

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Subject: Gen.-Maj. (Ret.) Iurii A. Kirshin

Position: Self-employed International Security Specialist, Former Deputy Director of the Institute of Military History, USSR/Russia (1985-1992), Former Chief of the Strategy Department of the Military Science Directorate of the Soviet General Staff

Location: Cambridge, England

Interviewer: John G. Hines

Date: January 9, 1990

Language: Russian

Prepared by: John G. Hines, based on notes

I met General Kirshin for the first time at a conference on East-West security issues held at St. John's College, Cambridge University. At an informal meeting toward the end of the conference, General Kirshin and I became better acquainted and he answered some of my questions related to his work with General of the Army Makhmut Gareev and Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov.

I commented that Marshal Ogarkov impressed me as a very thoughtful, intelligent officer who had written a great deal of interesting articles and monographs. General Kirshin countered, almost dismissively, "*on ne pisal, on podpisival*" (He didn't write these things, he signed them).

I asked then, that if Ogarkov had only signed these writings, who wrote them? Kirshin replied that the military theoretician and author behind Ogarkov for many years was General-Colonel Danilevich. Danilevich, he stressed, was a major military thinker and presence in the General Staff but not well known nor widely published. He was well known, however, within the General Staff. He said that Danilevich was retiring at the end of the year. I asked if Kirshin could arrange a meeting. He promised that he would.

Kirshin added that, even though he didn't always write his own material, Marshal Ogarkov was a very intelligent, active Chief of the General Staff who closely reviewed and critiqued everything that went out over his signature. When asked what happened that caused Ogarkov to be reassigned in September of 1984, Kirshin replied that Ogarkov was fired, personally, by Minister of Defense Marshal Ustinov. Kirshin, seemingly on the basis of detailed knowledge, added that the firing was carried out abruptly and with considerable rudeness. Ogarkov had gone on vacation to the Crimea in August of 1984. Ustinov telephoned Ogarkov in the middle of his vacation and informed him that he could extend his vacation because he had been fired [*uvolen*] and given a new assignment. Ogarkov returned immediately to Moscow to confront Ustinov who refused to change his decision and who assigned Ogarkov to the High Command of Forces of the Western TVD. He said that the events in August of 1984 represented the culmination of months and years of bad and deteriorating relations between Ustinov and Ogarkov.

I mentioned General Gareev, and Kirshin volunteered that Gareev was a serious thinker and scholar. Gareev, he said, wrote his own books and articles.

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Position: Self-employed International Security Specialist, Former Deputy Director of the Institute of Military History, USSR/Russia (1985-1992); Former Chief of the Strategy Department of the Military Science Directorate of the Soviet General Staff

Location: Moscow

Interviewer: John G. Hines

Date: June 26, 1993

Language: Russian

Prepared by: John G. Hines, based on notes

I mentioned to General Kirshin that I had heard that General Danilevich, as part of his responsibilities in the Main Operations Directorate of the General Staff, had been responsible for preparation of a major work on strategy for use, in the event of war, by the Armed Forces of the USSR. I mentioned that it was a large, three-volume book. General Kirshin corrected me. It was not a book but rather a *nastavlenie* (directive) of the General Staff for the conduct of strategic operations in the event of war. It was years in preparation under General Danilevich's direction and covered every aspect of strategy: intercontinental and theater, nuclear and conventional, in space and at sea. I asked if it might be possible to obtain a copy of the directive. Kirshin laughed and said that the entire set was top secret and protected by restricted access.

I asked about the relative knowledge of various general officers on questions of strategic nuclear doctrine—issues such as first strike and use of selected nuclear strikes. Kirshin asked me to be specific. I asked who would be better informed on such questions, General Varfolomei Korobushin or General Danilevich? Kirshin responded that General Korobushin, while technically very knowledgeable based on his many years in the Strategic Rocket Forces (SRF), would not necessarily know the context within which he was carrying out orders in training and exercises. The services, including the SRF, were not privy to the most sensitive details of scenarios and doctrinal questions which were developed and resolved among a relatively small group of officers within the Main Operations Directorate (GOU) of the General Staff. General Danilevich worked as special Assistant to the Chief of the Main Operations Directorate for over 15 years and worked in sensitive positions in the General Staff for 26 years. He had long been a major influence on questions of strategy and doctrine as witnessed by his responsibility for preparation of the most comprehensive document on strategy ever prepared by the Soviet General Staff. He believed that in the area of questions on strategy Danilevich would be among the best informed in the Soviet Armed Forces.