

## APPENDIX B: RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR SOVIET INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS

The following questions were prepared as a guide for the conduct of research. Largely because of residual distrust and security constraints, not all interview subjects were willing to answer all questions. In addition, on occasion, there arose informal interview opportunities with key subjects where the interviewer could not reasonably refer to a set of questions even if he were to have such questions on his person. Nor could the interviewer, in all instances, presume to impose on every interview subject an exhaustive review of the questions because of limitations imposed by time, or the patience or health of the interview subject. Some interview subjects reacted very strongly to certain questions and launched into "stream-of-consciousness" responses of almost free association which the interviewer was reluctant to interrupt lest he lose the opportunity to acquire important information and insights for which he had not formulated questions.

In summary, the attached questions provide the reader with a sense of the approach taken in the research phase and a more detailed understanding of the information and insights that the project was designed to reveal.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR SERVING AND FORMER SOVIET OFFICIALS AND ANALYSTS

Research Project: "Soviet Strategic Intentions 1965-1985: An Analytical Comparison of U.S. Cold-War Interpretations and Soviet Post-Cold-War Testimonial Evidence."

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Please keep in mind two aspects of all of the questions that follow:

First, almost all questions might be answered differently depending upon the period of the Cold War to which they refer. The U.S. or NATO threat looked different in 1968 from how it looked in 1981. Each answer, therefore, may actually be a series of answers depending upon the time period in question.

Second, the questions often refer to "the Soviet view" or "the Soviets." Clearly, the General Staff's view would not always be the same as that of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the International Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU. Respondents, therefore, should try to specify what organization or individuals held which particular views, who held major opposing views and which approach prevailed. Such answers would help to strengthen the scientific and analytical value of the overall analytical history of the Cold War.

#### Research Questions

I. Research and conceptual development underlying Soviet thinking on deterrence, strategies for war, the use of nuclear weapons, approaches to nuclear targeting, escalation, etc.

1. In the Soviet view, could the USSR increase its chances for survival by gaining an advantage in nuclear capabilities?
2. Did the Politburo and Defense Ministry ever conclude that nuclear weapons were not militarily useful?

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3. Did the Soviet Union come to accept the concept of mutually assured destruction? Was the strategic balance considered stable?
4. In your opinion, was nuclear war best prevented through mutual deterrence or by developing Soviet nuclear warfighting capabilities?
5. If nuclear deterrence had failed, were the Soviet Armed Forces prepared to fight:
  - With conventional weapons?
  - With nuclear weapons? -
6. Did the Politburo and MoD ever explore the possibility of launching a first strike?
7. In 1971 and 1972, the Ministry of Defense conducted high-level exercises that considered the effects of a strategic nuclear strike by the U.S. against the USSR. What led to the organization of the exercises? What happened at the exercises and what major conclusions were made as a result?
8. When and how did the Soviet Union adopt a launch-under-attack doctrine leading to the expectation of meeting-retaliatory strikes [*otvetno-vstrechnye udary*] by Soviet missile forces?
9. Were Soviet retaliatory strikes aimed at U.S. missile silos or only at soft military targets, cities, and economic infrastructure?
10. Did targeting vary depending on assumptions about first or second strike?
11. How would Soviet forces have responded to a small-scale U.S. strike using tactical nuclear weapons based in Europe? Based on submarines?
12. What would have been the response to a limited (in terms of numbers of warheads) strategic strike launched from the territory of the U.S. on the Soviet Union?
13. Did the USSR have plans to escalate from theater to global nuclear use?
14. Why did the USSR build up its SS-20 and other theater nuclear forces in the late 1970s and early 1980s?
15. Was the Soviet Union striving to achieve strategic nuclear superiority or merely strategic parity?
16. What was the aim of the Soviet arms buildup? Was the USSR trying to acquire a first-strike potential (for political reasons) or the capability to destroy the United States in a retaliatory strike?
17. In your view, did Pershing II and cruise missiles give U.S. forces the capability to launch a surprise attack on Soviet territory? How did these deployments affect Soviet strategic planning and doctrine?
18. Did special preparations in the early 1980s by the Soviet-VRIaN government against a surprise missile nuclear attack [*Vnezapnoe Raketno-ladernoe Napadenie*] from the U.S. and NATO represent a real concern or did other, internal factors affect the government's actions?

II. Bureaucratic politics within Soviet political-military circles

1. Which organizations exerted the greatest influence over the process of force development [*stroitel'stvo vooruzhenii*] and major weapons procurement programs [*programmi zakupok*]:

- Ministry of Defense?
- General Staff?
- Various departments of the Central Committee? If so, which departments?
- Chiefs of Design Bureaus?
- The Chiefs of the Services [*vidy vooruzhennykh sil*]?
- Others?

2. To whom if anyone did the Politburo inner circle of Brezhnev, Ustinov, Gromyko, Smirnov, and Andropov listen for advice on issues affecting state security? The General Staff? Industrialists? KGB? Specialists from the Central Committee?

III. Process of force structure planning and weapons systems development and production

1. Were particular nuclear weapons developed and deployed in order to fulfill specific military missions? Was there a rational strategy behind Soviet force structure development?

2. Which organizations or institutes did the most useful and influential analysis?

- General Staff Institutes?
- Military-Industrial Institutes?
- Academy of Sciences Institutes?

3. Were decisions on force development and deployment based on expert analysis, particularly on quantitative analysis?

4. Did Ustinov and the chief designers consider there to be a need for rapid technological improvement in Soviet weaponry and command and control? How did this assessment change in the 1970s and 1980s?

5. What was the Soviet attitude regarding arms control talks, such as SALT and SALT II? What advantages did the Soviet leadership see in these talks? What role did they play in Soviet calculations regarding the overall balance of forces?

6. What were the major organization differences over arms reduction issues?

IV. The course of a general war in Europe and the consequences of nuclear war

1. What consequences did Brezhnev, Ustinov, and other Politburo members expect from nuclear war? Did they think that they could survive a nuclear war?

2. Did key organizations or individuals believe that the Soviet Union was capable of winning a war in Europe with only conventional arms?

3. Under what circumstances was the Soviet Union likely to employ chemical weapons?

*Research Questions For Soviets*

V. Soviet assessments of the U.S./NATO threat

1. How did the USSR gauge its vulnerability to U.S. nuclear forces? Strategic? Tactical?
2. Which, if any, weapons programs, technological developments, and doctrinal statements appear most threatening to Soviet security?
3. Which developments, if any, led you to believe the U.S. might attack the USSR or the Warsaw Pact?
4. What were the perceptions of the U.S. threat and intentions based on force structure and technological developments?
  - Specifically, were there periods in the history of the Cold War when U.S. or NATO behavior were much more threatening than others?