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"THE SOURCES OF MILITARY DOCTRINE -
A LESSON FROM THE COLD WAR"

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INTRODUCTION

The study of the military policies of the USSR was one of the most important intellectual endeavours of the entire Cold War period from 1948 to 1991. The same can be said of the study of US military policies.

The reason is that in those years both countries actively developed military plans involving the devastation of each other and Europe with nuclear weapons. Parts of Asia, especially China, would have been targeted by both countries as well, albeit at different times. Chemical weapons were developed by both superpowers, but with considerably different approaches, and the USSR spent considerable effort developing biological weapons.

But the Cold War years were above all else years of nuclear peril. This peril existed because of the strategic rivalry between the USSR and the USA, but their respective arsenals grew to such extreme proportions that the attendant strategies served to redefine the nature of the superpower confrontation.

While the record now shows, as Churchill predicted in 1955, that safety was the "sturdy child of terror" and "survival the twin brother of annihilation",¹ the distinct possibility existed that a nuclear war could have broken out. Scenarios were numerous, but one of the commonly identified causes of the possible outbreak of a new world war was an erroneous assessment by one side of the other's intentions or actions.²

One would not expect unanimity in assessment by scholars or governments of any country's strategic intentions, especially where high levels of

¹ Quoted in McGeorge Bundy Danger and Survival: Choices About the Bomb in the First Fifty Years Schwartz and Wilkinson, Melbourne VIC, 1990, p198
² Bruce G Blair The Logic of Accidental Nuclear War Brookings, Washington DC, 1993, p1
secrecy hindered normal investigative endeavours. But the record of assessment of Soviet military strategy has some disturbing aspects, given what was at stake.

Some individual scholars and successive US Governments were able to make cautious and soundly-based judgements about Soviet military intentions. At the same time, it is beyond dispute that, to a large degree, the study of Soviet military strategy in the USA became hostage to a range of unscientific processes and presumptions, some ephemeral and some more enduring. One need go no further than the bomber gap, the missile gap, the civil defence gap, and the supposed window of vulnerability.

It would not be difficult to make a case that much work on Soviet military strategy became hostage to shared prejudices among a variety of people working in different parts of the US Government, especially the Defense Department and the armed forces, from which more than a few prominent American Sovietologists came or derived their financial support.

This thesis suggests that the mixed record of assessment stemmed from methodological flaws in much of the work. Garthoff identified one factor which may have lain at the root of some of these problems - that the subject of study was the enemy:

   too little attention has been paid in strategic studies, diplomatic history and intelligence analysis to the subject of assessing the adversary. More needs to be done ...¹

Garthoff mentioned a number of suggestions for improvement, but one which is particularly apt for this thesis is the need to acknowledge the effects on assessments of "blanks and uncertainties".² This thesis contends that the

¹ Raymond L Garthoff Assessing the Adversary - Estimates by the Eisenhower Administration of Soviet Intentions and Capabilities Brookings Institution, Washington DC, 1991, p52
² ibid p50
principal weaknesses in assessing Soviet military intentions were failure to admit the inadequacy of available information and failure to address a variety of alternative explanations.

The Soviet political and military leadership claimed in public that there was a direct correspondence between the tenets of official Soviet military doctrine and the shape of the armed forces - size, structure, missions and operational deployment. The leadership, through the political organs of the CPSU, claimed that there was a fully rational process for force structure decisions, and that the Party's analysis of the external security environment, the economic and social potential of the State, and its class interests determined the military doctrine adopted.¹

One example of the Soviet position can be found in the Officer's Handbook published in 1971, which claimed "scientific determination and correct calculation" by the Party leadership in arriving at the USSR's military doctrine, contrasting it with the inability of bourgeois states to make an "objective calculation" because they lack "truly scientific principles".²

It is possible that the Party's analysis of the external security environment was followed very closely in building the armed forces and developing doctrinal concepts for their use. After all, if the Party's main concern was to remain in power and build its prestige, it could be argued that it had much to gain by ensuring that its security policies were implemented. Moreover, the CPSU did

not face the political obstacle of public opinion experienced in democratic countries for most of the same period.

This assertion - that the CPSU's analysis of its external environment offered a nearly exact account of why the armed forces were built as they were - depended on three key assumptions - all unrealistic. First, that the Soviet force structure decision process was immune to distorting bureaucratic pressures to which policy in major Western powers was subjected.¹ Secondly, that all phases of Soviet policy-making (analysis, decision and implementation) were fully responsive to the directives of the leadership and to those alone.² Thirdly, that there was no difficulty in adapting the post-1945 forces to the requirements of modern warfare as they developed, particularly with the advent of nuclear weapons, missile delivery systems, and chemical weapons.³

As Chapter Four will show, scholarship on Soviet military strategy

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The process is fundamentally political. It is permeated with pulling and hauling over roles, missions, budgetary priorities, and many other institutional considerations.

² Matthew P Gallagher "The Military Role in Soviet Decision-Making" in MccGwire, Booth and McDonnell op cit pp46-49 disputed this view and quoted (pp48-49) a senior US official testifying before a Congressional committee about the US experience:

There is no inexorable logic tying one set of decisions to another. ... There is a great deal of slippage and room for judgement and priority debate in the connection between any two steps in the process.

³ The problem of the force in being is the most serious problem facing any country trying to adapt a force in being to one that a new or emerging doctrine says should exist. The nature of military forces is such that the forces in existence at a particular point in time have a profound influence on their development in subsequent years. Even when a Government dictates change in military posture (through revisions in military doctrine), a period of transition is required before the change can be fully implemented. The nature of the transition and the time it takes can be influenced by many things, such as levels of expenditure committed to the transition or degree of opposition to the change in the officer corps. No factor has greater influence on the pace of change than the shape of the force at the time the change is announced - the "force in being". Any effort to link the force structure of the Soviet armed forces to changing military doctrine must take account of the extent to which the force structure at a given point in time owed more to the force in being or more to supposed changes in doctrine. It is insufficient to assume - as most scholars have - that changes to Soviet force structure at any particular point in time after 1955 must have closely reflected synchronous changes in accepted military doctrine.
mostly assumed a fairly direct correspondence between putative Soviet military requirements (as assumed by Western observers), military strategy, and officially endorsed military doctrine. The "cultural" environment of the Soviet armed forces was not seen as exercising much influence on military strategy beyond dictating a preference for the offensive, use of massive forces, deep operations and pre-emption.

One blank in official Soviet military doctrine related to limited war. The official doctrine professed non-acceptance of the Western concept of limited nuclear war and the Soviet General Staff eschewed in public any substantive elaboration of "limited war". Some Western scholars accepted these facts as proof of Soviet rejection of the concept of limited war involving Soviet military forces. For example, Ball wrote in 1983:

Soviet planners evince no willingness whatsoever to seriously consider the possibility of limited or controlled strategic nuclear operations. ...

... the evidence that Soviet military doctrine now incorporates the possibility of control, selectivity, and restraint in a strategic nuclear conflict is actually very fragmentary. ...

... the doctrine that, once the nuclear threshold is passed, it is the task of the nuclear forces to terminate war by achieving military victory through massive, crippling strikes is deeply rooted in Soviet strategic culture, and the preferences and habits of the military bureaucracy would tend to rule out any possibility of improvisation in favor of "American formulated rules of intra-war restraint".¹

Ball - quite clearly talking only of limited strategic (intercontinental) war - may have been correct, but it is noteworthy that the lack of hard evidence

¹ Desmond Ball "Soviet Strategic Planning and the Control of Nuclear War" Soviet Union 10 Pts 2-3, 1983, pp202, 209, 217. Ball acknowledged some evidence in Soviet public statements of interest in escalation control and even that the Soviet command and control system was suitable to control escalation, but concludes for a number of reasons that it would not be practical and that the Soviet military leaders would not really be interested.
from one of the world's most secretive countries was persuasive in his interpretation. Ball put more faith in consistent statements favouring massive retaliation than in less frequent statements mentioning escalation control. The question of whether there were any constraints on the subjects which could be raised in the military literature was given little attention.

Ball's view of Soviet military strategy belongs to what this thesis calls the "Armageddon school".¹ The term is used because the work of this school suggests very strongly that the USSR, if faced with the use or threatened use of nuclear weapons, would have retaliated instantly with massive and wide-ranging strategic nuclear strikes - that is, with general nuclear war ("Armageddon").

This school of thought did not address with sufficient rigour whether the lack of consistent or elaborate treatment of escalation and selective targeting in officially endorsed Soviet military doctrine was a reliable guide to Soviet military strategy.

There was after all no doctrine for Soviet use of biological weapons, and very little for offensive use of chemical weapons, but the Soviet General Staff, or at least the Soviet political leadership, must have had some intentions concerning their military application.

The reliance by the Armageddon school on express Soviet doctrine had the effect of substituting the doctrine on general war for the strategy in all situations, including limited war.

This thesis challenges that thinking and gives room for further consideration of whether the nexus in Soviet military thinking between limited war

¹ Ball is an Australian but as Chapter Four shows, the Armageddon school was a vigorous school of thought - the dominant one at times - in the USA on Soviet military doctrine.
and general war was more highly developed than the Western literature assumed.

The thesis argues that official doctrine was not a consistent set of objective principles devised in direct response to Soviet assessment of the USSR’s international circumstances and goals. It examines the proposition that the sources of Soviet military doctrine included a variety of institutional pressures, group and personal motivations, as well as more conventional assessments involving international circumstance and foreign policy.

The highly structured Soviet system of military science produced a well articulated doctrine for general war on which scholars could rely, but the same system, in rejecting the concept of limited war, and relying instead on a slightly different concept of local war, presented an obfuscation to scholars not prepared to study in sufficient depth commonalities between the two concepts.

This thesis seeks to avoid the methodological failings described above and hence provides a more lengthy treatment than usual of the nature of sources. The use of information derived from intelligence sources in the scholarship receives special attention.

But lack of attention to the evidentiary nature of sources was not the only shortcoming of the Armageddon school. There was generally little effort made to establish the nature of the two phenomena - military strategy and military doctrine - which were being discussed.

This would not have been a difficult or time-consuming task. It was simply a question of applying some basic definitional analysis. For this reason, the thesis places its analysis of Soviet military doctrine in a theoretical framework. By defining not only strategy and doctrine, but also local war, the author hopes to be better placed to give an account of the Soviet perspective of local war doctrine.
The purpose of the theoretical analysis goes a little further. The ways in which the Armageddon school analysed Soviet military doctrine were, in the author's experience, not unique to those scholars or their subject of study. Western analysis of the strategic policies and military doctrines of a number of countries of interest, it seems to this author, has been dominated by the image of military strategy as a policy reaction to a state's international military circumstances. This is essentially the balance of power model of international relations.

While the post-war literature on military policy, including military doctrine, explicitly recognised the possible domestic origins of military policy, including doctrine, and accepted a dynamic interplay between international and domestic circumstances,¹ the notion that military strategy and doctrine might be substantially shaped by domestic factors has not, until fairly recently, been explored in mainstream scholarship.²

Thus, proceeding from a disaffection with the lack of a theoretical framework in much scholarly work on Soviet military doctrine, the thesis tests the applicability to Soviet local war doctrine of a fairly recent model of analysis of military strategy, one which does not automatically give primacy to international circumstances over domestic influences. The thesis reviews the development of Soviet local war doctrine against a model developed by Snyder which postulates that military strategy is shaped by the interaction of motivational biases, doctrinal

¹ A good, early example of this is Samuel P Huntington The Common Defense - Strategic Programs in National Politics Columbia University Press, New York NY, 1961. At pp1-2, Huntington wrote:

The most distinctive, the most fascinating, and the most troublesome aspect of military policy is its Janus-like quality. Indeed, military policy not only faces in two directions, it exists in two worlds. ... Domestic politics serves as a constraint on the formulation of policies which are primarily responses to the external environment ... Conversely, international politics serves as a constraint on the formulation of policies which are primarily responses to the domestic environment.

² This presumption was a tenet of Marxist study of military strategy and doctrine.
simplifications, and rational calculations.¹

PART ONE

LOCAL WAR DOCTRINE -

THEORETICAL APPROACHES

AND A RECORD OF ANALYSIS
CHAPTER ONE

DEFINITIONS AND THEORETICAL APPROACHES

This chapter defines two key concepts used in the thesis - strategy and doctrine - and reviews theoretical approaches to the study of them.

Strategy: A Definition

Strategy is a word with several possible levels of meaning which can be traced to the different stages of development of the concept in the last two centuries.¹

The Clausewitzian definition of strategy saw it as "the deployment of the battles as the means toward the attainment of the object of war" or, in Liddell Hart’s view, "the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfil the ends of policy" implied in war.

The first extension of the meaning of strategy saw it look beyond purely military means to include the whole arsenal of resources at the disposal of the State in war - including economic, political and technological.

In the second extension, strategy came to be seen as more than a tool in war. The existence of war strategy as a tool of international competition and domestic organisation in peace-time makes the war strategy an inherent element of statecraft at all times, as Edward Mead Earle noted:

strategy is the art of controlling and utilizing the resources of a nation - or a coalition of nations - including its armed forces, to the end that its vital interests shall be effectively promoted and secured

against enemies, actual, potential, or merely presumed.¹

In the third extension of its meaning, strategy came to embrace not only the vital interests of a State, but the entire range of its political and social goals.²

All of the above meanings would appear to be included in the Webster’s Dictionary entry for strategy:

1. the science or art of employing the political, economic, psychological and military forces of a nation or group of nations to afford the maximum support to adopted policies in peace or war;

2. careful plan or method or clever stratagem.

The second meaning of strategy given above explicitly mentions the word "stratagem". This term embraces the meaning of "skill in devising expedients" as well as "an act of generalship", or "a military artifice designed to outwit or surprise the enemy".³ Strategy is both a plan and a method, a science and an art.

Thus, in English, the term strategy carries the connotation not only of a general plan but also of skill in devising expedients in response to an unprogrammed or unexpected turn of events.

The meaning of strategy in English is virtually equivalent to the meaning of the Russian word strategiia.

In Ozhiogov’s Dictionary of the Russian Language, strategiia is defined as "the science of the conduct of war"; or "the art of leadership of a social or political struggle".

² Lider Military Theory p194
³ Murray’s English Dictionary 1894
Once the qualifier "military" is attached to the term "strategy", two meanings appear possible:

the science or art of employing all resources (political, economic, military and psychological) for military purposes in peace or war; or

the science or art of employing military resources for any national purpose in peace or war.

It is debatable whether it is possible to make such distinctions, given the possible breadth of meaning of "military purposes" (battlefield effects versus political effects) or "military resources" (military forces versus industrial capabilities or political statements).

Certainly Bull saw military strategy as the art or science of exploiting military force so as to attain the objects of policy, military or otherwise.

For the purposes of this thesis, the term "military strategy" is understood as defined in the Soviet Military Encyclopedic Dictionary, which says that military strategy embraces the "theory and practice of preparing the country and its armed forces for war, and the planning and conduct of strategic operations and wars in general". This is much the same definition that appears in the classic Soviet work of the 1960s, Marshal Sokolovskii's Military Strategy, although Sokolovskii applies a class label to what non-Marxist commentators might term national interests:

Military strategy is a system of scientific knowledge dealing with the laws of war as an armed conflict in the name of definite class interests. Strategy - on the basis of military experience, military and political conditions, economic and moral potential of the country, new means of combat, and the views and potential of the probable enemy - studies the conditions and nature of future war, methods for

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1 Hedley Bull "Strategic Studies and its Critics" World Politics July 1968 p593
2 Voennyi entsiklopedicheskii slovar' [Military Encyclopedic Dictionary] USSR Ministry of Defence, Institute of Military History, Voenizdat, Moscow, 1983, p711. The word [strategema] is defined in the same dictionary as "military cunning or the art of deceit of the enemy in war".
its preparation and conduct, services of the armed forces and the basis of their strategic employment, as well as the foundations for material and technical support and leadership of the war and the armed forces.¹

The Soviet concept of military strategy embraced two other concepts which define it more clearly: military science [*voennaia nauka*] and military art [*voennoe iskusstvo*]. "Military science", in Soviet terminology, was the system of knowledge of the character and laws of war, the preparation of the armed forces and the country for war, and the methods of waging war".²

The theory of "military art" was one of the components of military science, the others being theories of military organisation, military education and training, and military economy and the rear. Military art was further defined as the "theory and practice of the preparation and conduct of military operations".³

The Russian word [*nauka*], while most often translated as "science", also carries a more general connotation of "knowledge". The Russian word [*iskusstvo*], most often translated as "art", carries the connotation of skill of the craftsman or workman, as much as it does the creative or innovative aspects of the work of an inspired artist (painter or writer, for example).⁴

The Soviet conception of strategy therefore provides a reasonable starting point for analysing Soviet military strategy for local war along the following lines: military science (nature and methods of waging local wars, preparing the country for them, preparing the armed forces for them) and military art (preparing for operations and conduct of operations).

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¹ Marshal V D Sokolovskii (ed) *Voennaia strategiia* [Military Strategy], 3rd edition, Voenizdat, Moscow, 1968, p20
² *Voennyi entsiklopedicheskii slovar*’, p136
³ *ibid* pp500, 514
⁴ The Russian word [*iskusstvo*] can also be translated as "skill". The term [*voennoe iskusstvo*] can be conceived as meaning "military skill".
Military Doctrine: A Definition

Military doctrine is that set of organising principles accepted by the leadership of the armed forces for the purpose of guiding the development of the forces including their structure, equipment, and training and exercises.¹ Military doctrine is a relatively recent concept² which - not necessarily with that label - has traditionally enjoyed more attention in continental powers, such as Germany, France, and Russia, than in the USA.³

Military doctrine can be seen as a very large sub-set of military strategy - the accepted set of principles of military art and military science.

A US Government publication defined doctrine as:

Fundamental principles by which the military forces or elements thereof guide their actions in support of national objectives. It is authoritative but requires judgement in application.⁴

Military doctrine is supposed to be the means whereby a state ensures that its armed forces are prepared to conduct military operations in situations considered most likely to arise. Some states attempt to have a military doctrine to cover all possible situations.

The following definition, using the term "strategic doctrine", is a useful summary:

Strategic doctrine refers to a connected series of beliefs, and related statements of what are believed to be facts, about strategy. Such beliefs, together with the associated facts, may be either restrictive or inclusive in character, and may be used to justify, explain, prescribe and, sometimes, to predict.

As the author of this definition observes, strategic doctrine refers to

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¹ Lider Military Theory p355
² Lider Military Theory p354
³ Garthoff Deterrence and the Revolution in Soviet Military Policy p37
⁴ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms USGPO, Washington DC, 1987, p118
a class of theories about use of armed force that may be broken down into constituent elements, such as "targeting doctrine", "deployment doctrine", or "nuclear warfighting doctrine".\textsuperscript{1} A different breakdown of the concept might include naval doctrine, big war doctrine, local war doctrine, guerilla warfare doctrine, or doctrine for low intensity conflict.

The suggestion in this definition, that doctrine is about strategy, highlights the importance of clarifying the distinction between doctrine and strategy. Their relationship is not merely linear or sequential, but interactive.

As already stated, military doctrine is a subset of military strategy, in broad terms, but strategy can also be an outcome of doctrine. While "strategy" may be used to define the practical activities of the military leadership, it also exists as theory (the propositions that guided the development of doctrine); and doctrine based on a choice of strategical ideas then becomes the basis on which strategy in conflict is elaborated.\textsuperscript{2} As one scholar observed, a small academic and military community has also used the term "military doctrine" to describe the codification of officially accepted precepts on the preparation for the conduct of military operations in war, that is strategy.\textsuperscript{3} In fact, in the ordinary discourse of the professional community, the terms "strategy" and "doctrine" are often used interchangeably.\textsuperscript{4}

Military doctrine, as a subset of strategy, develops under the influence of the same variety of factors that influence the development of strategy -

\textsuperscript{2} Lider *Military Theory* pp390-391
\textsuperscript{3} Raymond L Garthoff *Deterrence and the Revolution in Soviet Military Doctrine* Brookings, Washington DC, 1990, p37
\textsuperscript{4} Lider *Military Theory* p355
political, social, economic, technological and personal factors, including the political power of the high command relative to the government.

The official military strategy of a state in peace-time is usually represented as its doctrine for war - its set of beliefs on the likely nature of the war or wars for which it believes it should prepare its armed forces. Even military strategies centred on doctrines of deterrence (war avoidance) are based on assessments of the perception of forces in conflict.

The state itself - as an abstraction - cannot have beliefs. The beliefs about war on which a state bases its force structure planning are really the beliefs of senior military or political leaders. The way in which one set of beliefs becomes accepted as the officially endorsed view of the state, must therefore be a political process.

Where a state has a formally endorsed, official military doctrine, there may be little distinction between its principles and how it actually conducts military operations. But this is rarely the case.

Military doctrine may be highly structured and widely disseminated, or little more than ideas shared by the senior leaders of a country’s armed forces.

A more sensible definition of doctrine sees it as a "synthesis of scientific knowledge and expertise on the one hand, and of traditions and political assumptions on the other".¹

McCgwire’s formulation that strategy includes the accumulated policies, practices, concepts, and procedures (explicit as well as implicit) which combine to shape and to provide the framework of behaviour at all levels of action,

from planning to weapon procurement and tactical operations, would appear to be applicable to doctrine.\textsuperscript{1}

The degree to which the leadership of the armed forces in any country accepts political direction on the substance of military doctrine is rarely complete or consistent. The high command can often impose its own view of the official doctrine on a reluctant, weak or ill-informed government.

Moreover, doctrine does not always have a direct bearing on outcomes of strategic deliberation. As a former US Secretary of Defense, James Schlesinger, observed:

\begin{quote}
doctrines control the minds of men only in periods of non-emergency. They do not necessarily control the minds of men during periods of emergency. In the moment of truth, when the possibility of major devastation occurs, one is likely to discover sudden changes in doctrine.\textsuperscript{2}
\end{quote}

A Soviet source agreed:

\begin{quote}
During war, military doctrine withdraws somewhat into the background because in an armed conflict they are guided primarily by military-political and military-strategic considerations and by the conclusions and generalisations which follow from the conditions of a specific situation. Consequently, war and armed conflict are guided not by doctrine, but by strategy.\textsuperscript{3}
\end{quote}

The inherently ideological content of doctrine - that is, its non-objective nature - is one of its essential features. As Buteux observed:

\begin{quote}
As soon as doctrines are assigned functions and support purposes in a political context they take on an ideological coloration; that is, they serve to promote interests and counsel policies in relation to some
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{1} Michael McGwire "Naval Power and Soviet Global Strategy" International Security 1979 (Spring) p134


group.¹

If military doctrine is inherently political and personal, then so will be military strategy on which it is based. Beaufre underlined the political nature of military strategy and the need for a very broad conception of the influences on military doctrine when he asserted that strategy is the "art of the dialectic of two opposing wills using force to resolve their dispute".²

This political process, involving domestic power relationships and personalities, undermines the neat hypothesis that a state’s military doctrine is a logical consequence of national interest and international circumstance. That hypothesis is usually associated with the view that the process by which a state determines its doctrine is objective and observable. Yet the processes of defining a military doctrine, like those involved in determining national interest or national circumstance, are quintessentially political and subjective. They can, in certain cases, owe as much to unconscious reactions and personal motivations as to conscious perceptions assumed to be based on the national interest.

Theoretical Approaches to the Study of Strategy

The traditional strategic paradigm is based to a large degree on the billiard ball model of international relations, in which the Newtonian concept of action-reaction plays an important part. That paradigm sees strategy as "international relations with many of the complexities taken out".³

Such a paradigm does not survive contemporary definitions of strategy or doctrine. Strategy is a more complex phenomenon than simply the

¹ Buteux op cit pp4-5; Lider Military Theory pp354-357, 389-392
² André Beaufre Introduction to Strategy Faber & Faber, London UK, 1965, p12
summary of its explicit precepts.

The strategy of any country is rooted in a specific cultural and political structure, and this ethnocentric flavour must be understood if the more narrowly defined precepts of the strategy itself are to be understood.¹

As much as strategy may appear coherent, rational and structured, it also has other important dimensions which must be studied. These include the interplay of the rational and the subjective, and the dynamic process whereby a declared strategy is forced continually to adapt not only to the consequences of actions by others but also to circumstances that unexpectedly affect it. This dynamic has been described as follows:

whereas military strategy is devised in a highly structured context that can theoretically provide for comprehensive calculation of detail and coordination of effort, that image dissolves in the broad arena of politics, which arches over elements of military, diplomatic and economic arenas that are often non-hierarchical and poorly coordinated at best, if not in outright conflict. Politics itself implies at its core an unfinished, practical dialectic rather than the efficient implementation of a plan.²

Thus strategy can be seen as a sum of "aggregative processes" resulting in "unintended, articulated and mobilised aggregations".³

Julian Lider summarised the range of possible approaches to the study of the causes of war (and hence the origins of strategy and doctrine) to include biological, psychological, anthropological, ecological, geopolitical, legal, moral, military-technical, sociological, political, politico-economic, and multi-

¹ ibid p24
dimensional approaches.\footnote{Julian Lider \textit{On the Nature of War} Swedish Institute of International Affairs, Saxon House, Westmead UK, 1977, pp5-47}

Other writers, such as Ken Waltz, referred to the possible approaches to the study of international events (including war, and hence strategy and doctrine) in terms of level of analysis: individual human behaviour; the internal structure of states; and the anarchic structure of the international community of states.\footnote{Kenneth N Waltz \textit{Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis} Columbia University Press, New York NY, 1954, pp1-15} While scholars have different views on the particular levels that should be analysed, most agree that a multi-dimensional analysis is the most appropriate.\footnote{Lider \textit{On the Nature of War} pp26-27} Jervis recognised its importance but chose to focus on one of four identified levels of analysis - the perceptions of a decision-maker as one of the root causes of policy decisions.\footnote{Robert Jervis \textit{Perception and Misperception in International Relations} Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 1976, pp13-31}

An important further elaboration on the proposition that strategy is merely perception is that of strategy as imagination, a view developed by Kaldor.\footnote{Mary Kaldor \textit{The Imaginary War: Understanding the East-West Conflict} Basil Blackwell Ltd, Oxford UK, 1990, pp192-195} While strategy in advance of conflict is always formulated as a hypothetical construct, Kaldor highlighted the fact that the strategy of the superpowers for central war could be redefined "as the way in which military forces would be employed for political ends in an imaginary confrontation".\footnote{ibid p192}

Pointing out correctly that "different strategies came to reflect different political positions", Kaldor also made the point that "military strategies do not necessarily bear much relation to actual military capabilities". Citing the institutional influences on development of capabilities, such as inter-service rivalry or technological innovation, Kaldor saw strategy as providing a "rationale for these..."
capabilities that fitted ongoing political concerns\textsuperscript{1}.

Using language of the peace movement to which she belonged, Kaldor described the nuclear war scenarios of the superpower military leaders as "fantasy". She concluded that "the very unreality of strategic discussions contributed to the imaginary nature of the East-West confrontation, allowing it to become a deep, ongoing, unrealizable fear".\textsuperscript{2} By contrast, she described so-called limited wars in the Third World and Eastern Europe as "real wars".

She also hypothesised that "deterrence, instead of preventing war, actually turns out to be a way of keeping the idea of war and the idea of conflict alive, either to legitimise the growth of military forces or for domestic or intra-bloc purposes", and asserted that changes in stated doctrine came about less as the result of an action-reaction process than as the result of shifts in government and intra-alliance relations.\textsuperscript{3}

Kaldor's thesis about military strategy as imagination is a good reminder that military strategy has a dual identity - one which exists in circumstances when the war as imagined is not imminent or occurring; and one in circumstances where major war is imminent or has already broken out.

In circumstances of actual or imminent war, the relationship between strategy and politics is direct and concrete, with immediate results. In other circumstances, the relationship is less direct, less concrete, and more permissive.

The interaction between these dual identities of strategy in a given country has been seen to be all too compelling when war breaks out and the strategy and doctrine divined beforehand prove inappropriate to the actual

\textsuperscript{1} ibid
\textsuperscript{2} ibid pp192-193
\textsuperscript{3} ibid pp194-195
circumstances of combat. In other words, strategy, no matter how imaginary, can gain embodiment in doctrine and actually come to be believed and practised.

Whole schools of international relations theory have been built around proponents of a particular level of analysis - the bureaucratic decision-making school, and so on.¹

The choice of level of analysis can have some significant implications. As Lider points out in respect of the analysis of war, the choice can reflect the scholar’s assumptions about the nature of war or, on the other hand, simply reflect the scholar’s desire to narrow the focus of his own enquiry while fully recognising that other lines of inquiry, pursuing different levels of analysis or different approaches, may be just as valid.²

The most important implication of that choice, though, is that the level of analysis chosen gives the analysis a different character.³ As another scholar put it:

While at one level three models produce different explanations of the same happening, at a second level the models produce different explanations of quite different occurrences.⁴

A scholar focussing narrowly on the international relations level of analysis (for example, using balance-of-power type assumptions) is more likely to produce an explanation that emphasises balance-of-power considerations than a scholar who has focussed on a bureaucratic level of analysis. Yet even those who do review the bureaucratic basis of national military strategy can overlook the dynamic of the process. Instead of a straight line process which achieves a result

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¹ Lider On the Nature of War p5
² ibid
³ ibid
⁴ Graham T Allison Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis Little, Brown and Co, Boston, 1971, p251
that is implemented fully, the various stages of bureaucratic decision-making can be cyclical and recurring, with any one phase being able to develop in such a way as to force the process back into an earlier phase.\footnote{Stephen M Meyer "Soviet National Security Decisionmaking: What Do We Know and What Do We Understand" in Jiri Valenta and William C Potter (eds) Soviet Decisionmaking for National Security George Allen and Unwin, London, 1984, p299. Meyer described the four phases of decision-making as policy agenda, policy controversy, formal decision, and implementation.}

The study of military strategy should accept as a basic premise that the relationship between military planning and political goals is not a simple one, and that the proportionality between ends and means can disappear or become distorted.\footnote{Lider On the Nature of War p359} While this distortion is particularly relevant once war breaks out, the same phenomenon also occurs in peace-time, and was particularly evident in the nuclear arms race between the USSR and the USA.

A multi-dimensional or interdisciplinary approach to the study of strategy would, therefore, appear to be mandatory in determining why a country adopts a particular military strategy or military doctrine. It is only in the knowledge of these reasons that predictive assumptions can be made with any degree of reliability.

The need for a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of an opponent's strategy was neatly summarised by Brodie: "good strategy presumes good anthropology and sociology".\footnote{Bernard Brodie War and Politics Macmillan, New York NY, 1973, p332}

A convincing example of the value of multi-disciplinary or multi-dimensional analysis has been provided in Atkinson's Social Order and the General Theory of Strategy, a study of the way in which the Chinese communists exploited their grasp of the social bases of strategy - including cultural, political, and
economic factors. Atkinson combined his study of the Chinese case with a critique of the work of Clausewitz and attempts to update Clausewitz in the following manner:

The roots of violence do not so much draw substance from the raw nature of man but from that of men cast into social relations. It is the conception of social relations, established patterns of which are the essence of social order, that give rise to the twin notions of power and morality. In terms of these two, war is the natural extension of the substance of social life.¹

Atkinson was seeking to rescue from its classical roots one of Clausewitz’ most important achievements: the realisation that war could not be separated from the social - read "political" for Clausewitz - milieu in which it operated. As Clausewitz said:

the principal features of all great strategic plans are for the most part of a political nature, and always the more they encompass the totality of war and state. The whole plan of war results directly from the political existence of both warring states as well as from their relations with others ...
... even in the individual parts of a campaign the political element is implicated and indeed there is seldom any great act of war ... where at least some influence of it was not apparent.²

Atkinson asserts that Clausewitz was recognising the influence of politics so as to postulate a purer form of classical strategy, a strategy still existing independently for a military elite and for the purposes of war which fell somewhat short of total war as it has emerged in the twentieth century. While there are numerous instances where Clausewitz recognised that the absolute form of war is often not reached, but is modified by political factors, he generally proceeded from the notion that politics is a sub-element of war and not vice versa.³

² Carl von Clausewitz On War as cited by Atkinson op cit p243
³ Atkinson op cit p248
Thus, there is some distance between Clausewitz’ more narrow conception of the scope of these political considerations and the scope of the social basis of strategy envisaged by Atkinson. His central argument is that strategy can be appreciated in all its strengths and weaknesses only if one looks at the social contract which determines in a given society the power and moral authority of the strategy makers - that is, by understanding the contractual basis (the political, cultural, economic, and institutional bases) on which the strategy is allowed to stand as an abstraction.¹

Beyond the issue of the political basis of the authority which enables the political/military elite in a particular country to develop a specific strategy, the domestic determinants of strategy have probably been best conceptualised by two works which analyse the strategies of the major European powers before the World Wars.

