

New Evidence in Cold War Military History

Planning for Nuclear War: The Czechoslovak War Plan of 1964

[Editor's Note: Much of the military history of "the other side" of the Cold War is still shrouded in secrecy as large parts of the records of the former Warsaw Pact remain classified in the Russian military archives. To some extent, however, the more accessible archives of the Soviet Union's former allies in Eastern and Central Europe have provided a "backdoor" into Warsaw Pact military thinking and planning. Versions of the minutes of the Warsaw Pact's Political Consultative Committee, for example, are partially available in the German Federal Archives, the Central Military Archives in Prague and Warsaw, the Bulgarian Central State Archives in Sofia, and the Hungarian National Archives in Budapest.

In collaboration with its affiliate, the Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact, coordinated by Dr. Vojtech Mastny, CWIHP is pleased to publish the first Warsaw Pact era war plan to emerge from the archives of the former East bloc. The document was discovered by Dr. Petr Luňák in February 2000 in the Central Military Archives in Prague and is published below in full. Additional documentation, including the "Study of the Conduct of War in Nuclear Conditions," written in 1964 by Petr I. Ivashutin, Chief of the Soviet Main Intelligence Administration, for Marshal Matvei V. Zakharov, Chief of the General Staff Academy," and an interview about it with Col. Karel Štěpánek, who served in the Czechoslovak army's operations room at the time the plan was valid, can be found on the PHP website (<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php>).

Earlier CWIHP publications on the history of the Warsaw Pact include: "Warsaw Pact Military Planning in Central Europe: Revelations from the East German Archives," CWIHP Bulletin 2 (1992), pp. 1, 13-19; Vladislav M. Zubok, "Khrushchev's 1960 Troop Cut: New Russian Evidence," CWIHP Bulletin 8/9 (Winter 199/1997), pp. 416-420; Matthew Evangelista, "Why Keep Such an Army? Khrushchev's Troop Reductions," CWIHP Working Paper No. 19 (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center, 1997); and Vojtech Mastny, "'We are in a Bind': Polish and Czechoslovak Attempts at Reforming the Warsaw Pact, 1956-1969," CWIHP Bulletin 11 (Winter 1998), pp. 230-250.—Christian F. Ostermann]

By Petr Luňák

The 1964 operational plan for the Czechoslovak People's Army (Československá Lidová Armáda, or ČSLA), an English translation of which follows, is the first war plan from the era of the NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontation that has emerged from the archives of either side. It is "the real thing"—the actual blueprint for war at the height of the nuclear era," detailing the assignments of the "Czechoslovak Front" of forces of the Warsaw Pact.¹ The plan was the result of the reevaluation of Soviet bloc military strategy after Stalin's death. Unlike the recently discovered 1951 Polish war plan (the only pre-Warsaw Pact war plan to surface thus far from the Soviet side), which reflected plainly defensive thinking,² the ČSLA plan a decade and a half later, according to the ambitious imagination of the Czechoslovak and Soviet military planners, envisioned the ČSLA operating on the territory of southeastern France within a few days of the outbreak of war, turning Western Europe into a nuclear battlefield.

The principles on which the Polish and Czechoslovak armies based their strategies in the 1950s and 1960s mirrored Soviet thinking of the time. When did the change in military thinking in the Eastern bloc occur, and why? Further, it is necessary to ask when exactly did it take on the characteristics contained in the plan of 1964? Naturally, precise and definitive answers cannot be given until the

military archives of the former Soviet Union are made accessible. In the meantime, material from East-Central European sources can at least hint at some of the answers.

The advent of nuclear weapons

During the first years after the formation of the East bloc, the Czechoslovak People's Army concentrated on planning the defense of Czechoslovak territory. The designs for military exercises held in the first half of the 1950s reflect this priority. While plans and troop exercises occasionally included offensive operations, they almost never took place outside of Czechoslovak soil. Advancing into foreign territory was taken into consideration, but only in the case of a successful repulsion of an enemy offensive and the subsequent breach of their defense.³

The vagueness of Czechoslovak thinking vis-à-vis operations abroad is also apparent in the military cartographic work of this period. The first mapping of territory on the basic scale of 1:50,000, begun in 1951, covered Czechoslovak territory only. But, as late as the end of the 1950s, the Czechoslovak cartographers were expected to have also mapped parts of southern Germany and all of Austria. During the following years, the mapping was indeed based on this schedule.⁴

The change from defensive to offensive thinking,

which occurred after Stalin's death, is connected with a reevaluation of the role of nuclear arms. While Stalin himself did not overlook the importance of nuclear weapons and made a tremendous effort to obtain them in the second half of the 1940s, he did not consider them to be an important strategic element due to their small number in the Soviet arsenal.⁵ As a consequence, his so-called "permanent operating factors" (stability of the rear, morale of the army, quantity and quality of divisions, armament of the army and the organizational ability of army commanders), which were, in his view, to decide the next war (if not any war), remained the official dogma until his death. This rather simple concept ignored other factors. First and foremost, it did not take into account the element of surprise and the importance of taking the initiative.

Only after the dictator died was there room for discussion among Soviet strategists on the implications of nuclear weapons which, in the meantime, had become the cornerstone of the US massive retaliation doctrine.⁶ Nuclear weapons were gradually included in the plans of the Soviet army and its satellite countries. In the 1952 combat directives of the Soviet Army, for instance, nuclear weapons had still been almost entirely left out. When these directives were adopted by ČSLA in 1954 and translated word for word, a special supplement on the effects of nuclear weapons had to be quickly created and added.⁷

The extent to which the Czechoslovak leadership was informed of Soviet operational plans remains an open question. In any case, its members were in no way deterred by the prospect of massive retaliation by the West. Alexej Čepička, the Czechoslovak Minister of National Defense and later one of the few "victims" of Czechoslovak de-Stalinization, viewed nuclear weapons like any others, only having greater destructive powers. In 1954, he stated that "nuclear weapons alone will not be the deciding factor in achieving victory. Although the use of atomic weapons will strongly affect the way in which battles and operations are conducted as well as life in the depths of combat, the significance of all types of armies [...] remains valid. On the contrary, their importance is gaining significance."⁸

Given the nuclear inferiority of the East, such casual thinking about the importance of nuclear weapons was tantamount to making a virtue out of necessity. However, it should be noted, that although Western leaders frequently stressed the radical difference between nuclear and conventional weapons, military planners in both the East and West did their job in preparing for the same scenario—a massive conflict that included the use of all means at their disposal.

There were, however, fundamental differences in the understanding of nuclear conflict and its potential consequences. In the thinking of the Czechoslovak and probably the Soviet military leadership of the time, nuclear weapons would determine the pace of war (forcing a more offensive strategy), but not its essential character. Since nuclear weapons considerably shortened the stages of war, according to the prevailing logic, it became necessary to

try to gain the decisive initiative with a powerful surprise strike against enemy forces. Contrary to the US doctrine of massive retaliation, the Soviet bloc's response would have made use not only of nuclear weapons but, in view of Soviet conventional superiority, also of conventional weapons. Massive retaliation did not make planning beyond it irrelevant. Contrary to many Western thinkers,¹⁰ Soviet strategists assumed that a massive strike would only create the conditions for winning the war by the classic method of seizing enemy territory.

The idea that in the nuclear era offense is the best defense quickly found its way into Czechoslovak plans for building and training the country's armed forces. From 1954-55 on, the "use of offensive operations [...] with the use of nuclear and chemical weapons" became one of the main training principles, and the ČSLA prepared itself almost exclusively for offensive operations.¹⁰ Defensive operations were now supposed to change quickly to surprise counter-offensive operations at any price.¹¹ Not surprisingly, from 1955 on, military mapping now included southeastern Germany all the way to the Franco-German border, on a scale of 1:100,000—a scale that was considered adequate for this kind of operation.

It should be noted that the Czechoslovak military staff proved reluctant to engage in the risky planning of operations involving the use of nuclear weapons on the first day of conflict. But complaints along these lines to the highest representatives of the Ministry of National Defense were irrelevant since in the 1950s Czechoslovakia neither had access to nuclear weapons nor nuclear weapons placed on its territory.¹²

Deep into enemy territory

The introduction of nuclear weapons into East bloc military plans and the resulting emphasis on achieving an element of surprise had a tremendous effect on the role of ground operations. Now the main task of ground forces was to quickly penetrate enemy territory and to destroy the enemy's nuclear and conventional forces on his soil. Thus the idea of advancing towards Lyons by the 9th day of the conflict, as outlined in the 1964 plan, did not develop overnight. Until the late 1950s, exercises of ČSLA offensive operations ended around the 10th day, fighting no further west than the Nuremberg-Ingolstadt line.¹³ These exercise designs show that the so-called Prague-Saarland line (Prague-Nuremberg-Saarbrücken) was clearly preferred to the Alpine line Brno-Vienna-Munich-Basel.¹⁴

With the aim of enhancing the mobility of the army, the Czechoslovak military staff, upon orders from the Soviet military headquarters, began a relocation of military forces in 1958, which concentrated the maximum number of highly mobile tank divisions in the western part of the country.¹⁵ As a result of the 1958-62 Berlin Crisis, the military institutionalization of the Warsaw Pact led to the creation of individual fronts. Within this new framework, the ČSLA was responsible for one entire front with its own command and tasks as set forth by the Soviet military headquarters.¹⁶

Even before these organizational changes were officially implemented, they had been applied in military exercises, during which the newly created fronts were to be synchronized. While the plans of the exercises and the tasks set for the participants cannot be considered an exact reflection of operational planning, they show that the time periods by which certain lines on the western battlefield were to be reached had gradually been reduced and the depth reached by Czechoslovak troops had been enlarged. In one of the first front exercises in 1960, the ČSLA was supposed to operate on the Stuttgart–Dachau line by the 4th day of conflict. The operational front exercise of March 1961 went even further in assuming that the Dijon–Lyon line would be reached on the 6th–7th day of the conflict. During the operational front exercise in September 1961, the Czechoslovak front practiced supporting an offensive by Soviet and East German forces. The line Bonn–Metz–Strasbourg was to be reached on the 7th and 8th day. An exercise conducted in December 1961 gave the Czechoslovak front the task of reaching the Besançon–Belfort line on the 7th day of operations.¹⁷ From the early 1960s onward, massive war games with similar designs took place in Legnica, Poland, in the presence of the commands of the individual fronts. The assumed schedule and territory covered in these exercises already reflected the vision of the 1964 plan.

