

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW

Subject: Sergei Blagovolin

Position: Head of Department for Military-Economic and Military-Political Research, Institute of the World Economy and International Relations (Russian acronym, IMEMO)

Date/Time: May 7, 1991, 10:30 a.m.

Location: Office at IMEMO

Interviewer: John G. Hines

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Prepared: Based on notes

“Industrial Mobilization”

Right after university (around 1971), Blagovolin worked on a project that analyzed the industrial mobilization potential of the United States and estimated that the U.S. could produce 50 nuclear submarines and 50,000 tanks per year within a few months of starting mobilization.

He believes the USSR is living with the results of that estimate. In the 1970s and 1980s this threat assessment was used to justify Soviet force building programs. After Iakovlev returned from Canada in 1982, and Blagovolin, as chairman of the Institute's Party Committee [*Partkom*], worked closely with him as Director of the Regional Party Committee [*Obkom*] to reevaluate U.S. mobilization capacity and the effect of the arms race on the USSR. The conclusion was that the Soviet Union had created its own set of enemies by building such a monstrous production machine in all sectors (including submarines) and had thereby helped to drive the Soviet economy to ruin. Blagovolin is publishing a book on this subject in English (expected out in Summer 1991).⁷ The Russian version for a Russian audience is more important than the English.

The Agreement of April 23 states that the Treaty of the Union (TOU) will be signed soon, probably after the special 12 June Presidential elections in the RSFSR (Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic). Not less than 6 months after the signing of the TOU, a new constitution will be issued, and not less than 6 weeks after the new constitution, there would be new, direct elections at all levels.

At the Party Central Committee Plenum of April 20, Gorbachev threatened to resign after many of the delegates criticized his weakness and ineffectiveness regarding the Union and the economy. During the break, Volskii circulated a petition with the support of Bakatin and Nazarbav (72 signed, 35 - 40 more promised to sign). After the break, Volskii got up and said that if Gorbachev's resignation were accepted, then the signatories of the petition would leave the Communist Party not as individuals but as a

⁷ Book not published in either language.

political movement. As a result, the vast majority voted to reject Gorbachev's resignation. Blagovolin said it was clear that Volskii and the others were ready to break the Party apart over the issue of Gorbachev's leadership. The Party was already reaching a complete breakup, and Volskii intended to start a new party. He emerged in June as part of the new movement behind Shevardnadze that broke from the Party.⁸

⁸ Eduard A. Shevardnadze, Minister of Foreign Affairs under Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.