Snyder, in The Ideology of the Offensive, identified three categories of determinants of military strategy: rational calculation; motivated or self-interested bias; and doctrinal oversimplification.² Posen, in The Sources of Military Doctrine, offered a "set of categories, questions, and explanations useful for studying the grand strategy and military doctrine of any state".³

Posen’s book compared the relative effectiveness of the balance-of-power model of international relations against the organisational (bureaucratic decision-making) model in explaining three selected aspects of the military doctrine

¹ ibid p225  
of France, Britain and Germany before World War II. The three aspects were: the character of the doctrine (offensive, defensive or deterrent); the degree of coordination of the doctrine with foreign policy; and the degree of innovation the doctrine contains.

Snyder combined in his model the different levels of analysis: international relations, domestic politics, social influences and individual psychological elements. In his model, "rational calculation" in strategy formulation is an accurate assessment of the relationship between national aims (foreign policy goals) and the constraints and potentialities of the environment in which the state finds itself.²

Snyder identified two types of bias that will influence such an assessment and thus reduce the level of rationality in it. The first type originates from the motivations of the decision-makers, especially their parochial interests. The second type results from their attempts to simplify and impose a structure on their complex analytical tasks".³ He saw both groups of biases not only as cognitive phenomena ("skewing the perceptions and choices of individual decision-makers"), but also as organisational phenomena ("shaping the structure, ideology, and standard operating procedure of institutions").

With the concept of "rational calculation", Snyder was postulating the concept of an appropriate response to an objective set of international circumstances of a state. This set of circumstances comprised two main elements: a state's foreign policy goals; and the strategic balance between that state and any

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¹ *ibid* p7  
² Snyder The Ideology of the Offensive pp19-24  
³ *ibid* p18
adversary.¹

But as a later work by Snyder suggested, the root assumption of the rational calculation hypothesis is that the military strategy and doctrine of a state (its international objectives) should grow out of its international military circumstances.² He suggested there had been no scholarly effort to test the relationship between Soviet grand strategy and the USSR's international circumstances (according to the rational incentive model).³

These circumstances could be conceived in two ways: endemic and variable.⁴ As far as the USSR was concerned, Snyder suggested as endemic circumstances its backwardness relative to other industrialised countries; its relative economic self-sufficiency; and its legacy as a revolutionary state. As variable circumstances, he suggested the character of the opponent; military technology; and the international distribution of power.⁵

Some of the variable factors obviously had a major impact on the intensity of effect of some endemic factors. The difficulty of disaggregating general concepts, such as "legacy as a revolutionary state, in a defensible (scientifically

¹ _ibid_ p19. Snyder postulated a rational strategy (or doctrine) as one which conformed to foreign policy goals of the State, technological and geographical constraints, and the military balance. A more logical view may be that the technological and geographical circumstances of a State's armed forces are sub-sets of the military balance, not distinct elements. In this view, the military balance might more aptly be described as the strategic balance, a balance between the military potential of two States, rather than a balance between existing orders of battle.
² Jack Snyder _Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition_ Cornell University Press, Ithaca NY, 1991. This assumption would not hold for a country in which the armed forces had a significant internal police function. While KGB border troops were used for the domestic purpose of keeping Soviet citizens in, and Ministry of the Interior troops had a clear domestic function, the Soviet armed forces were conceived by the General Staff in the period covered by this thesis exclusively in terms of external functions (defensive or offensive).
³ _ibid_ p215
⁴ _ibid_ p216
⁵ _ibid_ pp230-233 makes a synthesis of the influence of these factors by dividing Soviet strategic thought into four camps: Molotov (Western hostility is unconditional, defence has the advantage); Zhdanov (Western hostility is unconditional, offence has the advantage); Malenkov/Gorbachev (Western hostility is conditional, defence has the advantage); and Khrushchev/Brezhnev (Western hostility is conditional, offence has the advantage).
usable) way suggests that a sharper method of characterisation, which illuminates more specifically the question of conformity of military strategy and doctrine with perceived Soviet objectives, needs to be found.

Snyder concluded that for the most part international conditions helped make or break Soviet strategic "ideologies" \(^1\) but that Soviet grand strategy was often mismatched with "objective situational incentives" \(^2\) and considerations of realpolitik accounted fairly poorly for the features of Soviet foreign policy in two out of three identified periods of expansion.\(^3\)

There were, Snyder said, Soviet political leaders who appreciated in a "realistic" way the international penalties and benefits of certain courses in response to their objective international circumstances, but that these leaders were constrained by the Soviet system.\(^4\)

In essence, therefore, Snyder in this later work postulated a fundamental contradiction in the Soviet case between the two elements of rational incentive in his model from the earlier work: foreign policy goals and international circumstance. In saying that Soviet grand strategy was not responsive to incentives from the USSR's international circumstances, he was concluding that the USSR's fundamental foreign policy objectives stood in contradiction to its international circumstances and were therefore unrealistic and, by implication, unachievable.\(^5\)

Thus, while Snyder advanced international circumstance as the root assumption of his rational incentive model, he seemed to suggest that the only

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\(^1\) *ibid* p253  
\(^2\) *ibid* p229  
\(^3\) *ibid* p216  
\(^4\) *ibid* p237  
\(^5\) The historical record, in particular the disintegration of the Soviet Union, would appear to bear out Snyder's conclusion.
scientific way of treating the international circumstances of a state as having an objective existence was through the choices and perceptions of the political leaders.

This would appear to be an important elaboration on Snyder's 1984 work in that, ultimately, the only test of rationality in military strategy and doctrine is whether the means postulated in them conform to foreign policy goals in the prevailing circumstances. The international circumstances will always be perceived subjectively, and thus cannot provide in and of themselves a benchmark for rationality in strategic choice.

In this respect, Snyder's concept of "rational calculation" may be open to question. In fact, he conceded, in the conclusion of his 1984 work, that even this element can be "shaped by organizational, cognitive, and strategic variables".¹

Rational calculation in military strategy and doctrine therefore can ultimately be interpreted only as a decision by the military leadership on the use of military force that conforms to the foreign policy objectives of the state.

Snyder's model probably has greater application in historical analysis of events where the outcomes are known (such as the First World War) and, hence, where judgements of the sort mentioned in the preceding paragraph can be made.

At the same time, much of Snyder's hypothesis about strategy making in general can be applied to analysis of the sources of a state's military doctrine. For example, Snyder suggested that motivations for bias will be greatest when three conditions prevail simultaneously: first, institutional interests are severely threatened; second, the interests at stake are fundamental ones, especially self-image and organisational essence; and third, there is some contradiction

¹ Snyder The Ideology of the Offensive p200
between institutional interest and sound strategy.¹ (Exactly what is sound strategy in any particular case may be debatable, but it is often easy to identify unsound strategy - so defined by clear failure to achieve national objectives.)

Both Posen and Snyder refer to the influence of threat on strategy. This dynamic has been the subject of a vast body of literature, known under the rubric of crisis diplomacy studies.² Much of this work has chosen only one theoretical approach or one level of analysis. By contrast, this thesis - while conscious of distinct levels of analysis and a variety of possible theoretical approaches - is based squarely on a principle espoused by Pettman:

Much more time should be spent by the discipline [international politics] in attempting to connect the conclusions that emerge at different levels of analysis from that of the individual to systems as a whole.³

The thesis aims to analyse the sources of Soviet military doctrine for local war by connecting the conclusions that emerge at different levels of analysis.

That said, the thesis accepts motivation as the central subject of international relations, an approach advanced by Cottam. While his study addressed the perceptual basis of inter-state conflict, his theoretical approach to the study of foreign policy offers an ideal way of incorporating the complex mix of variables that influence the formulation of military policy.

Cottam argued that the realist approach to the study of international

¹ *ibid* p25
³ *ibid* p300
relations "seriously camouflages motivation"1 which he defined as "a compound of factors that predispose a government and people to move in a decisional direction in foreign affairs".2 His view of motivation would thus subsume the two main sources of bias identified by Snyder. This thesis assumes that it is possible and desirable to attempt to analyse motivations that give rise to decisions, and the processes that transform motivations into decisions.3

If motivation is the central element of international interaction, then the primary decision-makers should be the focus of analysis of military strategy and doctrine.4 They are too important to be treated as manifestations of some bureaucratic or social role, because "they are the individuals who define the situation, and the manner in which they do so will determine the choice alternatives they can perceive".5

As Gallagher and Spielmann put it:

the character of the leadership is the dominant factor that determines how the whole system operates.6

Volten agreed:

It is not the analyst’s theoretical design or his selected issues, but the Soviet leadership’s concern about their nation and about the development of the system that should be the point of departure.7

Unfortunately, lack of data on the motivations of individual Soviet leaders makes more than passing attention to individuals difficult, except in a

1 Richard W Cottam Foreign Policy Motivation - A General Theory and a Case Study University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh PA, 1977, p20
2 ibid p31
3 ibid p318
4 ibid p320
5 ibid p320
handful of cases.

Yet Cottam was prepared to concede that high level bureaucrats - unlike the ultimate decision makers - could be subsumed under the guise of a single modal individual (their institution or organisation), with insignificant distortion given the level of analysis.¹ Thus the thesis concentrates on the General Staff, the political leadership, the Communist Party (meaning the Central Committee leadership based in Moscow) and the Main Political Directorate of the armed forces as the main players, offering comment on individual motivations where evidence exists.

**Scientific Method and the Study of Military Doctrine**

The thesis is written with an eye to Popper's observations in his 1967 essay "Knowledge: Subjective versus Objective", which criticised what he called "traditional epistemology" for focusing on documentation of "belief based upon perception".²

He rejected the "causal approach" used by behaviourist, psychological and sociological study, in favour of the "objective approach" which, in his view, starts from effect. He wrote:

> In all sciences, the ordinary approach is from the effects to the causes. The effect raises the problem ... and the scientist tries to solve it by constructing an explanatory hypothesis.³

¹ Cottam op cit p320. Volten essentially agreed with Cottam on this point but still advocated a personalised analysis. Volten cited the view of Halperin that the essence of an organisation can usefully be regarded as "the view held by the dominant group in the organisation of what the missions and capabilities should be" (Morton H Halperin Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy Washington DC, 1974, p28 cited in Volten op cit p29). But Volten wanted analysis at the sub-system level (ministries, High Command, Party, etc) to be focussed on personal views held by participants who might attempt to shape their institutions according to their own views.

² Karl Popper "Knowledge: Subjective versus Objective" in David Muller (ed) A Pocket Popper Fontana, Oxford, 1983, p60

³ *ibid* p66
The relevance of Popper’s observation to the study of international relations has been attested in part by some commentators on the lack of rigour in Soviet studies. For example, Hoffman criticised William Dray and other "historians" for rejecting the value of empirical generalisations in historical explanation,¹ and preferring to explain events in terms of the perceptions of the principal actors.² He sees these historians as preferring "logic-of-the-situation" analysis and seeking to explain events merely by the elimination of possible causes.³

These criticisms - that the historians generally stop at documentation of motive and belief⁴ - are exactly those made by Popper in respect of science in general. In the social sciences, documenting motive and belief is an important element in any analysis and, in most circumstance, a difficult enough task. However, Popper would argue, it is essential for the social scientist to go further and explain.

Some guidance as to how Popper’s ideas might be implemented in Soviet studies has been provided by Snyder.⁵ Like Hoffman, Snyder appears to have accepted the positive features of logic-of-the-situation types of analysis and recognised the degree of latent generalisation in all historical analysis.⁶ However, Snyder pushed the argument further in a direction reminiscent of Popper’s argument by advocating the use in Soviet studies of fundamental principles of

³ Hoffman "Methodological Problems..." loc cit p130
⁴ ibid p131
⁶ ibid p108
scientific method.\textsuperscript{1}

Thus, in the views of Popper, Snyder and - to a lesser extent - Hoffman, description of the subjective perceptions of key players is merely the documenting and ordering of some of the data on which scientific analysis is subsequently to be performed.

The differences between these two stages of analysis can prove vital. For example, Posen's analysis of the perceptions of military leaders in France, Britain and Germany between the World Wars concluded that balance of power theory explained better than bureaucratic decision theory why those states adopted their respective strategies and military doctrines.\textsuperscript{2} That conclusion is descriptive, rather than explanatory or argumentative; it merely asserts that in the three case studies, the persons most responsible for the outcome of the events under review acted on those occasions as if balance of power considerations were the most important.

An objective explanation would be different, and should go further. It might postulate a reason for those statesmen having internalised balance-of-power abstractions for those decisions. The implication of this is that explanation of the causes of international events must ultimately be rooted in the domestic political and psychological environment of the decision-makers.

This line of argument takes the early Hans Morgenthau at his word: "A theory of international politics is but a specific instance of a general theory of politics".\textsuperscript{3}

\textsuperscript{1} *ibid* pp91-92
\textsuperscript{2} Posen *op cit* pp240-241
\textsuperscript{3} Hans J Morgenthau "The Nature and Limits of a Theory of International Relations" in W T R Fox (ed) *Theoretical Aspects of International Relations* University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 1959, p16
This thesis does, however, reject Morgenthau's notion that a theory of politics can merely be a "rationally ordered summary of all the rational elements which the observer has found in the subject matter".¹ As Volten reminds us, knowledge should be transmissible and verifiable, and the logic trail must be visible.²

**Conclusion**

Military strategy embraces the theory and practice of preparing a country and its armed forces for war, and the planning and conduct of strategic operations and wars in general. Military strategy therefore is a complex phenomenon, existing at several levels and subject to a wide variety of political, personal, social or physical influences.

Military doctrine is a set of organising principles accepted by the leadership of the armed forces for the purpose of guiding the development of the forces, including their structure, equipment, training and exercises. Doctrine is also a synthesis of scientific knowledge and expertise on the one hand, and of traditions and political assumptions on the other.

The relationship between doctrine and strategy is interactive. But as a subset of strategy, doctrine develops under the influence of the same variety of factors that influence the development of strategy - political, social, economic, technological and personal factors, including the political power of the high command relative to the government.

A scientific study of a country's military doctrine, if it claims to

¹ *ibid* p21
² Volten *op cit* p248
establish the relationship between doctrine and probable strategy in war, should relate evidence of a High Command’s knowledge, expertise, traditions and political assumptions to the environment in which decisions about war and doctrine are made.

Of the available theoretical approaches to the study of military doctrine, this thesis tests the usefulness of one based largely on the model developed by Snyder (institutional or personal interests, doctrinal simplification and rational calculation) as a means of determining why the Soviet General Staff responded to the doctrinal requirements of local war as it did.
CHAPTER TWO
LOCAL WAR AND LIMITED WAR - COMMONALITIES AND PECULIARITIES

Chapter One suggested that US and Soviet conceptions of the scope of military strategy were much the same, while arguing that the content of a country’s military strategy was heavily influenced by a variety of factors peculiar to each country. Chapter Two identifies common ground between the Soviet conception of local war and the US conception of limited war, but highlights the unique origins of US limited war doctrine in US military strategy. The lack of a single US view on the essential or defining characteristics of limited war, and confusion in usage with the term local war, are also noted.

In this way, the Chapter seeks to demonstrate that scholars looking for a Soviet mirror image of a US doctrine of limited war failed to appreciate that the US doctrine did not represent a universal truth, but rather a unique response heavily influenced by particular ambitions and goals, and by geographical remoteness from likely theatres of conflict (most of which were on the Soviet periphery).

Yet the USSR’s armed forces, while not a slavish copy of US forces, did develop within the context of competition with the principal adversary and, later, with China. Part of this competition was mutual structuring of forces with attention to their combat effectiveness against one another or with attention to achieving similar capabilities.
Local War and Limited War

The presumption of a vital link between small wars and the central balance of power has been an important feature of the modern international system. Small wars had been the principal preoccupation of the peace-time armies of the great empires once political stability returned to Europe after the Napoleonic wars.

Small wars were a distinct object of military studies. For example, in the late nineteenth century, the British armed forces published a work on the subject. The author admitted that the term was "somewhat difficult to define", but used it "in default of a better", to apply to wars in which a regular army found itself fighting either irregular (guerilla) or palpably inferior forces. The author, Colonel C. E. Calwell, sought to make the distinction because he saw the conduct of operations in small wars as distinct from that in "regular warfare" and as an art by itself.¹ Similarly, the French developed a concept for small wars on the model of the Algerian war they had fought in the 1840s.

By contrast, Great Powers, seeking to change the status quo (what may loosely be called the central balance) or to defend it against a major assault, shifted to central war strategies - massed armies or navies in high intensity combat to overturn or defend the central balance of power. This was Germany's modus operandi before both World Wars, as it was Japan's in the Pacific in the late 1930s.

At the same time, Germany did try in the late 19th and early 20th century to shift the central balance more in its favour without major war, through a policy of colonial acquisition in which small wars were an important tool. In the

same years, the British Empire sought to defend its position in the central balance by resisting threat to its colonies from small wars.

Thus there is some merit in the argument that the limits imposed on conduct of wars after the Second World War, when avoidance of general war became an overwhelming preoccupation, had much in common with those that applied in the early eighteenth Century. Total war was politically nonsensical when the overall *status quo* was acceptable (or at least temporarily tolerable) to the Great Powers, and limited wars became a useful tool.¹

But the limits that applied in the nuclear era differed from those of the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries in one obvious respect. The threat of use of nuclear weapons on a strategic scale after 1945 redefined the concept of total war from one involving primarily the armed forces to one involving the totality of the society. The threat of nuclear weapons therefore changed the relationship between total war and power politics, from one ending in a peace treaty, however humiliating, as in the case of Germany after the First World War, to one ending in the devastation and possible destruction of at least one of the antagonists and most of its population.

This image of general nuclear war threw up a requirement, or rather a hope, that should war again break out between major powers, it could be limited to avoid total devastation. This image also eventually led to recognition that the threat of war, if it had to be general nuclear war, had lost much of its political value for all circumstances other than the most imminent and potentially

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¹ Maurice Tugwell "Adapt or Perish: The Forms of Evolution in Warfare" in Maurice Tugwell and David Charters (eds) *Armies in Low-Intensity Conflicts: A Comparative Analysis* Brassey's Defence Publishers, London, 1989, pp8-9. Tugwell observed that the concept of limited war has tended to move in and out of fashion through history.
overwhelming attack by one country on another.

At the same time, many of the small wars after 1945 were no different from those of the previous two centuries. Colonel Calwell’s views retained some significance for the superpowers, as like him, American and Soviet strategic commentaries identified a distinct type of war involving forces in combat with irregular (or guerilla) forces, or with palpably inferior forces.¹

Thus, post-war conceptions of limited or local war had two quite distinct aspects, depending on the involvement of the nuclear superpowers.

Soviet sources in the late 1950s and early 1960s used three main terms to describe war according to scale: small [malaia]; limited [ogranichionnaia], and local [lokal’naia] war. Usage did not become standardised until the mid-1960s, when the term "local [lokal’naia] war" eventually became the accepted usage in a neutral or scientific sense.

Official Soviet terminology placed local war in the following hierarchy of concepts:

- world war [mirovaia voina]
- local war [lokal’naia voina]
- military clashes [voennye konflikty].

The distinction in Soviet terminology between world war and local war was that:

local wars are characterised by relatively limited political aims that define the known extent of the scale of military operations, a specific strategy and tactics, and the limited use of weapons systems.²

Local wars differed from "military clashes" in that the latter were characterised "by a significantly smaller scale and by the smaller size of the forces drawn into the

¹ US and Soviet views are discussed in detail later in this chapter.
² General I A Shavrov (ed) Lokal’nye voiny: istoriia i sovremennost’ [Local Wars: Their History and Contemporary Significance], Voenizdat, Moscow, 1981, pp8-9
"Military clashes" simply involved the armed forces of a country, or particular units in discrete areas, whereas local wars usually involved the whole country.2

Local wars in some sources were seen as including wars of national liberation, civil wars, wars between capitalist states, and wars between capitalist states and socialist states.3 Guerilla war, or "partisan warfare" in Soviet terminology, was one form of civil war or national liberation war.4

The Soviet Military Encyclopedic Dictionary defined local war without reference to nuclear weapons as follows:

a war which involves, in contrast to a world war, a relatively small number of countries and a limited geographic area.5

Thus, in Soviet terminology the term "local war" meant any war apart from a global war between imperialism (the Western military alliance) and the socialist community. The main distinction was between the one big future war (the main focus of published Soviet writings) and the many other wars (the more regular focus of Soviet leaders' foreign policy attention).

In this respect, there was no great difference between the Soviet idea of local war and the official US idea of limited war described below, even though, in public at least, Soviet strategists consistently derided the Western concept of limited nuclear war.6

A US Joint Chiefs of Staff publication in 1987 defined limited war

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1 ibid p9; see also Voennyy entsiklopedicheskii slovar' under the entry [konflikt voennyi]
2 Shavrov (ed) Lokal'nye voiny p9
3 B V Panov et al Istoriia voennogo iskusstva [History of Military Art] Voenizdat, Moscow, 1984, translated by JPRS, USGPO, Washington DC, 1985, p513; see also the list of local wars in Shavrov Lokal'nye voiny pp296-303
4 Voennyy entsiklopedicheskii slovar' under the entry [partizanskoе dvizhenie]
5 See Voennyy entsiklopedicheskii slovar' under the entry [lokal'naia voina]
6 For example, Henry Trofimenko "The Theology of Strategy" Orbis Fall 1977, pp512-513
as "armed conflict short of general war, exclusive of incidents, involving the overt engagement of the military forces of two or more nations". The same publication said that the term "local war" was "not to be used".¹

Efforts toward consistency of usage in US publications did not succeed, with "local war" used widely in some US publications, especially until the early 1960s,² and "limited war" preferred in others.

An unofficial US source saw limited war as "virtually anything short of central strategic warfare" and equated local war with limited war.³ Another study accepted the view of limited war as anything short of general war but did not equate it with local war.⁴

In most sources, limited wars were defined as wars constrained by geographical extent, by the scope of the political aims of the belligerents, by the means (quantity or quality) with which the war was waged, or by restraint in selection of targets.⁵

While such characterisations served a purpose, some scholars pointed out deficiencies in conceiving local wars as limited.⁶ Some observers tended to confuse the limits on battlefield objectives in so-called limited wars with limited

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¹ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms USGPO, Washington DC, 1987, pp211, 213
² Julian Lider Military Theory: Concept, Structure, Problems Gower Publishing Co, Aldershot UK, 1983, pp75-76 notes that between 1945 and the early 1960s differing concepts of "local war" and "limited war" coexisted in the USA, whereas in Britain "limited war" became a new classification in addition to "local war" in the mid-1950s, and in Germany, "local war" was replaced by "atomic limited war" and "conventional limited war" in the early 1950s.
⁴ Robert McLintock The Meaning of Limited War Houghton Mifflin Company, The Riverside Press, Cambridge MASS, 1967, p10 offered the following list: wars of national liberation; limited strategic war; simple wars for independence; domestic rebellion; civil war with outside intervention; wars for the acquisition of territory; and wars for political and strategic objectives.
political objectives. The aims in limited wars were limited not so much in importance but in scope: they were always tactical means toward an important strategic goal.\(^1\) Moreover, in national liberation wars, the liberation forces had a clear determination to crush their opponents' will.

Another difficulty was that the term "limited war" was used to lump together wars in which the superpowers were involved (on opposite sides by proxy or directly) and wars in which they were not involved.\(^2\) In particular, there was a vast gulf between limited war fought by US forces in a Third World country against local forces, and a limited war fought in Europe with nuclear weapons against the USSR.\(^3\)

To avoid confusion as much as possible, this thesis will use the term "limited war" only in referring to official US policies (for what were local wars), or to describe the views of scholars who have used the term "limited war". On all other occasions, the term "local war" will be used - with one exception. The term "limited nuclear war" will be used to describe an hypothesised local war involving the use of tactical or theatre nuclear weapons, which remains localised (does not escalate to general nuclear war).\(^4\)

The term "limited war" as understood in the USA could also apply

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1 Tugwell "Adapt or Perish: The Forms of Evolution in Warfare" *loc cit* p14
2 Garnett *op cit* p124. Small wars, as discussed by Calwell, did not engage all of the military forces of the colonial power, but could nonetheless have engaged the full military power of the other party - the "palpably inferior enemy". So too in the period after the Second World War, local wars were, in the strategic discourse of the superpowers and the two empires (Britain and France), small for them but an all-embracing commitment for many of the other parties.
3 Elaborate studies of limited war in Europe were a feature of Western strategic discourse. For example, Des Ball "Controlling Theatre Nuclear War" *British Journal of Political Science* vol. 19, pp303-327 analysed the threat of escalation to general war posed by the lack of separate command and control arrangements in NATO forces, especially US forces, for general war and theatre war.
4 This does not imply a position by the author on whether such a war is possible or whether it would last long without becoming a general nuclear war.
to a war involving limited attacks on the homeland of the superpowers.¹ For example, Herman Kahn used the term "controlled general war".² This type of war will be described in this thesis as "limited strategic war".

For the superpowers, a distinguishing characteristic of local, as opposed to general, war was that complete victory was not necessary. It was only important not to lose.³ This contributed to an associated complication. In order to prevent a strategic loss, there was pressure to extend the geographical scope of a war, thereby making it more difficulty to bring some local wars to an end.⁴

This was the great fear associated with local war in Europe - that in order not to lose, it would be necessary to expand its geographical scope, and to move rapidly to wide-ranging, pre-emptive strategic nuclear strikes. This fear engendered an unfavourable reception in Western Europe for US concepts of limited war, even when US thinking began to move from exclusive reliance on limited nuclear war to counter a Soviet invasion to include conventional defence as an option.⁵

In some Western scholarly studies, the emphasis in definitions of limited war was on this element of escalation: limited war included "armed encounters short of incidents in which one or more major powers or their proxies voluntarily exercise various types and degrees of restraint to prevent unmanageable escalation. By contrast, the concept of "local war" had a geographical aspect without reference to limits on weapons used: "war confined to a geographically

¹ Morton H Halperin Limited War in the Nuclear Age John Wiley and Sons, London, 1963, p2
² Herman Kahn On Thermonuclear War Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 1961, p174
³ ibid p125
⁴ Edward Rice Wars of the Third Kind: Conflict in Underdeveloped Countries University of California Press, Berkeley CA, pp158-149
⁵ Lawrence Freedman The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy 2nd ed, St Martin’s Press, New York NY, 1989, pp293-300
limited theater where conventional as well as nuclear weapons may be used".\textsuperscript{1}

In another US interpretation, the concept of "limited war" included the following elements:

a war which did not directly engage the conventional forces of the opposing superpower alliances in the two key regions of strategic confrontation (Central Europe or North Asia);

a war which did not directly threaten the strategic nuclear assets on land or at sea of either superpower; or

a war which did not directly threaten the homeland of either superpower.\textsuperscript{2}

This interpretation, like the officially endorsed US definition of limited war and the Soviet definition of local war, did not exclude a small scale war in central Europe, involving the USSR and only one or two of the major NATO allies, such as the USA and West Germany.

A local war could be limited or large scale war, using most sorts of weapons and for high-stake objectives. The US conception of limited nuclear war in the Persian Gulf under the Carter Doctrine was an example of a local war with few limits except geographical ones.\textsuperscript{3}

Therefore, as Calwell suggested in respect of the term "small war",\textsuperscript{4} the term "local war" should not be seen as implying an overly narrow description of the scale of operations, if only because of the wide diversity in scale of conflicts.

\textsuperscript{1} Wolfram F Hanrieder and Larry V Buel \textit{Words and Arms: A Dictionary of Security and Defense Terms} Westview Press, Boulder CO, 1979, p66. A British source saw limited war as a conflict of greater intensity than guerilla war but one in which nuclear, biological and chemical weapons were not used (\textit{Jane’s Dictionary of Military Terms} Compiled by Brigadier P H C Hayward, Macdonald and Jane’s, London UK, 1975, p97).
\textsuperscript{2} Halperin \textit{Limited War in the Nuclear Age} p1; Deitchman \textit{op cit} p13
\textsuperscript{3} The essential feature of this doctrine was the declaration that any attempt by outside force (the Soviet Union) to gain control of the Persian Gulf region would provoke a military response by the USA necessary to reverse the situation. The doctrine was meant to imply that if the USA did not have adequate ground forces in the region to achieve this aim by conventional means alone, nuclear weapons would be used.
\textsuperscript{4} Calwell \textit{op cit} p21
embraced by the definition.

The Western concept of "low intensity conflict" (defined as anything more violent than a show of force and less violent than a limited conventional war)\textsuperscript{1} did not fit comfortably with the Soviet concept of local war. The main reason was the ideological precept that low intensity conflict was the normal operating state of the rival social systems in periods not characterised by outright war.

A different typology of local wars offered by a Western scholar suggested three major classes: conventional war; unconventional war (irregular forces on one side); and deterred conflicts (armed forces confront each other but no actual hostilities break out).\textsuperscript{2}

As discussed in Chapter One, military strategy, and therefore strategy for local wars, can come into play before hostilities actually break out. In the same way as global nuclear war strategy had a strong deterrent element, local war strategy can concern itself with conflicts in which blows are not exchanged. It is logical to include under the scope of local wars, conflicts where military force was used in anticipation of hostilities or as a deterrent, such as Czechoslovakia in 1968.

Deterrence depends on an appropriate amount of striking power, the will to use it, and the enemy's perception of a strategy or plan to implement the action. Deterrence operations can therefore be an integral part of both military strategy and doctrine.\textsuperscript{3}

Deitchman defended the inclusion of deterred war in the study of military doctrine in the following terms:

\begin{itemize}
  \item[2] Deitchman op cit p18; Halperin Limited War in the Nuclear Age p1 also includes potential local war as a strategic preoccupation.
  \item[3] Lider Military Theory pp82-83
\end{itemize}
The "deterred wars" ... were, of course, really not wars at all, but military actions taken in anticipation of the outbreak of war, which appear to have deterred it. One of the main factors which operated for deterrence was the rapid buildup of a significant military force in the area where the threat existed. While these forces, in all but the Cuban Quarantine, were much smaller, than those that would probably have had to be committed if active warfare had broken out, they were significant to the extent that they would, at the very least, have been able to act effectively in a delaying action pending the arrival of reinforcements. Thus their commitment constituted a clear promise to establish new, higher thresholds of force limitation (that is, to "escalate") if deterrence was unsuccessful.¹

Conflicts such as the Cuban missile crisis, which involved some risk of nuclear war between the superpowers, would not appear to fit the definition of limited war suggested above. Yet opinions vary on the correct characterisation of this event, and it is of some interest that a variety of Soviet sources include the Caribbean crisis, in the period that led up to the missile crisis as an example of a local war. Several American sources also refer to the Cuban missile crisis as a "local" war.²

In the final analysis, notwithstanding a variety of potential disagreements about the scope of the concepts of limited war and local war, the Soviet idea of local war and the American idea of limited war were almost identical, as indicated by a comparison of the following excerpts, the first from a paper by Henry Kissinger, the second from a Soviet work:

A limited war ... is fought for specific political objectives which by their very existence, tend to establish a relationship between the force employed and the goal to be attained. It reflects an attempt to affect the opponent’s will, not to crush it, ... to strive for specific goals and not complete annihilation.³

¹ Deitchman op cit p19
² For example, Morton H Halperin Contemporary Military Strategy revised edition, Faber and Faber, London, 1972, p95
Local wars differ from world wars in the fact that they pursue relatively limited political aims. This also determines the limited scale of military operations, the small number of participants, and the specific strategy and tactics of small wars.¹

Both superpowers recognised that all types of wars could be located at various points on a spectrum of hostilities. The "high end" of that spectrum of hostilities was general war (global superpower war). Everything below the high end of that spectrum was more difficult to define and to plan for. Moreover, the crossover point from local or limited war to general war was one of the most discussed and most feared phenomena of this century.