In Warsaw Pact plans, Czechoslovakia did not play the main strategic role in the Central European battlefield—that fell to the Warsaw–Berlin axis. For instance, during the joint front exercise VÍTR (Wind), the Czechoslovak front, besides taking Nancy (France), was “to be prepared to secure the left wing of the Eastern forces [the Warsaw Pact–*P.L.*] against the neutral state [Austria–*P.L.*] in case its neutrality was broken.”¹⁸

With a greater number of nuclear weapons in their possession by the late 1950s, the Soviets began to appreciate nuclear weapons not merely as “normal” weapons. For Soviet leader Nikita S. Khrushchev, nuclear weapons were both a tool to exert political pressure and a measure of military deterrent. To him, further demilitarization of the Cold War could be achieved through cuts in ground forces.¹⁹ Nuclear weapons in turn acquired an even more prominent role in planning for massive retaliation.²⁰ The Czechoslovak military leadership hinted at this as follows: “For the countries of the Warsaw Treaty and specifically of ČSSR, it is important not to allow the enemy to make a joint attack and not to allow him to gain advantageous conditions or the development of ground force operations, and thus gain strategic dominance. Basically, this means that our means for an atomic strike must be in such a state of military readiness that they would be able to deal with the task of carrying out a nuclear counter-strike with a time lag of only seconds or tenths of seconds.”²¹

Flexible response à la Warsaw Pact

The US move from massive retaliation to flexible response during the early 1960s did not go unnoticed by the Warsaw Pact. According to its 1964 training directives, the ČSLA was supposed to carry out training for the early stages of war not only with the use of nuclear weapons but, for the first time since mid-1950s, also without them. At a major joint exercise of the Warsaw Pact in the summer of 1964, the early phase of war was envisaged without nuclear weapons.²²

However, flexible response as conceived by the Warsaw Pact was not a mere mirror image of the Western version. The US attempt to enhance the credibility of its deterrent by acquiring the capacity to limit conflict to a manageable level by introducing “thresholds” and “pauses” resulted from an agreement between political leaders and the military, who assumed to know how to prevent war from escalating into a nuclear nightmare. In the East, by contrast, the concept was based only on a military—and perhaps more realistic—assessment that a conflict was, sooner or later, going to expand into a global nuclear war. In the words of the ČSSR Minister of National Defense Bohumír Lomský:

All of these speculative theories of Western strategists about limiting the use of nuclear arms and about the spiral effect of the increase of their power have one goal: in any given situation to stay in the advantageous position for the best timing of a massive nuclear strike in order to start a global nuclear war. We reject these false speculative theories, and every use of nuclear arms by an aggressor will be answered with a massive nuclear offensive using all the means of the Warsaw Treaty countries, on the whole depth and aiming at all targets of the enemy coalition. We have no intention to be the first to resort to the use of nuclear weapons. Although we do not believe in the truthfulness and the reality of these Western theories, we cannot disregard the fact that the imperialists could try to start a war without the immediate use of nuclear arms ... That is why we must also be prepared for this possibility.²³

In line with this crude thinking, the Czechoslovak, and most probably the Soviet military conceived of only one threshold, i.e. that between conventional and nuclear war. The Warsaw Pact hence stood somewhere between massive retaliation and flexible response.

According to some contemporary accounts, it was in this period that the term “preemptive nuclear strike” appeared in Warsaw Pact deliberations. A massive nuclear strike was supposed to be used only if three sources had confirmed that the enemy was about to employ nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, all exercises carried out in the following years made it clear that the use of nuclear weapons was expected no later than the third day of operations. Exercises that counted on the use of nuclear arms from the very beginning of the fighting were common.²⁴

The 1964 Czechoslovak war plan is therefore especially important. It shows how little the East-bloc planners believed in the relevance of Western-style flexible response. Not only did the plan not consider the possibility of a non-nuclear war in Europe, but it assumed that the war would start with a massive nuclear strike by the West.

The Czechoslovak war plan of 1964

Considering the high degree of secrecy surrounding these documents, only a few people in the 1960s had direct knowledge of the 1964 Czechoslovak war plan. However, several sporadic accounts make at least some conclusions possible. The plan was the first to have been drawn up by the ČSLA in the aftermath of the 1958-62 Berlin Crisis. According to the late Václav Vitanovský, then ČSLA Chief of Operations, the plan came about as a result of directives from Moscow.²⁵ These directives were then worked into operational plans by the individual armies. As Vitanovský explained, “When we had finished, we took it back to Moscow, where they looked it over, endorsed it, and said yes, we agree. Or they changed it. Changes were made right there on the spot.”²⁶ The orders for the Czechoslovak Front stated that the valleys in the Vosges mountains were to be reached by the end of the operation. Undoubtedly, this was meant to prepare the way for troops of the second echelon made up of Soviet forces.

The 1964 plan remained valid until at least 1968 and probably for quite some time after.²⁷ As early as the mid-1960s, however, a number of revisions were made. According to contemporary accounts, the Soviet leadership feared that the Czechoslovak Front would not be capable of fulfilling its tasks and, accordingly, reduced the territory assigned to the ČSLA. To support the objectives of the 1964 plan, Moscow tried to impose the stationing of a number of Soviet divisions on Czechoslovak territory in 1965-66. In December 1965, the Soviets forced the Czechoslovak government to sign an agreement on the storage of nuclear warheads on Czechoslovak soil. Implementation of both measures only became feasible after the Soviet invasion in 1968.²⁸



DOCUMENT

Plan of Actions of the Czechoslovak People's Army for War Period

“Approved”
Single Copy
Supreme Commander
of the Armed Forces of the USSR

Antonín Novotný
1964

1. Conclusions from the assessment of the enemy

The enemy could use up to 12 general military units in the Central European military theater for advancing in the area of the Czechoslovak Front from D[ay] 1 to D[ay] 7-8.

—The 2nd Army Corps of the FRG [Federal Republic of Germany] including: 4th and 10th mechanized divisions, 12th tank division, 1st airborne division and 1st mountain division,

—the 7th Army Corps of the USA including: the 24th mechanized division and 4th armored tank division;

—the 1st Army of France including: 3rd mechanized division, the 1st and 7th tank divisions, and up to two newly deployed units, including 6 launchers of tactical missiles, up to 130 theater launchers and artillery, and up to 2800 tanks.

Operations of the ground troops could be supported by part of the 40th Air Force, with up to 900 aircraft, including 250 bombers and up to 40 airborne missile launchers.

Judging by the composition of the group of NATO troops and our assessment of the exercises undertaken by the NATO command, one could anticipate the design of the enemy's actions with the following goals.

To disorganize the leadership of the state and to undermine mobilization of armed forces by surprise nuclear strikes against the main political and economic centers of the country.

To critically change the correlation of forces in its own favor by strikes against the troops, airfields and communication centers.

To destroy the border troops of the Czechoslovak People's Army in border battles, and to destroy the main group of our troops in the Western and Central Czech Lands by building upon the initial attack.

To disrupt the arrival of strategic reserves in the regions of Krkonoše, Jeseníky, and Moravská Brána by nuclear strikes against targets deep in our territory and by sending airborne assault troops; to create conditions for a successful attainment of the goals of the operation.

Judging by the enemy's approximate operative design, the combat actions of both sides in the initial period of the war will have a character of forward contact battles.

The operative group of the enemy in the southern part of the FRG will force the NATO command to gradually engage a number of their units in the battle, which will create an opportunity for the Czechoslovak Front to defeat NATO forces unit by unit. At the same time, that would require building a powerful first echelon in the operative structure of the Front; and to achieve success it would require building up reserves that would be capable of mobilizing very quickly and move into the area of military action in a very short time.

2. Upon receiving special instructions from the Supreme Commander of the Unified Armed Forces, the Czechoslovak People's Army will deploy to the Czechoslovak Front with the following tasks:

To be ready to start advancing toward Nuremberg, Stuttgart and Munich with part of forces immediately after the nuclear strike. Nuclear strikes against the troops of the enemy should be targeted at the depth of the line Würzburg, Erlangen, Regensburg, Landshut.

The immediate task is to defeat the main forces of the Central Group of the West German Army in the southern part of the FRG, in cooperation with the [Soviet] 8th Guards Army of the 1st Western Front; by the end of the first day—reach the line Bayreuth, Regensburg, Passau; and by the end of the second day—move to the line Höchststadt, Schwabach, Ingolstadt, Mühldorf, and by the fourth day of the attack—reach the line Mosbach, Nürtingen, Memmingen, Kaufbeuren.

In the future, building upon the advance in the direction of Strasbourg, Epinal, Dijon, to finalize the defeat of the enemy in the territory of the FRG, to force a crossing of the river Rhine, and on the seventh or eighth day of the operation to take hold of the line Langres, Besançon.

Afterward develop the advance toward Lyon.

To have in the combat disposition of the Czechoslovak Front the following units:

—the 1st and 4th Armies, 10th Air Army, 331st front missile brigade, 11th, 21st and the 31st mobile missile support base in the state of combat alert.

—the reserve center of the Army, the 3rd, 18th, 26th, and 32nd mechanized rifle divisions, 14th and 17th tank divisions, 22nd airborne brigade, 205th antitank brigade, 303rd air defense division, 201st and 202nd air defense regiments with mobilization timetable from M 1 to M 3.

—the formations, units and facilities of the support and service system.

The 57th Air Army, arriving on D 1 from the Carpathian military district before the fifth or sixth day of the operation, will be operatively subordinated to the Czechoslovak Front.

If Austria keeps its neutrality on the third day of the war, one mechanized rifle division of the Southern Group of Forces will arrive in the area of České Budějovice and join the Czechoslovak Front.

The following forces will remain at the disposal of the Ministry of National Defense: the 7th air defense army, 24th mechanized rifle division and 16th tank division with readiness M 20, reconnaissance units, and also units and facilities of the support and service system.

Under favorable conditions two missile brigades and one mobile missile support base will arrive some time in advance in the territory of the ČSSR from the Carpathian military district:

—35th missile brigade—excluding Český Brod, excluding Ríčany, Zásmyky,

—36th missile brigade—excluding Pacov, excluding Pelhřimov, excluding Humpolec, —3486th mobile missile support base—woods 5 kilometers to the East of Světlá.

Formations and units of the Czechoslovak People's Army, on permanent alert, upon the announcement of combat alarm should leave their permanent location in no more than 30 minutes, move to designated areas within 3 hours, and deploy there ready to carry out their combat tasks.

Formations, units and headquarters that do not have set mobilization dates, leave their locations of permanent deployment and take up the identified areas of concentration in the time and in the order determined by the plan of mobilization and deployment.

The following disposition of forces is possible in the area of operations of the Czechoslovak Front for the entire depth of the operation:

—in divisions—1.1 to 1.0

—in tanks and mobile artillery launchers—1.0 to 1.0

—in artillery and mine-launchers—1.0 to 1.0

—in military aircraft—1.1 to 1.0, all in favor of the Czechoslovak Front.

In the first massive nuclear strike by the troops of the Missile Forces of the Czechoslovak Front, the front aviation and long-range aviation added to the front must destroy the main group of troops of the first operations echelon of the 7th US Army, its means of nuclear attack, and the centers of command and control of the aviation.

During the development of the operation, the troops of the Missile Forces and aviation must destroy the approaching deep operative reserves, the newly discovered means of nuclear attack, and the enemy aviation.

Altogether the operation will require the use of 131 nuclear missiles and nuclear bombs; specifically 96 missiles and 35 nuclear bombs. The first nuclear strike will use 41 missiles and nuclear bombs. The immediate task will require using 29 missiles and nuclear bombs. The subsequent task could use 49 missiles and nuclear bombs. 12 missiles and nuclear bombs should remain in the reserve of the Front.

Building on the results of the first nuclear strike, the troops of the Front, in coordination with units of the 1st Western Front must destroy the main group of troops of the 7th US Army and the 1st French Army in cooperation with airborne assault troops, force the rivers Neckar and Rhine in crossing, and defeat the advancing deep strategic reserves of the enemy in advancing battle, and by D[ay] 7-8 take control of the areas of Langres, Besançon, and Epinal.

