

## SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW

**Subject:** Gen.-Lt. (Ret.) Nikolai Vasil'evich Kravets

**Position:** Currently Deputy Director of Joint Stock Company "ASKOND"; 30 years of experience in the Strategic Rocket Forces working on force design, systems acquisition, testing and evaluation, and final acceptance

**Location:** Chartered bus en route from Moscow to NPO NIIKhimMash outside Zagorsk

**Interviewer:** John G. Hines

**Date/Time:** June 22, 1993, 10:30 a.m.

**Language:** Russian

**Prepared by:** John G. Hines, based on notes

**Q:** Were you aware of a meeting held in July 1969 in the hills above Yalta and attended by Brezhnev and virtually all senior industrial directors and military officers involved in the force development process?

**A:** Yes. I did not attend the meeting. We (the SRF) were represented by Marshal of the Soviet Union (MSU) Krylov, CINC of the SRF, but I am very much aware of the meeting because I had staff responsibility after the meeting for working out how to implement in the SRF decisions taken at Yalta in July 1969. The 1969 Yalta meeting was attended by the entire senior military-industrial leadership to include all Politburo members with any interest in force development [*voennoe stroitel'stvo*]. The meeting was a very special meeting of the Defense Council (which normally met every 4 months or so) whose purpose was to establish a fifteen-year plan, or at least guidelines, for development of the Armed Forces of the USSR. The meeting was called specifically to get arms building under some kind of central direction. This was driven by the realization, at the highest levels, that arms building in the Soviet Armed Forces had become an unguided process [*nepravliaemyi protsess*], with each service [*vid*] pushing for its own systems and for as large a part of force authorization as possible uncontrolled by any central concept, and such a concept and overall plan was to be established clearly by the Defense Council at the Yalta meeting.

[General Kravets added that he was personally very familiar with the process in the missile-building industries. He complained, for example, that the general designers [*glavnye konstruktory*] and military industrialists created a complicated and wasteful situation because, in the continuous aggressive internal competition among various designers and industrialists, each participant ultimately had his own way. That is to say, competing missile systems would be developed and tested and all variants, usually two but sometimes more, would be accepted for production and put into the forces. This led to a situation where the USSR had 12 types of ICBMs, which created a situation of great waste of resources, time, and research and development effort for the Soviet Union. "The U.S.," he said admiringly, "has only three types of ICBM, a more rational arsenal."]

Q: When did the mobile ICBM program begin?

A: We started by developing operational-tactical mobile missiles in 1964 in Chelomei's design bureau. Iangel' tried to put together a longer range mobile missile by combining a liquid-fueled first stage and a solid-fueled second stage. He tested it in 1968 with terrible results—there was a massive explosion. The program was canceled, I believe in 1969. Another mobile ICBM program was initiated in 1968 as we improved our competence with solid fuel.

Q: Were any of these systems what NATO called the SS-16, or some other designation?

A: No. NATO never had a designation for these two systems. They were very closely guarded programs that we hid successfully from many, certainly from NATO.

Q: Why did the USSR invest in intercontinental mobile missile programs?

A: Because of Minuteman. You had a solid-fuel missile with a 10,000 km range. It was responsive, simple, and accurate. We had nothing like that.

The second reason is that our silos were hardened to only 2 kg/cm<sup>2</sup> [28 psi] and yours were hardened to 20 kg/cm<sup>2</sup> [284 psi]. Our silos weren't improved until somewhat later into the 1970s.