Yet the preoccupation of some Governments, military officers and scholars with classifying wars according to scale (including scope or intensity) as outlined above was not a universal phenomenon. There were several competing classifications, in the political realm (interstate or civil war, subversive war, liberation war, just wars) or military realm (nuclear or non-nuclear, guerilla war, accidental war).²

**Local Wars: The Unique Military Characteristics**

Local war creates a tension within professional military forces whose *raison d'être* is, or has been general war.³ The process of their adaptation to lesser forms must either be *ad hoc* or based on dividing the forces into components designed for the total destruction of a major adversary and components designed for more limited military purposes.⁴

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¹ Panov et al *op cit* p513  
² Lider *Military Theory* pp73-81  
³ Tugwell "Adapt or Perish" *loc cit* p9. Tugwell made this point about the contrast between limited war and total war, but the observation is equally apt for the contrast between local war and general war.  
⁴ *ibid* p9
Local war imposed upon military forces not only a tension between limited and all-out combat operations, but the need to be sensitive to greater intrusion by political circumstances, which could change more rapidly than in total war.\(^1\)

In the post-war period, notwithstanding perceptions of a spectrum of conflict embracing both local wars and world wars, the superpowers identified the need for a strategy for fighting wars distinct from their strategy for superpower conflict. As Herman Kahn put it as early as 1959:

> even if the United States and the Soviet Union cannot wage all-out war against each other this does not mean that the role of force will be entirely eliminated. There may still be many disputes between the two nations - disputes which may tempt one side to use force on a small scale.\(^2\)

For most of the second half of this century, the central determining feature of the course and conduct of most local wars was the degree to which the superpowers saw each other on opposing sides - that is, the relationship of the war to the global strategic competition between them. This relationship governed moves by the superpowers to expand or prolong each conflict, or to curtail it and prevent its escalation.\(^3\) The means they used to control or influence the conduct of local wars included supply of weapons, provision of military advisers, shows of force, or direct military intervention.

For a superpower, the outcome of a local war was seen in terms not only of battlefield objectives but also of foreign policy objectives and political effects in the surrounding region and globally. In some instances, domestic political effects in the USA or the USSR may have flowed from the conduct and outcome

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1. *ibid* pp9, 14; *Garnett op cit* p125
2. *Kahn op cit* p12
3. *Halperin Limited War in the Nuclear Age* pp1, 3
of a local or limited war.\textsuperscript{1} The interplay of pressures to act and constraints on action, was able to create divisions in the domestic consensus.\textsuperscript{2}

The involvement of a superpower in a local war tended to subordinate the objectives of local belligerents (which may have included total military victory) to the political - and often more limited - objectives of the external, superpower actors.\textsuperscript{3} Or as one scholar put it, superpower objectives in local wars transcended the place and politics of the hostilities, because these wars were seen as part of a global contest.\textsuperscript{4}

For the superpowers, two principles of local war came to the fore: the primacy of politics, and economy of force.\textsuperscript{5} For them, local wars were a "political process conducted by military means",\textsuperscript{6} or "political phenomena with a martial aspect".\textsuperscript{7} There is a dynamic of political bargaining which subordinates normal military parameters of victory on the battlefield to special reinterpretation in the light of political circumstances.\textsuperscript{8}

The military requirements that flow from the special nature of local wars involving the superpowers have been described in terms of the place of a particular war on the "attrition/manoeuvre spectrum":

The closer they are to the theoretical extreme of pure attrition, the more armed forces tend to be focused on their own internal administration and operations, being correspondingly less responsive

\textsuperscript{1} ibid pp3-10, 24-25
\textsuperscript{2} Deitchman op cit p115
\textsuperscript{3} cf Garnett op cit p125
\textsuperscript{4} Malcolm Hoag On Local War Doctrine Rand Corporation, Santa Monica CA, 1961, p3
\textsuperscript{6} Garnett op cit p125
\textsuperscript{7} Edward Luttwak Strategy and History - Collected Essays vol. 2, Transaction Books, New Brunswick, 1985, p203
\textsuperscript{8} Halperin Limited War in the Nuclear Age p30; Garnett op cit pp124-126; Stephen T Hosmer Constraints on US Strategy in Third World Conflicts Crane Russak and Company, New York NY, 1987, pp80-81; Hoag op cit p3
to the external environment comprising the enemy, [and] the specific phenomena of any one particular conflict...
By contrast, the closer they are to the relational-maneouvre end of the spectrum, the more armed forces tend to be outer-regarding...
...the keys to success are first the ability to interpret the external environment in all its aspects, subtle as well as obvious, and then to adapt one's own organisational formats, operational methods, and tactics to suit the requirements of the particular situation.¹

It was "simply unprofessional" to fight one type of war with forces equipped, trained and organised for the other.

This observation highlights the essential doctrinal dilemma for major powers which need to be ready both for general and local war. This is the question of force universality: the ease with which standard operating procedures devised for high attrition wars can be reconciled with the requirement in lower intensity conflicts to develop "one-place, one-time adaptive doctrines and methods"; and the interchangeability of personnel trained for high attrition operations and those trained for lower intensity operations with "one-time expertise, embodied in specific individuals with unique attributes".²

The implication for training of personnel was that forces for local or limited wars should be very familiar with their unique environment: both the terrain (desert, jungle, or mountainous) and the culture of the local forces (language and customs). The implication for force structure and unit training was that units and their equipment had to be optimised for the unique environment.

More specifically, it is possible to identify the following force structure priorities for the superpowers in local or limited wars:

- conventional rather than nuclear forces;
- readiness, but not necessarily sustainability or force size;
- naval and marine corps forces, especially aircraft carriers, land attack

¹ Luttwak op cit p198
² ibid p202
weapons, and forces for inshore shallow water operations; army airborne, air assault and light divisions; reserve components rather than standing active army and air force units; long range air force attack planes; anti-terrorist forces; airlift assets and afloat prepositioned materiel, but not necessarily sealift assets; and a narrower research and development effort focussing on selected technologies ... such as advanced naval mine countermeasure systems and stealthy equipment for special forces.¹

The superpowers had a requirement to fight two different types of local or limited war: against regular or conventional forces; and against irregular, guerilla forces. The counter-revolutionary or counter-insurgency function required specially designed units, with unique command structures, operational planning, targets, and personnel.²

A typology of local wars which contrasts the conventional and the unconventional aspect is not rendered useless by the observation that guerilla wars can grow into conventional warfare or vice versa.³ Two different types of forces are still needed for the conventional or unconventional phases of combat remain much the same, but their composition, quantities, training and deployment would be affected.

**US Limited War Strategy**

From the early 1950s, US military strategy embraced political and military concepts for limited war (including a range of operational concepts, force structure decisions, and specific training). US experience after the Second World War in planning for limited wars was extensive. According to one study:

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¹ Ronald O'Rourke "Defense Spending Priorities" Congressional Research Service Issues Brief, Washington DC, 26 January 1989, p4
² Sarkesian "The American Response to Low-Intensity Conflict" *loc cit* p22
³ Rice *op cit* pp148-149
The need for general purpose forces to implement the policy of containment had been foreseen before Korea and by 1955, it was accepted that the principal components of US defense policy included "American forces and allied forces strong enough to deter or suppress small-scale aggressions or disorders inimical to American interests in the "grey areas" of the world. ¹

But it was not until the 1960s that military planning, force structure and training began to be based on elaborated concepts specific to limited or local war.

Early in 1950, President Truman authorised the preparation of a strategic policy document to cope with perceived new threats to US security and perceived weaknesses in US ability to meet them. The National Security Council document which emerged, NSC 68, emphasised the importance of flexibility in US forces to match a variety of threats from the USSR and its satellites, including both general war and more limited conflict:

The mischief may be a global war or it may be a Soviet campaign for limited objectives. In either case we should take no avoidable initiative which would cause it to become a war of annihilation, and if we have the forces to defeat a Soviet drive for limited objectives it may well be in our interest not to let it become a global war. ²

For the authors of the paper, the flexibility being sought was vertical flexibility - the ability to escalate to general war - because they believed in a reasonable prospect of general war provoked by the USSR. This contrasted with other views, including those of George Kennan, whose ideas on containment had provided a starting point for the authors of the paper, and who believed that general war with the USSR was unlikely. Kennan had argued for horizontal flexibility - the ability to apply limited military force in a variety of contingencies at the same time

as relying on the other tools of international relations to achieve US objectives.¹

Many of the broad range of policy responses outlined in NSC 68 had their roots in domestic policy - especially persistent inter-service rivalries and debates over the total defence budget.² But the international circumstances postulated as the basis of the document included the prospect of a Soviet-initiated general war, as soon as Soviet military capability overtook American sufficiently to risk it - a condition judged likely to be reached in 1954.³ The paper identified war by proxy as the greatest danger until the USSR reached that point.

The Korean war undermined the exclusive preoccupation of American post-war strategists with general war.⁴ The USA confirmed in 1951 in a National Security Council document, its view of the need to limit its commitments in Korea. But the perception of need not to overcommit in Korea or against China sprang as much from the desire not to degrade general war posture as from consideration of the proportionality between interests and commitment in Korea.⁵

In 1954, President Eisenhower gave official sanction to the strategy of massive retaliation. The doctrine was based in part on presumed US inability to defeat the multi-million armies of the Sino-Soviet bloc without using nuclear weapons.⁶ It implied that the US would not become involved in limited wars, preferring to deter Soviet probes by threatening nuclear retaliation.⁷

In espousing this strategy, the USA was reacting to the "mounting costs" of having to "be ready to fight in the arctic and in the tropics; in Asia, the

¹ Gaddis op cit p101
² ibid p90
³ NSC 68 pp251, 267 cited in Gaddis op cit p97
⁵ Gaddis op cit p123
⁶ Haffa op cit pp18-20
⁷ ibid p20; Sarkesian "The American Response to Low-Intensity Conflict" loc cit p25
Near East and in Europe; by sea, by land and by air; with old weapons and with new weapons". The Government could not continue to meet those commitments "without grave budgetary, economic and social consequences".¹

Even with the strategy of massive retaliation, so-called "brushfire wars" or small, local wars were still seen as possible, and the US strategy for coping with these was predicated on the need for forces, American or allied, based in the theatre to hold a defensive position until US air and sea power, or the central strategic reserve of ground forces, could be deployed.² These wars were conceived of as small, not involving the Soviet Union directly, and of sufficiently low intensity to leave the brunt of the fighting to the allies concerned.³

But the doctrine of massive retaliation was not the essence of US military strategy, merely one of its elements. The main principle of the "New Look" doctrine advanced by the Eisenhower administration was that of asymmetrical response: reacting to challenges in ways that exploited one's own strengths, even if this meant changing the nature and location of the confrontation.⁴

This might involve what subsequently became called limited nuclear war:

the United States cannot afford to preclude itself from using nuclear weapons even in a local situation, if such use will bring the aggression to a swift and positive cessation, and if, on a balance of political and military consideration, such use will best advance U.S. security interests.⁵

Asymmetrical response also added to US strategy the element of keeping the USSR guessing about how it might respond to a particular crisis.

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² Haffa op cit pp20-21
³ ibid pp22-23
⁴ Gaddis op cit p147
⁵ NSC 162/2 "Basic National Security Policy" 30 October 1953, Modern Military Records Division, National Archives, p22 cited in Gaddis op cit p150
The integration of nuclear weapons into tactical considerations became more of a preoccupation in the 1950s, with the USA announcing in 1956 that it had activated its first Army division capable of fighting with nuclear weapons.¹

The late 1950s saw a gradual shift in American official policy away from a public doctrine of massive retaliation to one of flexible response. In 1957, President Eisenhower supported a Joint Resolution of Congress which declared that the USA was "prepared to use armed force to assist any nation or nations requesting assistance against armed aggression from any country controlled by international communism".²

Moves toward a US limited war strategy followed - as a natural consequence - the expansion of US interests in remote areas under the policy of containment, which by the mid-1950s had become a policy of encirclement.³

The framework for this policy was a series of security treaties signed by the USA or established under its sponsorship between 1949 and 1960.⁴ These would also provide, it was hoped, a mechanism for countering localised Soviet aggression.⁵

The essential elements of American local war strategy were

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¹ Halperin Limited War in the Nuclear Age pp59-61
² Sarkeesian "The American Response to Low-Intensity Conflict" loc cit p25
³ Gaddis op cit p153
⁴ The network included the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) set up in 1949; the ANZUS pact based on treaties signed with Australia and New Zealand in 1951; the South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) set up in 1954; and the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO) set up in 1955; and mutual security treaties with the Philippines (1951), South Korea (1953), Republic of China (1954), and Japan (1960). The USA was not a signatory to the Baghdad Pact between Turkey, Iran and Pakistan of 1955 but it sponsored the formation of the treaty and in 1959 signed bilateral security treaties with each of the parties. The USA also had security commitments to some countries, such as Israel, that have never been the subject of a formal - or at least public - treaty (John M Collins American and Soviet Military Trends since the Cuban Missile Crisis Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, Washington DC, 1978, p161).
⁵ Gaddis op cit p153
summarised as early as 1956 by Kaufmann, in one of the first post-war works on limited war:

the United States should still be able, with the help of indigenous forces, with mobility, well organized logistical facilities, great conventional firepower, and highly trained central reserves, not merely to match but actually to beat the enemy at this type of game. After all, Greece and Korea are not figments of the imagination.¹

By 1960, several major critiques of massive retaliation had been written, and the theoretical basis of limited war doctrine had been elaborated. Landmarks in the literature on limited war strategy included works by Brodie between 1954 and 1959;² a 1956 collection of essays edited by Kaufmann advocating a limited war strategy, *Military Policy and National Security;*³ 1957 books by Osgood, *Limited War: The Challenge to American Security,*⁴ and

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¹ William Kaufmann "Limited Warfare" in William Kaufmann (ed) *Military Policy and National Security* Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 1956, p122 cited in Halperin *Limited War in the Nuclear Age* p122. In the late 1950s, there was broad agreement in the USA on the need for rapid deployment capabilities, but there was little agreement on how that force might be composed. The Army took the lead, with the creation in 1958 of the Strategic Army Corps, comprising three divisions but lacking dedicated strategic airlift, organic tactical air power or closely coordinated tactical air support from the United States Air Force (USAF). The USAF concentrated on the primary strategic mission of massive retaliation, convinced that it had insufficient forces to meet this primary mission, let alone undefined limited contingencies elsewhere. The USAF did create a Composite Air Strike Force in the late 1950s for limited war missions, but these were conceived in the strategic nuclear bombing mode rather than as strategic air lift or close air support to ground forces. The Navy, including the USMC, continued to emphasise its independent power projection role rather than pay much attention to limited contingencies as a specific form of operation requiring joint force operations (Haffa *op cit* pp90-91).

² Bernard Brodie "Unlimited Weapons and Limited War" *The Reporter* XI, Nov 18 1954, pp16-21 presented the view that the USA must be prepared to fight limited wars if total war was to be avoided. See also Bernard Brodie "More about Limited War" *World Politics* 1957 (October) no. 10, pp112-122; "The Meaning of Limited War" Rand Memorandum RM-2224, July 30 1958; and *Strategy in the Missile Age* Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 1959. Chapter 9 of the book, which is largely about strategic deterrence, deals with local war planning as part of a comprehensive strategy.


Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*;\(^1\) and a 1959 book by retired Army General Maxwell Taylor, *The Uncertain Trumpet*.\(^2\)

The need to accommodate limited war strategies in the US force structure was included in the Democratic Party Platform of 1960, with specific demands for greater expenditure on diversity, mobility, and greater numbers of weapons and forces "to deter both limited and general aggressions".\(^3\)

As Huntington observed in 1961, US limited war doctrine was a home-grown US response to the post-War world:

The requirement for a limited war capability ... was not the direct result of a need to match some clearly identifiable increase in Soviet capabilities. ... The need for limited war forces flowed instead from Soviet development of strategic forces designed for general war. Logically, the argument that a nuclear balance of terror increased the likelihood of limited war seemed irrefutable. It did not, however, produce a concrete threat ... which could serve as a stimulus and a standard for the development of comparable American capabilities.\(^4\)

In particular, the US Army's early support for limited war doctrine in 1954 was the result of the threat posed to its traditional missions by preoccupation with nuclear weapons and long range delivery vehicles arising from total war strategies.\(^5\)

But the military requirements for limited conventional war were not met easily, and efforts to meet them were opposed by conservative officials and a system in which the limited war doctrine did not sit comfortably.\(^6\) The problem was aptly described in part in the following comment on the USA after the Second World War:

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\(^2\) Maxwell D Taylor *The Uncertain Trumpet* Harper & Bros, New York NY, 1959

\(^3\) Haffa *op cit* p25


\(^5\) *ibid* p345

\(^6\) *ibid* p342
the habits of mind linked to an institutional disposition for preparing for total war meant that the nation was seemingly disarmed in coming to terms with conflicts short of all-out war.\(^1\)

As Deitchman observed, the tactical forces with which the USA entered the Korean war were virtually all that could be spared from the central mission of defending Europe.\(^2\) Even after that, the US armed forces were developed with all eyes on the Soviet European threat, "to the virtual exclusion of possible wars elsewhere".\(^3\)

Coming to the Presidency on a platform which included a new military policy, John Kennedy wasted little time. In his first months, Kennedy read to his Cabinet Khrushchev's January 1961 speech on Soviet support for national liberation forces to justify his belief that the USSR was imbued with a "bellicose confidence" that "declared faith in victory through rebellion, subversion and guerilla warfare". Kennedy was firmly of the view that US doctrine and forces were inadequate to the threat posed by the USSR and world communism in localised conflicts.\(^4\)

In a message to Congress in March 1961, Kennedy outlined a new strategy based on the principle of "flexible response":

> to deter all wars, general or limited, nuclear or conventional, large or small - to convince all potential aggressors that any attack would be futile.\(^5\)

The following month, he elaborated: non-nuclear conflicts posed the "most serious threat to Free World security" but "do not justify and must not lead to a general

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1 William Olsen "The Concept of Small Wars" Small Wars and Insurgencies, 1990 (April) vol. 1, no. 1, p40
2 Deitchman op cit p2
3 ibid p3
4 Haffa op cit p28. The words in quotation were attributed by Haffa to an account by Arthur Schlesinger of the impact of the speech on President Kennedy.
5 cited in Gaddis op cit p214
nuclear attack".\footnote{1}

In a special message to Congress on 25 May 1961, he said:

I have directed a further reinforcement of our own capacity to deter or resist non-nuclear aggression. In the conventional field, with one exception, I find no need for large levies of men. What is needed is rather a change of position to give us still further increases in flexibility.\footnote{2}

The main elements of his proposed plan concerning limited war were:

- to reorganise the Army’s divisional structure to increase its non-nuclear firepower;
- to improve the army’s tactical mobility in any environment;
- to improve coordination with allies;
- to set up new airborne brigades in the Pacific and Europe;
- "to expand rapidly and substantially ... the orientation of existing forces for the conduct of non-nuclear war, para-military operations and sub-limited or unconventional wars";
- to increase the rapid deployment capability of Army reserve forces; and
- "to enhance the already formidable ability of the Marine Corps to respond to limited war emergencies".\footnote{3}

Three separate studies commissioned by the Government in 1961 highlighted deficiencies in US doctrine for limited war.\footnote{4}

In the next two years, US military planning began to move away from the notion that the West would gain a strategic advantage by using tactical nuclear weapons, and placed more emphasis on strengthening conventional forces.\footnote{5}

By 1963, limited war concepts began to take root in US military doctrine and studies had been conducted for limited war in Europe, the Middle East, Southeast and Northeast Asia.\footnote{6}

\footnote{1} cited in Gaddis \textit{op cit} p215
\footnote{2} quoted in Deitchman \textit{op cit} p4
\footnote{3} Deitchman \textit{op cit} pp4-5
\footnote{4} Haffa \textit{op cit} p27. The Assistant Secretary for Defense, Paul Nitze (the Limited War Study Committee), the Secretary of the Navy, John Connally, and Dr Luis Alvarez of the Lawrence Radiation Laboratory, each directed a separate study.
\footnote{5} Halperin \textit{Limited War in the Nuclear Age} p63
\footnote{6} Haffa \textit{op cit} p32
The new emphasis on limited wars did not detract in any way from attention to nuclear weapons, for which Kennedy implemented a procurement program well beyond that contemplated by Eisenhower.¹

In 1965, Secretary for Defense McNamara enunciated a unified doctrine to cope simultaneously with a large-scale war in Europe, low-level conflict in any region of the world (brushfire war), and a war resulting from direct attack by a communist state on its neighbour. This was the "two-and-a-half" war doctrine.²

Escalation in Vietnam after mid-1965 constrained the effectiveness of earlier planning aimed at expanding general purpose forces for the two-and-a-half war doctrine. By August 1967, when US forces already in or committed to Vietnam reached 500,000 troops, units had for the first time to be drawn from the central strategic reserve, thus rendering it unavailable for other, lesser contingencies.³

By 1969, a number of influences (the Vietnam war, US congressional pressure on defence spending, and realisation that the Sino-Soviet split reduced strategic pressure on the Western alliance) contributed to moves to redefine US global military strategy.⁴ In that year, President Nixon's National Security Adviser, Henry Kissinger, following a review of the assumptions of the two-and-a-half war strategy, recommended its replacement by a "one-and-a-half war" strategy, on the grounds that:

¹ Gaddis op cit p218 notes that by mid-1964, the number of available nuclear weapons had increased by 150 per cent, a 200 per cent boost in deliverable megatonnage, and ten additional Polaris submarines (for a total of 29) and 400 additional Minuteman missiles (for a total of 800) above the figures planned by Eisenhower.
² ibid pp32-33
³ ibid pp33-35
⁴ ibid pp38-39
a simultaneous Warsaw Pact attack in Central Europe and a Chinese conventional attack in Asia is unlikely. In any event, I do not believe such a simultaneous attack could or should be met with ground forces.¹

According to Kissinger, President Nixon and he agreed that the USA would avoid involvement in foreign civil wars and plan to fight a major war in either Europe or Asia, but not both, as well as more limited contingencies.²

On 3 November 1969, President Nixon outlined the new strategy in a press conference at Guam, and formalised it in his Foreign Policy Report on 18 February 1970. Its essential point was that while providing a nuclear shield to allies, the USA would expect the country directly threatened to provide the forces for its own defence.³

In terms of US military planning there was little change, since the force levels required for the two-and-a-half war concept had never been reached.⁴ Nixon had however made plain that insurgencies (a form of civil war) were best fought with economic and military aid short of direct US combat intervention.⁵

Apart from this obvious retreat from limited wars, the US armed forces may have lost confidence in their ability to counter Soviet-sponsored aggression in small wars. As Osgood wrote in 1973:

The popular disaffection with the Vietnamese war does not indicate a reversion to pre-Korea attitudes towards limited war. Rather it indicates serious questioning of the premises about the utility of limited war as an instrument of American policy, the premises that originally moved the proponents of limited war strategy and that underlay the original confidence of the Kennedy Administration in

¹ Henry Kissinger White House Years Little, Brown & Co, Boston MASS, 1979, p221 cited in Haffa op cit p41
² Haffa op cit p42
³ ibid p41
⁴ ibid p42 citing Secretary for Defense Laird in his 1970 Posture Statement
America's power to cope with local Communist insurrections of all kinds.\footnote{1}

In 1974, Defense Secretary Schlesinger admitted - in the wake of the 1973 Arab-Israel War - that US forces were even inadequate for the one-and-a-half war strategy.\footnote{2} By 1976, the strategic concept of one-and-a-half wars had been turned upside down, with the lesser contingency (the half war) coming to greater prominence.\footnote{3}

Review by President Carter in 1977 of the bases of US military strategy preserved the "one-and-a-half" war concept but placed most emphasis on a big war in Europe and a potentially explosive small war, in the Persian Gulf or elsewhere. Soon, the mismatch between US forces designed for the major war in Europe and the requirements for much more mobile forces in a Persian Gulf scenario became apparent.\footnote{4}

A planned withdrawal of US forces from Korea, announced in 1977, also drew considerable attention to the need for highly mobile reaction forces.\footnote{5}

A strategy review completed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1978 recognised the need for a joint service rapid deployment force, questioning the value of the one-and-a-half war concept and raising the prospect of direct Soviet participation in a half-war scenario. By mid-June 1979, proposals for such a force were being considered, including a 100,000 man strike force, increased access to Indian Ocean basing, and greater military cooperation with friendly countries in the

\footnote{2} "Schlesinger Seeks More Army Divisions" Washington Post 17 October 1974 cited in Haffa op cit p49
\footnote{3} Haffa op cit p49
\footnote{4} ibid pp53-56
\footnote{5} ibid p57
Middle East.

By the end of 1979, US national security policy and strategic doctrine were in ferment. The US loss of influence in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan forced the formulation of the Carter doctrine based on a new premise that the USSR could now operate military forces simultaneously in several parts of the world. The USA began at this time to consider more vigorously than ever before the use of military force against the USSR in non-NATO scenarios. The new thinking became a "one war and two half-wars" scenario.

US forces for a non-NATO contingency became the subject of a separate chapter in the Department of Defense Annual Report presented at the end of 1980:

When this administration came into office four years after the 1973 oil embargo, we found that the United States had little or no capability for quickly deploying military forces to that critical area of the world. ... While the potential missions of Rapid Deployment Forces are global, in practice most of our planning and programming has focused on Southwest Asia.

The early Reagan years saw specific rejection of the "half war" concept in favour of reliance on new strategies of horizontal escalation (fighting on other fronts where damage would be unacceptable to the USSR), coupled with a complex posture of global confrontation with the sole enemy, the USSR. A new element of the confrontation was reassertion of US naval supremacy. In response to Soviet exploitation of civil wars in the Third World, especially Central America, and US determination to use military assets to undermine the Soviet occupation of

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1 ibid pp60-62
2 ibid pp60-65. Haffa is citing the phrase from comments by Under-Secretary of Defense, Robert Komor, to the Senate Committee on Armed Services in 1980.
4 Haffa op cit pp228-230
Afghanistan, the USA paid considerably more attention to the doctrine of low intensity conflict. This doctrine embodied, for the first time since the end of the Vietnam war, a more vigorous US para-military effort to oppose what it saw as Soviet expansionism.

The doctrine demonstrated a new willingness to engage the USSR in low risk conflicts, almost exclusively in the Third World. This doctrine was a restatement of Kennedy’s pledge to "pay any price ... support any friend, oppose any foe", but it was conceived within the framework of low-risk engagements. As in the Kennedy era, Defense Secretary Weinberger in 1983 saw the military skills required for low intensity conflict as found "chiefly ... in our special operations forces".1

As the Reagan Administration’s determination to confront and oppose the "evil empire" - grew, the strategists took the necessary steps to put behind them the perceived mistakes of the Vietnam War era. In 1984, in a major address on the uses of military power, Weinberger listed six tests to be applied when considering the commitment of United States forces to combat. These were:

US forces should not be committed to combat abroad unless the national interest or that of allies is at stake;

the USA must have a clear intention of winning the engagement;

political and military objectives must be clearly defined, along with a means for achieving those objectives;

there must be continuous reassessment of the conditions, objectives and combat requirements, with adjustments as necessary;

there must be reasonable assurance of popular support; and

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the commitment of US forces should be a last resort.\textsuperscript{1}

By 1985, the US Navy was advocating a new version of the concept of horizontal escalation for major war in Europe - the so-called "maritime strategy". This strategy envisioned US naval forces countering the Soviet Navy worldwide to win a war in Europe. The strategy, while expressed in terms of general war, was used to justify the US Navy's plans for 15 carrier battle groups and a 600 ship fleet.\textsuperscript{2}

The Weinberger Doctrine and the determination to maintain powerful interventionary naval forces under the maritime strategy together represented a potent limited war doctrine, although the ambitious targets for the Navy were not reached.

The 1988 Report of the Commission on Integrated Long Term Strategy, prepared for the Department of Defense, called for even greater efforts in developing strategies for operations in limited, conventional force conflicts in Europe, the Far East, or the Third World.\textsuperscript{3}

The US-led Gulf War against Iraq in 1991 was in many respects the culmination of decades of effort in perfecting plans for limited war. Although not against the USSR and largely facilitated by the end of Cold War, it demonstrated US Governmental determination to apply the Weinberger doctrine.\textsuperscript{4}

\textsuperscript{1} cited in Bernard F McMahon "Low Intensity Conflict: the Pentagon's Foible" Orbis Winter, 1990, p12
\textsuperscript{2} \textit{ibid} p8
\textsuperscript{4} In some respects, the existence of the Weinberger doctrine, in particular its link between ability to achieve clearly defined political and military objectives and a decision in favour of use of force, may have predisposed the US Government to the action it took.
US Force Structure for Limited War

Planning for wars outside US territory requires a choice between rapid deployment of a central reserve ("strategic mobility capability") and the basing of forces outside the country, or a combination of both.¹ Forward basing provides several advantages, especially deterrence through the so-called trip-wire effect.² In US calculations, forward basing also had disadvantages, especially lack of flexibility and mobility, if the limited contingency broke out distant from the force bases.³

The US accepted a combination of a home-based central reserve, dedicated to responding anywhere in the world, with forward basing of equipment and supplies appropriate to particular regions.⁴ The choice was backed with deployments of troops, naval forces and air forces in the key theatres of Europe and Northeast Asia for much of the post-war period.

The most visible changes to US force structure in response to the new limited war missions came in the areas of command structures and in special forces, but naval and airborne forces, while undergoing less change, were important elements of the strategy.