Upon completion of the tasks of the operation the troops must be ready to develop further advances in the direction of Lyon.

The main strike should be concentrated in the direction of Nuremberg, Stuttgart, Strasbourg, Epinal, Dijon; part of the forces should be used on the direction of

Straubing and Munich.

The operative structure of the troops of the Czechoslovak Front is to be in one echelon with separation of two tank and five mechanized rifle divisions for the reserve as they arrive and are deployed.

The first echelon shall consist of the 1st and 4th armies and the 331st front missile brigade.

The reserve of the front includes: Headquarters of the 2nd Army (reserve), mechanized rifle division of the Southern Group of Forces by D 3, 14th tank division by D 3, 17th tank division by D 4, 3rd mechanized rifle division by D 3, 26th mechanized rifle division by D 4, 18th mechanized rifle division by D 5, and 32nd mechanized rifle division by D 6.

Special reserves include: 22nd airborne brigade by D 2, 103rd chemical warfare battalion by D 2, 6th engineering brigade by D 3, and 205th antitank artillery by D 4.

3. On the right—the 8th Guards Army of the 1st Western Front advances in the direction of Suhl, Bad Kissingen, and Worms and with part of its forces to Bamberg.

The separation line with the Army is the USSR-GDR border as far as Aš, then Bayreuth, Mosbach, and Sarrebourg, Chaumont (all points exclusively for the Czechoslovak Front). The meeting point with the 8th Guards Army should be supported by the forces and means of the Czechoslovak Front.

On the left—the Southern Group of Forces and the Hungarian People's Army will cover the state borders of Hungary.

The dividing line with them: state border of the USSR with the Hungarian People's Republic, and then the northern borders of Austria, Switzerland, and Italy.

4. The 1st Army (19th and 20th mechanized rifle divisions, 1st and 13th tank divisions, 311st artillery missile brigade) with 312nd heavy artillery brigade, 33rd antitank artillery brigade without 7th antitank artillery regiment, the 2nd bridge-building brigade without the 71st bridge-building battalion, the 351st and 352nd engineering battalions of the 52nd engineering brigade.

The immediate task is to defeat the enemy's group of the 2nd Army Corps of the FRG and the 7th US Army in conjunction with the 8th Guards Army of the 1st Western Front, and to develop advance in the direction of Neustadt, Nuremberg, Ansbach, and with part of forces in conjunction with units of the 8th Guards Army in the direction of Bamberg, by D 1 to take control of the line Bayreuth, Amberg, Schmidmühlen; and by the end of D 2 to arrive on the line Höchststadt, Schwabach, Heiden.

The further task is to advance in the direction of Ansbach, Crailsheim, Stuttgart; to defeat the advancing operative reserves of the enemy, and by the end of D 4 take control of the line excluding Mosbach, Bietigheim, Nürtingen.

Subsequently to be ready to develop the advance in

the direction of Stuttgart, Strasbourg, Epinal.

The dividing line on the left is Podčázovce, Schwandorf, Weissenburg, Heidenheim, Reutlingen (all the points except Heidenheim, are inclusive for the 1st Army).

Headquarters—in the forest 1 kilometer south of Střibro.

The axis of the movement is Střibro, Grafenwöhr, Ansbach, Schwäbisch Hall.

5. The 4th Army (2nd and 15th mechanized rifle divisions, 4th and 9th tank divisions, 321st artillery missile brigade) with 7th antitank artillery brigade and 33rd antitank artillery brigade, 71st bridge-building battalion of the 2nd bridge-building brigade, 92nd bridge-building battalion and 353rd engineering battalion.

The immediate task is to defeat the enemy group of the 2nd Army Corps of the FRG in cooperation with the troops of the 1st Army and to develop advance in the direction of Regensburg, Ingolstadt, Donauwörth, and with part of forces in the direction Straubing, Munich; and by the end of D[ay] 1 to take control of the line Schmidmühlen, Regensburg, Passau; by the end of D[ay] 2—Eichstätt, Moosburg, Mühldorf.

The subsequent task is to advance in the direction of Donauwörth, Ulm, to defeat the advancing formations of the 1st French Army and by the end of D[ay] 4 to take control of the line Metzingen, Memmingen, Kaufbeuren.

Subsequently to be ready to develop advance in the direction of Ulm, Mulhouse, Besançon.

Headquarters—6 kilometers northwest of Strakonice.

The axis of movement is – Strakonice, Klatovy, Falkenstein, Kelheim, Rennertshofen, Burgau.

6. The Missile Forces of the Front must in the first nuclear strike destroy the group of forces of the 7th US Army, part of forces of the 2nd Army Corps of the FRG, and part of the air defense forces of the enemy.

Subsequently, the main efforts should be concentrated on defeating the advancing operative and strategic reserves and also the newly discovered means of nuclear attack of the enemy.

In order to fulfill the tasks set to the front, the following ammunition shall be used:

- for the immediate task—44 operative-tactical and tactical missiles with nuclear warheads;
- for the subsequent task—42 operative-tactical and tactical missiles with nuclear warheads;
- for unexpectedly arising tasks—10 operative-tactical and tactical missiles with nuclear warheads shall be left in the Front's reserve.

The commander of Missile Forces shall receive special assembly brigades with special ammunition, which shall be transferred to the Czechoslovak Front in the following areas: 2 kilometers to the East of Jablonec, and 3 kilometers to the East of Michalovče.

The use of special ammunition—only with permission of the Supreme Commander of the Unified Armed Forces.

7. Aviation.

The 10th Air Force—the 1st fighter division, 2nd and 34th fighter-bomber division, 25th bomber regiment, 46th transport air division, 47th air reconnaissance regiment and 45th air reconnaissance regiment for target guidance.

Combat tasks:

With the first nuclear strike to destroy part of forces of the 2nd Army Corps of the FRG, two command and targeting centers, and part of the air defense forces of the enemy.

Upon the beginning of combat actions to suppress part of air defense forces of the enemy in the following regions: Roding, Kirchroth, Hohenfels, Amberg, Pfreimd, Nagel, and Erbendorf.

To uncover and destroy operative and tactical means of nuclear attack, command and control aviation forces in the following regions: Weiden, Nabburg, Amberg, Grafenwöhr, Hohenfels, Regensburg, and Erlangen.

During the operation to give intensive support to combat actions of the troops of the front: on D[ay] 1—6 group sorties of fighter bombers, from D[ay] 2 to D[ay] 5-8 group sorties of fighter bombers and bombers daily, and from D[ay] 6 to D[ay] 8-6 group sorties of fighter bombers and bombers daily. The main effort should be concentrated on supporting the troops of the 1st Army.

In cooperation with forces and means of the air defense of the country, fronts and neighbors—to cover the main group of forces of the Front from air strikes by the enemy.

To ensure the landing of reconnaissance troops and general airborne forces on D[ay] 1 and D[ay] 2 in the rear of the enemy.

To ensure airborne landing of the 22nd airborne brigade on D[ay] 4 in the area north of Stuttgart, or on D[ay] 5 in the area of Rastatt, or on D 6 in the area to the east of Mulhouse.

To carry out air reconnaissance with concentration of main effort on the direction of Nuremberg, Stuttgart, and Strasbourg with the goal of locating means of nuclear attack, and in order to determine in time the beginning of operations and the direction of the advancing operative reserves of the enemy.

In order to fulfill the tasks set for the front, it will be required to use the following weapons:

- for the immediate task—10 nuclear bombs;
- for subsequent tasks—7 nuclear bombs;
- for resolving unexpectedly arising tasks—2 nuclear bombs shall be left in the Front's reserve.

The 57th Air Force, consisting of the 131st fighter division, 289th fighter-bomber regiment, 230th and 733rd bomber regiment and 48th air reconnaissance regiment, arriving by D[ay] 1 from the Carpathian military district, is to remain under operative subordination to the Czechoslovak Front until the fifth to sixth day for 5 army sorties.

The Army has a determined the limit of: combat sets of air bombs—3, combat sets of air-to-air missiles—2, combat sets of aviation cartridges—2, and fuel—3 rounds of army

refueling

Combat tasks:

- in cooperation with the 10th Air Force to find and destroy the means of nuclear attack of the enemy, its aviation and command and control centers with concentration of main efforts on the direction of Nuremberg, Strasbourg;
- to support combat actions of the troops of the Front when they force the rivers Naab, Neckar, Rhine, and when they counter-attack the enemy;
- to support combat actions of the 22nd airborne brigade in the areas of its landing;
- to protect the troops of the front from air strikes by the enemy;
- to carry out air reconnaissance with concentration of the main effort on discovering the means of nuclear attack and deep operative and strategic reserves of the enemy.

The 184th heavy bomber regiment of long-range aviation should use nuclear bombs in the first nuclear strike against headquarters of the 2nd Army Corps of the FRG, 7th US Army, 2nd/40 Corporal artillery battalion, 2nd/82 Corporal artillery battalion, 5th/73 Sergeant artillery battalion, and the main group of forces of the 4th mechanized division and 12th tank division of the 2nd Army Corps of the FRG. Total use of nuclear bombs—16. Use of special combat ammunition—only with permission of the Supreme Commander of the Unified Armed Forces.

8. Air Defense

7th Air Defense Army of the country—2nd and 3rd air defense corps.

Combat tasks:

- in cooperation with air defense forces of the Front and the air defense of the neighbors in the united air defense system of countries of the Warsaw Treaty to repel massive air strikes of the enemy with concentration of main effort on the direction Karlsruhe, Prague, Ostrava.
- not to allow reconnaissance and air strikes of the enemy against our groups of forces, especially in the area of the Czech Lands, against aircraft on the airfields, and against important political and economic centers of the country, as well as communications centers. The main effort should be concentrated on protecting the areas of Prague, Ostrava, Brno and Bratislava;
- upon the beginning of combat actions, troops of the Czechoslovak Front with anti-aircraft missile forces to continue to defend most important areas and objects of the country, with forces of fighter aviation to defend objects of the Front after the advancing troops.

Air Defense troops of the Front

Combat tasks:

- Upon the beginning of combat action of the Front, to take part in the general air defense

system of the Warsaw Treaty countries with all forces and resources to cover the main group of the Front's troops.

—During the operation, in cooperation with the 7th Air Defense Army, units of 10th and 57th Air Force and the air defense of the 1st Western Front, to cover the troops of the front from the air strikes of the enemy in the process of their passing over the border mountains, and also during the crossing of the rivers Neckar and Rhine to cover the missile forces and command and control centers.

9. The 22nd airborne brigade is to be ready to be deployed from the region of Prostějov, Niva, Brodek to the region north of Stuttgart on D[ay] 4 or to the region of Rastatt on D[ay] 5, or to the region to the east of Mulhouse on D[ay] 6 with the task of capturing and holding river crossings on Neckar or Rhine until the arrival of our troops.

10. Reserves of the Front.

The 3rd, 18th, 26th, and 32nd mechanized rifle divisions of the Southern Group of Forces, the 14th and 17th tank divisions are to concentrate in the regions designated on the decision map in the period from D[ay] 3 to D[ay] 5.

The 6th engineering brigade by D[ay] 3 is to be concentrated in the region of Panenský Týnec, and Bor, excluding Slaný, to be ready to ensure force crossing of the rivers Neckar and Rhine by the troops of the Front.

