

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW

Subject: Gen.-Col. Gregorii Fedorovich Krivosheev

Position: Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Chief of the Main Directorate for Organization and Mobilization

Location: Room 8074, (General Krivosheev's Office) General Staff Building, Moscow, USSR

Interviewer: John G. Hines

Date/Time: December 20, 1990, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Duration: Two hours

Language: Russian

"General Krivosheev's Proposed Agenda for U.S. Visit"

The General revealed an interest in:

Issues of force building, force organization, and force manning. Of special interest was the recruiting and maintenance of an all-volunteer force and the integration of reserve components into the active force.

He discussed issues of the industrial mobilization potential of the state. He realized that this may be a sensitive area but that he was prepared to discuss it.

A range of questions about recent events in Europe and the results of recently completed arms control talks. The general seemed to feel that it was useful to explain to us in person the impact of recent events on the whole process of force planning in the Soviet Union. His presentation of these questions was amicable but firm:

The basis for NATO continuing to identify the USSR as the main threat. He pointed out that the Warsaw Pact collapsed several months ago and that the strategic structure in Europe had changed markedly. He explained that this was important because the General Staff must take seriously this pronouncement by such a powerful coalition located on the Soviet doorstep in Europe.

Perceived inequities of the CFE agreement - He invoked Supreme Soviet deputies reactions to bolster his case. Subissues included:

Asymmetrical cuts - He clearly felt CFE was unfair in the distribution of force reductions. He cited 80 NATO tanks to 8,000 Soviet as an example.

Destruction of old equipment first by both sides - He indicated that he was hearing complaints from the U.S. about this and claimed to be puzzled because the U.S. was doing the same thing.

New equipment east of the Urals and in the U.S. - He again claimed that the U.S. was saving and hiding equipment in the U.S. and elsewhere and was excessively self-righteous on this question.

The U.S. Navy's evasion of arms control constraints - He stated that the U.S. Navy has at least three times the combat potential of the Soviet Navy against a Soviet threat that is diminishing measurably.

Continued concern about Germany - He seemed genuinely to fear German irredentism in Poland and even Kaliningrad. His greatest concern was that they would get back former German lands without war because of weakening European and American resolve vis-à-vis Germany.

He indicated that many of these questions, especially the German question, were far too sensitive to put in an official written agenda. Consistent with this attitude, he was concerned that the visit be informal and unofficial and not widely advertised. He asked for an invitation from the Deputy Secretary of Defense to MoD Iazov but he did not want any publicity for his visit. General Filatov told me later that he was especially concerned about European reactions.

Despite his preference for a quiet visit, the General volunteered to make a presentation at "the institute" where we prepare our officers for planning industrial and force mobilization and to give a talk in the Pentagon.

General Krivosheev and General Filatov both made it clear that participation in the visit by general officers from the Center for Operational-Strategic Research and from his own directorate was acceptable but not welcome. Filatov promised a much more open General Krivosheev if he were not accompanied by younger generals and officers.

"Krivosheev on Future Force Manning Option"

General Krivosheev explained that the USSR is still in a demographic hole [*iama*] with respect to 18 - 19 year old males. Recovery is expected by 1994-1995. Many of his solutions are affected by this situation.

He indicated that he planned to move toward a professional contract force incrementally and that the process would be monitored to help to determine the nature and direction of subsequent changes. As a first step toward changing force manning practices he plans to:

Draft young men for 6 months of specialist training, e.g., equipment operator, PVO [Air Defense] specialists, etc. At the end of the 6-months training period, the soldier would be offered two options:

1. Sign a contract for 2 (or more) years additional service at better pay
2. Or serve out the remaining 18 months service without a contract at a conscript salary level

By 1994 the total length of conscript service would be reduced to 18 months (in anticipation of getting well demographically). By 1994-95, he expects the Armed Forces to be 50% professional. (He believes it is 30% professional today, taking into account all officers, warrant officers, and extended-service enlisted men.) He will augment the professional force by accepting a larger number of women into the Armed Forces than is now the case. Based on experience with a 50 percent professional force, decisions on further changes will be taken.

"Plans for Reducing Force Levels"

General Krivosheev stated that:

The current strength of the Armed Forces is 3.8 million men. This number includes:

MVD (Internal Security), Civil Defense Forces, construction troops, DOSAAF,⁷⁶ and what the General called the real military—the combat, combat support and combat service support troops who would actually defend the Soviet state.

By May 1991, the Armed Forces will be reduced to 3.6 million men. By the year 2000, strength will be at 3.0 - 3.2 million.

Forces are being reduced through attrition, early retirement, and, an area very important to him, elimination from Armed Forces accountability of civil defense and construction troops, DOSAAF personnel, and others. General Krivosheev explained that he was charged, for example, with the members of "hunting clubs" who made no real contribution to the readiness of the Armed Forces.

The General stressed that the present figure 3.6 - 3.8 million far exceeds the number of real soldiers who would actually defend the Soviet state. He almost gave me the real number, looked askance at the silent Soviet interpreter by my side, and said that the actual strength was restricted. I proposed that the figure might be approximately 2.6 million and he responded that I was probably "right," or at least very close.

The General spent a great deal of time venting his frustration at the proliferation of civilian "defense specialists" such as Georgii Arbatov who had the temerity to publish the "real" strength of the Soviet Armed Forces in foreign journals. The numbers, he said, were absolutely incorrect but that he was unable to correct him openly. I suggested to him that it might improve the quality of the defense debate if the General Staff were to find a way to participate more openly and actively. He responded that there was movement in that direction already. He then cited the fact that I was in the General Staff building in his office as indicative of major changes in the MoD's approach to dealing with "outsiders." He said that my visit was unprecedented and that he had received

⁷⁶ DOSAAF — *Dobrovol'noe obshchestvo sodeistviia armii, aviatsii i flotu SSSR* — The Voluntary Society for Cooperation with the Army, Aviation, and Navy of the USSR. DOSAAF was a quasi-military organization embedded in the Soviet educational system for the purpose of preparing Soviet youth for military service or for support of those who did serve in the military. It was not generally regarded as voluntary by Soviet youth.

permission from Iazov himself to see me in his office. This event, he offered, reflected a new type of Soviet-U.S. relationship based on dialogue which he fully supported.