Command Structures In 1961, a unified Strike Command was established to meet the limited contingency (half war) requirement but it had

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¹ Haffa op cit p156. This view was expressed by Neville Brown in a 1963 study when he observed that the world-wide distribution of "Anglo-American" forces reflected a compromise between specially assigned reserve forces on home territory, garrison forces in flashpoints, or overseas-based theatre reserves (Neville Brown Strategic Mobility Chatto & Windus, London UK, 1963, p27).
² Haffa op cit pp146-147
³ ibid p147
⁴ ibid pp148-152
responsibility only for the tactical air and army assets assigned.\textsuperscript{1} By December 1963, its missions had been more fully articulated as follows:

- to conduct operations in the Middle east, Southern Asia and Africa south of the Sahara;
- to augment other unified commands;
- to execute contingency missions as the Joint Chiefs might direct;
- to develop a doctrine for the employment of forces assigned;
- to be responsible for the joint training of forces assigned; and
- to conduct joint training exercises to ensure maintenance of a high state of combat effectiveness and a rapid reaction capability.\textsuperscript{2}

Strike Command suffered from the outset from the lack of full-time assigned forces, the exclusion of naval and marine forces, conflict with geographic unified commands in likely hot spots, and the continued allegiance of assigned army and air force commanders to their single services.\textsuperscript{3} Another principal weakness was its universality: its mission to go "anywhere, anytime".\textsuperscript{4} Kennedy’s Defense Secretary, McNamara, had opined that US limited war forces should be capable of dealing "with the entire spectrum" of limited contingencies.\textsuperscript{5} In the first five years of Strike Command’s existence, 22 separate contingency plans were drawn up; and in a representative 18 month period in 1962-1963 it participated in 27 joint operations, including exercises as far flung as Alaska, the Philippines, the Caribbean and Europe.\textsuperscript{6}

The force universality of Strike Command led to the other major

\textsuperscript{1} \textit{ibid} p93. Strike Command comprised the Strategic Army Corps, the USAF Tactical Air Command and the Composite Air Strike Force.
\textsuperscript{2} Joe Wagner "Strike Command - Paper Tiger or Peacemaker" \textit{Armed Forces Management} October 1963 cited in Haffa \textit{op cit} pp93-94. Haffa also cites Strike Command OPLAN 7080 (15 September 1970).
\textsuperscript{3} Haffa \textit{op cit} pp94-95, 100-102. A number of military operations in the 1960s, including the Cuban crisis in October 1962, demonstrated the pre-eminence of the unified commands over Strike Command.
\textsuperscript{4} \textit{ibid} pp100-101
\textsuperscript{5} US Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, Hearings on H.R. 7851, 87th Congress, 1st session, USGPO, Washington DC, 1961, p25 cited in Haffa \textit{op cit} p100
\textsuperscript{6} Haffa \textit{op cit} p100
weakness of US limited war strategy: the use of forces designed for general war in a limited war. The Vietnam War showed that the general purpose forces were less flexible than had been thought:


nor did the prevailing concept that conventional forces designed to meet the worst-case contingency - high-intensity, non-nuclear conflict - would also be suitable for lesser contingencies prove to be as valid as expected.¹

US forces in Vietnam encountered major difficulties in applying command and control arrangements designed for major war, including the conflicting priorities of agencies outside the military command, such as State Department and CIA.²

On 8 July 1971, the US announced that Strike Command would be dissolved, and its functions assumed by US unified commands throughout the world.³ These commands, as well-established entities whose focus was confined to specific regions, presented a solid basis for a limited war, the essence of which had to be the ability to respond to the unique circumstances of each war, particularly those of terrain, climate and probable enemy.

At much the same time, in 1972, Readiness Command, was set up as the immediate institutional successor to Strike Command as a limited contingency force. Readiness Command had no operational command in the event of hostilities, was responsible only for training forces, and had no specific geographic area of responsibility. It lacked any sense of mission.⁴

By 1974, under pressure of events in the Middle East, the USA

¹ *ibid* p104
³ Haffa *op cit* p105
⁴ *ibid* p107. The low profile of Readiness Command and the institutionalised constraints on its ability to provide ready reaction forces were the direct result of the period of foreign policy retrenchment that followed the Vietnam experience and the Guam doctrine (p109).
began paying attention again to the outbreak of limited war and the need for forces in that theatre, although it took until 1980 to establish officially the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF). This force was established as subordinate to Readiness Command, and at its inception was not assigned a specific geographic area of responsibility. Its mission, to "deploy and employ forces in response to contingencies threatening US interests anywhere in the world", was still based on the theory of force universality or force versatility.¹

By the end of 1980, the Persian Gulf region emerged as the focus of responsibility of the RDJTF, and the most likely perceived enemy became the USSR. The narrowing focus of the RDJTF led to its removal from Readiness Command. A proposal to establish a new theatre command in the Middle East received little support in the services, but by early 1981 the Secretary for Defense announced plans to create a separate unified command. Central Command was formally established in January 1983.²

It took over some areas previously under the responsibility of the European and Pacific Commands, and comprised subordinate Service Component commands of all the services, thus overcoming a number of the inter-service problems that existed with the RDJTF. It had much in common with other unified commands and few characteristics of a rapid deployment force designed to extinguish brushfire wars anywhere in the world. As in other unified commands, its single service components were responsible to their service chiefs for daily operations and training. At the same time, the presence of the components in a central staff enhanced service cooperation better than the weaker organisation of the

¹ *ibid* pp112-114, 128
² *ibid* pp128-129, 227-228
RDJTF.\textsuperscript{1}

The creation of Central Command marked a departure from the concept of a strong, central reserve force with a versatile command structure to respond to a wide variety of contingencies. Yet the reliance on versatility of forces and the hope that forces would not be needed simultaneously in different areas were not eliminated, since many of the units assigned to Central Command could also be assigned to other commands.\textsuperscript{2} And the need for rapid deployment forces based in the continental USA to respond in lower priority contingencies, such as in Africa, Central America or the Caribbean, remained very much a factor in US force planning.\textsuperscript{3}

**Special Forces** The US Government consistently regarded special forces as an important tool in limited war.\textsuperscript{4} It was in them that the requirement to mould forces according to a specific region (the distinguishing feature of local or limited war) was given most prominence.

The first permanent Army organisation in the USA with a formal

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\textsuperscript{1} *ibid* pp234-236

\textsuperscript{2} *ibid* p240. The effectiveness of Central Command using US forces assigned from other Commands, including in Europe, was demonstrated in Operation Desert Shield in late 1990 and in the war against Iraq (Desert Storm) in 1991. It is an open question whether the scale of redeployment of US forces undertaken in the war against Iraq would have been considered at the height of the Cold War.

\textsuperscript{3} *ibid* pp129, 240-241

\textsuperscript{4} Maurice Tugwell and David Charters "Special Operations in US Strategy" in Barnett, Tovar and Shultz (eds) *op cit* p35 define special operations as:

- Small-scale, clandestine, covert or overt operations of an unorthodox and frequently high-risk nature, undertaken to achieve significant political or military objectives ...
- Special operations are characterised by ... the discriminate use of violence, and by oversight at the highest level.

These operations did not sit easily with the American political system or many military professionals, despite the use of unconventional operations by the USA in its War of Independence, some of its Indian wars (1836-1843), the Spanish American war (1898) and the Filipino insurrection (1898-1901) (Sarkesian "Organizational Strategy and Low Intensity Conflicts* *loc cit* pp263-264).
mission of unconventional operations was set up during the Korean War in 1952.\(^1\) Its mission was to infiltrate the enemy’s sphere of influence and train indigenous guerilla fighters to complement operations by US regular forces.\(^2\) Roles included organising resistance groups, running agent networks, agent training, espionage, sabotage, guerilla warfare.

Shortly after the Korean War, US special forces were at their nadir, with total strength standing at 2,000.\(^3\) With President Kennedy’s foreign policy based on the principle of "go anywhere" and "bear any burden", special forces began a period of growth that extended into the Vietnam War.\(^4\) A Special Group (Counter-Insurgency) was set up in January 1962 to coordinate policy.\(^5\) These forces refocussed their attention on counter-insurgency operations rather than

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\(^1\) Sarkesian "Organizational Strategy and Low Intensity Conflicts" *loc cit* p263. This unit, the 10th Special Forces (SF) Group (Airborne), was organised around the concept of 15 man teams trained in a range of skills from intelligence collection, and demolitions to basic medical care. The men were trained to operate with foreign equipment and to operate in small, isolated teams in a foreign environment for long periods of time (Sarkesian "The American Response to Low Intensity Conflict" *loc cit* p35) This centre, under the Psychological Warfare Center, which had been set up one year earlier at Fort Bragg, North Carolina was renamed the Special Warfare Center in 1956, then the John F. Kennedy Center for Military assistance in 1969, to become the basis of the 1st Special Operations Command in 1982 (Alfred H. Paddock "Psychological Operations, Special Operations and US Strategy" in Barnett, Tovar and Shultz (eds) *op cit* p244).

\(^2\) Sarkesian "The American Response to Low Intensity Conflict" *loc cit* p35

\(^3\) ibid p36. Although the 10th had been assigned to Germany, and a new unit, the 77th, had been raised in Fort Bragg, lack of sympathy in the Army hierarchy with the value of the special forces in Germany saw the 10th SF Group reduced from 800 to 400 by the mid-1950s. In 1956, two SF detachments were formed in the Pacific (Hawaii and Japan), to become the 1st SF Group (Airborne) based in Okinawa a year later. By 1961, the 1st SF Group had 123 officers and 586 men, organised into four separate detachments assigned to four separate geographic based missions: Southeast Asia; China; Korea; Okinawa and Japan (Leroy Thompson *De Oppresso Liber - The Illustrated History of the US Army Special Forces* Paladin Press, Boulder CO, 1987, pp23, 33).

\(^4\) Sarkesian "The American Response to Low Intensity Conflict" *loc cit* p37. By the mid-1960s, four Special Action Forces (SAF) had been formed, each with a 1,500 strong SF Group, a civil affairs group, a psychological operations battalion, an engineer detachment, a medical detachment, an intelligence detachment, and a signals intelligence unit. The four SAF each had a specific geographic area of responsibility: the Far East (1st), Latin America (8th), Africa (3rd) and the Middle East (6th). There remained three additional smaller SF detachments, such as the 10th SF Group in Germany. These SF units provided special forces training to foreign countries in their area of responsibility where possible. The SF School went from producing 500 graduates in the mid-1950s to 3,000 per year (Thompson *op cit* p42).

\(^5\) McLintock *Instruments of Statecraft* p163
operations against Soviet targets behind their front line.\textsuperscript{1} Naval special forces were set up in 1962.\textsuperscript{2}

The role of special forces in Vietnam came to the fore in May 1961 when as a result of the deterioration of South Vietnam's position, Kennedy approved the assignment of 400 US special forces personnel to act as trainers and advisers to the Army of the Republic of Vietnam, especially to its special forces. He also ordered a campaign of clandestine warfare in North Vietnam to be conducted by South Vietnamese personnel trained by CIA and US special forces.\textsuperscript{3}

Later in 1961, he approved special operations by US personnel in Laos against North Vietnamese forces. Responsibility for conducting unconventional warfare in North Vietnam was transferred from the CIA to the Army in December 1963. The special forces groups in Vietnam were under a Special Assistant for Counter-Insurgency and Special Activities in the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Their operations had little success, so their mission was redirected after October 1965 from infiltration to harassment, destruction of enemy forces, and intelligence collection activities.\textsuperscript{4}

The counter-insurgency era began with Kennedy and the April 1961

\textsuperscript{1} Sarkesian "The American Response to Low Intensity Conflict" \textit{loc cit} pp36-37
\textsuperscript{2} McLintock \textit{Instruments of Statecraft} p350
\textsuperscript{3} Charles M Simpson III \textit{Inside the Green Berets: the First Thirty Years - A History of the US Army Special Forces} Presidio, Novato CA, 1983, p144
\textsuperscript{4} Simpson \textit{op cit} pp144-147; Sarkesian "The American Response to Low Intensity Conflict" \textit{loc cit} p38. Hit and run raids and intelligence missions became primary missions, while psychological operations against the popular support base of the guerillas were not a high priority.
Bay of Pigs operation, and faded away with the US withdrawal from Vietnam,¹ reviving temporarily under President Reagan, when low intensity conflict provided a rationale.²

Along with ready acceptance of the interventionary role of designated airborne units, the US Army also began to develop battlefield mobility concepts that broadened the concept of airborne forces, in association with the Kennedy Administration’s introduction of the flexible response doctrine.³

Airlift assets were considerably augmented under the Kennedy and Johnson administrations as a complement to the forward strategy and limited war

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¹ McLintock *Instruments of Statecraft* p162, 348. Special Forces personnel had peaked at 13,000 in 7 Groups in 1969, dropping to three active Groups in 1974. By 1970, of 249 separate camps and installations built for US special forces, only 49 were still active (Simpson *op cit* pp199, 202). The USA could not sustain the high numbers of SF personnel in Vietnam that it committed itself to, because of declining recruitments and declining interest among serving members to volunteer for reassignment to Vietnam (Shelby Stanton *Green Berets at War - US Army Special Forces in Southeast Asia, 1956-1975* Presidio, Novato CA, 1985, pp167-170). The advent of anti-Western terrorist groups in the early 1970s put a renewed emphasis on US special forces, but changed their missions somewhat to include anti-hijack and hostage rescue roles (Sarkesian "The American Response to Low Intensity Conflict" *loc cit* p42). Even so, by 1980, the total strength of SF units was only 3,000, which was less than the peak strength of just one SF Group in 1968 (McLintock *Instruments of Statecraft* p348).

² Sarkesian "Organizational Strategy and Low Intensity Conflicts" *loc cit* p263. In 1982, a reversal began when the Army Special Operations Command was established. Active duty SF forces in the three services rose from 11,600 in 1981 to 14,900 in 1985, with a 1990 target of 20,900. Reserve SF strength also grew, with the 1990 target being 17,600 (McLintock *op cit* p348). While the bulk of the special forces assets were in the Army (9,100 active duty personnel in 1987), the US Air Force also had impressive assets (4,100 active duty personnel, a Special Operations Air Wing and Five Special Operations squadrons, including one in the Philippines and one in Germany). The Navy had 1,700 SF troops by 1986, and the CIA’s unconventional warfare capabilities had also been built up (McLintock *Instruments of Statecraft* pp349-350). Funding for the special operations in FY 1988 was $2.5 billion, compared with $440 million in 1981 (Kenneth Brooten, Jr "The US Special Operations Command" *Journal of Defense & Diplomacy* vol. 5 no. 10 1987 pp22-23).

³ Airborne operations relying on small scale air fleets became a central element of strategically mobile forces of the major powers after the Second World War - from the Dutch airborne landing on Magewo airfield in Java in 1948, through 156 separate parachute assaults by French troops in Vietnam between 1946 and 1954, to the Malayan Emergency, the Algerian Revolutionary War, the Arab-Israel War of 1956, and the Suez crisis. A 1962 study commissioned by Defense Secretary McNamara recommended the complete integration of air mobility into the Army field force and the formation of air mobile divisions, with light scales of equipment and weapons. After some trials and the establishment of a training unit, McNamara approved in 1965 the formation of a full strength air mobile division. The 1st Cavalry Division (Air Mobile) was ordered to Vietnam in July 1965 (Maurice Tugwell *Airborne to Battle - A History of Airborne Warfare 1918-1971* William Kimber, London UK, 1971, pp289-315, pp318-319).
planning. For example, the incoming Kennedy administration announced funding in June 1961 for 129 new long range transport aircraft compared with the 50 previously programmed. McNamara called for a 100 per cent increase in airlift capacity by 1964. Yet when 1964 arrived, he was forced to acknowledge that the USA was still "obviously far short of any reasonable goal" with respect to airlift capabilities for the first 30 days of a large-scale war in a remote area.

Regular study and review of rapid deployment transport support, by air and sea, became a feature of strategic analysis after 1964. By 1970, the demands of the Vietnam war on US airlift capacity made support of any other limited war contingency impossible, causing a Congressional panel to conclude that airlift support for even a one-and-a-half war strategy was questionable.

The 1973 Middle East War provoked renewed interest in strategic transport assets, especially airlift, but very quickly the need for increased airlift for rapid deployment in a limited contingency outside NATO faded. But events in Iran, Cuba and Afghanistan in 1979, and the formal establishment of the RDJTF in 1980, put the need for bolstered airlift and sealift assets on the agenda again. New air transport acquisitions were planned and decisions on afloat prepositioned stocks were announced in 1979. The focus of the new strategic mobility assets was very clearly on the Persian Gulf region. The new goals were not reached in the early 1980s, partly because of past funding shortfalls, but also because the new requirement after 1979 to combat the USSR in the Persian Gulf imposed new

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1 ibid pp156-158, 168
2 McNamara's Posture Statement of January 29 1964 cited in Haffa op cit p169
3 Brown op cit p157; Haffa op cit pp157-159. A decision was made in 1965 to begin construction of a new class of Fast Deployment Logistic Ships.
4 Haffa op cit p170
demands on transport support.¹

**Naval Forces** After 1945, debate about the future size of the US fleet and the role of super-carriers erupted into the "Admirals' revolt", fuelled in part by their disenchantedment with the predominance accorded strategic (nuclear) bombing and massive retaliation over a more flexible strategy which also took account of limited wars.²

Defense Secretary Johnson, opposed the Navy’s views and declared only months before the Korean War began, that amphibious landings were a thing of the past. That war vindicated the admirals because the Navy provided shore bombardment; carrier strikes against bridges, supply depots and transport; close air support for ground troops; amphibious landings - and evacuations - and logistical support for the Army. By 1951, six 78,000 ton carriers were laid down, only two years after Secretary Johnson had cancelled a 60,000 ton carrier.³

In the 1950s, the Navy was regularly called on to defend US interests in localised conflicts in the Mediterranean, the Caribbean and the Taiwan Strait. The intervention of the Sixth Fleet in Lebanon in July 1958 showed that the USA had a decisive, rapid reaction force that served to undermine Soviet

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¹ *ibid* pp176-183, 184, 191
² Nathan Miller *The U.S. Navy - A History* Revised edition, Quill, William Morrow, New York NY, 1990, pp248-249. There had been a rapid demobilisation and contraction of the United States Navy - from more than 3 million men and women on active service at the time of the surrender to about half a million one year later; and construction was halted on 9,800 vessels, mostly small craft; another 2,000 were decommissioned or mothballed, and an even larger number were declared surplus.
³ *ibid* pp251, 254
pretensions to be seen as a defender of its new Arab allies.\textsuperscript{1}

In 1961, the USA had 16 aircraft carriers in operation. They were joined in 1962 by the nuclear powered USS Enterprise. These carriers, supported by another 860 ships in the active fleet, were regarded at the time as "a major element in the limited war posture" of the USA.\textsuperscript{2} Even in 1963, the carriers were "becoming less and less suitable for general war purposes" but were still "subtle, flexible and powerful instruments of local deterrence".\textsuperscript{3}

By the mid-1970s, the US Navy had been reduced to 460 ships in commission, its lowest level for forty years.\textsuperscript{4} Yet US naval power in the 1970s did not necessarily decline. At least 13 attack carriers were in service throughout the decade, and helicopter carriers were increased from 7 to 11 by 1979.\textsuperscript{5} Numbers of destroyers fell slightly, but numbers of frigates and nuclear attack submarines increased by a factor of three.\textsuperscript{6}

**Force Structure: An Assessment** US Force structure developed in an *ad hoc* manner in response to the strategic guidance about limited contingencies or half wars. In particular, only gradual and incomplete recognition was given to the four organisational elements critical to the preparation of a limited contingency force:

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\textsuperscript{1} Miller *The US Navy* pp256-257. By 1963, the US Marine Corps totalled 200,000 men, comprising three divisions - one on each coast of the USA and one in Okinawa. The fleet of amphibious assault ships included four Helicopter Assault Ships, ranging from 10,000 tons to 38,000 tons. There were also 79 tank landing ships (4,000-6,000 tons), and 15 larger ships. Fifteen attack transports had been added to the amphibious fleet in 1961 (Brown *op cit* p112).

\textsuperscript{2} *ibid* pp116-117

\textsuperscript{3} *ibid* p119

\textsuperscript{4} Miller *The US Navy* p268


\textsuperscript{6} *ibid* p565
unity of command;
stability in forces assigned;
consistency in assigned mission (specific scenario and adversary);
and
proper basic training to equip assigned forces for the
specific theatre.¹

Against these criteria, US attempts to plan rapid deployment forces between 1960
and 1980 were not successful.²

It could be argued that the American national security apparatus was
basically unsuited to the conduct of limited wars. Various constraints existed, such
as public opinion and disagreement between the President and Congress over war
powers. But the reluctance of the armed forces to prepare suitably for such wars,
and the inability of the higher command authorities to conduct limited wars with
the finesse and firmness required, were "deeper, more permanent, and more
dangerous problems".³

In another sense though, the United States armed forces may have
been better prepared than some commentators were willing to admit. As the critic
cited in the preceding paragraph acknowledged, limited wars were likely to occur
simultaneously, and therefore a force structure solution based on a single small war
"fire brigade" could not have hoped to cover all contingencies.⁴ Failure to grasp the
limited war nettle firmly did not mean the difference between being able to fight
and not being able to fight. Rather it meant the difference between fighting well
and fighting poorly.⁵

¹ Haffa op cit p82
² ibid p222. Haffa observed: "Strategic concepts containing the 'half war' were only partially
formed, organizations were factionated, support was neglected".
³ Eliot A Cohen "Constraints on America's Conduct of Small Wars" International Security Fall 1984
vol. 9, no. 2, republished in Steven E Miller and M Lynn Jones (eds) Conventional Forces and
⁴ ibid p354
⁵ ibid p355
Such debates notwithstanding, the paradox is that limited war theory and planning never had a consistent influence on US strategic thinking. As one observer noted in the 1980s:

Despite nearly forty years of experience of small wars and no war with the Soviets, the essence of military thought and planning continues to derive from big war scenarios.¹

The central preoccupation of US strategy remained the prospect of general nuclear war.

**Conclusion**

Local or limited war was identified in Soviet and American strategic commentary as distinct from general or central war, or world war. Both superpowers assumed a vital link between local or limited wars and the central balance of power.

Opinion on what constituted limited or local war was not unanimous. To many commentators, there was little distinction between the term "limited war", as understood in official US doctrine, and the preferred Soviet term "local war". The irony is that US official doctrine rejected the term "local war" and Soviet official doctrine rejected the term "limited war".

Most definitions did not preclude the possibility of a local nuclear war in central Europe. Some scholars suggested deterred conflicts should also be considered.

It was widely accepted in the USA that local war forces would be different from general war forces, to reflect different priorities in force structure, such as conventional rather than nuclear forces; readiness, but not necessarily

¹ Olsen *op cit* pp40, 45
sustainability or force size; naval and marine corps forces, especially aircraft carriers, land attack weapons, and forces for inshore shallow water operations; army airborne, air assault and light divisions; reserve components rather than standing active army and air force units; and airlift as opposed to sealift assets.

It was accepted that local war creates a tension within professional military forces whose raison d'être is general war, posing a doctrinal dilemma, since forces would find it difficult to be ready to fight both types of war. Counter-revolutionary or counter-insurgency mission in certain local wars required yet another set of forces, command structures, planning, and personnel. Forces for these sorts of wars needed special familiarity with their specific operating environment - in terms of terrain (desert, jungle, or mountainous) and culture of the local forces (language and customs).

The US armed forces had difficulties coming to grips with limited war issues, but by the end of the 1960s they began to address the problems more or less comprehensively.

The continuing requirement to guard against the possibility of general nuclear war constrained in several important respects the way in which forces were developed, but victory (or at least not losing) in limited wars was seen as a sufficiently vital element of the central strategic competition between NATO and the USSR to warrant development of specific capabilities for such wars. The global scope of US limited war strategy followed - as a natural consequence - the expansion of its interests in remote areas of the world under the policy of containment.

In some respects, the USA relied on the questionable versatility of force elements designed for general war to adapt to limited wars. For example, US
special forces trained for roles in both general war and in limited wars. In the event, these units had many combat missions in limited wars and none in a general war. But more importantly, the size and disposition of US special forces depended almost entirely on the changes in US limited war policy.

The USA was not content to rely on forces designed for general nuclear war to fight limited wars. It rejected the notion that a trained soldier could fight just as well in any region against any enemy, and US forces made special efforts (language training and in-country exercises) to train for a variety of regions.

The balance between the USA’s limited war forces and general war forces, or more accurately between their missions, rarely remained the same for long. Within limited war planning, the balance between forward based forces and home based reserves also changed over time.

US efforts to meet limited war requirements were heavily influenced by bureaucratic and political struggles, involving the armed forces, Congress and successive Administrations. These battles also flared between single services within the armed forces.

The concept of limited nuclear war figured most prominently in US strategy when there was lack of confidence in US strategic power, with the feeling of insecurity centred on the inability to deliver sufficient conventional military power to match Soviet military power in important theatres remote from US territory, most notably in the late 1950s and early 1960s in respect of Europe, and in the late 1970s in respect of the Persian Gulf.
CHAPTER THREE

SOURCES OF EVIDENCE FOR SOVIET MILITARY DOCTRINE

Military doctrine is an inherently subjective phenomenon, encompassing scientific knowledge and expertise about the conduct of war on the one hand, and, on the other, traditions and political assumptions about how to prepare the armed forces for war and how to fight. Military doctrine, as a set of beliefs about strategy, can be highly structured and widely disseminated, or little more than the ideas shared by the senior military leaders of a particular country.¹

Evidence of a country’s military doctrine may therefore be found in two types of sources - formal (highly structured and officially endorsed) or informal (less structured and more individualistic). Formal sources would be command decisions of the armed forces, force structure decisions, field regulations and manuals, course material of military academies, and official statements of doctrine by military and political leaders. Informal sources would include personal views of military officers, such as those found in the military press, journals or memoirs.

Informal sources represent only personal opinions, although in some countries such sources make up the more substantial part of visible military doctrine.² A case would need to be made for attributing any particular informal source of evidence the quality and reliability of a formal source.

¹ Military leaders in a country include the political figures who direct the armed forces as well as the highest command authorities in the uniformed services.
² Some countries, such as India, do not have formal statements of military doctrine at the national level in the same way as the USA and USSR did during the Cold War.
The formal and informal sources of evidence can be termed direct sources. Indirect sources of evidence of military doctrine also exist:

Equipment and field organisations are ... very firm indicators of trends, and an experienced military observer should be able to foretell intentions, even a whole military philosophy, by analysing the general pattern of equipment and organisation ...¹

The indirect sources may be more reliable for assessing practical implementation of doctrine than either the formal or informal sources mentioned above. In particular, they could potentially be far more reliable than informal sources, which offer no *prima facie* evidence of a country's military planning.²

This chapter discusses the evidentiary limitations on the information available to US scholars about the Soviet armed forces, and the implications of the fact that much of that information came from the US intelligence community.³

In particular, the chapter canvasses the possibility that US intelligence assessments in the period 1950 to 1960, and the frame of reference of US intelligence analysis after 1960, set parameters for subsequent CIA work to such an extent that many scholars could not escape their influence. The primary feature of this influence was preoccupation with evidence of Soviet general war planning to the exclusion of lesser scales of war.⁴

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¹ Albert Seaton and Joan Seaton *The Soviet Army - 1918 to the Present* The Bodley Head, London UK, 1986, p171
² *ibid*
³ This is not to imply *ipso facto* anything about the quality of such information or the important purposes open source publication of it served, but to register the point that primary sources for the scholarly study of government policies are usually their own documents recording their decisions, memoirs of key players and domestic records of the implementation of the policies, not a foreign intelligence agency's assessments.
⁴ The implication of this suggestion is that the framing of intelligence collection requirements and the questions agencies were asked to answer unduly restricted the scope and quality of the assessments that were being made.
Evidence of Soviet Military Doctrine

Scholars faced special difficulties in studying Soviet military policy because of a strict Soviet ban imposed on public discussion of almost all detailed information about the armed forces. This well known fact is rehearsed here for the important purpose of distinguishing between knowledge (fact) and supposition (theory). If a basic test of scientific knowledge is that it be verifiable, scholars are obliged to assess a level of confidence in their key judgements - would other scholars with the same information reach the same conclusions? Levels of confidence should be expressed in terms of the evidentiary nature of sources used, the range of activities that the information covered, and the effect on conclusions of information reasonably assumed to exist but not available.

The Soviet blackout on military information was codified in a law in 1956 to cover any plans, movement details, locations, size, armaments, training, reserves or accommodation of any military or border force unit.¹ What made the Soviet secrecy law unique was that it covered not only detailed information but "generalised" or "overall" information. It was an all-embracing, totalitarian law enforced with considerable vigour.²

While there was some weakening of control in respect of generalised or overall information through its official release, the detail of military policies, like the activities of the armed forces, remained secret. This was true even of the most harmless sorts of information. For example, a history of Soviet naval infantry

² For example, when Khrushchev announced in 1960 the size of the Soviet armed forces in 1948, this was the first time that information had been revealed.
written in 1957 is very vague about the role of naval infantry, and even its formal status, after the Second World War.¹ Little changed in the next thirty years, with a history of the Soviet armed forces written in 1987 being equally vague, noting only that the capabilities of the naval infantry were improved sometime in the period before 1961, and nowhere giving a date for the decision to reconstitute it as a separate branch of the navy.²

Key Soviet documents recording formal decisions of the General Staff or revealing strategic level plans since 1948 are not available and there has been no public domain release of any US intelligence may have. Other sources of evidence of formal decisions on military doctrine after 1950 are meagre: occasional books (classified and unclassified) published by the General Staff, and censored by the Communist Party;³ occasional articles in the military press;⁴ extremely rare

⁴ An article attributed to the Minister of Defence or the Chief of the General Staff should be regarded as more authoritative as a source of General Staff views in most cases than articles by middle ranking officers. That is not say that on occasions the Chief of the General Staff may not have relied on more junior officers to carry into the public domain views which political masters or even the Minister of Defence may have opposed. But the fact remains that the most senior Soviet military officers only rarely went into print on doctrinal issues. Works such as R Ia Malinovskii (then Minister of Defence) Bit’el’no stoial’ na stratehii mira [Vigilantly Stand Guard for Peace] Voenizdat, Moscow, 1962 or N V Ogarkov (then Chief of the General Staff) Vsegeda v gotovnosti k zashchite Otechestva [Always Ready to Defend the Fatherland] Voenizdat, Moscow, 1982 are some examples. Ogarkov went into print more than once with such a work as Istoriia uchit’ bit’el’nosti [History Teaches Vigilance] Voenizdat, Moscow, 1985, published after he had been moved from Chief of the General Staff to the position of Commander of the Western Theatre.
references in memoirs by senior military officers;¹ books attributed by their Western publishers to Soviet defectors, such as Penkovsky and Suvorov;² and personal accounts of particular events, like that of a Polish military officer, Ryszard Kuklinski, about Soviet military planning for invasion of Poland in 1980.³ These sources are discussed in the second section of this chapter.

Thus, of the types of the sources referred to above, scholars only had unfettered access to one formal source (official statements of doctrine) and a few informal sources (the least valuable from an evidentiary perspective); all of these were subject to political propaganda controls by the Communist Party.

Scholars’ access to all other information which might provide evidence of Soviet military doctrine (plans, deployments, exercise patterns, and training activities) was available only through an intermediary which controlled the

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¹ Most military memoirs published in the Soviet Union before 1991 contained almost no references to the detail of decisions taken after the end of the Second World War. One rare exception is the note included by M A Moiseev (then Chief of the General Staff) "Ob avtorove i ego knige" [About the Author and his Book] in M V Zakharov General'nyi shtab v predvoennye gody [The General Staff in the Pre-War Years] Voenizdat, Moscow, 1989 in which Moiseev relates (p305) what he says were Khrushchev’s attempts to eliminate the General Staff Academy. Another exception is the recounting in various places after 1988 about how the decision to invade Afghanistan was taken. For example, an unsigned article "Kak prinimalos' reshenie" [How the Decision was Taken] Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal 1991 (1) p40 reported that the decision was taken by a committee of four in the leadership and that "no written orders or documents of any kind could be found in the Ministry of Defence".

² O Penkovsky The Penkovsky Papers translated by P Deriabin, Collins London UK, 1965; Viktor Suvorov (a pseudonym) The Liberators - Inside the Soviet Army Hamish Hamilton, London UK, 1981; Suvorov Inside Soviet Military Intelligence Macmillan, New York NY, 1984; Suvorov Spetsnaz: The Story Behind the Soviet SAS Hamish Hamilton, London UK, 1987. These books were of questionable reliability in that they were assisted into the public domain by US and British intelligence agencies. It is not that the information was necessarily false, but the books carried an unspoken implication that all information reported in the works was reliable. The publication many years later of a new account of Penkovsky's information, Jerold L Schecter and Peter S Deriabin The Spy Who Saved the World - How a Soviet Colonel Changed the Course of the Cold War Charles Scriber's Sons, New York NY, 1992, was to reveal the limitations on some of the information attributed to Penkovsky in the 1975 book.