The 103rd chemical warfare battalion from D[ay] 2 to be stationed in the region of Hluboš, excluding Příbram, excluding Dobříš. The main effort of radiation reconnaissance should be concentrated in the region of Hořovice, Blovice, and Sedlčany.

Objects of special treatment should be deployed in the areas of deployment of command and control centers of the Front, the 331st front brigade, and also in the regions of concentration of the reserve divisions of the Front.

11. Material Maintenance of the Rear

The main effort in the material maintenance of the rear of the troops of the Front should be concentrated throughout the entire depth of the operation in the area of the 1st Army's advance.

To support the troops of the 1st Army, the 10th and 57th Air Forces should deploy to the forward front base number 1 and the base of the 10th Air Force in the region to the West of Plzeň by the end of D[ay] 2; troops of the 4th Army should deploy the forward front base number 2 in the region to the south of Plzen.

Field pipeline is to be deployed in the direction of Roudnice, Plzen, Nüremberg, and Karlsruhe and used for provision of aircraft fuel.

Rebuilding of railroads should be planned on the directions Cheb-Nüremberg or Domašice-Schwandorf-Regensburg-Donauwörth.

Two roads should be built following the 1st Army, and one front road throughout the entire depth of the operation

following the 4th Army.

The Ministry of National Defense of the USSR will assign material resources, including full replacement of the ammunition used during the operation for the troops of the Czechoslovak Front.

Support for the 57th Air Force should be planned taking into account the material resources located in the territory of the USSR for the Unified Command.

Use of material resources should be planned as follows:

- ammunition—45,000 tons
- combustible-lubricating oil—93,000 tons
- including aircraft fuel—40,000 tons
- missile fuel:
- oxidizer—220 tons
- missile fuel—70 tons

Automobile transportation of the Front should be able to supply the troops with 70,000 tons of cargo during the operation.

Transportation of the troops should be able to carry 58,000 tons of cargo.

By the end of the operation the troops should have 80% of mobile reserves available.

In D[ay] 1 and D[ay] 2 hospital bed network for 10 to 12 thousand sick and wounded personnel is to be deployed. By the end of the operation the hospital bed network should cover 18% of the hospital losses of the Front.

12. Headquarters of the Front should be deployed from the time "X" plus 6 hours—5 kilometers to the east of Strašice. The axis of movement—Heilbronn, Horb, Epinal.

Reserve Command Post—forest, to the north of Brezová

Advanced Command Post—forest 5 kilometers to the east of Dobřany

Rear Command Post—Jince-Obecnice

Reserve Rear Command Post—excluding Dobřany, Slapy, excluding Mníšek

Headquarters of MNO—object K-116, Prague.

Minister of National Defense of the ČSSR

General of the Army [signed] Bohumír Lomský

Head of the General Staff of Czechoslovak People's Army

Colonel General [signed] Otakar Rytíř

Head of the Operations Department of the General Staff

Major General [signed] Václav Vitanovský

11 October 1964

[Rectangular seal:]

Ministry of National Defense

General Staff—Operations Department

Section: Operations Room

Received: 20.10.1964

No. 008074/ZD-OS 64, 17 sheets

Executed in one copy of 17 sheets

Executed by Major General Jan Voštera

[signed] Gen. Voštera

14 October 1964

[Source: Central Military Archives, Prague, Collection Ministry of National Defense, Operations Department, 008074/ZD-OS 64, pp. 1-18. Obtained by Petr Luňák and translated from the Russian by Svetlana Savranskaya (National Security Archive), and Anna Locher (Center for Security Studies and Conflict Research, Zurich).]

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¹ Vojtech Mastny, "Introduction: Planning for the Unplannable," <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php>.

² According to the 1951 plan, the Polish army was not supposed to leave Polish territory and no reference was made to nuclear weapons. The document is located at the Central Military Archives in Warsaw; copy at the Library of Congress, microfilm (o) 96/6398, reel W-15.

³ According to these theoretical considerations, the ČSLA was to reach the Alps 17 days after rebuffing an enemy attack. See the exercises of the ČSLA air force command of July 1952" on the topic "Air support for striking operations of the army," *Vojenský historický archiv Vojenského ústředního archivu* (Military Historical Archive of the Central Military Archive, Prague, Czech Republic—VHA VUA), *fond Ministerstvo národní obrany* (MNO—Ministry of National Defense), 1952, box 280, sig 83/1-4, c.j. 46577.

⁴ During the entire existence of the East bloc, the ÄSLA used the largest scale of 1:25,000 exclusively to map the territory of Czechoslovakia and some operationally difficult areas in Western Europe, i.e. the Rhine and Main river valleys and other major rivers in West Germany. See summary of maps of the 1:50,000 scale in the 1946 system. Planned outlook of cartographic works at 1:50,000 foreign territory, VHA VUA, MNO/Operations, 1952, box 369, sig. 97/2, c.j. 2131.

⁵ On Stalin's view of nuclear weapons generally see David Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1994).

⁶ The change in strategic thinking and ensuing discussions among Soviet strategists, taking place in the journal *Vojennaja mysl* [Military Thought], are described in Herbert S. Dinerstein, *War and the Soviet Union: Nuclear*

Weapons and the Revolution in Soviet Military and Political Thinking (New York: Praeger, 1959) and Raymond L. Garthoff *Soviet Strategy in the Nuclear Age* (New York: Praeger, 1958).

⁷ VUA, MNO, 1954, box 22, sig. 80 5/1-57, c.j. 0037.

⁸ Statement of the Minister of National Defense, Alexej Čepicka, in an analysis of the joint troop exercises on 29 September 1954, VHA VUA, MNO, 1954, box 446, sig. 832/1-130, c.j. 3600-GS/OS.

⁹ For US 1954 plans for nuclear war, see David Alan Rosenberg, "A Smoking Radiating Ruin at the End of Two Hours: Documents on American Plans for Nuclear War with the Soviet Union, 1954-55," *International Security* 6: 3 (Winter 1981/82), pp.3-38.

¹⁰ Guidelines for the operational preparation of generals, officers and the staff of all types of services for the training period of 1955/56, VUA, MNO, box 596, sig. 83, c.j. 5800.

¹¹ "Analysis of the command-staff exercises of June 1958," VHA VUA, MNO, box 310, sig. 17/2-28, c.j. 4813-OS. Theses on the organization of the defense operations command at the level of army divisions," VHA VUA, MNO, 1957, box 327, sig. 17/7-32, c.j. 2395-08/1957. VHA VUA, MNO, 1957, box 326, sig. 17/1-13, c.j. 1803-OU.

¹² "Guidelines for operational-tactical preparations of the generals, officers and staff of all types of forces," VHA VUA, MNO, 1958, box 310, sig. 17/3-8, c.j. 5000-08/1958.—With regard to the stationing of Soviet nuclear weapons in Czechoslovakia, not until August 1961 and February 1962 were two preliminary Soviet-Czech agreements were entitling the Soviet Union to dispatch nuclear warheads immediately to Czechoslovakia in the event of an emergency. After the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, those two agreements were supplanted by a much more far-reaching "Treaty Between the Governments of the USSR and CSSR on Measures to Increase the Combat Readiness of Missile Forces," which was signed by Soviet Defense Minister Marshal Rodion Malinovsky and his Czechoslovak counterpart, Army-General Bohumir Lomsky, in December 1965. See Mark Kramer, "The 'Lessons' of the Cuban Missile Crisis for Warsaw Pact Nuclear Operations," *CWIHP Bulletin* 8-9 (Winter 1996-1997), pp. 348-354.

¹³ "The design of the mutual and two-tiered exercise of the commanders and staff in March 1958," VHA VUA, MNO, 1958, box 311, sig. 17/3-28, c.j. 1730; "Analysis of the military staff exercises from June 1958," VHA VUA, MNO, 1958, box 311, sig. 17/2-28, "Analysis of the operational exercises of the commanders of April 1959," VHA VUA, MNO, 1959, box 300, sig. 17/3-8, c.j. 9083

¹⁴ This is also reflected in the recommendations of the Czechoslovak military cartographers and strategists in 1959. See "Zapadnyi teatr vojennykh dejstvij," VHA VUA, MNO, 1959, box 300, sig. 17/7-9, c.j. 8576-OS/59.

¹⁵ See "Principles for the new relocation of the Czechoslovak People's Army," VUA, MNO, box 312, sig. 18/3-14, c.j. 3764-OS/1958. See also sig. 18/3/67, c.j. 4395/OS.

¹⁶The formation of the front included almost all Czechoslovak ground troops: 15 mobilized divisions arranged into 3 armies, the air force, an airborne brigade and the accompanying technical and rear equipment. The command was given to the general staff of the ČSLA; the chief-of-staff became the commander of this front.

¹⁷"Analysis of joint exercises at the Ministry of National Defense in 1960," VUA, MNO, 1960, box 394, sig. 6/5, c.j. 17989-OS/1960, VUA, MNO, 1961, box 347, sig. 17/1-4, c.j. 1659/OS-1961; VUA, MNO, 1961, box, 347, sig. 17/2-24, c.j. 4135; VUA, MNO, 1961, box 348, sig. 17/2-31, c.j. 4922/21.

¹⁸"Exercise Wind (Voter)," VHA VUA, MNO, 1962, box 304, sig. 17 2/13, c.j. 12650/1962. VHA VUA, MNO, 1962, box 305, sig. 2-15, c.j. 12130.

¹⁹ See Matthew Evangelista, *'Why Keep Such an Army?'* *Khrushchev's Troop Reductions*, CWIHP Working Paper 19 (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center, 1997). On Khrushchev see also Vladislav Zubok and Hope Harrison, *The Nuclear Education of Nikita Khrushchev*, in John Lewis Gaddis, Philip H. Gordon, Ernest R. May and Jonathan Rosenberg, eds., *Cold War Statesmen Confront the Bomb* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999), pp. 141-168.

²⁰ See Evangelista, *'Why Keep Such an Army;'* Vladislav M. Zubok, "Khrushchev's 1960 Troop Cut: New Russian Evidence," *CWIHP Bulletin* 8/9 (Winter 199/1997), pp. 416-420.

²¹"Lecture On the Character of Present-day War," VUA, MNO, 1961, sig. 4 1-6, c.j. 16196-NGS.

²²Based on experiences with the Sputnik exercises, one of the main tasks for the exercise season of 1965/66 was set to be the training of operations without the use of weapons of mass destruction. See "Guidelines for the preparation of generals, officers and warrant-officers of the Ministry of National Defense in 1965," VUA, MNO, 1964, box 269, sig. 17/1-5, c.j. 1400/19.

²³"Exercise Sputnik," VUA, MNO, 1964, box 270, sig.

17/2-3, c.j. 11500/108-54/1964.

²⁴"Conclusions from the Exercise October Storm on 16-22 October 1965," VUA, MNO, 1965, box 242, sig. 4/4, c.j. 17841.

²⁵In the 1960s, Václav Vitanovský was considered a guru of Czechoslovak military thinking. In 1964 he published a textbook on the theory of strategy and doctrine. He was deposed already in 1967 for coming into conflict with the Soviet generals, who pressed the Czechoslovak military headquarters to raise military expenditures and number of troops.

