshals and generals, Gorbachev is not all bad. Although loss of status under his administration is doubtless unwelcome, as are his continuing efforts to cut back on military spending, most of the top military appear to recognize the need to rebuild the Soviet economy and streamline the military establishment (even if they fight for every ruble they can get). Given the extent of waste and corruption within the Soviet military prior to Gorbachev, *perestroyka* offers some hope of increasing overall efficiency and creating a leaner and meaner force that costs less.

Gorbachev has the look of a technological determinist who believes the only way to take advantage of technology is through the creation of a Soviet-style meritocracy. The top-level military officers appointed since he took over appear to share his views in these areas. They feel that it is vital that the USSR not fall behind in the high-technology arms race.

What about doctrine and arms control? Since Gorbachev came to power, the Soviets have been very active in both areas. It is important to recognize, however, that the doctrinal trend observed under Gorbachev (e.g., less reliance on nuclear weapons) has long been visible within the Soviet military establishment. In a sense, Gorbachev is following the military's lead in this area.

There is no doubt that some in the military high command are uncomfortable with the pace and scope of Gorbachev's proposals in the area of arms control. However, with the exception of his unilateral steps (e.g., the unilateral nuclear test ban moratorium) and his apparent acceptance of intrusive verification measures,

the military seems to accept his policies. And if Gorbachev's proposal for the elimination of intermediate-range nuclear missiles was not designed by the military, it arguably does not violate their perceptions of Soviet national security interests.

This brings us to the future. Will the Soviet military be different under Yazov? In one important aspect, yes; in others, little will change. Yazov is clearly committed to *perestroyka* and will push it with increased intensity. The July 19, 1987, *Krasnaya Zvezda* reported on a Yazov speech blasting senior officers for failing to wipe out "negative tendencies" in the armed forces. "We must," he said, "look the truth in the eye: certain of us have lost the sense of duty and responsibility for the fulfillment of our duties and tasks."

At the same time, Yazov has given topics such as arms control or doctrine only the most perfunctory attention in his public writings. This suggests that when he must make authoritative statements in these areas, as on July 27,⁴⁶ they are likely to be drafted by the General Staff. In effect, one anticipates a division of labor in the top ranks of the Soviet military, with Yazov taking the lead on personnel-related issues while individuals such as Akhromeyev and Colonel General Nikolay Chervov remain the central players on arms control, and Akhromeyev and Colonel General Makhmut Gareyev play the key roles on doctrine.

For the West, nothing will change in the immediate future. It is clear, however, that Gorbachev is serious about *perestroyka* and that he has found a general to lead the Soviet armed forces who is as committed to this policy as he is. In the long run, if the Gorbachev/Yazov team is successful in gaining military acceptance of *perestroyka*, the military threat facing the West could increase significantly. As Marshal Ogarkov has argued on several occasions,⁴⁷ war is not merely a matter of numbers. Quality also counts. Based on their actions to date, both Gorbachev and Yazov recognize this and are out to do their best to improve Soviet performance in this key area.

⁴⁶D. T. Yazov, "The Military Doctrine of the Warsaw Pact Is the Doctrine of the Defense of Peace and Socialism," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, July 28, 1987.

⁴⁷See the author's "Nikolay Ogarkov and the Scientific-Technical Revolution in Soviet Military Affairs," *Comparative Strategy* (New York), Vol 6, No. 1, 1987, pp. 29–59, for a discussion of Ogarkov's views.

Correspondence

NOTE: Readers are welcome to comment on matters discussed in this journal. Letters should be addressed to The Editors, *Problems of Communism*, US Information Agency, 301 4th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20547, USA.

A QUESTION OF ALLIANCE

TO THE EDITORS: I am surprised at the title "Moscow's Indian Alliance" affixed to Dr. Jyotirmoy Banerjee's article in your January-February 1987 issue. Not only does it reflect unfairly on the contents of the article, but it is also misleading about the nature of the actual relations between India and the Soviet Union.

India is genuinely non-aligned in East-West relations and has always and consistently tried to be friendly with both the blocs and with the two superpowers that head them. It happens, however, that the United States's policies and actions have been less sympathetic to India's overtures than have those of the Soviet Union. The latter has been far more helpful to India than the United States (as, even US allies such as Great Britain, France, and the Federal Republic of Germany have been more forthcoming than Washington) in the matter of supplying arms on a commercial basis and licensing their indigenous production. This is equally true in re-

spect to the fields of economic and scientific cooperation—the former consisting largely of counter-trade.

Naturally, therefore, India is friendlier to the Soviet Union than to the United States, without, however, compromising India's non-aligned status. In fact, India successfully incorporated in Article 4 of the 1971 Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship that the Soviet Union "respects India's nonalignment. . . ." It might be observed that this provision is found only in the Soviet treaty with India and not in similar friendship treaties between the USSR and other nonaligned nations.

India is too large in size and too old an historic entity (like China) to be an ally of any other state. It can be friendly—*no more* and *no less*—to other states. And with respect to the Soviet Union, as Dr. Banerjee has stated, India has many differences in the field of foreign policy/foreign relations (in addition to those in domestic policies). If these are not always expressed in official statements of the two nations, the position is not very different from the US treatment of its friends; one does not shout from the rooftops differences with one's friends.

The difference between a "friend" and an "ally" is much more than semantic. It is the inability of some critics in both the East and the West to perceive this vital difference that is often the source of confusion and misunderstanding

between India on the one hand, and the United States and the Soviet Union, on the other. India has been performing admirably a difficult exercise in seeking to maintain good relations between both the superpowers. The task is not made easier when friends in one or the other superpower state, unwittingly or otherwise, misperceive India to be an "ally" of the other.

M. S. RAJAN

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of International Organization
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MR. BANERJEE RESPONDS: Since I live in the Marxist-ruled state of West Bengal, let me attempt a "dialectical" resolution of the "contradiction" over the published title of my article. Professor Rajan is absolutely right. India's self-image is that of a non-aligned state.

Our Soviet friends, however, have a somewhat different interpretation of nonalignment, as I had occasion to analyze in my article. It is my understanding that Moscow has had reasons to see in India something more than just a "friend." Perhaps an intermediate category between a "friend" and an "ally" would be appropriate to describe how Moscow views India. The nuance of the title seems accordingly to focus more on Moscow than on India.

If, however, my "dialectics" has failed to resolve the "contraction," then it is up to

the Editors of *Problems of Communism* to fill the gap, since it is they who had supplied the title.

JYOTIRMOY BANERJEE
Jadavpur University
Calcutta

TROTting OUT TROTSKY

TO THE EDITORS: Readers might be interested to know that the famous Trotsky quote cited by Milan Hauner in his article "Soviet Eurasian Empire and the Indo-Persian Corridor" (*Problems of Communism*, January-February 1987)—viz, "The road to London and Paris lies via the towns of Afghanistan, the Punjab, and Bengal"—turned up a few years ago in a Soviet volume.

On p. 118 of R. A. Ulyanovskiy, Ed., *The Comintern and the East* (Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1979), the above Trotsky statement is reproduced. However, Ulyanovskiy adds the following critical comment: "Naturally, the Central Committee with Lenin's active participation turned down this adventurist scheme."

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