³ R Kuklinski "The Crushing of Solidarity" Orbis 1988 (Winter) pp7-31
presentation of the information - the US intelligence community.¹

The Intelligence Community: Primary or Secondary Source

The principal source of information on the Soviet armed forces was - and even now remains - US intelligence reports.² Most formally released intelligence reports were assessed information, not raw data. In scholarly terms, therefore, almost all officially released US intelligence reports were secondary sources.

Comprehensive information on the Soviet armed forces has not been available for most of the last fifty years, except at the broadest level of generalisation - order of battle information, such as numbers of strategic missiles, ships, aircraft or divisions, their general location, and their assessed level of readiness. While at first glance, the numbers of ships or missiles might be regarded as not open to interpretation or distortion, very few intelligence "facts" were not subject to some interpretation before being subsumed into generalisations in intelligence assessments. And most such generalisations, made by intelligence analysts before the release of the information, were obscured from scholarly scrutiny at that stage. Some account was possible in US Congressional Committees,

¹ Many scholars of Soviet military doctrine worked in the intelligence community or with access to intelligence information at various stages of their careers, and hence may have reached conclusions different from those suggested exclusively by open source information. These scholars were in a good position to understand the ways in which the intelligence information had been collected, analysed and disseminated, as well as the intelligence gaps. They might reasonably have claimed, as many sought to do by implication, that their scholarly work would not be as affected by any distorting influences in this process as the work of some scholars who had never been exposed to the classified information or the intelligence process. Unfortunately, only a few of those who had experience of both worlds were rigorous (and humble) enough to admit gaps in information and uncertainty in judgement.

² The UK intelligence agencies, like those of most countries, rarely put into the public domain detailed information on the Soviet armed forces beyond order of battle detail and general organisational information.
but this was constrained by the peculiar features of that process.

Throughout the entire post-war period, the US intelligence community was ordinarily disposed to put detailed information about the Soviet armed forces into the public domain either on the occasion of publishing finished "assessments", mostly in the context of policy decisions on US forces, or on an ad hoc basis, through officially sanctioned or unofficial, individually motivated leaks.

Raw intelligence data was almost never put into the public domain. It was therefore impossible for anyone outside the intelligence agencies, such as scholars, to test many of the interpretations put on the raw data. Thus, the English speaking scholarly community relied heavily on released or leaked US intelligence information for study of the activities of Soviet armed forces. Independent open sources commonly cited in studies, such as the annual publication of the International Institute of Strategic Studies, the Military Balance, could only have derived their order of battle information from intelligence officials, whether British, French, German or American.

Scholars found it hard to overcome the constraints imposed by the manner in which the information (mostly order of battle) and the readiness assessments were put into the public domain. The main constraint was that one purpose in releasing information was to support budget bids, readiness posture or procurement decisions of US forces. Since a primary purpose of the US intelligence community’s work on the Soviet armed forces was the worthy purpose of preparing US forces for possible war, the information released was collected, analysed and published in such a way as to serve that purpose.

Another constraint was that the record of the US intelligence community was not perfect - the quality and reliability of its information or
assessments could not be taken for granted. The bomber gap, the missile gap, the civil defence gap, and the defence spending gap were all revised in important ways by the CIA only some years after the original inflated estimates had been made public.

The community’s record in discovering information on the locations, equipment and activities of Soviet military units was weak until the 1960s, but consistently good from the 1970s. By the time the USSR collapsed in 1991, US intelligence information on locations, equipment and activities was excellent. By contrast, the record of the US intelligence community in interpreting the relationships between the various pieces of the Soviet military jigsaw, remained mixed even after technical means (satellite photography and signals intelligence) improved and after detente in Europe provided valuable access to some former Soviet military officers in emigration.

Persistence in misinterpretation of some Soviet capabilities was demonstrated by the belated admission in 1988 by the Director of Soviet Analysis of CIA that Soviet military posture in Europe had been geared to lesser contingencies than general war, while at the same time offering some support for a general war contingency.¹ The panel reviewing the information and this admission concluded that:

DoD estimates significantly overstated the day-to-day readiness of Warsaw Pact forces and understated how long it would take Soviet divisions, particularly those that are manned at 50 per cent or below wartime strengths, to get ready for combat.

NATO (and US) force planning had been based for some time on an exaggerated portrayal of the conventional threat posed by the

Warsaw Pact.¹

Moreover, in the formative years of Soviet military strategy prior to 1962, there were very few scholars studying Soviet military policy and the wall of secrecy was rarely penetrated. US intelligence on the USSR was only just beginning to understand Soviet military preparations (evidenced by acknowledgment of the missile gap as non-existent). After Khrushchev’s overthrow in 1964, the intelligence community rarely looked back, yet on occasions when it reviewed past assessments of Soviet military forces, significant deficiencies and important new facts were found.

For example, the readiness levels of the armed forces - one of the most important elements in assessing the readiness for various types of war - were not seriously studied until 1960, when the CIA made the first study of peacetime manning of Soviet ground force divisions.² However, CIA estimated strengths for the Soviet Air Force and Navy in 1960 on the basis of full strength establishment, because it had insufficient information to determine manning levels.

There were other examples of US intelligence failings in these years:

² Raymond L Garthoff "Estimating Soviet Military Force Levels: Some Light from the Past" International Security 1990 (Spring) vol. 14, no. 4, p98. Matthew A Evangelista "Stalin’s Postwar Army Reappraised" International Security 1982-83 (Winter) vol. 7, no. 3, p118 points out that a 1955 CIA estimate concluded that even Soviet line divisions were only at 70 per cent of wartime strength. This acknowledgment of less than full manning of Soviet divisions was repeated in some subsequent assessments, for example a 1957 NIE, but only in general terms - as far as the declassified versions indicate.
failure to detect a large though partial mobilisation at the time of the Korean War;¹ failure to detect a large scale conventional force build-up in Cuba between July 1961 and October 1962, including 40,000 Soviet combat troops and a high level command and control system for conventional operations;² over-estimation of the Soviet conventional threat in central Europe;³ lack of consideration of Soviet concerns about the East European threat of insurrection, particularly by the emerging East German forces;⁴ and in the 1960s, possible failure to appreciate changes in readiness levels of Soviet nuclear forces - all assumed to be in high

¹ The evidence on this failure can be drawn from a number of sources including S A Tiushkevich The Soviet Armed Forces - A History of their Organizational Development translated by the USAF, USGPO, Washington DC, 1978, p374 which gives the date of commencement of a buildup as 1949; Ernest R May, John D Steinbrunner, Thomas W Wolfe History of the Strategic Arms Competition 1945-1972 Office of the Secretary of Defense, Historical Office, March 1981, p251 concluded that the most likely explanation of Soviet mobilisation in this period was "preparation in the short run for possible war in or over Yugoslavia or Korea and in the long run for the full range of dire contingencies military men could portray". The limited mobilisation undertaken by the USSR from 1949 to 1951 began to be reversed sometime in 1952, with the US intelligence community unaware at the time that any large scale mobilisation of Soviet forces had occurred. Garthoff "Estimating Soviet Military Force Levels: Some Lessons from the Past" loc cit p99 says that US intelligence did not recognise the large increases in Soviet armed forces during the Korean War. Contemporary CIA estimates of the size of Soviet forces were held nearly constant at about 4 million from 1948 to 196.  
² Raymond L Garthoff Reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis revised edition, Brookings, Washington DC, 1989, pp18, 35-36; May, Steinbrunner and Wolfe op cit pp479-480; William G Hyland The Cold War - Fifty Years of Conflict Random House, New York NY, 1991, p126 cites a Politburo decision in June 1961. The US intelligence community did not detect the build up until after the Cuban crisis and even then thought it only be to half as large as it actually was (about 20,000 troops).  
³ Alain C Enthoven and K Wayne Smith How Much is Enough? - Shaping the Defense Program, 1961-1969 Harper & Rowe, New York NY, 1971, pp118, 140-141. As the authors note on pp140-141: eliminating paper divisions, using cost and fire-power indexes, counts of combat personnel in available divisions, and numbers of artillery pieces, trucks, tanks and the like, we ended up with the same conclusion: NATO and the Warsaw Pact had approximate equality on the ground. Where four years earlier [1961] it had appeared that a conventional option [for NATO] was impossible, it now began to appear that perhaps NATO could have had one all along.  
⁴ Notwithstanding the consistent political loyalty of the German Democratic Republic to Soviet strategic goals after the mid-1950s, the USSR never allowed it to have more than six divisions, compared with ten allowed to Czechoslovakia, which had a smaller population. Czechoslovakia was allowed 5 tank divisions and the GDR only two, and 13 fighter and ground attack squadrons compared with the GDR's four. (Michael MccGwire Military Objectives in Soviet Foreign Policy Brookings, Washington DC, 1987, p129).
states of readiness.\textsuperscript{1}

The inadequacies of a number of important US intelligence assessments were spelled out in a classified study commissioned in 1974 by then Defense Secretary Schlesinger and completed in 1981. The authors concluded:

denied any but the most meager evidence about the Soviet military establishment, and most of that relating to actual deployments, American planners had to make estimates open to a wide range of error. This made possible the "missile gap" alarm of the late 1950s and the swing in the opposite direction which produced in 1962-1970 consistent underestimates of the rate of expansion and future levels of strategic forces ...\textsuperscript{2}

The US intelligence community’s lack of success in estimating the size of Soviet strategic nuclear forces has been analysed comprehensively. The key works conclude that the essence of the failure lay in the lack of due recognition by scholars, commentators and intelligence analysts of the US domestic political environment in which the intelligence assessments were made.\textsuperscript{3}

\textsuperscript{1} By 1977, the US intelligence agencies were admitting publicly to new, lower but unspecified assessments of Soviet ICBM readiness (US Congress Allocation of Resources in the Soviet Union and China - 1977 Hearings before the Sub-Committee on Priorities and Economy in Government of the Joint Economic Committee, 95th Congress, 1st session, 23 and 30 June, 6 July 1977, p94). These levels were revealed publicly later to be about 30 per cent of the ICBM force compared with about 98 per cent for the US force, and about 15 per cent of the Soviet SSBN fleet on patrol at any one time, compared with 66 per cent of the US fleet (US Congress Allocation of Resources in the Soviet Union and China - 1977 Hearings before the Sub-Committee on Priorities and Economy in Government of the Joint Economic Committee, 95th Congress, 1st session, 23 and 30 June, 6 July 1977, These levels were revealed publicly later to be about 30 per cent of the ICBM force compared with about 98 per cent for the US force, and about 15 per cent of the Soviet SSBN on patrol at any one time, compared with 66 per cent of the US fleet (Tom Gervasi Soviet Military Power: The Pentagon’s Propaganda Document, Annotated and Corrected Vintage Books, Random House, New York NY, 1988, p19). A number of alerts of nuclear forces may also have been missed, possibly during the Cuban missile crisis and the Czechoslovakia invasion in 1968 (Bruce Blair The Logic of Accidental Nuclear War Brookings, Washington DC, 1993, pp24-25).

\textsuperscript{2} May, Steinbrunner and Wolfe \textit{op cit} pp815-816. This study was declassified more than ten years later.

\textsuperscript{3} John Prados \\textit{The Soviet Estimate: US Intelligence Analysis and Russian Military Strength} Dial Press, New York NY, 1982, pp292-299 noted that the inaccurate intelligence information conditioned the public debate, that the residual uncertainty in intelligence assessments provided the basis for misinterpretation (often willful), and that the only responsible way out of the intelligence uncertainty - through policy choice - could not escape the parameters of the earlier public debate. Lawrence Freedman \textit{US Intelligence and the Soviet Strategic Threat} 2nd ed, Macmillan, London, 1986, p198 observed that the process by which the Soviet threat came to be perceived was a political process, not one of intelligence assessment.
There has not been similar detailed study of the intelligence record with respect to the more central elements of Soviet military strategy or doctrine because of lack of access to Soviet secrets and US intelligence information. A number of authors did however assume a serious intelligence failure in this field.¹

In 1991, Garthoff was moved to observe that the importance of blanks and uncertainties about Soviet military capabilities and political intentions has not been adequately recognised.² He noted that the estimates of capability had been corrected over time, but only after the USA had made policy decisions based on the inaccurate estimates, and he observed that many of the judgements of Soviet intentions have not been validated, and "remain uncertain to this day".

Important changes in capability assessment were often accompanied by new interpretations which left the overall threat assessment unchanged. As Garthoff wrote in 1984:

> the more refined, more confident, and less threatening intelligence estimates served to confirm, rather than to challenge, defense programs and policies established on the basis of much more threatening estimates.³

In 1990 Garthoff observed about the 1950s that:

> there were restraints against suggestions as to Soviet policy motivations that departed from the implicit stereotypical cold war consensus.⁴

He raised the question whether the intelligence failures in the 1950s arose from poor appreciation of the unconscious dangers for intelligence analysts of "assessing

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¹ For example, Alan Wolfe The Rise and Fall of the "Soviet Threat": Domestic Sources of the Cold War Consensus Institute for Policy Studies, Washington DC, 1977
² Raymond L. Garthoff Assessing the Adversary - Estimates by the Eisenhower Administration of Soviet Intentions and Capabilities Brookings, Washington DC, 1991, p50
³ Raymond L. Garthoff Intelligence Assessment and Policymaking: A Decision Point in the Kennedy Administration Brookings, Washington, DC, 1984, p4
⁴ Garthoff Assessing the Adversary pp50-51
the adversary". But he allowed himself a broader swipe at the whole post-war period in observing that there was "never" recognition in American assessments of the need to weigh Soviet threat assessments and concerns over the US military buildup, alliance building and global basing, and criticised the inability of the scholars and analysts involved to empathise with the other side or visualise its interests in other than adversarial terms.

The existence of an enduring link between the key judgements and assumptions of US intelligence estimates in the 1950s and subsequent may explain this lack of perspective. For example, there is a clear link between the 1950s estimates and the conclusions of the Armageddon school about limited war. Between 1946 and 1955, US intelligence assessments of Soviet military capability were grossly inflated and expressed in terms of preparedness for general war. The aim of a 1950 estimate set the tone:

To estimate Soviet capabilities and intentions with particular reference to the date at which the USSR might be prepared to engage in a general war.¹

While the CIA had abandoned by 1952 the fanciful notion of determining the date at which the calculus of risk may change on the sole basis of order of battle considerations, the pattern of concentration in annual estimates on the least likely scenario (no matter how important) to the almost total exclusion of estimates of lower levels of conflict displayed an imbalance that was never corrected.²

Moreover, most annual US estimates of Soviet military policy were

¹ CIA Soviet Capabilities and Intentions 5 November 1950 p1
² This can be seen in the discussion later in this chapter of a 1982 estimate.
heavily oriented towards consideration of capability,\(^1\) with their assessments of a single weapons system often being elevated in status to some sort of strategic level assessment.\(^2\)

An equally consistent feature of major intelligence assessments was that readiness and sustainability were not understood by many analysts, and were probably not studied as intensively as they warranted.

For example, after the Second World war, the US intelligence community failed to derive concomitant reductions in combat readiness of the forces from the massive Soviet demobilisation. By 1947, the Soviet 1945 military strength of 11.365 million had been slashed to 2.874 million - a cut of more than 70 per cent,\(^3\) and by the end of that year, the number of divisions had been reduced from 500 to an estimated 175 divisions ranging from nearly full strength to cadre

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1 CIA did publish annual estimates of Soviet military policy in broad terms along with its estimates of strategic nuclear capability for general war. The military policy estimates were represented in the 1950s by titles such as Probable Soviet Courses of Action to Mid-1952 2 August 1951 or Soviet Capabilities and Main Lines of Policy through Mid-1959 7 June 1954.

2 This became the case with the Backfire bomber. As Prados op cit p292 observed:
   As the general image became more hostile and the specific claims as to the Backfire's performance became progressively more extreme, a point was reached at which legislators ... were insisting that such a powerful weapon had to be included within the [strategic] arms limitation treaty.

3 Raymond L Garthoff "Continuity and Change in Soviet Military Doctrine" in Bruce Parrott (ed) The Dynamics of Soviet Defense Policy The Wilson Center Press, Washington DC, 1990, p144. Khrushchev claimed in 1960 that the 1948 total armed forces strength was 2.874 million, a claim which most Western scholars came to accept (Evangelista "Stalin's Postwar Army Reappraised" loc cit p115). Evangelista "Stalin's Postwar Army Reappraised" loc cit p114 reports that a US Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) estimate of 1948 put the ground force strength at 2.5 million (based on 175 line divisions plus supporting forces) out of a total armed forces of 4 million. The JCS estimate for the total armed forces was therefore 25 per cent higher than the figure accepted now as having been correct. According to Cristann Lea Gibson Patterns of Demobilization: the US and USSR after World War II Ph D thesis, University of Denver, 1983, p289, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had decided in 1944 to use a planning figure of 4 million for the size of the post-war Soviet armed forces. A 1947 CIA estimate reported less than 3.8 million, including security troops (May, Steinbrunner and Wolfe op cit p81).
units. The US Government estimated in 1948 that there were 11,500 combat aircraft in the Air Forces and 3,100 combat aircraft in Naval Aviation - a cut to just over half 1945 levels.

Most US intelligence assessments between 1946 and 1948 concluded that war with the USSR was unlikely but were generally alarmist. For example, the CIA advised President Truman in August 1946 that there was "some possibility of near-term Soviet military action" such as a "concerted offensive through Europe and Northern Asia" even though there were no military indicators that such an event might occur.

The US intelligence community appears to have made little serious effort in those years to assess the actual combat readiness of the Soviet armed forces, despite making wild claims about it. A 1948 CIA assessment "assumed" that the USSR at that time could rapidly overrun Europe and the Near East.

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1 Garthoff "Continuity and Change in Soviet Military Doctrine" loc cit p144; Mackintosh Juggernaut - A History of the Soviet Armed Forces Macmillan, New York NY, 1967, p271 cites the 175 figure. May, Steinbrunner and Wolfe op cit p81 note that most of the 175 divisions were "shells". They report that the figure of 175 was based on the presumption that a wartime division was still in existence unless the US intelligence agencies had three pieces of evidence to the contrary. It is not known whether the British intelligence agencies used a similar approach, but May, Steinbrunner and Wolfe insist that the manpower estimates were so low that most of the 175 divisions must have been shells.


3 The Air Forces had been reduced from 20,000 aircraft in 1945 to about 14,000 or 15,000 in 1946 (Robert A Kilmnx A History of Soviet Airpower Praeger, New York NY, 1962, p226) with an estimated 50 per cent reduction in manpower (May, Steinbrunner and Wolfe op cit p95).


5 Memorandum to the President from the office of the Director Central Intelligence 24 August 1946 pp1-2

6 May, Steinbrunner and Wolfe op cit p81 note that the director of CIA's clandestine collection efforts in the USSR claims to have continually questioned the estimates of Soviet strength and readiness which were circulating in Washington. The authors note (p82) that the US Government was putting information into the public domain about the Soviet armed forces to "produce effects rather than make disclosures".

7 CIA The Strategic Value to the USSR of the Conquest of Western Europe and the Near East (to Cairo) prior to 1950 30 July 1948, p.2. The paper does note that if Soviet forces did overrun Europe, they would not be sufficient to defend it (p4).
Between 1949 and 1952, US estimates of Soviet readiness for war became more consistently alarmist. Persistence of the presumption that general war was a Soviet objective was demonstrated by the State Department when, even while seeking to "dissent" from the main conclusion of a 1950 Interim Estimate that there was a "continuing danger of war", used the contorted formula: "We do not consider, however, that lack of evidence of a Soviet intention to use military force on the US can be taken as evidence of the absence of such intention."\(^1\)

The cause of such intellectual gymnastics was obvious. The US Army dissent from the same Interim Estimate argued that in it the "threat of Soviet aggression is minimized to the point where dissemination of the paper and its use for planning purposes could seriously affect the security of the United States."\(^2\)

The final version of the Estimate, published several months later by a different body charged with resolving the controversies, concluded that the Soviet possession of the atomic bomb increased the possibility of war.\(^3\)

A Navy Intelligence dissent from the paper showed up the narrow basis on which the US was confirming its fears about Soviet military capability:

The reader is actually left to infer that the only factor under Soviet control which would induce a decision to attempt a surprise and crippling atomic attack on the U.S. is possession of what they estimate to be a requisite number of atomic bombs to accomplish the task. It is inconceivable that the Soviets could arrive at such a decision without regard to political or economic factors and all the other military factors, offensive and defensive.\(^4\)

But the Navy's good reason did not prevail and the CIA concluded

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\(^1\) CIA Estimate of the Effects of the Soviet Possession of the Atomic Bomb upon the Security of the United States and upon the Probabilities of Direct Soviet Military Action 6 April 1950 p20
\(^2\) ibid p31
\(^3\) Joint Ad Hoc Committee The Effect of the Soviet Possession of Atomic Bombs on the Security of the United States 9 June 1950 p1
\(^4\) ibid Enclosure B p1
in August 1950:

the USSR is vigorously and intensively preparing for the possibility of direct hostilities with the U.S. ... on a sufficient scale to secure virtually all of continental Europe and the Near East.¹

And the basis of the Soviet offensive was to be its "powerful, combat ready ground army and tactical air force". The study concluded that the USSR would not be capable of a large scale atomic bombardment campaign in 1950 but could use against the continental USA "the 25 bombs estimated to be currently available".²

Another Estimate of the same year concluded that "the Soviet Union is in a position to conduct general war now" and that its air force, "numerically superior to Western tactical air forces", was adequate to support all land campaigns it might be expected to undertake in the event of general war.³ This Estimate concluded:

At present the Soviet Union possesses the capability of initiating hostilities in Western Europe without any additional warning and invading Western Europe with an initial force of about 25 divisions at present located in East Germany and Poland, and of rapidly building this force to about 75 to 90 divisions.⁴

This same picture was presented in the important policy document NSC-68 of 1950 which described the USSR as an enormous hostile force, "animated by a new fanatic faith", seeking to "impose its absolute authority on the rest of the world", and posing the threat of annihilating warfare, with the threat of "increasingly terrifying weapons of mass destruction".⁵ NSC-68 nevertheless did not consider the threat of general war to be imminent.⁶

¹ CIA Soviet Preparations for Major Hostilities in 1950 25 August 1950 p1
² ibid pp1-2
³ CIA Soviet Capabilities and Intentions NIE-3 15 November 1950 pp2,6
⁴ ibid p5
⁶ Carl-Christoph Schweitzer "American Threat Analyses in the 1950s" in Schweitzer (ed) op cit p60
In 1951, CIA estimated that "in view of the high state of war-readiness of the Soviet economy and armed forces", the USSR could simultaneously launch land campaigns against western Europe and the Middle East with little or no warning. In the same Estimate, CIA said the USSR could mobilise an additional 145 divisions within 30 days or shortly thereafter.\(^1\)

A 1952 assessment talked of the "intensive training" the Soviet forces were undergoing that would support rapid transition to general war.\(^2\) The severe logistical and communications problems they might face were acknowledged in this and subsequent assessments, but the presumption that military units were ready for war was not challenged.\(^3\) And the USSR’s mobilisation potential was upgraded to an unqualified "additional 145 divisions in 30 days".

By late 1952, the CIA had reversed its position, and concluded that the USSR would not initiate a general war.\(^4\)

A critique of US assessments in this period noted:

The Intelligence Services of the United States were well aware of the lack of capacities for transport, the relatively low degree of motorization of the Soviet land armies, of the surprisingly high number of desertions, of the fact that a large part of the Soviet army was pinned down by the task of helping to rebuild the shattered homeland, and ... tasks of occupation both in the occupied and liberated territories in Europe. ... also the Soviet Union had systematically, well into 1950, thinned out the railway tracks in Central Germany ... [leaving] a railway system run more or less on single-track lines.\(^5\)

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1 CIA The Strength and Capabilities of Soviet Bloc Forces to conduct Military Operations against NATO 12 October 1951 pp2, 16. Official intelligence assessments in Washington in the last months of 1950 predicted that war with the USSR was not far off. The consensus in the American capital was that war had become inevitable, as laid down in Soviet political doctrine (Schweitzer "American Threat Analyses in the 1950s" loc cit pp57-58).

2 CIA Soviet Bloc Capabilities, Through Mid-1953 12 November 1952, p9

3 ibid, CIA Soviet Capabilities and Probable Soviet Courses of Action through 1960 NIE 11-3-55 17 May 1955 p28

4 ibid p62

5 Rautenberg "The Federal Republic of Germany in the 1950s" loc cit p234
Notwithstanding explicit judgements that the USSR would not initiate general war, the US vision of the Soviet threat in the period to 1961 was consistently one of a possible large scale offensive against NATO. Some US estimates of the 1950s claimed that a total Soviet force of up to 400 Soviet divisions (that is, an additional 225) could be mobilised in 30 days.\(^1\) By the early 1960s, this estimate had been reduced by a factor of five - to between 45 and 55 divisions in 30 days of "uninterrupted mobilisation".\(^2\) The new estimate resulted not from any change in Soviet plans, but from US access to new data on the actual state of readiness of Soviet units.

The 1955 CIA estimate showed no change from earlier estimates of the total number of Soviet Ground Forces divisions (175) or Ground Forces divisions in Eastern Europe (30).\(^3\) But the 1955 CIA estimate, in comparison with earlier estimates, began to play down the threat of general war, and talk more in terms of the greater likelihood of localised Soviet military actions.

Even as the estimates of the numbers of Soviet war-ready divisions were changing and the low levels of manning in some locations acknowledged, there were still assessments that the USSR could mount offensive operations by ground and airborne forces, without an observable military buildup. For example, a 1957 assessment concluded that the 22 line divisions in East Germany (the number had dropped from 33) could attack without reinforcements, and that the USSR could airlift 4-5 airborne divisions in one day.\(^4\)

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1 Enthoven and Smith *op cit* pp120-121
3 CIA *Soviet Capabilities ... through 1960* Table 2
The CIA's shift away from the threat scenario of global war continued unto 1957:

they [Soviet leaders] are probably confident that their own growing nuclear capabilities, added to their great conventional strength, are increasingly deterring the US and its allies from courses of action gravely risking general war. As a result the USSR probably regards itself as progressively achieving greater freedom of maneuver in local situations ...

the chief military contingency against which the USSR feels it must guard is that of general war involving all-out use of nuclear weapons. The USSR almost certainly believes that the West's current military posture and strategic doctrine are such as to compel the West, if general war occurred, to fight it primarily by nuclear means.

... A major corollary aim of Soviet military policy, to which the maintenance of a strong deterrent posture is an essential concomitant, is to provide the Soviets with military superiority in situations which they may estimate can be dealt with short of all-out nuclear war. ...

In assessing the size and types of forces essential to meet the above requirements the Soviets have apparently concluded they must keep a large and diversified force structure designed to meet a variety of contingencies. ...

their continued maintenance of strong ground, naval, and tactical air forces, indicates their belief that such forces, equipped with conventional and nuclear weapons, would be of great importance in both general war and limited conflicts.¹

The 1957 CIA estimate drew another important conclusion about Soviet belief in the possibility - indeed the desirability - of keeping any conflict with the USA localised:

a key element of Soviet strategy in any war, whether with the US or with another nation, would be to attempt to keep the conflict limited in geographic scope.²

The estimate assessed that Soviet leaders would prefer to keep such a conflict limited to conventional weapons, but that they think such a limitation "would be

² ibid p35
impossible in many circumstances".¹

But even with acknowledging that general war was a remote prospect, the 1957 CIA Estimate still confined most of its military analysis to general war for the following reason:

The number and variety of conceivable local wars is so great as to preclude any attempt to consider in this estimate the manner in which the Soviets might conduct them. We therefore confine ourselves to one aspect only of Soviet military strategy - that for the initial phase of general war.²

One may ask whether this observation set the standard for subsequent neglect of limited war in US Government estimates. While it would have been difficult to canvas specific local war scenarios, the number could have been confined to two or three important ones. After all, local wars the USSR could undertake would have been confined to the periphery of the USSR: Europe, Central Asia, or the Far East. One suspects there may have been some concern to avoid discussion of local war in Europe lest it blur perceptions of the requirement to meet a general war threat.

While the elements of fear and exaggeration in US assessments had abated by 1961, the spectre of the Soviet leadership at some time in the future actively favouring a massive attack on the Western Alliance continued to be canvassed at consistently greater length and in more detail than lesser

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¹ _ibid_. The West German Ministry of Defence reached a similar important conclusion in 1956: The Eastern bloc is now in a position of strategic defence with regard to a future outbreak of hostilities ... the Soviet Union, in spite of now being able to draw the satellites into its orbit, has so far not succeeded in a geographically complete deployment of front-line forces for a possible attack. (Rautenberg "The Federal Republic of Germany in the 1950s" _loc cit_ p239).

² CIA _Main Trends in Soviet capabilities and Policies 1957-1962_ p35
contingencies, but more likely contingencies.¹

The CIA estimates were not wrong to devote such attention to general war. The failing was in not identifying the possibility of general war as hypothetical. And the context in which the possibility was raised was illogical because the spectre of this war was raised in official Estimates up to 1961 purporting to represent the likely or probable courses of Soviet action. This imaginary war was often discussed at length even in Estimates which dismissed it as unlikely - and this at a time (before 1961) when the USA indubitably enjoyed massive military superiority.

It was reasonable that CIA should assess Soviet capabilities for general war, but not reasonable to do so at the expense of canvassing local or limited war options.

This illogicality probably contributed to persistence of the image, because it could never be proven wrong by intelligence information. It was perpetuated right up to the demise of the USSR in the manner in which the US intelligence community reported on Soviet military policy. In annual estimates of Soviet capabilities for general nuclear war, Soviet limited war options were not examined in comparable detail.

¹ It is difficult to agree with the view of assessments in this period published by CIA in 1993: The estimates of the 1950s portray the Soviet Union as aggressive but unwilling to take foolish risks. The assumption running through the estimates is that, while the USSR would use every opportunity to extend its influence, it would not do so in areas or ways that could escalate into general war with the United States. The essential intelligence question then became to determine what risks the Soviet Union would be willing to take in any given instance. These estimates reveal that the Office of National Estimates reassured American policy-makers and planners that the USSR would not deliberately go to war unless it thought its vital interests were at stake. The Office counselled vigilance rather than panic in American responses to Soviet moves. (Scott A Koch (ed) CIA Cold War Records - Selected Estimates on the Soviet Union 1950-1959 History Staff, Center for the Study of Intelligence, CIA, Washington DC, 1993, xiv).
Without access to a full set of CIA intelligence estimates from 1950 to 1991, and the many other reports on Soviet military policy from CIA or the Defense Intelligence Agency, it is difficult to make conclusive judgements about the influence of the early, one-sided work of the US intelligence community on its subsequent analyses. There may well have been individual estimates or certain periods when the work of the agencies was not skewed by preoccupation with general war to the virtually complete exclusion of other contingencies. Nevertheless, there are examples of estimates in the 1980s where the possibility of general nuclear war was elevated to the status of all-consuming preoccupation - a preoccupation which the same estimates regarded as unhealthy in the case of the Soviet leaders, and as a sign of implied danger to the United States.

For example, in a 1982 estimate, the aim was not essentially different from the 1950 estimate:

In this NIE we are focussing on the USSR’s strategy, plans, operations, and capabilities for strategic nuclear conflict as we believe Soviet leaders perceive them.¹

The key judgements of the 1982 estimate discuss capability for the most part, with a brief nod in the direction of strategy. But the presumed Soviet quest for a level of military superiority which would allow it to prevail in a general nuclear war is present in 1982 as it was in 1950, albeit updated to give the Soviet leaders some credit for common sense:

Soviet leaders have stated that nuclear war with the United States would be a catastrophe that must be averted if at all possible ... Nevertheless, they regard nuclear war as a continuing possibility and have rejected mutual vulnerability as a desired or permanent basis for the US-Soviet strategic relationship. They seek superior

capabilities to fight and win a nuclear war with the United States.¹

As with the 1950 estimate, the axiomatic condition, that if a country enters a war it should have forces capable of winning victory, was raised to the status of implied intent even in the absence of a war threat.² The suggestion that the USSR sought superior capabilities to win a nuclear war should not of itself have been regarded as threatening, especially if Soviet leaders were judged to be determined to take all available measures to avert the catastrophe. Moreover, capabilities for winning a war would serve a greater purpose in intra-war bargaining than lesser levels of capabilities. Thus a "fight to win" capability can also be a "fight to bargain" capability. And was the US posture any different?