²⁶Interview with General Major Václav Vitanovský of 20 November 1990, Institute of Modern History, Prague, Collection of the "ČSFR's Government Commission for the Analysis of the Years 1967-70," R-105. Unfortunately, half of the interview has been lost. Colonel Karel Štěpánek, Chief of the Operations Room at the General Staff at the time and another participant in the preparation of the 1964 plan, also confirmed this procedure in an interview with the author.

²⁸The mapping of Western Europe during the 1970s and 1980s also seems to confirm that the 1964 plan was valid until the second half of the 1980s. It is apparent from the plan of map renewal in the 70s and 80s for individual Warsaw Pact countries, that the ČSLA was still responsible for the same area as during the 1960s. The same goes for the scale of 1:100,000. See plan "Utocnenija sovместnych rabot geograficeskich sluzb armij gosudarstv-ucastnikov Varsavskogo dogovora po obnovlenii topograficeskich kart na 1972-1975 gody," VHA VUA, fond Varsavska smlouva (VS), Topo, c.j. 004/75-12; also see plan "Utocnenija ucastnikov Varsavskogo dogovora po obnovlenii topograficeskich kart na 1976-1980 gody," VUA, VS, Topo, c.j. 5643/4

²⁹ See Mark Kramer, "The "Lessons" of the Cuban Missile Crisis for Warsaw Pact Nuclear Operations," pp. 348-354.



“Operation Atom”

The Soviet Union’s Stationing of Nuclear Missiles in the German Democratic Republic, 1959

By **Matthias Uhl** and **Vladimir I. Ivkin**

On 26 March 1955, Nikita S. Khrushchev, First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and Nikolai A. Bulganin, Chairman of the Soviet Union’s Council of Ministers, signed government decree no. 589-365. Their signatures set in motion one of the most secret military actions of the Cold War—the stationing of strategic nuclear missiles on the territory of the German Democratic Republic (GDR).¹

Recently declassified documents and internal materials from the Russian Federation’s Strategic Missile Command now reveal that the first stationing of Soviet strategic missiles outside the borders of the USSR did not occur—as previously assumed by most historians and observers—in Cuba in 1962, but in the GDR nearly three years earlier. While the stationing of the missiles in Cuba provoked a global crisis, the Western governments, in their official statements in 1959, acted as if unaware of the developments in East Germany. Documents from the West German foreign intelligence service (*Bundesnachrichtendienst*—BND), now available in the German Federal Archives in Koblenz, show that at least the intelligence agencies of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), the United States, Great Britain, and France knew about the missile stationing. Both blocs apparently succeeded in addressing the tense military situation outside the public eye through a combination of secret diplomacy and calibrated pressure.

This essay provides an overview of the most important events and presents aspects of this military episode that have received little attention to date. Many of the relevant documents are still classified in Russian, German and US archives, or are considered to be lost, so the following is only a tentative assessment. It is difficult to put these events in the context of larger political developments because the internal deliberations about the operation are not yet known.

By 1955, more than 300 of the German missile specialists who had been brought to the USSR in the early postwar years had left the Soviet Union. They had been included in the missile building program that had existed since 1946 as a vital part of the Soviet Union’s effort to develop and produce long-range ballistic missiles using German technology. The German scientists’ legacy was the production of a Soviet version of the German V-2, which the Soviets called R-1.² The entire Soviet missile program was subsequently built on the success of the R-1 series. The next step in its development, the R-2, already had a range of 600 kilometers. The first missile of genuinely Soviet production was the R-5, which was successfully

tested in March 1953. It had a range of 1,200 kilometers and carried a warhead weighing 1.42 tons.³

It was necessary to equip the missile with an atomic warhead in order to make it a new strategic weapon. On 10 April 1954, the Soviet government gave its military-industrial complex the assignment of developing just such a weapons system. Given that the atomic bombs available at the time were too heavy to be delivered by a missile, the first step was to reduce the weight of the warhead. A special department of the Nuclear Weapons Development Center “Arzamas-16” headed by Samuel G. Kocarjanc took the lead on this aspect of the project. The nuclear warhead was to be delivered by a modified version of the R-5. The draft construction plan of the new R-5 was drawn up by the “Special Construction Office No. 1” (OKB-1) of the Scientific Research Institute No. 88 (NII-88), which, at that time, was the only Soviet research institution that developed long-range ballistic missiles. The well-known missile builder Sergei P. Korolev headed the scientific aspects of the project, and D. I. Kozlov was charged to head the construction of what was officially called “Production 8K51.” The project progressed rapidly, and in January 1955, the first flight tests took place at the Soviet Ministry of Defense’s central testing site in Kapustin Yar.⁴ The tests revealed several technical adjustments still necessary to make the R-5M a reliable carrier of nuclear weapons.

The second phase of the testing began in January 1956. By that time, Soviet technicians had succeeded in delivering atomic warheads on missiles. The operation had been code-named “Baikal.” Initially, the troops responsible for testing the new weapon launched four missiles equipped with complete warheads, except for the components necessary to start a nuclear chain reaction. On 2 February 1956, the Soviets successfully completed the world’s first launching of a battle-ready nuclear missile. After a flight of 1,200 kilometers, the missile reached its planned target area in the Aral region’s Karakum Desert [*Priaral’skie karakumy*]. The detonation device for starting the chain reaction functioned properly, causing the first explosion of a missile equipped with a nuclear warhead. The strength of the detonation was measured at the equivalent of 0.4 kilotons (KT) of TNT. Soon thereafter, the engineers and technicians increased this strength to 300 KT, more than twenty times the power of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. At that point, the missile and the warhead comprised a new weapons system that allowed the destruction of strategic objectives. The Soviet Ministry of Defense added the R-5M to its missile arsenal as early as

21 June 1956.⁵

The new weapon, officially called a first-generation mid-range strategic missile, had a length of 20.8 meters, a diameter of 1.65 meters, and a weight of 28 tons. The missile was driven by a liquid propulsion system that used liquid oxygen and alcohol, which created a thrust of 44 tons and was therefore able to carry the 1,400 kilogram warhead up to a maximum distance of 1,200 kilometers. The missile would hit its target after a maximum flying time of 637 seconds. The navigational system of the missile functioned on the basis of inertial navigation and was guided by radio transmission to correct deviations from the missile's proper flight path. The average margin of error of 1.5 kilometers was considered to be sufficiently accurate. It allowed the destruction of important political and economic centers as well as larger "soft" military targets.⁶

Even before the successful conclusion of the tests, the Soviets began working on designs for a deployment of the weapon. The planners in the Soviet Ministry of Defense responsible for the project were aware that the R-5, with a range limited to 1,200 kilometers, still had to be stationed outside the territory of the Soviet Union if the most important political, military, and economic centers of Western Europe were to be in reach. Between 1953 and 1955, special groups from the Soviet Ministry of Defense gathered information on potential deployment locations for R-1, R-2 and R-5 missiles during reconnaissance trips to

Romania, Bulgaria and the GDR. Due to the limited effectiveness of these weapon prototypes in a conflict situation, the military leaders decided against implementing these plans. The plans were, however, the starting point for the planned stationing of the R-5M missile outside the Soviet Union.⁷

In March 1955, the Soviet Ministry of Defense presented draft decree no. 589-365 for the USSR Council of Ministers' decision. The draft called for stationing battle-ready missile brigades of the Supreme High Command Reserve (RVGK) in the Trans-Caucasian Military Zone, the Far Eastern Military Zone, in the GDR and in Bulgaria. While the Soviet Foreign Ministry was instructed to obtain the agreement of the Bulgarian government for stationing missiles on its territory, this procedure was not followed in the GDR. There the missile brigade was apparently to be integrated into the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany, which were considered to have extraterritorial status. The Soviet Union therefore saw no reason to consult with its ally about the intended stationing.⁸ In fact, as far as can be documented, the Soviet military apparently kept the stationing of the R-5M in the GDR a secret from their East German ally.⁹

Although Khrushchev and Bulganin signed the decree on 26 March 1955, its implementation was delayed repeatedly. The most important causes for this delay were repeated problems in producing the R-5M in sufficient

Announcing The Machiavelli Center (CIMA)

After many years of close but informal cooperation, last year a group of Italian Cold War historians decided to set up a formal arrangement in order to coordinate their research projects and link their efforts to the international programs studying the same historical period. This led to the creation of an inter-university center, The Machiavelli Center (CIMA), which unites a number of departments from the Universities of Florence, Padua, Pavia, Perugia, Roma Tre, and Urbino. The project centers around the activities of the Dipartimento di Studi sullo Stato of the University of Florence. Planned activities include conferences, publications and internships. Those interested to know more about its activities can write to dinolfo@unifi.it, leonuti@etr.it, guderzo@unifi.it. See also the CIMA website at <http://www.machiavellicenter.net>.

numbers, which made it impossible to equip the troops as planned. It was not until 1957 that the first strategic nuclear missile was actually introduced to the Soviet armed forces.¹⁰ By that time, plans for stationing the R-5M in the GDR had solidified. In addition to the Operations Division of the General Staff of the Soviet Army, the Staff of the Missile Troops also took part in preparing the operation. In early 1957, Maj.-Gen. P. P. Puzik, acting head of the Operations Division of the Missile Troops, received the order from the head of the Main Operations Administration of the General Staff, Lt.-Gen. A. O. Pavlovski, to choose proper stationing locations for the R-5M in the GDR. A few days later, Puzik traveled to the staff of the Group of the Soviet Forces in Germany, near Wünsdorf. From there he began his search for the best locations. These locations would ideally be in thinly populated areas, be easy to guard, and, if possible, have a good railway connection for unloading the equipment necessary for the operation. In the end, he chose the towns of Fürstenberg on the Havel and Vogelsang. Planning proceeded under the utmost secrecy. Puzik, for example, was not allowed to make any drawings during his inspection tour. The exact map of the planned sites was only developed after his return to the Operations Division of the Soviet General Staff.¹¹

The troops chosen for the stationing—the 72nd RVGK Engineer Brigade of the Soviet Army—were considered to be elite troops with experience in Germany. The 72nd RVGK Engineer Brigade had been formed in 1946 in Thuringia. On Stalin's orders, the core of the future Soviet missile troops practiced launching V-2s at Berka, near Sonderhausen. The goal of the exercises was the practical testing of six V-2 rockets in Peenemünde in October 1946.¹² Because Stalin feared diplomatic problems due to this obvious violation of the 1945 Potsdam Accords, the first launch of the rocket took place in Kapustin Yar in 1947.

In the ensuing years, the unit tested not only a steady stream of new models of missiles but also practiced the first tactical variations of the use of missile weapons. The unit alternated between simulating the destruction of industrial areas and political centers. The brigade was still primarily a testing unit since the inaccuracy and low levels of explosive power of conventional warheads made their effective use in battle unlikely. The experience gathered from the tests was used primarily to analyze the most applicable methods for missile attacks and to develop the necessary command and troop structures.¹³

Once the 72nd Engineer Brigade had been designated for stationing in the GDR, the military preparation for the operation began immediately. From March 1957 on, the first of the brigade's three artillery units was equipped with the R-5M weapons system. Just one month later, the special unit responsible for the construction and use of atomic warheads, the 23rd Field Construction Brigade, was formed within this division. The other two artillery units continued to deploy the outdated R-1 and R-2 missiles. The entire brigade took part in an exercise in the summer of 1957, in the course of which the troops were ordered to show

actions of an engineer brigade during the attack of an army group. During the exercises, the brigade's 650th Missile Unit launched two R-5M missiles.

