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The Voroshilov Lectures: Materials from the Soviet General Staff Academy: Volume I, Issues of Soviet Military Strategy

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Soviet naval writings, particularly in the primacy it gives to combatting enemy forces and to interdiction of shipping. It should be noted that some of the excitement this list has generated is due to a misunderstanding. Other Soviet naval mission lists do not separate strategic and operational missions, whereas this list applies to operational missions only. Still, the fuller implications of this and other Soviet naval mission lists is worthy of further study.

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In World War II General George S. Patton, Jr. told a staff officer that he had spent years preparing himself to meet General Erwin Rommel by reading Rommel's books and studying his campaigns.

These translations of lectures presented to students of the Voroshilov General Staff Academy in Moscow, are, to students of Soviet military thought, what Rommel's books were to Patton. They are an in-depth look at the way the Soviet military leadership is taught to view war, strategy, and operations.

The source of these lectures is Ghulam Wardak, a former lieutenant colonel and general staff officer

of the Afghan armed forces, who attended the two-year course at the Voroshilov General Staff Academy in 1973-75. A Russian linguist and army field commander of considerable experience, Wardak was able to get his transcribed notes and copies of the Voroshilov lectures safely back to Afghanistan on his return. After the communist coup in 1978, Wardak was imprisoned several times by the new Afghan regime, but was finally allowed to retire. From 1979-1980, Wardak functioned as a successful commander of Mujahedeen forces until a serious wound forced his evacuation into Pakistan. Wardak came to the United States in 1981, bringing with him the lecture materials that he had safeguarded since leaving the Soviet Union. We owe this dedicated military professional gratitude and admiration.

The materials collected by Wardak have been compiled and edited by Graham Turbiville, a senior analyst at the U.S. Army's Soviet Army Studies Office in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Working with Wardak, Turbiville assembled into this first volume eight lectures that were given on strategic issues during Wardak's attendance at the Voroshilov Academy. Eight more lectures will be published in a second volume.

The introductory chapter, written by Wardak and Dr. John Yurechko from the Defense Intelligence Agency, describes the setting where these lectures took place; the milieu of the General Staff Academy—the students, the faculty, the procedures and the curriculum of this important

institution. The points of contrast with the U.S. approach to higher military education are striking. The staff and faculty (some faculty are involved in research) are comprised of 300 colonels and 200 general officers, most of whom hold higher academic degrees. The student body, of only about 120 Soviet and foreign students, yields a faculty to student ratio of nearly 2 to 1. The two-year course consists of a 10-hour day, six times a week for students and faculty. The lecture and seminar classes are comprised of only three to five students each, and late afternoon study periods are mandatory. But, perhaps most significant: There is a school solution to all the issues of military planning!

While there are courses in strategy, history, Marxism-Leninism and foreign languages, the core curriculum at the General Staff Academy focuses on the planning and conduct of military operations at the Army and Front (Army group) levels. This is a how-to-do-it course designed to train and educate General Staff officers for their future assignments—the larger realm of geopolitical or future-force-planning issues do not appear to be addressed except in the context of the current Soviet military doctrine. This doctrine is provided by the party leadership and is presumably not a subject for debate, a concept that contrasts vividly with the vigorous discussions on similar issues that take place in our own senior service colleges.

This logical, measured and yet pedantic approach to military

education is exemplified in the Voroshilov lectures themselves. They were presented to the entire student body and were considered to be vitally important components of the Academy curriculum. The lectures published in this volume discuss and define the Soviet approach to military strategy and the Theater Strategic Operation. They were meant to establish the conceptual framework for student work at the tactical and operational levels of war, which comprise the bulk of the course. The discussions of the integrated components of the Theater Strategic Operation—or Theater of Strategic Military Action, to use the editor's terminology—provide details previously unavailable at the unclassified level, details which should make it clear that Soviet military planners leave nothing to chance.

This is a milestone work. It provides us with important insight into the Soviet military mind at a time in history when such information is vital to interpreting contemporary changes. Regardless of "Defensive" doctrine and the "restructuring" of the Soviet military, the Soviet military approach to planning and conducting military operations, outlined in these Voroshilov lectures, will continue to define Soviet concepts for waging war. This book will greatly assist us in understanding these concepts.

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