The 1982 estimate claimed to revise the official US view of the place of limited nuclear war in Soviet strategy:

The Soviets in our view are unlikely to initiate nuclear conflict on a limited scale, with small-scale use confined to the immediate combat zone, because they would probably see it as being to their advantage instead to keep the conflict at the conventional level. However, they appear to be developing a means for dealing with the possibility of NATO's initiation of such limited nuclear use, without the USSR's necessarily having to go to large-scale nuclear war. We believe that they would see an initial localized use of nuclear weapons as probably being the last realistic opportunity to avoid large-scale nuclear war.³

The most important admission or revision in this estimate was probably the following:

In a situation in which nuclear war in Europe was still limited to a battlefield stage, the Soviets' recognition of the consequences of

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¹ ibid p5
² The "fight to win" slogan was used to support a claim that the USSR did not accept the concept of deterrence. But a "fight to win" posture can be used equally well to support the opposite claim - that the USSR did accept the concept of deterrence. As noted in Chapter One, deterrence depends on an ability to deliver the implied threat.
³ ibid p10. The claim to having revised the official view of limited nuclear war in Soviet thinking is carried on p1.
intercontinental nuclear conflict could give them incentives to wait.\(^1\)

The estimate accepted the limitations of its information and acknowledged the possible gap between doctrine and strategy:

There are no easy prescriptions for what the Soviets would actually do under a particular set of circumstances, despite the apparent doctrinal imperative to mount massive preemptive nuclear attacks.\(^2\)

We are unable to judge what information would be sufficiently convincing to cause Soviet leaders to order a massive preemptive attack.\(^3\)

We do not know how the Soviets would assess their prospects of prevailing in a global nuclear conflict.\(^4\)

But the estimators' unwillingness to accept that these considerations reduced certainty in the central conclusion is shown in an alternative view (a dissent) carried in the estimate:

the Soviets have not resolved many of the critical problems bearing on the conduct of nuclear war, such as the nature of initiation of conflict, escalation within the theater, and protracted nuclear operations. ... the Soviets recognize that nuclear war is so destructive, and its course so uncertain, that they could not expect an outcome that was "favorable" in any meaningful sense.\(^5\)

The alternative view also recognised the limitations of doctrine for nuclear war:

The Soviets recognize that the concept of prevailing in nuclear war is far too imprecise to guide force acquisitions and operations, and are fully aware of the great uncertainties and catastrophic losses that would be incurred by all parties in a nuclear war.\(^6\)

About as far as majority view in the Estimate was prepared to go in recognising the above considerations was to acknowledge that Soviet perceptions of the "growing complexity of warfare" had led to greater efforts to plan forces and

\(^1\) ibid p30
\(^2\) ibid p2
\(^3\) ibid p11
\(^4\) ibid p12
\(^5\) ibid p14. The Director of Intelligence and Research of the Department of State recorded this view.
\(^6\) ibid p28
operations "against a backdrop of more varied contingencies".1

If the most important CIA estimates for thirty years addressed
general war to the exclusion of lesser contingencies, then there would have been
little requirement to collect or analyse intelligence from the perspective of limited
war.

Non-Intelligence Sources

In the absence of comprehensive primary source information on
force structure decisions, scholars of Soviet military doctrine had to fall back on
published Soviet books, journals and newspapers, or translations of radio
broadcasts. The open source journals were supplemented by access to translations
of a number of issues of the Ministry of Defence's journal, Military Thought
[Voennaia mys'l], which was circulated on a restricted distribution confined to
military officers.

In some cases, it was legitimate to regard particular speeches or
articles as authoritative. In so doing, there was still a requirement for an analyst or
scholar to characterise each source correctly and to establish its relative authority.

Since the organs of the General Staff involved in the study of
military strategy were the Directorate for Military Science, the General Staff
Academy, the Historical Directorate, and the Institute of Military History, the main
journals with a serious claim to reflecting - at least in part - the opinions of
military professionals and the General Staff on military doctrine at the national
level were Military History Journal [Voenko-istoricheskii zhurnal] and Military
Thought.

1 ibid
The Main Political Administration (MPA), the Communist Party’s vehicle of political rectitude in the armed forces, was not involved in the formulation of purely military operational aspects of doctrine. Its main claim to legitimacy in this sphere was comment on the political aspects of war, or the politically correct interpretations of military subjects. The MPA operated as a Department of the Central Committee, and had representatives on the editorial boards of all military newspapers, journals and publishing houses to oversee political rectitude.¹

The primary function of the MPA’s "journal", Communist of the Armed Forces [Kommunist vooruzhionnykh sil], was Party propaganda on a broad range of issues. As far as military doctrine was concerned, the MPA’s function was to put the correct political spin on what the General Staff wanted to do and say. The MPA had the function of reconciling the public presentation of General Staff views with the broader propaganda and policy goals of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Opinions on the weight to be given Communist of the Armed Forces and to particular articles published in it, vary.² The journals did publish articles on military theoretical problems but this was only one of its many functions. Others

¹ Such boards controlled the expression of all political arguments in print (Jerry Hough The Struggle for the Third World: Soviet Debates and American Options Brookings, Washington DC, 1986, p14).
² For example, William T Lee and Richard F Staar Soviet Military Policy since World War II Hoover Institution, Stanford University Press, Stanford CA, 1986, pp30-31, 38 noted that throughout the 1960s, "informative discussions of USSR military doctrine and strategy" appeared in its pages but after 1972, "articles in this publication have said little or nothing about these subjects". Lee and Staar claimed that until 1972, Soviet open sources had been "remarkably candid in setting forth the principles and objectives of military doctrine and strategy". More importantly, Lee and Staar observed that members of the MPA who wrote for Communist of the Armed Forces were charged with propagandising a Party line. The journal was published under that title after September 1960, as the direct successor to a number of different titles in publication since 1920. See O L Sarin and M Iu Chachuk Sputnik voennogo zhurnalista [Military Correspondent’s Companion] Voenizdat, Moscow, 1990, p159. These titles included Propagandist i agitator [Propagandist and Militant] and Partiino-politicheskaiia rabota v Sovetskoi Armii i Voenno-Morskoi Flote [Party-Political Work in the Soviet Army and Navy] from 1947 to 1960.
included publicising Marxist-Leninist theory on defence of the Fatherland, the leading role of the Communist Party in direction of the armed forces, and current problems of party-political work in the armed forces.¹

The journal cannot be ascribed any independent authoritativeness as a source of evidence of General Staff views. Those parts of it which reflected views of military professionals were published elsewhere, especially in Military Thought, without as many of the propagandistic twists or embellishments characteristic of the ideologues in Communist of the Armed Forces.

The issue of whether some articles appearing in General Staff journals also appeared in the MPA journal without serious modification is only one side of the coin. The related question to pose is whether all articles purporting to address questions of military strategy and doctrine in the MPA journal appeared without modification in the General Staff journals.

Even if they did, this would not make all articles automatically authoritative as scientific evidence of the dominant General Staff view of the military issues involved. Even the less propagandistic Military History Journal had a dual role, because Soviet military history had a clearly stated propaganda function.²

Another aspect to articles on military strategy or doctrine which appeared in other journals as well as Communist of the Armed Forces is that editors of the MPA journal were able to choose from a range of articles submitted to the other journals. Even when the editors selected articles from the more serious journals, such as Military Thought, Military History Journal or Naval Digest

¹ Sarin and Chachuk op cit p159
² M Mitrofanov "XXV S'ezd KPSS i zadachi voennoi istorii" [25th Congress of the CPSU and Tasks of Military History] Voenna-istoricheskii zhurnal 1977 (2) pp81-82
[Morskoï sbornik], it would have only been natural to prefer articles which conformed closely to Communist Party objectives.

In Soviet "military literature", as in all Soviet official literature, there was an important distinction to be made between scientific and popularising work. Thus, an article which might have appeared to present a new nuance of meaning, may in fact have been little more than an attempt to simplify an issue for popular consumption. This observation is particularly applicable to Communist of the Armed Forces and military journals such as Military Herald [Voennyi vestnik] or Soviet Warrior [Sovetskii voïn], with Military Thought and the Military History Journal being the exceptions.

Worse still, some Soviet "military writing" may simply have been "mere polemical affirmation" or "obligatory polemical banalities" since Soviet ideology proscribed silence. Thus, the frequency with which particular ideas were canvassed was not necessarily a reliable guide to the importance the military leaders attached to them. The frequency with which an issue was canvassed was indicative only of its place in Soviet political ideology.

The problem of exclusive reliance on published Soviet sources was compounded in the case of scholars who had to rely largely on those works

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1 Naval Digest is one of the oldest exiting journals in Russia, having been in publication since 1848. It proudly boasts one of its main purposes to be publication of articles on naval theory and it was in the period after 1956 the least propagandistic journal - hence more useful to scholars of Soviet military doctrine - of all the single service journals.

2 Roderic D M Pitty Recent Soviet Development Debates: the 'Third World' and the USSR, Ph D dissertation, Australian National University, Canberra, 1989, p14

3 ibid p14


translated by the US Government.\footnote{Benjamin S Lambeth *The State of Western Research on Soviet Military Strategy and Policy* Rand, Santa Monica CA, 1984, p32. Lambeth observed that this meant "at best, ... missing a great deal of material .... At worst, ... looking for one's keys where the light is best".}

Another important, though often neglected, consideration regarding Soviet open sources was that Soviet publicists had their own publish-or-perish syndrome driven by career needs which deprived their work in many cases of originality.\footnote{ibid pp47-49}

Public statements of Soviet leaders were not independently reliable sources, if only because they regularly "said different things to different audiences at the same time".\footnote{Franklyn J C Griffiths *Images, Politics, and Learning in Soviet Behaviour toward the United States* Ph D dissertation, Columbia University, 1972, p226} Close attention to satisfying target groups to the detriment of conveying policy positions accurately has been identified as a possible cause of softening of the tone of military doctrine in the 1980s, compared with the strident tone of earlier statements.\footnote{ibid p53}

Pitty, who has given an excellent review of the complexities of relying on published Soviet sources, quoted Hoffman:

> a rudimentary but important piece of advice would be to infer carefully the meaning of communications, and not to take the stated meaning or contents literally.\footnote{Erik P Hoffman "Methodological Problems of Kremlinology" in Frederic J Fleroni (ed) *Communist Studies and the Social Sciences: Essays on Methodology and Empirical Theory* Rand McNally, Chicago, 1971, p136 cited in Pitty *op cit* p11}

Or as another writer put it:

> The central task of the interpreter is to find the question to which a text presents the answer; to understand a text is to understand the question.\footnote{Joseph Bleicher *The Hermeneutical Imagination* Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1982, p75 cited in Pitty *op cit* p10}

One particular point of interpretation often overlooked in assessing
the meaning of open source material was the authoritativness of differences in formulation of similar views. Much effort was spent offering elaborate explanations for changes in emphasis when the only reason for change may well have been an author’s personal need to find an original way of expressing an officially sanctioned view. After all, one of the hardest skills for any Soviet publicist to master was that of appearing to say something new, when in fact permitted only to repeat tired, accepted formulas.

Nevertheless, Soviet open sources and the memoirs of some Soviet public figures remain important sources, albeit incomplete, anecdotal, and subject to predictable biases.

Memoir literature published in the 1980s revealed new insights into certain aspects of Soviet military policy. For example, a 1980 book on Soviet volunteer pilots in China recounted air attacks on Japanese targets there and in Taiwan between 1937 and 1939 in which over 200 Soviet pilots were killed.¹

New evidence on Soviet military planning also emerged. For example, an early 1941 General Staff plan for a Soviet invasion of Iran, discovered in German archives in 1981, suggests an active Soviet military interest in local wars in the pre-war period.² In 1989, the General Staff’s Military History Institute published a post-war plan for military operations in Germany.³

Sources still remain problematic. Even recent Soviet books on the

³ The plan, presumably part of a series, was titled "Plan for the Active Defence of the Territory of the Soviet Union". It was issued as a Top Secret document in 1946 and reissued (reauthorised) at the same level of classification in 1948. It was published in the public domain in the February 1989 issue of Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal pp26-29.
Soviet armed forces give few historical facts pertinent to documentation of the general pattern of organisation of Soviet forces in the formative post-war years. These works could hardly be described as giving a complete picture. Even less so could one rely on contemporary Western accounts of Soviet military planning between 1945 and 1991 as historically accurate. At best, they should be seen as informed speculation about the events and processes in question. Until the new Russian Government allows access to the archives of the Soviet Ministry of Defence and those archives of the Communist party that touch on the key decisions of military policy, sources will be inadequate.¹ Memoirs from key participants, like Zhukov or Gromyko, published before 1991 shed almost no light on key questions.

Conclusion

The English speaking scholarly community studying Soviet military doctrine still has none of the more formal or direct sources normally associated with the study of US military doctrine, such as documents recording decisions of the political leadership or command elements of the armed forces. The two main sources of evidence for Soviet military doctrine were US intelligence information on the one hand, and books, articles and newspaper articles published in the controlled press on the other. Both were imperfect and diluted sources for study of the Soviet armed forces.

The quality of the sources was not an obstacle to good analysis but it did need to be reflected in the confidence levels scholars had in key judgements. In

¹ The principal archives include: the Central State Archives of the Soviet Army, the Central Archives of the Ministry of Defence of the USSR, the Central Party Archives of the Institute of the Theory and History of Socialism, the Central State Archives of the October Revolution, and the Central Museum of the Revolution of the USSR, and the KGB archives.
particular, care needed to be taken in interpreting the authoritativeness of informal sources.

The manner in which US intelligence information, especially readiness assessments, was made public imposed severe constraints on scholars trying to interpret it. The mixed record of US intelligence assessments of Soviet military policy imposed additional constraints on scholars who relied heavily on them. The focus of the US intelligence community on general war to the near total exclusion of limited war probably also had a limiting effect on the scope of information available to scholars, and on scholars' decisions as to what aspects of Soviet military policy they should take as important.
CHAPTER FOUR

SCHOLARSHIP ON SOVIET MILITARY DOCTRINE

This chapter assesses scholarship on Soviet military strategy and doctrine, with two important criteria in mind: what did the works say about the sources of Soviet military strategy, such as institutional pressures, ideological constraints, or political imperatives; and what did they say about the place of Soviet local war doctrine in Soviet military strategy as a whole.

The literature is reviewed in three sections: works on Soviet military doctrine in general; works on Soviet local war doctrine; and works on civil-military relations. The last topic is included because of the central place it plays in doctrine formulation and dissemination.

The review pays some attention to the chronology of scholarship on Soviet military doctrine because it may reveal trends in terms of focus of attention (general war and/or local war) synchronised more with US policy interests than with Soviet doctrine.

On Soviet Military Doctrine and General War

In a famous 1943 collection of articles on strategy, Edwin Mead Earle published an article on Soviet concepts of war under Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin. Earle outlined briefly the political battles between Trotsky and Stalin in which questions of military doctrine were used in part as issues of dispute but also in part as excuses for dispute. In particular, Trotsky and Svechin were opposed by Stalin and Voroshilov for advocating a variegated military doctrine which saw each
war as different and requiring a unique strategic line, while Stalin and Voroshilov
wanted a single or unified *edinaiya* military doctrine.¹

That dispute, this thesis argues later, was one of the biggest single
influences on subsequent public presentation of Soviet military doctrine, but its role
as a determinant of the form of Soviet military doctrine after Stalin’s death has
been ignored by most scholars.

Raymond Garthoff, in *Soviet Military Doctrine* in 1953,² was the
first to elucidate contemporary Soviet concepts of the conduct of war (still pre-
nuclear at that time).³ The preface to the 1954 UK edition of his book
acknowledged the importance to Soviet military strategy formulation of issues such
as the revolutionary origins of the Soviet state, Communist party history, and
questions of control in Soviet society and in the satellite countries.⁴

The preface to Garthoff’s book, written by a history professor, set
out a warning to subsequent students of Soviet military doctrine that was largely
ignored:

> As Lord Kitchener once said, "One makes war as one must - not as
> one would like to." The task of the student of military affairs is to
determine how much of Soviet military doctrine is *real* and how
much is political window dressing ...⁵

¹ Edward Mead Earle “Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin: Soviet Concepts of War” in Edward Mead Earle
*Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler* Princeton University
Press, Princeton NJ, 1943, pp341, 361. Earle mentioned four works on the Red Army that had been
published between 1940 and 1943. These were Erich Wollenberg *The Red Army: A Study of the
Growth of Soviet Imperialism* London UK, 1940; M Berchin and E Ben-Horin *The Red Army* New
York NY, 1942; N Basseches *The Unknown Army* New York NY, 1943; and D Fedotoff-White *The
Growth of the Red Army* Princeton NJ, 1943
UK edition in 1954 under the title *How Russia Makes War - Soviet Military Doctrine* George, Allen
& Unwin, London UK, 1954. The work, based on a 1951 Ph D thesis, was published as part of a
program sponsored by the Rand Corporation.
³ Lambeth *The State of Western Research on Soviet Military Strategy and Policy* p6
⁴ H A De Weerd in the preface to Garthoff *How Russia Makes War - Soviet Military Doctrine* v
⁵ *ibid* (De Weerd’s preface) vi-vii
Garthoff made a distinction between formal and actual Soviet military doctrine, and described his study as trying "not merely to determine manifest Soviet doctrine, but also to formulate and to make explicit those tenets which are themselves not recognized by the Soviets as part of their formal doctrine, but which nonetheless actually play a substantial role in it".¹

No book published since 1954 achieved Garthoff's breadth of coverage in this work.² Given the nature of Soviet sources in the early 1950s, Garthoff's treatment of all of these aspects had to be speculative, especially in respect of limited war. An important feature of his work was that he did not take Soviet doctrinal statements at face value, especially those in propagandistic sources.³

Garthoff also wrote the first full academic exposition of Soviet military strategy for the nuclear era.⁴ His central conclusion in that work was that Soviet doctrine took account of the need to be able to fight general nuclear war and

¹ Garthoff How Russia Makes War pp1,2
² Garthoff has 23 separate chapters: three on political, institutional and international influences on Soviet military doctrine; 15 chapters on Soviet principles of war, including the offensive, manoeuvre, concentration of force, annihilation, retreat, morale, intelligence, and deception; and five chapters on the operational and tactical employment of forces, including recognition of special combat conditions for a variety of geographical locations, and the role of partisan forces.
³ In his analysis of the principles of Soviet doctrine, Garthoff does not rely on the journals Propagandist i agitator [Propagandist and Militant] and Partitno-politicheskia rabota v Sovetskoi Armii i Voenno-Morskom Flote [Party-Political Work in the Soviet Army and Navy] which in 1960 became Communist of the Armed Forces - nor does he include them in his discussion of the documentary sources of Soviet military doctrine.
⁴Raymond L Garthoff Soviet Strategy in the Nuclear Age Atlantic Books, Stevenson & Sons, London UK, 1958 (first published by Praeger, New York NY, 1958). Like Garthoff's 1953 book, this work set a standard for breadth and complexity of treatment of Soviet strategy in the nuclear era that has rarely, if ever, been matched. Garthoff set Soviet military strategy in a foreign policy context (Chapter 1) and described the relationship between the armed forces and their political masters (Chapter 2). The book set down the institutional relationships between the services and the structure of the armed forces (Chapter 3). Garthoff outlined doctrinal views on nuclear war (Chapter 4) and limited war (Chapter 5), and related the various components of military power (land, air, sea and strategic missiles) to Soviet strategy (Chapters 7 to 10). Garthoff reviewed Soviet images of the enemy (Chapter 6) and made a prediction for the 1970s and beyond (Chapter 11). Equally importantly, Garthoff had a separate discussion of source materials and how to interpret them (Chapter 12).
limited war, conventional or nuclear:

The Soviet preparation - doctrinal and other - for general nuclear war does in no way commit them to this form of warfare. They retain diversified capabilities for nuclear and non-nuclear limited and local wars. ... Soviet modernization of doctrine, weapons, and organization is distinguished not by replacement of the capacities for conventional war, but by the addition to them of capacities for either limited or total nuclear war.\(^1\)

Garthoff's view of Soviet strategy at that time was rooted in the notion that the USSR believed that it needed to prepare its armed forces for a variety of types of war:

military demonstrations, little wars by proxy (as in Korea) or by internal dissidents (as in Malaya), local or peripheral wars (as with Japan in 1938-39), limited wars (with out the use of nuclear weapons, for example), preventive wars, wars of conquest, and wars of annihilation.\(^2\)

Garthoff underlined what he saw as the Soviet preference to rely on political strategies rather than "resort to arms, even in local wars"\(^3\) and noted a central fact about Soviet military doctrine as it related to local war:

Soviet views on [limited and local] wars ... are rarely explicit. ... 

... Specific tactical prescriptions are usually stated in terms of the contingency of nuclear warfare, while basic strategic thinking continues to be pitched in an overall structure of military doctrine which the Soviets apparently consider applicable for nuclear and non-nuclear warfare. In practice, significant differences would, of course, characterize the strategy ... The Soviets do not, however, believe these differences require separate "doctrines". Instead, they believe that these require particular applications of their military doctrine to the concrete contingencies of nuclear or non-nuclear, general or local, wars.\(^4\)

In an eighteen page chapter on "Perspectives on Limited War",

Garthoff posed a question addressed only infrequently in subsequent scholarship:

\(^{1}\) *ibid* xii
\(^{2}\) *ibid* p6
\(^{3}\) *ibid* p7
\(^{4}\) *ibid* pp14, 16
it is possible and indeed most necessary to consider the probable calculations on limited war in Soviet policy-making.¹

Garthoff asserted, contrary to subsequent conventional wisdom about the Khrushchev period, that "the available evidence suggests that the Soviets may believe it will be to their advantage to strive for the non-employment of nuclear weapons in a future war".² He quoted Zhukov in early 1957 as saying that it was impossible to say whether nuclear weapons would or would not be used in future wars:

"Neither I nor anyone else can answer completely all these questions now because all wars, major and small, arise, are waged and end under specific political, geographical, and economic conditions."³

Garthoff believed that the USSR planned for the possibility of a major non-nuclear war in Europe. He referred to consistent Soviet statements about the lack of any distinction between tactical and strategic use of nuclear weapons, and Soviet assertions that any use of nuclear weapons would mean general nuclear war. He saw some plausible military explanations for this position, but specifically acknowledged that Soviet political propaganda for nuclear disarmament would be seriously undermined if the military theorists took any other position.⁴

In particular, Garthoff rejected literal interpretation of Soviet statements that local wars would inevitably develop into general war. He noted that the USSR had in the past fought a number of such wars and that they represented "the classic Soviet type of limited military action, for limited objectives, and at

¹ ibid p97
² ibid p98
³ ibid p103 citing Marshal G Zhukov, then Defence Minister, Krasnaja zvezda 23 March 1957
⁴ ibid pp105-109. Garthoff mentions the lack of accuracy of nuclear weapons, and the Soviet preference to keep any major war in Europe conventional by threat of massive retaliation if nuclear weapons were used at all.
limited risk".\textsuperscript{1}

He observed that "Local wars waged with Soviet forces would employ standard military capabilities and doctrine". It seemed improbable, he said, that the USSR would initiate use of nuclear weapons in a local war. He also suggested that the USSR would respond to US resort to nuclear weapons in only one theatre with theatre use of nuclear weapons, not escalation to general war.\textsuperscript{2}

Garthoff's analysis of Soviet strategic doctrine for general nuclear war was never significantly revised in subsequent scholarship, although there were conflicting views on the degree of menace inherent in the explicit doctrine. This is how Garthoff saw the strategy:

the Soviets recognize as absolutely essential the acquisition of tremendous inter-continental striking power, and its corollary of home defense to weaken the enemy's long-range attack. It is also clear that they consider as equally important the maintenance of large, modern "theater" land armies, with supporting air, missile and naval forces. ... balanced forces - strong theater armies, as well as intercontinental offensive and defensive capabilities - are needed.\textsuperscript{3}

The main features of Soviet doctrine for general nuclear war were the need to cripple enemy offensive forces; the rejection of "ultimate weapons" strategies; the need for balanced forces conducting "combined arms" operations; recognition of the decisive factors of war; the importance of surprise; rejection of "blitzkrieg"; and expectation of protracted war.

The fact that Garthoff's conclusions, written before the end of 1957, remained applicable to Soviet military strategy into the 1980s\textsuperscript{4} is at least one piece

\textsuperscript{1} ibid p113
\textsuperscript{2} ibid pp114-115
\textsuperscript{3} ibid xiii, pp71-89
\textsuperscript{4} Soviet views about the likely duration of general nuclear war and the place of pre-emption did undergo some modification, as Garthoff himself points out in subsequent works, but the basic parameters of Soviet strategy did not.
of evidence that the essential elements of Soviet military strategy for the entire Khrushchev and Brezhnev periods may have been in place by the end of 1957, and were not substantially affected by Khrushchev’s rhetoric about missile war in 1960 and after.

Garthoff expected changes to Soviet doctrine for general war, like the need to plan for reduced manpower, as the result of the pressure of increasing cost of new technology weapons, but he expected the counter-force principle (destroying the enemy’s forces as the primary goal) to remain the principal characteristic. His work acknowledged a variety of political or institutional influences on the formation of military doctrine. For example, he saw a conscious link between the offensive character of Soviet doctrine for general war and the ideological tenets of communism. An essential element of his appreciation was his recognition of the effect on doctrinal writings of the cycle of "thaw" and "freezing" in intellectual life generally. More importantly, he made the link between an offensive Soviet posture debunking Western concepts of mutual deterrence and the Soviet regime’s ability to mobilise Soviet budgetary resources to military expenditure.

Garthoff’s conclusions on Soviet planning for limited nuclear war or local war, and their place in Soviet strategy, were rejected by the Armageddon school in the study of Soviet military doctrine. For example, another of the earliest studies, Dinerstein’s War and the Soviet Union, took as its central proposition that

1 ibid p91
2 ibid p73
3 ibid pp12, 23. Garthoff saw this as an important explanation of military disenchantment with Malenkov. Similarly, he saw Khrushchev’s disagreement with Malenkov’s view that a world war would mean the end of civilisation (mutual deterrence) as an important part of the political alliance between Khrushchev and the military leaders in the mid-1950s.
"the major mission of the Soviet armed forces was to fight a full-scale [nuclear] war if the need arose". Dinerstein drew this conclusion in the face of his contradictory assertion that, by the mid-1950s, the Soviet leadership was confident that a war instigated by the USA had become less likely.¹

That Dinerstein did not canvas military doctrine for wars other than general war is all the more surprising given his acknowledgment that "The Soviet Union, like all other great powers, undoubtedly requires her Ministry of War to maintain an up-to-date series of war plans to meet various contingencies".² Dinerstein’s neglect of limited war is also unusual considering his excellent if brief account of Soviet reliance on a limited war strategy in the period prior to the German attack in 1941,³ which he was one of the few scholars of Soviet military doctrine even to mention.⁴ He went so far as to postulate a generalised Soviet view of limited war policy right up to Stalin’s death:

In all the wars so far initiated by the Soviet Union the objective has been limited, both in the planning and the aftermath. The temptation to expand the conflict when the resources needed to attain the original objective turned out to be excessive has always been resisted.⁵

The book’s main contribution to scholarship was the view that official Soviet military doctrine after 1955 had become a "pre-emptive strategy"

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¹ H S Dinerstein War and the Soviet Union - Nuclear Weapons and the Revolution in Soviet Military and Political Thinking Frederick A Praeger, New York NY, 1959. This work was also published under the auspices of the Rand Corporation.
² ibid p215
³ ibid pp27-31
⁴ David J Dallin The New Soviet Empire Hollis & Carter, London UK, 1951 has a short chapter on "The Six Wars of the Soviet Union" between 1920 and 1940; Malcolm Mackintosh Juggernaut - A History of the Soviet Armed Forces Macmillan, New York NY, 1967 has a chapter on "The Lessons of Finland:1939-41" and sections on other localised conflicts, such as the battles of Lake Khasan in 1938 and Khalkin Gol with Japan in 1939; Raymond L Garthoff Soviet Military Policy - A Historical Analysis Faber and Faber, London UK, 1966, begins that work with a chapter on Russian and then Soviet use of the armed forces in conflicts apart from general war or world war.
⁵ ibid p29
based on readiness to strike a pre-emptive blow if faced by a threat of general nuclear war. While some of his argumentation concerned forestalling an imminent enemy attack only on receipt of timely and reliable warning, he offered a political view of the pre-emptive doctrine that canvassed other circumstances:

The [Soviet] leaders have only to be convinced of the correctness of aggressive policy; it requires no popular mandate. This basic characteristic of Soviet politics makes it legitimate to inquire whether the Soviet leaders are employing the phrase "pre-emptive blows" as a euphemism for preventive war.

He did not answer this question directly, but implied that the inclusion in the explicit doctrine of the principle of timely and reliable warning may have been merely a propaganda device, and implied that the aim of the Soviet military build-up may have been to achieve the capabilities for preventive war, even though he acknowledged that the USSR was unlikely ever to achieve the necessary military superiority over the USA.

Dinerstein alluded in various places to political, bureaucratic, technological and international influences on Soviet military doctrine, but his study was based primarily on published Soviet statements. He showed considerable awareness of the stifling relationship between the rigidity of official Soviet military doctrine and any subsequent analysis by Soviet military officers. He also recognised the way in which officially endorsed military doctrine forced the revision of historical appreciation.

Yet Dinerstein’s work, for all its elaboration of distorting influences

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1 ibid p188
2 ibid p205
3 ibid p209
4 ibid p207
5 ibid pp194, 196. Dinerstein notes that when the offensive element became dominant in military doctrine, historical accounts of operations in the Second World War which had praised active defence were attacked.
on open source statements, was inclined to elevate a number of Soviet statements of doctrine to the status of gospel truth, and accept them at face value.¹

A note by retired US Army General, James Gavin, introducing a 1959 work by Garthoff, offered an important reminder about the origins of the concept of "limited war":

"Limited war" is an expression of our creation. To the Soviets war is war, and is as all-out or not as the needs of policy require. In fact, limited and discreet application of power is the classic communist method and the Soviets are prepared to wage limited war anywhere along its periphery.²

Garthoff’s review of Soviet doctrine debunked the confusion between pre-emption and preventive war.³ He reiterated the place of local war in Soviet strategy despite the USSR’s public rejection at the time of both local and limited wars.⁴ Apart from Soviet strategy for general war, he also addressed Soviet views of probable strategy for major conventional war and local war, nuclear or conventional even though by that time these had not been canvassed widely in Soviet open sources.⁵

The emergence of a Soviet military strategy, and associated military

¹ *Ibid* For example, on the key issue of defensive versus offensive posture, Dinerstein briefly mentioned the political battle between Malenkov and Khrushchev about the nuclear era. Dinerstein said Malenkov and his group argued that possession by both superpowers of nuclear weapons created a situation of mutual deterrence which would preclude an attack by the USA on the USSR. By contrast, Khrushchev challenged this view as complacent and defeatist (ostensibly because it implied the USSR would not survive a nuclear war). Khrushchev won this "theoretical and political victory" with instant effects on Soviet military expenditure and force structure. Dinerstein did not canvas the possibility that the theoretical formulation by Khrushchev may have had the political intent of weakening Malenkov’s general political power. Yet Dinerstein was prepared to admit that Khrushchev was more than willing to beat the drums of war in 1957 for no other reason than to mobilise military support to defeat the anti-Party group in an exclusively political struggle (p162).