During the following year, the 72nd Engineer Brigade underwent a number of restructuring measures. At that point, the 635th and 638th Artillery Units, designated for stationing in the GDR, received new nuclear missiles. At the same time, the construction brigade necessary for the use of the warheads, soon renamed the Mobile Missile Technical Base, was established. In addition, the brigade developed a strenuous training schedule in order to master the awe-inspiring weapons system. By the end of 1958, the 72nd Engineer Brigade had launched a total of eight R-5M missiles in preparing for the stationing. At this point, the missiles were equipped with nuclear warheads that could carry the equivalent of 300 kilotons of TNT to any type of strategic target in an attack.¹⁴

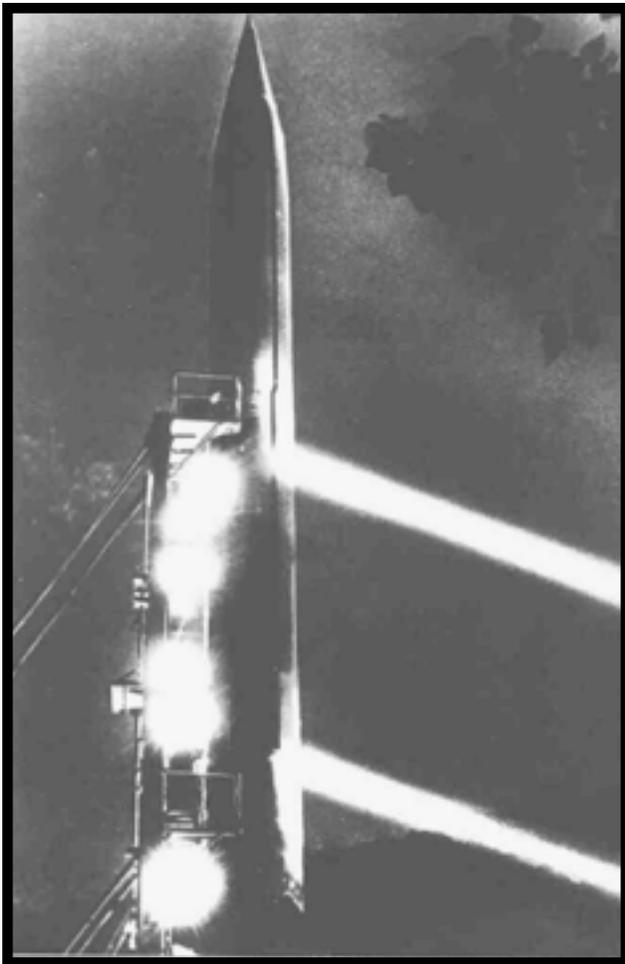
In early summer 1958, the USSR to build storage and housing areas for the warheads, missile technology, and the soldiers, while preparing the troops for their transfer. These preparations were carried out in extreme secrecy. Only Soviet soldiers worked on the construction sites—German construction companies did not participate in the project. Rumors were spread that the new facilities were being constructed to train East German army troops with the Soviet troops stationed in Germany.¹⁵ In spite of the caution exercised, the Soviets made a fatal mistake in the beginning phase of the project. The trucks used to transport construction materials bore the marking "ATOM" prominently displayed on the rear. By the time that the Soviet troops noticed the mistake, it was already too late. The West German intelligence service (BND) learned of the unusual events taking place in the Fürstenberg/Vogelsang area from its agents, mostly civilians working in the Soviet garrisons as well as agricultural workers and foresters who had access to the restricted area.¹⁶

In fact, the secrecy employed by the Soviets came back to haunt them. The local population, including those that were working for BND, became suspicious about the exclusive use of Red Army construction crews and the unusual practice of strictly separating the Soviet garrisons. In September 1958, an agent code-named "V-16800" reported that the large-scale transport of construction material "is connected with the construction of a rocket launching base in the region around Vogelsang, Templin, and Groß Dölln."¹⁷ The BND's evaluation of this report rated it a C-3, meaning "dependable source/probably true information." Although this report shows signs of having been processed, no further clues are available as to the impact of this information, because the relevant documents are still classified in Bonn and Pullach.¹⁸ Nevertheless, the report provided Western intelligence services with information about the Soviet deployment plans before the first missiles had even reached the GDR.

The Soviet military continued its preparations, however, since it still assumed the operation to be a secret. By the end of 1958, the construction work necessary for

stationing the missiles and their crews was nearing completion, and in November-December 1958, the 72nd Engineer Brigade prepared for its transfer to the GDR. Since only enough space existed thus far for two divisions, the third division was transferred to Gvardeysk in the Königsberg region. The remaining staff of the brigade, the 635th and 638th Missile Units as well as the 349th and 432nd Mobile Missile Technical Bases, began their secret transport of soldiers and equipment to the GDR.¹⁹

Efforts to maintain secrecy, such as firing all German workers in the Vogelsang and Fürstenberg garrisons, were increased.²⁰ Nonetheless, at the end of January 1959, agent V-9771 reported to his contact in the BND the arrival of parts of the 635th Missile Unit. He reported that a transport of the Soviet Army had arrived at the train route between Lychen and Fürstenberg. At the center of the transport, soldiers had moved “very large bombs” with the help of caterpillar tractors. It seems clear that this was the movement of R-5M components. Avoiding the main roads, the equipment, now covered in tarpaulin, was then taken to the back side of the Kastaven Lake military base near Fürstenberg.²¹



R-5M Missile

Picture Courtesy of Matthias Uhl

The staff of the brigade as well as the 349th Mobile Missile Technical Base were stationed with the 635th Division in Fürstenberg, in the immediate vicinity of the command center of the Second Soviet Tank Guard Army. The 638th Division and its accompanying 432nd Mobile Missile Technical Base were stationed twenty kilometers away, in the neighboring village of Vogelsang.²² Each of the two missile divisions controlled two artillery battalions, outfitted with a launching ramp for firing the R-5M, including the necessary ground equipment. Each launching ramp was equipped for three missiles at that time; in total four launching units and 12 missiles were ready for deployment in the GDR. In addition to the aforementioned equipment, each division had a transport battalion, a unit to fuel the missiles, and a guidance battalion. This last group had the task of increasing the accuracy of the missile through the use of radio control. To this end, the guidance battalion employed a guidance device designed to reduce the missile's tendency to veer to one side or the other.²³

The missiles, however, were not fully ready for battle. They still lacked the necessary nuclear warheads, which arrived in the GDR only in mid-April 1959. The warheads, officially labeled “generators” for the trip, were brought by train under heavy guard to the military airport at Templin. In the nights thereafter, they divided the Mobile Missile Technical Bases among the bunkers designed for them in the area around Vogelsang and Fürstenberg. On 29 April, an incident occurred that is not described in any detail in the material available at the time this article was written. But it is clear that during the transport of the nuclear weapons, the head of the 432nd Mobile Missile Technical Base, Lt.-Maj. S. I. Nesterov was demoted and relieved of command on the spot by Lt.-Gen. M. K. Nikolski, the head engineer for the 12th Central Division, responsible for the warheads.²⁴

Once the nuclear warheads had arrived, the 72nd RVGK Reserve Brigade was finally ready for battle. At the beginning of May 1959, the Commander of the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany, M. V. Zakharov, personally told Khrushchev that the missiles were ready for use.²⁵ At that point, the brigade, which reported directly to Khrushchev and the General Staff, was in position to report that it was ready to “assume the planned launching position and fulfill the designated tasks.”²⁶

Since the relevant documents are not accessible, one can only speculate as to the possible targets assigned to the missile brigade. It seems likely, however, that four missiles were aimed at the UK. The US-British “Thor” missiles stationed in Yorkshire and Suffolk were to be destroyed by the Soviet nuclear missiles in the case of a crisis. For the first time, moreover, the most important US air bases in Western Europe were also within range of the Soviets' weapons. The bombers stationed in Western Europe carrying US nuclear weapons, the most important element in the strategy of massive retaliation, were thus in

danger of a surprise attack. A third military option was also conceivable: Western Europe could be cut off from its US protector in the event of war by the destruction of the Atlantic harbors. It is also certain that missiles were aimed at population centers in Western Europe, such as London, Paris, Bonn and the Ruhr, and Brussels.²⁷ The establishment of another Soviet missile base in Albania could have completed the Soviet's strategy. From this base in the harbor city of Vlorë, Rome and NATO's Southern European Headquarters in Naples could be targeted.²⁸

Although a formidable number of the Soviet Union's battle-ready nuclear missiles were located in GDR territory at the time,²⁹ this fact alone should not be viewed as an aggressive move on Khrushchev's part. His central interest was to improve the Soviets' strategic position in the case of a potential conflict. At the time of the Suez Crisis, Soviet politicians and military planners had to recognize that they did not have the military capacity to threaten Western Europe in order to exert pressure in the case of a crisis. This strategic disadvantage, which the Soviets considered decisive, was to be eliminated through the stationing of R-5M nuclear missiles in the GDR. At the same time, it can be assumed that the nuclear forward guard of the USSR was supposed to reduce the US nuclear advantage that had existed up to that point. Since the Soviet Union was not in a position militarily to match the alleged threat of the Strategic Air Command, it responded by stationing nuclear missiles.

Meanwhile, the brigade in the GDR perfected its readiness through repeated launch drills. For security reasons, training took place only at night. Since the unit was very motivated politically and also enjoyed comparatively comfortable material conditions, they succeeded in reducing the preparation time for a launch from thirty to five hours. This increased performance guaranteed a high state of readiness, but technical problems repeatedly emerged. The substitute used for the highly volatile fuel component liquid oxygen continued to cause problems. Without refueling, the missiles were not mission-ready for longer than thirty days.³⁰

After the BND had gathered the first bits of information about the stationing of the 72nd Engineer Brigade at the beginning of 1959, the information flow increased in the spring of that year. The continued construction work exclusively carried out by Soviet units, the strict cordoning-off of the construction sites, and the forest surroundings necessary for hiding the missile troops, as well as the close military observation by machine gun posts—all of this caused the local population to speculate frequently that the Russians were building missile-launching bases in the area. The BND informants in the area quickly passed these rumors on to the intelligence organization's center in Pullach.³¹ But the West German intelligence service was by no means the only such agency active in the area where the 72nd Missile Brigade was stationed. US, British and French intelligence agencies, as well as two others that have yet to be identified, attempted to gather information

about the unusual activities in the Fürstenberg/ Vogelsang region.³² Despite this concentration of intelligence agents from NATO countries on such limited territory, the documentary evidence thus far available suggests that information on the nuclear missile deployments may not have reached top-level policymakers in the US until late 1960. It was not until then that US intelligence agencies had even reached firm conclusions on the GDR deployment. Indeed, the CIA believed that Soviet missiles were still in the GDR as of early 1961!³³

The Soviet missile base in the GDR provided Khrushchev with an important means to back up his Berlin ultimatum—whether or not its deployment was known among Western policymakers. The Soviet leader reiterated this threat in a conversation in Moscow on 23 June 1959 with W. Averell Harriman: “It would take only a few Soviet missiles to destroy Europe: One bomb was sufficient for Bonn and three to five would knock out France, England, Spain and Italy. The United States would be in no position to retaliate because its missiles could carry a warhead of only ten kilograms whereas Russian missiles could carry 1,300 kilograms.”³⁴

