

SUMMARY OF NARRATIVE

Subject: Boris Aleksandrovich Strogonov

Position: 1955-1987 in Defense Industrial Department of Central Committee apparatus; 20 years experience in production facilities and research institutes in production and development of missile and space technology

Location: Institute for Defense Studies (INOBS), Moscow

Interviewer: INOBIS

Date: March 1993⁸³

Duration: Approx. 1 hour total

Language: Russian

Prepared by: Ellis Mishulovich, based on audio cassette tape

Ustinov was a proponent of a survivable missile arsenal, while most of the Ministry of Defense, including Grechko personally, were opposed to missile protection.

At first silos began to be protected from 2 to 50 kg/cm² [28 to 711 psi], and protection increased as U.S. missile accuracy increased, until very high protection became economically unfeasible. At that point mobile missiles were proposed, and were championed by Ustinov. Here, as with silo protection, Grechko and the Ministry of Defense were opposed. For example, the mobile missile designs produced by the Iangel' KB [design bureau] were chronically underfunded and development stages took a very long time. However, eventually the military understood the value of mobility and development was substantially speeded up. More funding was made available and the Nadiradze KB and the KB in Dnepropetrovsk headed by V. F. Utkin began their own development of mobiles.

Brezhnev was personally involved in the development of military and civilian missile technology. He headed a commission on the development of missile technology, known as the Politburo Commission [*Kommissiia pri Politburo*], even though Brezhnev was the only Politburo member on it [sic]. This commission, of which Ustinov was a deputy, included Grechko, Riabikov (the deputy head of GosPlan for defense), all of the ministers of defense-related industries, General Designers, and academicians involved in defense work. Strogonov served as a secretary of this commission. The commission discussed technological, political, military, economic, and other issues related to defense production. Decisions were passed on to approval *pro forma* by the Defense Council, but were never amended by it. Issues were always debated in the commission and decisions made by a few individuals.

Ustinov was very close to Andropov. The two supported each other in the Defense Council. Both kept a careful watch over technological developments in the West,

⁸³ INOBIS carried out the interviews resulting in this narrative at various times during the month of March 1993.

especially the U.S. Ustinov was personally devoted to scrupulously monitoring American technological developments, and continued to do so until his death.

The Central Committee relied very heavily on the VPK.⁸⁴ The VPK consisted of technical specialists and scientists, and conducted preliminary studies on weapons systems and coordinated systems production and development. The greatest flaw in the VPK was that it had too much power and influence and meddled in policy questions instead of focusing strictly on technical questions. As a result of its undue influence too many obsolete weapons systems were kept in production and the development of advanced systems was retarded. Many obsolete missiles, for example, were not taken out of production or deployment. Questions regarding the reduction of such systems were never discussed in the VPK. The short-sightedness of the Soviet leadership and the decision-making structure of the Soviet Union ensured that the military industrial complex constantly grew in size.

⁸⁴ VPK — *Voennaia Promyshlennaia Kommissiia* — (Military Industrial Commission).