² Raymond L Garthoff *The Soviet Image of Future War* Public Affairs Press, Washington DC, 1959, viii

³ Garthoff *The Soviet Image of Future War* p14:
   A Soviet preemptive attack is contemplated for a situation which is *not* a time of their own choosing or the result of a deliberate planned buildup for optimum Soviet position for war. It represents a time when they believe they must act or forfeit the strategic initiative to us. In essence it is a desperate last-minute effort to seize the initiative from the enemy who is about to attack or is in the process of doing so.

⁴ *Ibid* pp14-15

⁵ *Ibid* pp18-19
doctrine, for local wars was accepted in some scholarly work of the early 1960s. For example, in 1961 Hoag wrote a short paper entitled On Local War Doctrine, which was largely theoretical.\(^1\) In Halperin’s landmark work, Limited War in the Nuclear Age, he concluded that "the Soviets themselves seem to be ready for local wars and have maintained ground forces capable of fighting both conventional and nuclear ground wars".\(^2\)

A 1963 essay written by a specialist in Chinese politics and foreign policy expressed doubt that statements by Soviet and Chinese leaders in their mutual polemic about the nature of war, the likelihood of escalation of local conflicts, and national liberation war could be taken literally.\(^3\) The author suggested there might only be small differences between the two countries in practice in their views of risks and the political purposes to be served by war. She suggested the polemic may owe more to political objectives and posturing than to convictions about war in practice. The author speculated that Soviet talk of inevitable escalation of local conflicts might be not a genuine belief but a propaganda device to justify in quasi-theoretical terms Soviet reluctance to provoke direct US military response in regional conflicts.\(^4\) She advanced a range of political explanations for the

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1 Malcolm W Hoag "On Local War Doctrine" Rand Corporation, Santa Monica, CA, 1961
2 Morton Halperin Limited War in the Nuclear Age John Wiley and Sons, New York NY, 1963, p16. He offered (p17) an interpretation of a 1960 speech by Khrushchev which many later scholars rejected but which this thesis accepts: when the Soviets proclaim that "limited war" is impossible, they mean that Western-inspired local wars are impossible and that the West should not intervene in local wars. ... The Soviets have always been willing to use limited force to gain limited objectives which suggests their appreciation of the fact that there is no inherent reason for war to be expanded indefinitely once it occurs.

It is of some note that although Halperin uses the term "limited war" in his title, he prefers the term "local war" throughout most of his book, suggesting a degree of affinity with the Soviet conception. In the work, Halperin contrasts "local war" with "central war".

4 *ibid* p158
polemic that rejected acceptance of most of the key statements as genuine belief. In this way, the article anticipated what this thesis regards as an essentially objective and critical approach to public statements.

Another early study of the interaction of political and economic influences and military doctrine, by Wolfe in 1964, suggested that Soviet leaders were "still confronted with a number of unresolved issues in seeking a military posture suitable to Soviet needs".\(^1\) Wolfe examined what he saw as seven "unresolved issues in the Soviet military policy debate":

- the size of the armed forces and prospects for mobilisation;
- the kind of war - short or protracted - for which Soviet forces should prepare;
- the possibility of fighting limited wars without escalation to general nuclear war;
- the relative importance of strategic nuclear operations and combined arms theatre operations in a general war;
- the prospects of survival under conditions of nuclear attack;
- the appropriate balance between a deterrent posture and actual war fighting capabilities; and
- whether there was a military strategy which could offer the prospect of victory in general war with the USA.\(^2\)

Wolfe examined Soviet strategy and doctrine from a number of non-military perspectives, especially the economic pressures on the USSR, strains in civil-military relations, the political liabilities of doctrine, and the relationship between Soviet military doctrine and Soviet disarmament initiatives. The study was mainly concerned with the period from the Cuban Missile Crisis (October 1962) to 1964 and drew heavily on important changes of emphasis from the 1962 to the

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\(^2\) *ibid* pp7-9. It is no coincidence that the uncertainties about Soviet military doctrine expressed by Wolfe were similar to those articulated by the Director of the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research in the 1982 Estimate referred to in Chapter Three.
1963 edition of Sokolovskii's Military Strategy.¹

Wolfe accepted that a consensus on basic matters still held in the Soviet leadership: on the primacy of nuclear weapons; the critical importance of the initial period of a war; the need for a high level of combat readiness; targeting of both civil and military targets; rejection of the notion of controlled response; and recognition of the economic burden of large forces in peacetime.²

At the same time, Wolfe noted some new trends: more attention to limited war; increased confidence in early warning and hence greater expectation to be able to blunt a surprise attack; importance for deterrence of hardening and mobility of strategic weapons; upgrading of the role of strategic missile submarines; downgrading that of the strategic bomber; more emphasis on anti-submarine and amphibious operations; and anti-missile and antisatellite capabilities.³ He did not link developments in Soviet doctrine on conventional forces, such as amphibious operations, to the alleged new interest in limited war.

Wolfe devoted an eleven page chapter to the question of limited war in Soviet doctrine, reaching the central conclusion that the "relatively meager treatment customarily given in Soviet military literature to the question of conducting limited wars is in marked contrast to the attention bestowed on general nuclear war". Wolfe said that this reflected concern for the contingency they feared most, but found signs that Soviet doctrine on local and limited war had been undergoing some change:

¹ ibid pp3, 51-52. Wolfe relied on revisions in the second edition of the Sokolovskii work to support his view that "doctrine is still in flux on many points" (p10). Two other explanations are possible. Doctrine may have been settled before the first edition in 1962 and the revisions may have been corrections which were missed in the publication of the first edition. Alternatively, the doctrine may have been settled between the publication of the two editions. Neither of these interpretations would allow the view that doctrine was in 1963 still in flux.
² ibid pp10-11
³ ibid p11
There is still a good deal of ambiguity and inconsistency in the Soviet treatment of the subject, and no unified doctrine of limited war applying to Soviet forces has by any means emerged in the open literature.¹

Wolfe mentioned the possibility that the declared doctrine (emphasising the violent, global character of any future war and the inevitability of escalation of local wars) might have a political purpose separate from its military application. Possible explanations included the support such a doctrine gives to a Soviet deterrence posture and reliance on it as a stratagem to deter Western use of military power against national liberation movements.²

At the same time, he identified possible political reasons for what he saw as a doctrinal shift toward greater interest in local wars in the two years he examined. These included a need to counter Chinese criticism of Soviet failure to give vigorous support to national liberation struggles; and to correct any impression that the West enjoyed greater freedom to act in local conflicts because of apparent Soviet hyper-sensitivity over escalation.³

Wolfe based his analysis on open media sources and readily linked the timing of the appearance of an idea in public print to the timing of its emergence in the General Staff. For example, he cited a Soviet statement to the effect that lack of attention to local wars was a deficiency in Soviet military theory that "began to be corrected only recently",⁴ without considering possible variant meanings of "recently".

In his references for the chapter on limited war, Wolfe relied on the

¹ ibid pp118-119
² ibid
³ ibid p13
second edition of Military Strategy for almost half of his citations (15 out of 35). Most of the other sources were the more propagandistic organs of the Soviet press - Red Star, Pravda, Communist [Kommunist] or Communist of the Armed Forces. He made only two references to the less propagandistic journal Military History Journal,¹ both of which support the argument of this thesis that study of local wars was by then already an important and entrenched subject of Soviet military theory behind closed doors, not something that emerged for the first time in the period Wolfe studied.

A 1965 study by Horelick and Rush of the relationship between Soviet military power and foreign policy was based on an unusual though convincing appreciation of the propagandistic purposes of Soviet statements of military doctrine:

Soviet strategic threats and claims are meant to serve a variety of purposes and to influence the beliefs and behaviour of a whole range of audiences. In general, the target of such Soviet assertions is world opinion at large, including certain groups in the Soviet Union itself.²

At the same time, the authors noted the need for Soviet positions to have a degree of internal consistency, and rightly observed that this requirement put severe limitations on Soviet "freedom to tailor claims to achieve such diversified

¹ Wolfe Soviet Strategy at the Crossroads p288
² Arnold L Horelick and Myron Rush Strategic Power and Soviet Foreign Policy University of Chicago Press, Chicago MI, 1966, pp37-38. The authors (pp29, 35, 39) painted many of Khrushchev's key statements on nuclear strategy between 1957 and 1961 as politically expedient and not as considered statements of an enduring military doctrine. In particular, they saw many of the key statements as part of an elaborate plan to deceive the West about Soviet military capability, especially by building on Western fears. They suggested that this is one reason why statements of the Soviet leadership (political and military) as early as 1956 gave greater emphasis to nuclear missiles than to nuclear bombers. Horelick and Rush dealt with Soviet military strategy at a fairly generalised level - that level where the precepts of the military strategy relate to foreign policy. Thus, strictly speaking, their comments about the propagandistic purposes of various Soviet formulations on nuclear war and Soviet plans for massive retaliation cannot be seen as addressing the more detailed elaboration of Soviet military doctrine.
effects".\textsuperscript{1}

The authors described a confident Khrushchev who by 1956 had concluded that "the West meant to employ its strategic superiority only defensively and not as a basis for serious political offensive against the Soviet camp". They suggested that Khrushchev did not develop a "unitary" concept of strategy, but reacted in accordance with events.\textsuperscript{2}

The authors suggested that key changes in emphasis between particular statements on nuclear war could be attempts to compensate for having given one target group unwanted impressions by exaggerated claims intended for another. An example which they cited related to the change in mid-1960 in the Soviet position on Soviet casualties in a nuclear war away from the view that it was only the imperialist countries which would be devastated. The authors suggested two causes: the need to bolster the Soviet position against China on the question of appropriate Communist bloc strategy;\textsuperscript{3} and a desire to tone down propaganda aimed at the USA, away from an emphasis on superiority to a theme of parity.\textsuperscript{4} They also attributed some of the excesses of Soviet statements between 1958 and 1962 on nuclear capability and nuclear war to the need to back up their campaign against Berlin in the same period. In particular, they linked an

\textsuperscript{1} ibid p38
\textsuperscript{2} ibid pp211-212
\textsuperscript{3} ibid p112. According to Horelick and Rush, the disagreement with China was in large part over the amount of pressure that could be exerted by Communist initiatives and retaliatory actions without unduly increasing the risk of nuclear war. The authors assessed the Chinese position as follows:

\begin{quote}
Revolutionary wars do not create sparks that can ignite a world conflagration but strengthen "the forces which prevent the imperialists from launching a world war." In contrast to the Russian belief that deterrence of the West depends upon the avoidance of severe political and military shocks, the Chinese leaders assert that the present strategic balance is proof against shocks administered by the Communists. The way to lessen the risk of world war, the Chinese Communists imply, is to accept the risk of lesser wars.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{4} ibid pp38, 79-80
intensification of the missile gap deception in early 1959 to the opening of their Berlin campaign in late 1958.¹

Garthoff, in a 1966 work on Soviet military policy, focusing more on the military aspects of foreign policy than on military doctrine, reiterated the view that the USSR accepted that any war it became involved in might take a number of forms, and continued to reject a literal reading of official Soviet statements about general war and local war.²

While Garthoff acknowledged that "Limited conflicts represent the classic form of Communist military action", his central conclusion was that the USSR is very cautious about becoming embroiled in local wars, including revolutionary wars involving only indirect Soviet support.³

In a 1967 history of the Soviet armed forces from 1917 to 1966, Malcolm Mackintosh, a British intelligence analyst, devoted some space to the main doctrinal developments in Soviet strategy after the death of Stalin, noting in a brief comment that the issue of local war had become visible in 1964:

some interest was shown in 1964 in forms of warfare which had hitherto been neglected by the Soviet armed forces. In the early summer, the marine corps was re-established in the main fleet areas, and marines took part in Warsaw Pact exercises for the first time. The use of forces on secondary theatres in a non-nuclear role was also dealt with, as were airborne and special forces operations, all possible indications that an all-out nuclear clash was no longer the only type of war which the Soviet military leaders thought could break out between East and West.⁴

Mackintosh stated in his conclusion that one of the three most important questions the Soviet armed forces would have to deal with in subsequent

¹ ibid p119
² Garthoff Soviet Military Policy p198
³ ibid pp198, 212
⁴ Mackintosh Juggernaut pp301, 303
years would be the role of non-nuclear and non-strategic forces. He suggested that the answer to this question would depend on the USSR's willingness to copy the pattern of American and British sea and airborne mobility on a global scale. He predicted that if the USSR so desired, he following decade would give a "new lease on life to the surface fleet, marines, airborne units, and other specialized non-nuclear forces".¹

By contrast with the mid-1960s majority view, a school of thought emerged later that the USSR did not have a military doctrine for limited war. The period after the mid-1960s also saw a growth in the contentiousness of Western commentary, the development of public acrimony over scholarly disagreements, and what has been called a "flood of dilettantism and superficiality".² Much of this research was personal opinion and special pleading disguised as expert analysis.

The principal dispute was over the balance in Soviet doctrine between deterrence and the "war fighting", with the two main schools of thought represented by Richard Pipes and Raymond Garthoff.³ The Pipes school argued that the USSR believed it could fight and win a nuclear war, while Garthoff argued that it accepted the principle of assured destruction that underpinned the American concept of deterrence.

¹ ibid p311
² Lambeth The State of Western Research on Soviet Military Strategy and Policy p11. He saw the period of scholarship up to the mid-1960s as one of the most professional:
   Among the distinctive features of this generation of Soviet military analysts ...
   were their abiding professionalism and attention to detail. All were bona fide
   Soviet specialists with solid Russian language skills. ... Although their writings
   were scarcely free of opinion, they remained marked by a notable absence of cant
   (p8).
³ Lambeth identified a new stage in Soviet military studies after the mid-1960s which was marked by "a significant growth in the scope of the inquiry": Party-military relations; force planning and defence policy processes; research and development for weapons acquisition; and international crisis behaviour (p9).
While it has been suggested that these differences were not too great, with the two contenders actually describing different levels of policy - Pipes on the military requirements should deterrence fail, and Garthoff on the political component of military doctrine¹ - a school very firmly in the Pipes mould had emerged by the mid-1970s. This school not only rejected possible Soviet interest in deterrence, but also refused to accept Soviet recognition of lesser contingencies, such as limited war. Soviet military doctrine was deemed to consist exclusively of an all-or-nothing concept of general war. This school of thought, the "Armageddon" school, did not give any credit to the views advanced by Garthoff about Soviet acceptance of deterrence or their planning for lesser contingencies - local war, limited theatre war or controlled general war.

For example, a study by Snyder in 1977 of Soviet policy on limited nuclear options in general war concluded:

> It would be dangerous to assume that Soviet crisis decisionmakers will be willing to tailor their behaviour to American notions of strategic rationality. ... Soviet criticism of limited strategic war and intra-war deterrence is consistent with embedded patterns of Soviet strategic thought.²

He did not attempt to explain the significance for Soviet doctrine of his observation that the "Soviets do not specify in their doctrinal writings how they would react to a US limited nuclear strike"?³

Douglass held a similar view:

> little evidence has been found in the Soviet literature to suggest any interest in limiting objectives or in restraining employment [of

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¹ Lambeth The State of Western Research on Soviet Military Strategy and Policy p14
² Jack L Snyder The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Options Rand Corporation, Santa Monica CA, 1977, p39. Some authors did not directly canvas the prospect of limited nuclear war (theatre war) but preferred to discuss Soviet views of limited war in connection with strategic (intercontinental) warfare in which they were probably on safer ground.
³ ibid p20
nuclear weapons] within (rather than to) the theater of operations once the war goes nuclear ... To the Soviets war is war; it is combined nuclear and conventional war and not either disjunctively a conventional or a nuclear war or something in-between.\(^1\)

In an important work by Douglass and Hoeber published in 1981, Soviet interest in conventional force operations in Europe and situations other than major war was acknowledged. Yet the focus of the work was on "major war" in Europe or against the USA anywhere, for which they concluded that the primary goal of the USSR would always be nuclear warfare, and that it would see any opening conventional phase of the major war as part of the planned transition to nuclear weapons.\(^2\) The authors rejected out of hand any suggestion that Soviet doctrine might have shifted in the 1970s to interest in fighting a conventional war in Europe,\(^3\) and saw the improvements in Soviet conventional forces as contributing to operations in nuclear war.

Douglass and Hoeber did however give some brief insights into Soviet thinking about local war:

The Soviets have clearly and continuously recognised the need to be able to conduct non-nuclear war, but primarily for fighting specific types of wars which are expected to remain non-nuclear ...\(^4\)

But they offered only the slightest elaboration on what these wars might be: wars against counter-revolutionary movements, such as in Hungary in 1956 or

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\(^3\) Douglass and Hoeber *Conventional War and Escalation* p6

\(^4\) *ibid*
Czechoslovakia in 1968; and wars of national revolution, as in Afghanistan in 1981, or possibly in the future in the Middle East or "selected European NATO countries".¹

They noted that "at least as early as January 1964" the possibility of a conventional phase of major war was recognised. They remarked that "at least by the mid-1960s, the Soviets had realised they were becoming too dependent on nuclear weapons" and "nuclear weapons were a scarce commodity in the 1960s, and simply were not available in large quantities at the battlefield level". They also noted that by 1966 training patterns in the Warsaw Pact reflected non-nuclear scenarios.²

The authors, like so many in the Armageddon school, attempted no analysis of the possible lag between actual changes in Soviet doctrine and between Western realisation of them through published Soviet statements or US intelligence reports. They did not acknowledge any possible mismatch between what the USSR was prepared to publish about its military doctrine and what might have occurred behind closed doors. Moreover, they berated other scholars for ignoring what Soviet sources said, in reminding their readers of the differences between Soviet and US doctrinal concepts and suggesting that Soviet doctrinal concepts "appear to be simply overlooked, not addressed, or discounted as mere rhetoric by the West".³

It is interesting that Douglass and Hoeber could so easily dismiss in a footnote the following statement, which raises the question addressed in this thesis:

A former senior East European officer has stated that provision for a

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¹ ibid pp13-14
² ibid pp9, 12
³ ibid p8
conventional variant was first incorporated into Warsaw Pact war plans in 1963. This conventional variant was, however, not for major war. Rather, it was for small-scale Berlin-like actions, over which the Soviets believed the United States would not go to war.¹

Between the two schools of thought (the Garthoff school and the Armageddon school), the literature is characterised by descriptive works which pay little attention to the many levels of analysis of military doctrine - bureaucratic, political, cultural, or individual motivations. These works were characterised by frequently unsupported assertions interspersed in exegesis of published Soviet works, or in chronological exposition of international political events or presumed force structure decisions.²

Where questions of development and dissemination of doctrine were considered in detail, some authors presumed a perfect, "unbureaucratic" model - a direct one to one correspondence between published doctrine and the timing and nature of decisions, a 100 per cent record for the Soviet armed forces and Soviet defence industry in respect of highly developed, totally rational, detailed, Government-authorised doctrine.³

When scholars did grapple with references in open Soviet sources to conventional operations, these were usually discussed only cursorily and as part of a general war scenario, notwithstanding the practical experience of Soviet

¹ *ibid* p9n
² For example, Harriet Fast Scott and William F Scott *Soviet Military Doctrine - Continuity, Formulation, Dissemination* Westview Press, Boulder CO, 1988. It was not uncommon for scholars to list the range of influences and then not treat them at any length. For example, one author offered the following set:
the country's location, demographics, level of economic development, history and the nature of the political system, ... the nature of its involvement in alliance systems, as well as the perception and evaluation of the opponent's capabilities and intentions.
³ For example, Douglass and Hoeber *Conventional War and Escalation: The Soviet View*
preparation for local armed conflicts with Czechoslovakia and China, and the existence of an explicit political doctrine for local war - the Brezhnev doctrine.¹

Little thought was given to what weight of literature in Soviet open sources might have reflected General Staff doctrinal positions on local war. As an American scholar observed in respect of his country's study of limited war: "After all, how many basic elaborations of deterrence, limited war, and arms control theory are needed?"²

Scholars who went outside Soviet official sources and thought more deeply about what was involved generally reached different conclusions from the Armageddon School. For example, Freedman in a 1981 study of the evolution of nuclear doctrine by the five nuclear powers, suggested a domestic political motive in the USA for assessments of Soviet military doctrine.³ He challenged the dominant view in the West of Soviet strategic doctrine:

while it is true that a careful reading of Soviet military writings left a clear impression of an expectation of the ultimate triumph of socialism, even through a victory in a nuclear war, this was so far removed from actual capabilities that it was difficult to believe the Russians themselves took it seriously. In fact, despite the proud bellicosity and ideological certainty of official pronouncements,

¹ William T Lee and Richard F Staar Soviet Military Policy since World War II Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University Press, Stanford CA, 1986, like so many works on Soviet military policy and doctrine, devoted only one page to the question of limited war. The authors suggest that until 1964, the USSR expected a war with the NATO coalition to be nuclear from the outset (pp39-40). After 1967, the authors said, the USSR changed its doctrine to allow for a conventional phase but this did not equate to western concepts of limited war because the Western alliance could not stop the Soviets in Europe by limited nuclear war. In other words, the authors were offering as evidence of their assertion that the USSR did not have a concept of limited war, the inability of the USA and NATO to fight one.


³ Lawrence Freedman The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy Macmillan, London UK, 1981, pp258-259: The growth of Soviet military capabilities during the late 1960s and 1970s encouraged people in the West to look once again, with a less critical eye, at Soviet doctrine. ... As the indictment against McNamara was being drawn up by the conservatives in the 1970s, the most serious item on the charge sheet was that of a failure to appreciate the distinctiveness of the Soviet approach to strategic issues.
attitudes and behaviour displayed in the context of actual international affairs were exceedingly cautious.¹

Freedman was one of the few scholars to suggest the seminal work Military Strategy may have been a bureaucratic compromise between the Central Committee and the General Staff, or between contending views in the General Staff:

The work avoided controversy and read like a compromise document. It offered no clear priorities for the design of Soviet forces while providing support for claims for every type of force. Nor was there even an unambiguous view on the likely character of a future war.²

In particular, Freedman noted the book’s ambiguity on questions of limited war:

At times the hypothesis of the inevitability of the expansion of limited war into a global nuclear war was given vigorous support; elsewhere there were indications that some limits might hold.³

A number of respected scholars who took a broad view of Soviet military strategy, such as MccGwire, were adamant that the USSR did have a doctrine for local war, although MccGwire believed this only happened after 1966, his postulated turning point for Soviet general war doctrine:

The 1970s hierarchy of objectives required that the Soviet Union take active steps to keep a future war limited ... ... the Soviets had a two-pronged military strategy, designed to defeat NATO forces in Europe while inhibiting the

¹ ibid p258. The debates about victory in war in the Soviet press, which formed the basis of the views of many American scholars about Soviet doctrine, had their equivalent in the USA, albeit most evident in the period of the doctrine of massive retaliation:
We believe that a policy of victory must be announced to the American people in order to restore unity and confidence. It is too much too expect that our people will accept a limited war. Our policy must be to win. Our strategy must be devised to bring about decisive victory.
Military Situation in the Far East, Hearings before the Committee on the on Armed Services and the Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate, 82nd Congress, 1st Session, 1951, p3590 cited in Morton H Halperin Limited War in the Nuclear Age Wiley, New York NY, 1963, p46
² ibid p264
³ ibid
resort to nuclear weapons. To implement this strategy the Soviets depended mainly on the new concept of operations, which their new conventional capability enabled.\(^1\)

At the same time, MccGwire noted that if NATO blocked Soviet conventional operations, the USSR would have had to "consider the selective use of nuclear weapons".\(^2\) Beyond these propositions, there is little trace in his account of more detailed Soviet consideration of limited war roles in their force structure development.

MccGwire based his view of a major change in Soviet military doctrine after 1966 on a number of amendments in the 1968 edition of Sokolovskii’s Military Strategy which "taken together ... implied a fundamental shift in underlying military doctrine".\(^3\) While MccGwire was able to find other evidence, including supposed decision years for naval ship-building, to support his view, most of his sources were textual.\(^4\)

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\(^1\) Michael MccGwire Military Objectives in Soviet Foreign Policy Brookings, Washington DC, 1987, pp54-55

\(^2\) ibid p134

\(^3\) MccGwire Military Objectives in Soviet Foreign Policy p387. MccGwire did not postulate any significant time lag between the publication of the materials in Sokolovskii’s book and their time of writing. It is arguable that the first two editions were based on work completed by 1957 or 1958, and the third on refinements to this earlier work undertaken after 1960, and possibly including changes agreed before the second edition was even published in 1963.

\(^4\) MccGwire noted that a time lag that can exist between a decision and any manifestation of it (p382). Yet his periodisation for major changes in Soviet doctrine relies on near simultaneous public events. For example, he talked of the "so-called revolution in military affairs" brought about by the advent of nuclear warheads and missile means of delivery, a revolution arising in his opinion from a defence review in 1959-60, which resulted in the establishment of the Strategic Rocket Forces (p384). Yet as Garthoff’s work reviewed in this Chapter shows, the USSR had already made the necessary adjustments in its published concepts of war-fighting by the late 1950s. Although the Strategic Rocket Troops did not come into being as a separate service until December 1959, training with medium range missiles began in 1953 or 1954, press reports of 1957 suggested the creation of the SRF as an independent service, and test firing of the first inter-continental missile to full range took place in 1957 (John Prados The Soviet Estimate -US Intelligence Analysis and Russian Military Strength Dial Press, New York NY, 1982, pp56, 77, 79). Moreover, the decision to develop a nuclear missile technology was taken by Stalin as early as 1945 or 1946, and the program began in April 1947 (Honорё M Catudal Soviet Nuclear Strategy from Stalin to Gorbachev - A Revolution in Soviet Military and Political Thinking Berlin Verlag Arno Spitz, Berlin 1988, p37; Lawrence Freedman US Intelligence and the Soviet Strategic Threat 2nd edition, Macmillan, London UK, 1986, p68).
His comments on the supposed important changes in the view of limited war between 1963 and 1968 are instructive:

The third edition described the US concept as envisaging a war in which both Russia and America would be spared nuclear strikes and in which the conflict would be geographically restricted but would include Europe. Other changes shifted the emphasis from the inevitability of escalation to an intercontinental exchange to the possibility of avoiding it.¹

Like MccGwire’s summary of supposed changes to "Soviet Positions on World War" before and after 1966, the above quotation ignored views in pre-1966 sources similar to those quoted, as Chapter Five of this thesis demonstrates.

MccGwire’s view that greater Soviet emphasis on conventional forces by the USSR was just part of their general nuclear war strategy became the accepted view amongst scholars,² though, oddly, other scholars found different starting points from MccGwire’s. For example, Sherr suggests that it occurred in 1964, with Soviet open sources having even suggested the possibility earlier than that:

the effort put into traditional arms after 1964 was designed in the main to achieve what was stipulated but in fact highly questionable before 1964: the support of the operations of the Strategic Rocket Forces, and the exploitation of missile strikes ...³

By 1989, flaws in Western scholarship on Soviet military doctrine were being recognised more widely. For example, Vigor wrote:

The period [mid-1970s and early 1980s] was characterised by sharp controversy about the nature of the problem faced by the West; but it is a myth that this controversy was a sort of ‘great debate’ about various aspects of Soviet military thinking. ... None of the protagonists proceeds by examining the differing interpretations of

¹ ibid p389
³ ibid p131
any given data, and few acknowledge the weakness of that data.\textsuperscript{1}

Vigor goes on to note the dangerous consequences of the poor scholarship:

true enhancement of our knowledge has suffered. More dangerously, people in authority, believing that the data support their analyst's conclusions, may actually feel themselves better informed and more capable of making decisions. These pseudo-debates of the past decade have put the credibility of the entire community of analysts at stake, as well as the policy conclusions drawn on the basis of much of that work.\textsuperscript{2}

At the same time, scholarly work on Soviet military strategy and doctrine began to manifest a degree of emancipation from the previously dominant concepts and fears. There was less preoccupation with general war, less concern about the aggressive intent of (past) Soviet military doctrine, and greater recognition of the intrusion of political factors into formulation of elaborate doctrinal concepts. This trend, almost certainly related to the rapid moves by Mikhail Gorbachev in the area of military policy and strategic doctrine, seemed to vindicate a 1973 view of the record of the scholarship until that time:

the troubling circumstance that one finds an empirically observable congruence between the temper of the times and the general thrust of dominant interpretations by specialists of the USSR.\textsuperscript{3}

For example, a 1990 study by Kaldor saw Soviet strategy as more realistic than US strategy, because the Soviets were more interested in real wars than the Americans, particularly in Eastern Europe.\textsuperscript{4} She identified three factors important in explaining Soviet strategy: the occupation role in Eastern Europe, the

\textsuperscript{1} Peter Vigor "Western Perceptions of Soviet Strategic Thought and Doctrine" in Gregory Flynn (ed) Soviet Military Doctrine and Western Policy Routledge, London UK, 1989, pp90-91
\textsuperscript{2} ibid pp90-91
\textsuperscript{3} Alexander Dallin "Biases and Blunders in American Studies on the USSR" Slavic Review Sep 1973 p565
\textsuperscript{4} Mary Kaldor The Imaginary War: Understanding the East-West Conflict Basil Blackwell Ltd, Oxford UK, 1990, p197
heritage of the Second World War, and institutional or ideological pressures.\textsuperscript{1} She suggested that Khrushchev’s emphasis on nuclear weapons in the late 1950s was often misinterpreted in the West as a minimum deterrence posture, and argued that conventional forces had a much greater place in Soviet strategy than those interpretations suggested.\textsuperscript{2}

Kaldor saw the Warsaw Pact as first and foremost a device for political, military and psychological control. Eastern Europe was always unstable after the war, and it was this very instability which led to the build-up of the police and military apparatus of the USSR, for continued Soviet preparation for and actual recourse to war.\textsuperscript{3}

Arguments made all along by the Garthoff school took on new significance as \textit{glasnost}' freed Soviet discussion of military policy from past political dogmas, and allowed the rational strands of Soviet strategic thought to emerge more clearly, without propagandistic embellishments. The Soviet military establishment was not necessarily willing to abandon pre-existing doctrinal formulations, but as Chapter Two suggests in the case of the USA, resort to doctrinal precepts does not necessarily imply faith in them. In particular, Gorbachev’s determination to reduce Soviet military spending and force levels under a policy of reasonable sufficiency threatened the institutional interests of the armed forces, and opened up a vigorous debate on Soviet military doctrine.

\textsuperscript{1} \textit{ibid.} Kaldor cited as an example of the shifting American perceptions of these enduring realities a change in assessments by the Joint Chiefs of Staff of Soviet capabilities in 1948 compared with their 1946 assessment (p195). In 1946, according to Kaldor, the JCS assessed the USSR would need nearly all of its 66 divisions in eastern Europe for occupation duty there and for defensive requirements. In 1948, after the USA scaled down its assessment of actual Soviet troop numbers, and after political circumstances changed, the JCS estimated that the USSR only need 6 of 31 divisions in Eastern Europe for occupation duties and that the other 25 were available for an attack on Western Europe.