The Western military alliance hence had to make it clear to the Soviets that there would be no compromise on the status of Berlin. The core of this tactic was NATO's 1959 contingency plan “Live Oak,” designed to assure Western Allied rights in Berlin. The crisis scenario developed in the context of “Live Oak” foresaw a continual escalation of military force applied in Berlin in the case of a military conflict. The possibilities ranged from an armed invasion of the GDR by US military units to reach Berlin to nuclear retaliatory strikes.³⁵

Unfortunately, it is impossible to determine at this time whether the presence of the battle-ready Soviet missiles in the GDR played any role in this contingency planning of the Western plans and tactics in the Geneva negotiations that began in May 1959. Uncertainty about Soviet missile deployments (whether Intercontinental or Intermediate-range ballistic missiles) heightened Western concerns that a political crisis over Berlin that turned into a military confrontation could put the UK and Western Europe at risk.³⁶ Certainly that problem made negotiations seem more urgent. But that uncertainty had been in the air for months before the completion of the GDR deployment. It seems highly doubtful that IRBM deployments in the GDR had an impact on decisions on the Berlin negotiations, especially when one considers that the intelligence community did not complete its assessment of the data on the GDR until the last days of the Eisenhower administration.³⁷

Khrushchev, however, probably did not intend an escalation of the crisis to reach the point of a war. The Soviet premier's tactics in the Berlin Crisis were much more bluff-oriented. For Khrushchev, the nuclear missiles in the GDR might have served as a special “trump” in the game of power poker. At no point, however, was the Soviet leader prepared to risk a World War III over Berlin.³⁸ When he recognized that a military conflict would develop in the

case of continued confrontation, Khrushchev moved to pull back his missiles stationed in the Soviets' front guard—perhaps intended (but not noticed) as a visible symbol of a relaxation of tensions.

In August 1959, the missile unit left its positions in the GDR in great haste. The officers and the soldiers of the unit, many of whom had hoped to be stationed in the GDR for a long term and had already begun to develop plans for a life in East Germany, were taken completely by surprise by the order to relocate. Within the span of a few weeks, the missiles were moved to the area around Kaliningrad on the Baltic coast. Paris and London were once again outside the range of the R-5M.³⁹

Even today, most of the officers and soldiers of the 72nd Engineer Brigade who took part in the stationing and withdrawal are unable to explain the hasty retreat of the missile unit. They suspect, however, that the retreat to the Soviet territory was based on political motives.⁴⁰ In fact, the withdrawal occurred just as Eisenhower and Khrushchev announced their decision to exchange visits, with Khrushchev to visit the US in September. With détente in the air, the Soviet leader may have worried that it would be awkward for Soviet policy if the US discovered the missiles in Germany. Given that two years later the Soviet leader launched “Operation Anadyr,” the stationing of Soviet nuclear weapons on Cuba, Khrushchev’s motives in deploying and removing nuclear missiles in the GDR raises intriguing questions—which only further access to the relevant archives will help to answer. Was “Operation Atom” a prelude to “Operation Anadyr”?



DOCUMENT

STATEMENT BY THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION AND THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE USSR ON THE TRANSFER OF THE 72ND ENGINEER BRIGADE TO EAST GERMANY, 26 MARCH 1955

Top Secret

Return to Group Number 1 of the Special Division of the Administrative Section of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union within 24 hours required

Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Council of Ministers of the USSR

Decision of 26 March 1955

Top Secret

Moscow, The Kremlin

About Measures to Increase the Battle-Readiness of the Engineer Brigades of the Supreme Command Reserve Units.

With the goal of increasing the battle-readiness of the engineer brigades of the Supreme Command's Reserve Units, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Council of Ministers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics have decided that:

The Defense Ministry of the Soviet Union (Comrade Zhukov) is assigned with carrying out the following measures:

1. From 1955 to 1956, four engineer brigades of the Supreme Command Reserve Units are to be transferred to areas that correspond with the plans for their battle deployment:

A. The 72nd RVGK [*Rezerv Verchovnogo Glavnokomandovanija*—Reserve of the High Command] Engineer Brigade is to be transferred to the territory of the GDR and is to be incorporated into the troops of the Soviet military forces in Germany;

B. The 73rd RVGK Engineer Brigade is to be transferred to the territory of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, and the Foreign Ministry of the USSR (Comrade Molotov) is to gain the agreement of the Bulgarian government to this stationing;⁴¹

C. The 90th RVGK Engineer Brigade is to be transferred to the territory of the Trans-Caucasian Military Zone;

D. The 85th RVGK Engineer Brigade is to be transferred to the Far Eastern Military Zone

2. The 72nd, 73rd, 85th, 90th and 233rd Engineer Brigades of the RVGK are to be brought up to full strength and are to be fully staffed, and armed with the necessary special weaponry and technology.

3. The 80th RVGK Engineer Brigade is to be transformed into a training unit for engineer brigades RVGK, and will be responsible for training the new non-commissioned officers and soldiers for all engineer brigades, as a substitute for those released to the reserves.

It is to be guaranteed that the training unit for RVGK engineer brigades can be transformed into battle-ready engineer brigades RVGK. In this instance, the specialists necessary for training the replacements coming from the reserves are to be left out of the transformation process. The training unit for RVGK engineer brigades is to be stationed on the territory of the Central State Artillery Range.⁴²

4. The size of the Soviet Army is to be increased by 5,500 men in order to guarantee that the measures listed in points 2 and 3 are carried out.

5. In the period 1955-56, the Ministry of Defense of the USSR is allowed to use 30 R-1 and 18 R-2 missiles that have passed their maximum guaranteed storage life in the reserve of the Ministry of Defense to

improve the battle training of the 7 engineer brigades.

The Secretary of the Central Committee
The Chairman of the of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Council of Ministers of the USSR,

N. Khrushchev
N. Bulganin

[Source: Archive of the President of the Russian Federation (AP FR), Moscow, Register 93 (Documents with Decisions of the Council of Ministers of the USSR for the Year 1955) as printed in *Pervoe raketnoe soedinenie vooruzennykh sil strany: Voенno-istoriceskij ocerk* (Moscow: CIPK, 1996), pp. 208-209. Translated from Russian for the CWIHP by Matthias Uhl.]

Dr. Matthias Uhl recently defended his dissertation on "Stalin's V-2: The Transfer of German Missile Technology to the USSR and the Development of the Soviet Missile Production, 1945-49." He is currently a research fellow at the Berlin office of the Institute for Contemporary History (Munich), working on a larger documentation project on the 1958/62 Berlin Crisis. Dr. Vladimir I. Ivkin is a Russian historian.

¹ See "Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union, Nr. 589-365," Top Secret, 26 March 1955, printed in *Pervoe raketnoe soedinenie vooruzennykh sil strany: Voенno-istoricesky ocerk* (Moscow: CIPK, 1996), pp. 208-209. The original is located in the *Archiv Prezidenta Rossijskoj Federacii* [Archive of the President of the Russian Federation, Moscow, AP RF], Register 93 (Documents with Decisions of the Council of Ministers of the USSR for 1955).

² On the activity of the German missile specialists in the Soviet Union, see Jürgen Michels, *Peenemünde und seine Erben in Ost und West: Entwicklung und Weg deutscher Geheimwaffen*, (Bonn: Bernard & Gräfe, 1997); Ulrich Albrecht, Andreas Heinemann-Grueder and Arend Wellman, *Die Spezialisten: Deutsche Naturwissenschaftler und Techniker in der Sowjetunion* (Berlin: Dietz, 1992). The author is currently working on a monograph on the same topic that will soon appear under the title: *Stalins V-2: Der Transfer der deutschen Raketentechnik in die UdSSR, 1945-1955*.

³ See *Raketno-kosmiceskaia korporacia "Energiia" imeni S. P. Koroleva* (Moscow: RKK "Energiia", 1996), pp. 31-51; T. Kochran, U. Arikin, R. Norris and Dz. Sends, *Jadernoe vooruzenie SSSR* (Moscow: IzDAT, 1992), pp. 230-233.

⁴ See M. A. Pervov, "Ballisticskie rakety velikoj strany" *Aviacija i kosmonavtika: Vcera, segodnja, zavtra*, no. 7 (1998), pp. 17-23; see also A.V. Karpenko, A. F. Utkin and A. D. Popov, *Otecestvennye strategiceskie raketnye komplekсы* (Sankt-Peterburg: Nevskij bastion: Gangut, 1999), pp. 38-44.

⁵ See *Strategiceskoe jadernoe vooruzenie Rossii* (Moscow: Izdat 1998), pp. 160-161, see also B. E. Certok, *Rakety i ljudi* (Moscow: Masinostroenie 1995), pp. 389-390; *Jadernye ispytanija SSSR* (Moscow: Izdat 1997), p. 147; *Chronika osnovnykh sobytij istorii Raketnykh vojsk strategiceskogo naznachenija* (Moscow: CIPK, 1996), p. 35.

⁶ See *Raketnye komplekсы*, p. 43f. see also S. G. Kolesnikov, *Strategiceskoe raketno-jadernoe oruzie* (Moscow: Arsenal-Press, 1996), p. 19-20.

⁷ See M. A. Pervov, *Raketnoe oruzie Raketnykh vojsk strategiceskogo naznachenija* (Moscow: Violanta, 1999), p. 51.

⁸ See "The Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and of the Council of Ministers of the USSR," no. 589-365, Top Secret, 26 March 1955, printed in *Pervoe raketnoe*, pp. 208-209.

⁹ During my interview with General Heinz Kessler, who was the Defense Minister for the GDR from 1985 to 1989, on 24 October 1999, Kessler stated: "The Soviet Army leadership did not give the GDR military leadership any information about the stationing of missiles in Vogelsang and Fürstenberg. In my position at the time as head of the GDR air force, I had no knowledge of any action of that type. Neither the GDR Defense Minister at the time, Willi Stoph, nor his first assistant, Lieutenant-General Heinz Hoffmann had received any information, as far as I know. In addition, in my later position as Defense Minister, this 1959 event was never mentioned in any way by the commander of the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany or the Supreme Command of the Warsaw Pact. This type of behavior matches my later experiences. The Soviet military, for example, never told us which Soviet installations in the GDR had nuclear weapons in storage during my time in that position."

¹⁰ See *Sozdateli raketno-jadernogo oruzija i veterany-raketaikij rasskazyvajut* (Moscow: CIPK, 1996), pp. 250-252, see also *Voennyj enciklopediceskij slovar' Raketnykh vojsk strategiceskogo naznachenija* (Moscow: Naucnoe izdatel'stvo "BRE", 1999), p. 619.

¹¹ See *Pervoe raketnoe*, p. 124-125

¹² See Draft Decision for the Council of Ministers of the USSR, "About the Production of a Trial Series of Long-Range Missiles V-2 and Measures to Their Further Improvement," not dated (probably August 1946), Russian State Archive for Economics [RGAE], Moscow, Register 8157, Section 1, document 1149, sheet 126-128.