\textsuperscript{2} \textit{ibid} p199

\textsuperscript{3} \textit{ibid} pp67-69
That the changes in military policy under Gorbachev did represent in part a stripping away of the propagandistic "window dressing" of Soviet military doctrine, not wholesale repudiation of all its precepts, was demonstrated fairly well in the publication in 1990 of a work by Garthoff on deterrence in Soviet military policy. While this work aimed to study new developments relating to war prevention, deterrence and reasonable sufficiency, it did not pass up the opportunity to review (and confirm previous judgements about) the historical development, however uneven and contradictory, of deterrence and war prevention in Soviet doctrine.¹

Garthoff reminded his readers that "there were parallels in Soviet and American thinking about limited war and flexible response reflecting the fact that both sides faced essentially the same problems". He suggested that the similarities were obscured because neither side took the other's expressed views seriously enough, preferring to impute more hostile intentions to it.²

The stripping away of the window dressing allowed Snyder, writing in 1991 on the links between national strategy and domestic politics, to criticise much of post-war American strategic analysis, make a plea for more attention to domestic sources of strategy, and conclude that the Soviet armed forces did have a concept for limited, conventional war, even in Europe:

the [Soviet] military adopted arguments reminiscent of the logic of offensive detente, extended to provide a theory of escalation control in limited conflicts. Thus Soviet military capabilities would constrain American escalation even while a Soviet client used Soviet supplied arms to achieve "victory" over an American client. This logic was also applied in preparing for a limited conventional war in Europe. The Soviet army would strive for a decisive victory using

² ibid p55
conventional forces only, and realists in NATO would be deterred from retaliating with nuclear arms by the threat of Soviet escalation.¹

On Soviet Local War Doctrine

Attempts to find a general pattern (evidence of a doctrine) in Soviet military policy for local wars did not really begin seriously until the late 1970s,² though a number of earlier studies had addressed the growing capability of Soviet forces for intervention.³ Even with the new interest, there was almost exclusive concentration on the international aspects, and in looking at the international aspects, the emphasis was on the political dimension rather than the military.⁴

In 1978, Haselkorn published a study interpreting Soviet political, economic and military moves along the USSR’s periphery between 1965 and 1975 as part of a coherent military strategy to establish a collective security system, designed to deter the USA from resisting militarily the gradual expansion of Soviet

Realism must be recaptured from those who look only at politics between societies, ignoring what goes on within societies. ...
My own work finds that, among the great powers, domestic pressures often outweigh international ones in the calculations of national leaders.

² It would be of some interest to establish the cause of the new interest. Was it concern about Soviet moves, such as the resupply of Egypt in 1973, Soviet and Cuban support of the Angolan communists in their civil war in 1975, the Soviet involvement in the Ethiopian war against Somalia in 1978, and the general expansion of Soviet military relationships with Third World countries? Or was it linked to renewed US interest in the late 1970s in the security of Middle East oil and interventionary capability in the Persian Gulf region?

³ For example, T W Wolfe The Soviet Quest for More Globally Mobile Military Power Rand, Santa Monica CA, 1967

domination based on conventional military forces.\textsuperscript{1} He devoted more than half of the short book to development of Soviet military capabilities, deployment patterns and strategic relationships to support power projection, but did not address doctrine for wars that might arise.

Jacobsen in a 1979 work reviewed the role of interventionary doctrine in overall strategic doctrine and in the context of the global balance of power. In examining the mechanics of Soviet intervention, he looked at the published Soviet view of concrete military issues, such as the need to guarantee military lines of communication, the requirements of combined operations, and the operational tasks of particular services, but did not give a comprehensive analysis of these issues.\textsuperscript{2} The work focused mainly on geopolitical inputs, and other types of motivation (such as internal political or bureaucratic) were not canvassed in any depth.

The most comprehensive study to date of the implementation phase of Soviet strategy for local war has been \textit{Diplomacy of Power}, a Brookings project involving several scholars on the use of the Soviet armed forces as a political instrument. The aims of the book were: to present a historical record of discrete Soviet politico-military operations since World War II, that focused on the political context; to examine Soviet readiness to use military power abroad and its willingness to accept risks in doing so; to evaluate the effectiveness and implications of Soviet coercive diplomacy.\textsuperscript{3}

The work presented an encyclopedic record of Soviet coercive

\textsuperscript{2} Jacobsen \textit{op cit} pp15, 37-47
\textsuperscript{3} Kaplan et al \textit{op cit} p2
diplomacy but did not assess military doctrine for local war, asserting that such a task might be impossible.\footnote{ibid p642. The editor of the work and principal author, Kaplan, concluded that it is "probably impossible" to discern the "identity and lines of authority" in the political and military leadership during the incidents reviewed or to know what motivated these leaders in their actions or which of their operational objectives were satisfied. Using a contentious definition of failure and success, Kaplan concludes that the "Soviet armed forces when used as a political instrument were an uncertain means for achieving specific objectives abroad", and that the realisation of broader Soviet objectives by these actions "was problematic". Kaplan also concluded that "invariably Moscow used military power with great deliberation" (pp646-647, 667).}

A 1983 work by Hosmer and Wolfe reviewed the broad international objectives of Soviet involvement in Third World conflicts and the political, economic and military means used in support of those objectives. It concluded with a description of the pattern of Soviet military involvements since 1946 in the following terms:

- largely reactive but assertively opportunistic;
- low risk in terms of possible military confrontation with the USA;
- hedged commitments and tailored involvement where risks are uncertain;
- intervention with combat forces in situations of dire necessity;
- preference for local forces to do the fighting;
- good success rate in terms of Soviet objectives;
- effective military support for conventional operations by clients but not too much comfort for clients in ant-insurgency campaigns (Ethiopia, Angola); and
- relatively low cost to the USSR.\footnote{Hosmer and Wolfe \textit{op cit} Chapter 12}

There were occasional references to changes in Soviet military doctrine giving new emphasis to intervention,\footnote{For example, \textit{ibid} pp34-38} but analysis of these changes was brief, and did not consider alternative explanations for the "evidence" presented. The book did not examine the civil-military interface in any detail, and made very few references to published Soviet military views.

The book noted a "visible improvement in Soviet military
capabilities applicable to intervention ... particularly growth in naval forces and airlift potential". This improvement, it claimed, "paralleled the emergence in the later 1960s of more doctrinal emphasis on a Soviet military presence abroad".  

A 1984 work on The USSR in Third World Conflicts - Soviet Arms and Diplomacy in Local wars 1945-1980 by Porter sought to "illuminate certain of the tactical and operational aspects of the USSR's policy in local conflicts" - a relatively neglected area in Western studies. He purported to look at tactical and operational aspects not only of military policy but also of diplomacy.  

His subject is really the latter - operational aspects of Soviet diplomacy, of which the Soviet armed forces are one instrument. He did not discuss Soviet approaches to combat operations and took no view on military questions:

The role of Soviet advisers in servicing and training was doubtless also a critical factor, but their actual influence on tactical planning in most cases is not known.

A short chapter on Soviet power projection capabilities dealt with military capability as little more than the sum of the equipment used. The book made passing mention of organisational structure for local war operations, but no significant treatment of doctrine and training.

A 1985 doctoral thesis on Soviet power projection in the Third World and the role of the USSR's strategically mobile forces gave a fairly generalised treatment of the relationship between use of force and Soviet foreign policy objectives. The author purported to review open source discussions of the

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1 *ibid* p35
2 Porter *op cit* pp2-3. Porter's work may have been the first book-length work on Soviet military policy to use the term "local war" in the title.
3 *ibid* p237
"nuts and bolts of conducting local wars" but provided no analysis beyond a discussion of general missions, force assets, and examples of use of force, and used very few Soviet military sources.

A 1986 study by Hough concentrated on the strategic purposes (foreign policy goals) of Soviet military actions in the Third World.\(^1\) He analysed the foreign policy motivations of Soviet Third World policy and how, after Stalin's death, the sources of Soviet foreign policy became more diverse.

Apart from studies which sought to generalise, there were a number of works on Soviet military planning for particular local wars in Eastern Europe and the Third World which, taken together, offer a rich literature of case studies on the international and domestic political rationale for the decision phase of certain Soviet actions.\(^2\)

Only a handful of works touch on Soviet military thinking - that is the ideas of the Soviet General Staff - with respect to doctrine for fighting local wars. In a brief 1981 review of Soviet approaches to limited war, Kolkowicz noted the difficulty of defining limited war, observed ambiguous and contradictory trends in the USSR, and said it historically embraced the concept of limited war, but in the post-war period strongly objected to Western notions of it.\(^3\) He observed that while the USA with nuclear superiority adopted a flexible response (limited war) doctrine, the USSR with massive conventional forces and minimal strategic forces

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\(^1\) Jerry Hough *The Struggle for the Third World: Soviet Debates and American Options* Brookings, Washington DC, 1986

\(^2\) For example, Galia Golan *Yom Kippur and After: The Soviet Union and the Middle East Crisis* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge UK, 1977; and Jiri Valenta *Soviet Intervention in Czechoslovakia: Anatomy of a Decision* Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore MD, 1979. In the event, there was no war. The scale of the Soviet intervention was such as to deter any resistance, but this could not have been assumed before the fact.

adopted a doctrine of finite deterrence and massive retaliation - a logical position because the USSR could not risk escalation of a local, limited war with the superior US forces.¹

He argued that in the 1970s and 1980s, this position reversed itself and the USSR became more capable of accepting the concept of controlled limited war because its limited war forces, with or without nuclear weapons, provided additional deterrent and war-fighting capabilities on the primary flanks of the USSR.² But he did not elaborate much on these limited war doctrines and forces. Echoing Garthoff, he noted that limited war was the "natural" and "rational" doctrine for a quasi-revolutionary, expansionist political system like the USSR in an international system controlled by the balance of terror.³

He observed that the USSR distinguished between three types of war: world war; limited war not involving the territories of the superpowers but fought with their support, with or without nuclear weapons; and local war or wars of national liberation in the Third World, which would remain non-nuclear, and contained in scope, targets, weapons and objectives.⁴ He viewed Soviet strategy as a "commissar strategy" - confrontation avoidance under conditions of low Soviet control, a process influenced more by goals than the means available.⁵

Kolkowicz recalled Wolfe’s view that Soviet military doctrine paid less attention to local than to general war but noted big changes in discussion of the relative roles of nuclear and conventional forces in future war and the loosening

¹ ibid
² ibid p77
³ ibid
⁴ ibid p80
⁵ ibid p81
of strictures against theatre warfare with or without nuclear weapons.\(^1\) He postulated that the Soviet political and military leaders were troubled by the contradiction in limited war of achieving the goal by decisive military operations at the same time as preventing escalation.\(^2\)

Katz, in *The Third World in Soviet Military Thought*, concentrated largely on the international relations level of analysis and his extensive quotations from Soviet sources are for the most part commentaries on broad politico-military issues rather than on operational military considerations. He identified six different aspects of Soviet military thinking about conflict in the Third World:

- the relationship of local wars to world war;
- the nature and types of war in the Third World;
- the relationship of peaceful coexistence to local wars;
- the Soviet view of indigenous forces in the Third World;
- the Soviet view of US ideas about actions in the Third World; and
- the role of the USSR in Third World conflicts.\(^3\)

Katz documented changes in Soviet thinking on these six aspects through reference to Soviet political and military literature and to Soviet actions on the international plane. His study covered the Brezhnev era to 1981, and he looked at differences of opinion between Party leaders and the professional military on questions of local wars.

In many respects, Katz’ work was ground-breaking, perhaps the first wide-ranging review of Soviet official literature on the subject of local wars. However, it reflected Soviet propaganda and terminology too closely. For example, his discussions of Soviet military thinking used published statements almost exclusively.

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\(^1\) *ibid* p83

\(^2\) *ibid* p78. The one quote Kolkowicz advances in support of the view that the Soviet leaders were “troubled” by this contradiction is not convincing.

\(^3\) Katz *The Third World in Soviet Military Thought* p10
Moreover, Katz failed to recognise that the Soviet term "lokal'naia voina" [local war] embraced other types of war and other issues apart from Third World conflicts. He did not discuss the nexus between Soviet strategic and operational precepts, and addressed the issue of local wars (in the Third World) in Soviet global political strategy rather than Soviet military strategy for local wars. Katz discussed the civil-military relationship only briefly.

Katz’ work nominally covered the period to 1981, but was in fact not comprehensive past 1979, and therefore did not cover the Soviet experience of Afghanistan.¹

Fukuyama’s study, *Soviet Civil-Military Relations and the Power Projection Mission*, was more credible in that it went beyond the rhetoric to a more realistic analysis. Fukuyama did look in some detail at Soviet strategy in Afghanistan and its impact on civil-military relations, but for the most part he, like Katz, presented a study of local wars in Soviet global strategy rather than of Soviet strategy for local wars. His analysis of civil-military relations on the question of local wars provides a useful starting point for the treatment of bureaucratic and political aspects in this thesis, but his interpretations of Soviet statements were, like those of Katz, "face value" interpretations.²

Golan’s 1988 study, *The Soviet Union and National Liberation Movements in the Third World*, was an important contribution to study of this aspect of Soviet foreign policy, especially in its comparison of Soviet and Chinese

¹ Katz edited a related work *The USSR and Marxist Revolutions in the Third World* Cambridge University Press, New York NY, 1990 and published a paper under the same title in 1987 under the auspices of the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies.
positions on national liberation peaceful co-existence, but contains only a brief treatment of the Soviet military and local war.¹

While Golan aimed to reflect the "complexity and multi-dimensionality" of a range of Soviet views on the issue of national liberation movements,² she admitted almost no propagandistic content in Soviet military commentaries cited, unwisely took Katz at face value, and like him failed to define adequately a distinction between "military theorists" and "civilian theorists".

A 1991 work by MccGwire, Perestroika and Soviet National Security hypothesised that sometime between 1979 and 1982 the USSR concluded that a regional (local) conflict involving the USA and USSR would not inevitably escalate to world war. MccGwire saw the creation of theatre commands for the Western, South-Western and Southern theatres in 1984 as an explicit manifestation of this shift in Soviet strategy.³ He stated categorically that until then, Soviet military requirements were "in practice determined by the worst case of world war", and in a statement typical of the scholarship, postulated a Soviet belief that if the contingency of world war "could be handled", "so could any lesser conflict".⁴

MccGwire noted that by the end of the 1950s, the USSR had largely discounted the cold-blooded premeditated US attack it had feared in the early

¹ Galia Golan The Soviet Union and National Liberation Movements in the Third World Unwin Hyman, Winchester UK, 1988
² ibid p1
⁴ ibid p14. MccGwire (pp16-17) claimed that all Soviet strategy was determined by the superiority of the West in overall military capability and that for this reason, the Soviets had to accept the constraints imposed by the strengths of Western forces. While the second part of MccGwire's statement is axiomatic, the first part is open to serious challenge. The notion, as he put it, that the USSR was a "strategy taker" (like a "price taker" in economic terminology), ignores the important geopolitical consequences of developments outside the sphere of military technology, such as the alliance with China from 1949 to 1962, the success of Eurocommunism in the 1970s, or the loss of US influence in Iran in 1978. The view that the Soviet leadership, political or military, divined their military strategy merely as a reaction to Western military predominance is to say the least monochromatic.
1950s. He repeated the traditional US view that at the end of the 1950s, the USSR believed that a major conflict between the USSR and the USA would inevitably develop into a full-scale intercontinental nuclear exchange. He saw Soviet military moves in the Third World in the 1960s as efforts to gain the "operational infrastructure needed to support Soviet strategy in the event of world war."

MccGwire, citing Katz, observed that the USSR’s fear in the 1960s that armed confrontation with US forces would escalate into global nuclear war was a major constraint on the use of Soviet force in the Third World. He claimed that by 1969, "the consensus on the dangers of escalation from local war began to break and a debate ensued, which in mid-1974 was set aside rather than resolved. He supported this interpretation by reference to Katz’s interpretation of one 1974 article and his own interpretation of one earlier article by the then Commander in Chief of the Soviet Navy, Admiral Gorshkov."

MccGwire noted the presumed transition after 1966 to a doctrinal view that world war would not necessarily be nuclear or involve massive strikes on the USSR, and claimed that in 1967-68, the USSR began to restructure its forces to carry out conventional offensive operations. As evidence for this view, he cited the Soviet hope for non-nuclear conflict with China if one erupted at the same time as a war in Europe. He claimed that Soviet military interest in the Third World even up to 1984 was largely related to the global strategic balance, and that acquisition of basing rights was secondary to acquisition of political influence. He went on to say:

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1 ibid pp20-21, 133
2 ibid p135
3 ibid p24
4 ibid p27
5 ibid p32
It was therefore not surprising that through 1984 the Soviet Union had not used actual or latent military force to coerce a state that lay outside its national security zone ...¹

McCawire suggested that the debate was put aside in the early 1970s because Soviet military thought was still largely conditioned by the ideas and attitudes that underlay the 1960s strategy, including the belief in inevitable escalation, and that these persisted until 1983-1984.²

McCawire conceded that "Hard evidence of debate and decisions in the 1983-84 period on the role of a Soviet military presence in the Third World is scarce" but nonetheless concluded that a "decision to that effect is supported by what evidence there is".³

The most detailed work on particular aspects of Soviet military strategy for local wars has appeared in journal articles in the last decade, particularly with reference to Soviet operations in Afghanistan⁴ but also about Soviet reactions to the Falklands conflict⁵ and the Israel/Syria air war over Lebanon in 1982.⁶ These provided a useful basis for study of selected aspects of Soviet operational thinking about local wars, but their scope was far from comprehensive and their quality variable.

The nine year involvement of Soviet forces in Afghanistan prompted

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¹ ibid p134
² ibid pp136-137
³ ibid p147
⁵ For example, Richard N Papworth, "Soviet Naval Reactions to the Falkland Islands Conflict" Naval War College Review 1985 (March/April) vol. XXXVIII, no. 2, pp53-72
the first detailed analysis of how Soviet military doctrine coped with fighting a local war. Much of the book was devoted to a description of Soviet military actions and how the armed forces had to adapt to fight the war, but it is premised on "an ideological [doctrinal] blindness to the requirements of counter-insurgency war". The author demonstrated unfamiliarity with key Soviet works on the military aspects of insurgency and did not consider the possibility that the General Staff understood counter-guerilla warfare well, but simply - for political reasons - did not prepare its forces to fight such wars.

**On Bureaucratic Processes for Military Doctrine**

A major review published in 1975 of the study of Soviet foreign policy using decision theory related approaches concluded that the prerequisite documentary and explanatory study of Soviet organisational behaviour "in its own terms" - had yet to be undertaken.²

This was certainly the case for study of the bureaucratic processes involved in formulation of Soviet military policy until the mid-1970s. The scholarship on this subject fell into two general schools of analysis. The earlier school could be called "historicist";³ its main feature was chronological description of key events in civil-military relations on broad issues, such as the emphasis given to a conventional navy built around a large surface fleet, or a strategic strike navy built around nuclear missile submarines and attack submarines.

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3 For example, D Fedotoff-White *The Growth of the Red Army* Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 1944 (dealing with the period to 1941) and John Erickson *The Soviet High Command, 1918-1941* St Martin's Press, New York NY, 1962
The other school, which developed later, used for the most part functional analysis: that is, it attempted to determine which institution held nominal responsibility for different aspects of the military decision process.¹ A representative work of the functional school was a 1977 study by Warner which used a bureaucratic politics model to analyse the institutional setting and policy formulation processes of the Soviet Armed Forces. It offered useful descriptions of the main institutions, and provided what Warner saw as merely informed speculation about Soviet military policy processes.²

Warner analysed the "institutional ideology" of the Soviet armed forces in a functionalist manner, borrowing from Huntington the basic framework of the "military mind" and single service allegiances.³ The remainder of his analysis of the institutional ideology drew almost entirely on official Soviet statements, ignored analysis of the motivational and cognitive aspects of institutional ideology, and made almost no mention of the effects on contemporary doctrine formulation of the repression in the Stalin era or the unacceptability of doctrinal concepts advocated first by Trotsky.⁴

Warner concluded that without better sources of information on the Soviet military bureaucracy’s internal processes, the application of the bureaucratic politics model has serious limitations.⁵ He appears to have assumed that the

⁴ In a section on the historical development of Soviet doctrine, Warner begins in the mid-1930s, therefore avoiding mention of Trotsky or the execution of high-ranking military officers who challenged the Stalin and Frunze line.
⁵ Warner *op cit* p 271
processes were much the same as those in a pluralistic society like the USA. His analysis was highly formalist and almost apolitical, producing as it did an account of functions not too different from those described in official Soviet sources. For example, it would be difficult to accept his conclusion:

Although three of the Departments of the Central Committee - Administrative Organs, Defense Industries, and the Main Political Administration - deal with military matters, none of these appears to play a significant role in such key areas as the drafting of defense budgetary plans, [or] the development of ... doctrine ...

This conclusion probably arose because Warner made little effort to analyse the step by step process by which Soviet military policy or doctrine was formulated and authorised.

Apart from the historicist and functional schools, there was considerable study of the political relationship between the Soviet leadership and armed forces. This work examined macro-political questions (civil-military relations) rather than questions of strategy formulation and implementation within the military establishment. Of course, civil-military relationships have a potentially important influence on the development of a country’s military doctrine but those relationships are but one aspect of the processes of doctrine development.

The study of civil-military relations in the USSR falls into three general schools of thought, which coalesce around the views of Kolkowicz, Odom and Colton.

In 1967, Roman Kolkowicz published a landmark study of the relations between the Communist Party leadership and the Soviet armed forces. The work investigated the "pressures and demands ... brought to bear upon the Party leadership by one institution striving for greater autonomy". Kolkowicz assumed a

\[1 \textit{ibid} \text{p270}\]
basic conflict between the "desire for hegemony within the state" and the "need to maintain a strong military-political posture before the rest of the world".\footnote{Roman Kolkowicz The Soviet Military and the Communist Party Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 1967, pp7-8} He asserted baldly that although - "objectively speaking" - the Party's political hegemony and the military's professional autonomy were not mutually exclusive, the Party apparently saw them as such", and he postulated a "conflict prone" Soviet military which presented a "perennial threat to the political stability of the Soviet state". The Party's fear of the military - "because of the instruments of violence which it commands" - prompted the political leaders to irrational efforts to suppress military professionalism that might otherwise have supported the state's external security requirements.\footnote{ibid p12, pp104-105}

Studying the period 1953 to 1963, Kolkowicz saw the armed forces as guild-like, exclusive, conservative, and wanting to maintain its own strong identity.\footnote{ibid p104}

He postulated a cyclical pattern of recurring crises between the Party and the military leadership:

When the Party is strong and untroubled, the military's voice and institutional role in the state are minor; when the Party is threatened from within or without, the military rises above its subordinate role and enters the public political stage.\footnote{ibid p33}

Kolkowicz overlooked shared institutional interests between Party and military leaders which may have placed them more in harmony than in conflict, although he did come close to this on occasion:

The Party also coopts a certain number of prominent military leaders into the highest Party councils ... thereby bringing them close to the

\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{ibid p12, pp104-105}
\item \footnote{ibid p104}
\item \footnote{ibid p33}
\end{itemize}
decision-making centers where, theoretically, they may present the military's point of view and look out for the military's interests. In practice, however, most of those chosen for such representation are ideologically close to the Party's point of view and tend to give priority to political considerations over the purely institutional military interests.¹

Kolkowicz identified a variety of political, institutional and personal influences on the formation of policy, but presented his analysis of their effect through the very narrow prism of anti-military or pro-military.

Kolkowicz touched on doctrinal issues, such as military dissatisfaction in 1961 and 1962 with Khrushchev's January 1960 statements on the primacy of nuclear weapons, but was mainly concerned with the issue of political control of the armed forces, such as Marshal Zhukov's dismissal from his post as Defence Minister, and the place of the MPA in the armed forces. His study remains the standard text on the turbulent period in civil-military relations, the principal feature of which was the reassertion of Party control over the armed forces.

The views of the other two contending schools of thought on civil-military relations in the USSR were summed up well in a collection of review essays.²

Odom disagreed with Kolkowicz about the nature of the Party-military relationship, but agreed on some points as to the current status of the military. He advanced five main assumptions about the relationship: that the army was an administrative arm of the Party, not separate from or competing with it; that the relationship was symbiotic; that the military was first and foremost a political institution; that the military's political life was bureaucratic, not lobbyist; and that

¹ ibid p29
the military leadership was resistant to innovation. His overarching conclusion was that the senior military officers became executants, not policy makers, and were not in a position even to frame the issues.¹

Colton, in rejecting the extreme positions taken by Kolkowicz and Odom, saw the military as disaggregated in different ways, depending on circumstances, in its interaction with civil authorities. He believed that in any political system, military participation will vary in two continuous dimensions - the scope of the issues, and the political means employed for interaction:

In contrast to the institutional congruence model I have read into Odom's work, I find it necessary to retain a notion of a civil-military boundary - a boundary that is permeable, to be sure, but that has a definite shape and location. But unlike Kolkowicz and other adherents of the institutional conflict model, I do not find outright conflict across the boundary to be a characteristic feature of Soviet military politics. Military participation in Soviet politics constitutes a complex set of reciprocal interactions, between institutions and across institutional boundaries, which merit study in their own right.²

These works by Kolkowicz, Odom and Colton were important studies of the organisational behaviour of the Soviet military establishment but cast little light on the civil-military relationship on questions of military doctrine.

There have also been a number of works on decision making for specific aspects of Soviet military policy which provided detailed and, for the most part, convincing analyses of the specific aspect of military policy they covered.³

¹ Odom "The Party-Military Connection - A Critique" loc cit pp41-44
² Colton "The Party-Military Connection - A Participatory Model" loc cit pp63, 73
Leites’ book on *Soviet Style in War* was one of the few in-depth studies of the influence of behavioural dispositions of Soviet military personnel (as identified by the Soviets themselves) on Soviet strategy and doctrine.¹ Leites wrote about Soviet concerns over likely personal shortcomings of military personnel during war, and about institutional predispositions to strategies or tactics to overcome these shortcomings - such as "warding off inaction"; "warding off slowness"; "fighting the neglect of obstacles"; "warding off passivity"; "enhancing one’s cohesion and reducing the enemy’s"; and "enhancing one’s capacity to calculate and reducing the enemy’s". Leites’ book was one of the few studies of Soviet strategy that focuses on the individual level of analysis.

It was not until 1990 that the first work comprehensively analysing the relationship between the Soviet Defence Minister, the Chief of General Staff and their political masters on military issues was published.² The author, Herspring, followed Colton’s model of the Soviet military leadership as participants in political bargaining on military issues.³

Herspring looked at four key issues in military policy in two decades (1967-1989): two military-technical issues (warfighting strategy and military management); and two socio-political issues (the budgetary process for defence and arms control). The issues are treated with differing emphasis according to the different views of key players at various times. Under war-fighting strategy, the

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¹ Nathan Leites *Soviet Style in War* Crane Russak and Co, New York, 1982
² Dale R Herspring *The Soviet High Command, 1967-1989: Personalities and Politics* Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 1990, p4. It was able to write in 1990 that his study of the Soviet High Command was the first in twenty years. The predecessor works he had in mind were, in different respects, Kolkowicz’s 1967 study of civil-military relations (*The Soviet Military and the Communist Party*) and Ericson’s 1962 work on the Soviet High Command (*The Soviet High Command*). But as Herspring points out, these works throw little light on General Staff views of Soviet military strategy.
³ *ibid* p16
question of the right mix between nuclear and conventional forces is a recurrent theme, with implications for limited war.¹

Herspring addressed these questions in the context of personal and institutional attributes or constraints on the key players.² He relied mainly on published Soviet sources, drawing without much distinction between the evidentiary value of Pravda, Red Star, Communist of the Armed Forces, and issues of Military Thought as available.³

Herspring made the very good point that in interpreting Soviet military writing, a distinction should be made between the political (propaganda) genesis of articles and a military technical genesis. He said that failure to appreciate the distinction has given rise to confusion in analysis.⁴ His assertion that Soviet military professionals did not begin talking about the need to be able to fight conventional wars until 1965 or 1966⁵ is typical of US studies of the subject.

Herspring followed Katz and a misreading of MccGwire in dating Soviet interest in preparing its armed forces for involvement in local wars principally to the period 1967 to 1969, and assumed that it was in this period that authoritative Soviet sources, such as Sokolovskii, said for the first time that local wars might not escalate into nuclear war.⁶

Herspring concluded that in the mid-1960s, the Soviet High Command (that is, General staff) had a "far from complete" diagnosis of the problems facing the armed forces, including integration of conventional and nuclear

¹ ibid pp20-21
² ibid pp25-26
³ ibid p30
⁴ ibid pp41-43
⁵ ibid pp42-43
⁶ ibid pp57-59
weapons in both strategy and operations.\footnote{ibid p47}

A later work, \textit{Engaging the Enemy - Organizational Theory and Soviet Military Innovation, 1955-1991}, developed the Colton model of civil-military interaction on questions of military policy by applying the concept of "policy community":

civilian intervention into doctrinal decision-making does not have to be characterized by pure conflict of bureaucratic interest groups. ... bureaucratic conflict is detrimental to civilian policy-makers. Only by building coalitions within the organization can such civilians obtain the information they need to make policy and verify its implementation.\footnote{Kimberley Zisk \textit{Engaging the Enemy - Organization Theory and Soviet Military Innovation, 1955-1991} Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 1993, p5}

Zisk analysed Soviet reactions to US doctrinal innovations (flexible response, the Schlesinger doctrine, and deep strike doctrines) from the perspective that Soviet military leaders did not choose to operate exclusively on an international or domestic political level, but were influenced by both orientations, and by personal motivations.\footnote{ibid p6}

Using a model of "doctrine race" (a corollary of arms race), Zisk concluded that the USSR developed a doctrinal response to the US doctrine of flexible response, reflected in the USSR's greater interest in limited war in the 1960s and its conventional force build-up in Europe after 1967.\footnote{ibid p75}

Zisk's theoretical approach to the study of Soviet doctrine formulation was original, and gave some reminders about time lag between doctrine and implementation, about the commonality of disagreements about doctrine amongst military officers, and about the imperfect processes by which any doctrine
is implemented. Nevertheless, her application of the model to the case of Soviet interest in limited war follows MccGwire’s interpretation almost exactly.

**Conclusion**

Scholarship on Soviet military policy in the English speaking world has had a chequered history. It did not produce a consistent, integrated view of the various sources of military strategy - motivations of key players, process, and outcomes.

The scholars who studied Soviet foreign policy and Soviet domestic politics had little difficulty in understanding the full range of constraints on Soviet military strategy and doctrine. With few exceptions, those who confined themselves to the narrower field of study of military doctrine proved unable to make a reliable assessment, let alone demonstrate an understanding of the complex nature of their subject or of the severe limitations of their sources.

The Armageddon school remained hide-bound in the early assessments and misconceptions of the US intelligence community, particularly an abiding preoccupation with general war to the exclusion of lesser, more likely contingencies.

While many of these scholars sought to represent their work as acknowledging a broad diversity of influences on Soviet military thinking, most failed to present a thorough analysis of Soviet strategy which investigated these influences. The failing was almost certainly compounded or facilitated by lack of

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1 Another recent work on civil-military relations which is not dissimilar to Zisk’s book in that it takes a fresh look at debates about military doctrine and places them in a well developed context of civil-military relations but does not bring much new by way of explanation to the subject is Thomas M Nichols The Sacred Cause - Civil-Military Conflict over Soviet National Security, 1917-1992 Cornell University Press, Ithaca NY, 1993.
willingness to concede the limitations of open source material.

Where the scholarship addressed Soviet force structure changes relevant to local wars, the perspective was one of increasing Soviet power projection capabilities. A number of studies saw certain developments in military capabilities, especially the growth in strategic reach through air-lift capacity and naval strength, as clear evidence of a new Soviet preparedness to fight small wars. The assumption of these studies appears to have been that it was easy for a superpower to pick and choose particular elements of its armed services that were developed for general war, and adapt them for use in a small war.

The most common type of work on Soviet strategy for involvement in local wars was one which drew a conclusion about Soviet preference not to become actively involved in local wars, and which offered some detail on how the USSR provided arms or military advisers to its clients in the Third World.

For the most part, scholars followed the lead of official Soviet propaganda to the effect that there was no Soviet doctrine for local war. Western scholars undoubtedly felt comfortable with this presumption, because published Soviet military writing devoted almost all of its attention to problems of general war.

Few scholars analysed the contradiction between the clear geopolitical requirement for the USSR to be ready to fight local wars (recognised in the USA as demanding a unique doctrine and specially tailored armed forces) and the presumed lack of a doctrine.