¹³ See Ju. A. Jasin and N. K. Monachov, "Pervaja otecestvennaja" *Nezavisimoe voенnoe obozrenie*, no. 3 (1998), p. 5; see also *Raketnye vojska strategi'eskogo naznachenija: Voенno-istoriceskij trud* (Moskva: RVSН, 1994), pp. 51-53; M. V. Sacharov, *Die Streitkräfte der*

UdSSR: Abriß ihrer Entwicklung von 1918 bis 1968 (Berlin: Militärverlag d. DDR, 1974) p. 637.

¹⁴ See *Pervoe raketnoe*, pp. 11–13, see also M. A. Pervov, *Mezkontinental'nye ballisticskie rakety SSSR i Rossii: Kratkij istoriceskij ocerk* (Moscow: [publisher not identified], 1998), p. 29–30.

¹⁵ See Standortkartei der Militärischen Auswertung des BND: “Allgemeine Beobachtungen in Vogelsang, 22. Mai 1958 bis 11 August 1958”, [Card Catalog of the BND’s Military Evaluations: General Observations in Vogelsang], Federal Archives, Koblenz [henceforth BA Koblenz], Collection B 206/114, sheet 18–19.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, sheet 18.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, report E 14136, mid-September 1958, BA Koblenz, collection B 206/114, sheet 20.

¹⁸ See information sent to the author by the BND on 22 April 1998 and 4 May 2000.

¹⁹ A. Bondarenko, “Osobaja tajna Vtoroj armii,” *Aviacija i kosmonavtika: Vcera, segodnja, zavtra*, no. 7 (1998), pp. 24–25; also see *Pervoe raketnoe*, p. 13.

²⁰ Card Catalog of the BND’s Military Evaluations: General Observations in Fürstenberg, report E 21235, late January, 1959, BA Koblenz, B 206/109, Sheet 6.

²¹ *Ibid.*, sheet 6. The Soviets’ procedures for unloading their cargo, which corresponded exactly to the instructions for transporting missiles of the R-5M category, also indicates that it was actually missiles being delivered at that time. See “Security Instruction to the Troop Section 15644 for Testing the R-5M and Other Analog Varieties,” 31 July 1954, RGAE, Register 397, Section 1, Document 201, Sheets 101–112.

²² See *Pervoe raketnoe*, p. 13.

²³ See Pervov, *Raketnoe oruzie*, p. 51; also see *Slovar RVSN*, p. 204–5.

²⁴ See *Pervoe raketnoe*, p. 133–34.

²⁵ See Bondarenko, “Osobaja tajna Vtoroj armii” p. 25.

²⁶ *Voencal'niki Rakenych vojsk strategiceskogo naznacenija* (Moscow: CIPK, 1997), p. 88.

²⁷ See Wolfgang Bayer “Geheimoperation Fürstenberg,” *Der Spiegel*, no. 3, 16 January 2000, p. 42–44; also see Bondarenko, “Osobaja tajna Vtoroj armii” p. 25–26.

²⁸ See *Das Albanien des Enver Hocha*, “Arte” TV Production, 1997.

²⁹ See *Raketnyj scit otecestva* (Moscow: CIPK, 1999), p. 68. In 1959, the missile troops of the Soviet Union had only 32 battle-ready atomic missiles at their disposal. All of them were R-5M model types. By 1960, they had two intercontinental missiles, model R-7A, as well as 36 medium-range missiles, model R-5M, and 172 R-12 missiles.

³⁰ See Bondarenko, “Osobaja tajna Vtoroj armii” p. 26; *Pervoe raketnoe*, p. 120–22.

³¹ See *Standortkartei der Militärischen Auswertung des BND: Allgemeine Beobachtungen in Vogelsang, Februar-Juni 1959* [Card Catalog of the BND’s Military Evaluations: General Observations in Vogelsang, February–June 1959], BA Koblenz, B 206/114, Sheets 25–29.

³² See *Standortkartei der Militärischen Auswertung*

des BND: Allgemeine Beobachtungen in Fürstenberg, Meldung von USAREUR (United States Army in Europe), April 1959, BA Koblenz, collection B 206/109, sheet 6; “Meldung von Aster,” *ibid.*; *Standortkartei der Militärischen Auswertung des BND: Allgemeine Beobachtungen Baustelle VOGELSANG - BURGWALL, Meldung von Narzisse, September 1959*, BA Koblenz, collection B 206/114, sheet 1. ASTER is the BND’s code name for the British intelligence agency, and the information delivered to the BND by the French Foreign Intelligence Service was classified under the codename NARZISSE. In addition, there are the code names DIANA and BSSO, which have not yet been positively linked to a particular foreign intelligence service.

³³ *Editor’s Note*: See “Intelligence Note: Deployment of Soviet Medium Range Missiles in East Germany,” Memorandum from Hugh S. Cumming Jr (INR) to the Secretary of State, 4 January 1961, National Archives, Record Group 59, Lot 65D478: Records of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Atomic Energy/Country and Subject Files Relating to Atomic Energy Matters, 1950–1962, box 5, 1961/USSR/Intelligence Reports.—I would like to thank William Burr (National Security Archive) for bringing this document to my attention.

³⁴ Quoted in John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York: Oxford UP, 1997), p. 242.

³⁵ See William Burr, “Avoiding the Slippery Slope: The Eisenhower Administration and the Berlin Crisis, from 1958 to 1959,” *Diplomatic History*, 18:2 (Spring 1994), pp. 177–205; see also “Geheimoperation Fürstenberg” *Der Spiegel*, p. 46; see also Christian Bremen, *Die Eisenhower-Administration und die zweite Berlin-Krise 1958–1961* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998); John Lewis Gaddis, Philip H. Gordon, Ernest R. May, and Jonathan Rosenberg, eds. *Cold War Statesmen Confront the Bomb: Nuclear Diplomacy Since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 111–115.

³⁶ Whatever data the West might have had on Soviet deployment in East Germany did not lead to a clear clamor among the Western European NATO members for corresponding MRBMs—only Turkey and Italy responded favorably to Eisenhower’s offer for them. See Phil Nash, *The Other Missiles of October* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

³⁷ See footnote 33.

³⁸ See Michael Jochum, *Eisenhower und Chruschtschow: Gipfeldiplomatie im Kalten Krieg 1955–1960* (Munich, et al.: Schoenigh, 1996), p. 107; Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 199.

³⁹ See *Pervoe raketnoe*, pp. 122, 135; see also *Slovar RVSN*, p. 440.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 126, 135.

⁴¹ The Bulgarians may have refused to grant their permission, because there are no references to a stationing of the 73rd Engineer Brigade RVGK in Bulgaria.

⁴² The Central State Artillery Grounds were established on 13 May 1946 and located in Kapustin Yar.

(continued from page 198)

Our country is undergoing a truly revolutionary upsurge. The process of restructuring is gaining pace; We started by elaborating the theoretical concepts of restructuring; we had to assess the nature and scope of the problems, to interpret the lessons of the past, and to express this in the form of political conclusions and programs. This was done. The theoretical work, the re-interpretation of what had happened, the final elaboration, enrichment, and correction of political stances have not ended. They continue. However, it was fundamentally important to start from an overall concept, which is already now being confirmed by the experience of past years, which has turned out to be generally correct and to which there is no alternative. [...]

We intend to expand the Soviet Union's participation in the monitoring mechanism on human rights in the United Nations and within the framework of the pan-European process. We consider that the jurisdiction of the International Court in The Hague with respect to interpreting and applying agreements in the field of human rights should be obligatory for all states.

Within the Helsinki process, we are also examining an end to jamming of all the foreign radio broadcasts to the Soviet Union. On the whole, our credo is as follows: Political problems should be solved only by political means, and human problems only in a humane way. [...]

Now about the most important topic, without which no problem of the coming century can be resolved: disarmament. [...]

Today I can inform you of the following: The Soviet Union has made a decision on reducing its armed forces. In the next two years, their numerical strength will be reduced by 500,000 persons, and the volume of conventional arms will also be cut considerably. These reductions will be made on a unilateral basis, unconnected with negotiations on the mandate for the Vienna meeting. By agreement with our allies in the Warsaw Pact, we have made the decision to withdraw six tank divisions from the GDR, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, and to disband them by 1991. Assault landing formations and units, and a number of others, including assault river-crossing forces, with their armaments and combat equipment, will also be withdrawn from the groups of Soviet forces situated in those countries. The Soviet forces situated in those countries will be cut by 50,000 persons, and their arms by 5,000 tanks. All remaining Soviet divisions on the territory of our allies will be reorganized. They will be given a different structure from today's which will become unambiguously defensive, after the removal of a large number of their tanks. [...]

By this act, just as by all our actions aimed at the demilitarization of international relations, we would also like to draw the attention of the world community to another topical problem, the problem of changing over from an economy of armament to an economy of disarmament. Is the conversion of military production realistic? I have already had occasion to speak about this. We believe that it is, indeed, realistic. For its part, the Soviet Union is ready to do the following. Within the framework of the economic reform we are ready to draw up and submit our internal plan for conversion, to prepare in the course of 1989, as an experiment, the plans for the conversion of two or three defense enterprises, to publish our experience of job relocation of specialists from the military industry, and also of using its equipment, buildings, and works in civilian industry. It is desirable that all states, primarily the major military powers, submit their national plans on this issue to the United Nations. [...]

Finally, being on U.S. soil, but also for other, understandable reasons, I cannot but turn to the subject of our relations with this great country. [...] Relations between the Soviet Union and the United States of America span 5 1/2 decades. The world has changed, and so have the nature, role, and place of these relations in world politics. For too long they were built under the banner of confrontation, and sometimes of hostility, either open or concealed. But in the last few years, throughout the world people were able to heave a sigh of relief, thanks to the changes for the better in the substance and atmosphere of the relations between Moscow and Washington. [...]

We acknowledge and value the contribution of President Ronald Reagan and the members of his administration, above all Mr. George Shultz. All this is capital that has been invested in a joint undertaking of historic importance. It must not be wasted or left out of circulation. The future U.S. administration headed by newly elected President George Bush will find in us a partner, ready—without long pauses and backward movements—to continue the dialogue in a spirit of realism, openness, and goodwill, and with a striving for concrete results, over an agenda encompassing the key issues of Soviet-U.S. relations and international politics.

We are talking first and foremost about consistent progress toward concluding a treaty on a 50 percent reduction in strategic offensive weapons, while retaining the ABM Treaty; about elaborating a convention on the elimination of chemical weapons—here, it seems to us, we have the preconditions for making 1989 the decisive year; and about talks on reducing conventional weapons and armed forces in Europe. We are also talking about economic, ecological and humanitarian problems in the widest possible sense. [...]

We are not inclined to oversimplify the situation in the world. Yes, the tendency toward disarmament has received a strong impetus, and this process is gaining its own momentum, but it has not become irreversible. Yes, the striving to give up confrontation in favor of dialogue and cooperation has made itself strongly felt, but it has by no means secured its position forever in the practice of international relations. Yes, the movement toward a nuclear-free and nonviolent world is capable of fundamentally transforming the political and spiritual face of the planet, but only the very first steps have been taken. Moreover, in certain influential circles, they have been greeted with mistrust, and they are meeting resistance. [...]

[Source: CNN.com]

Lee Harvey Oswald's Letter Requesting USSR Citizenship

[Editor's Note: At the 1999 Cologne summit, Russian President Boris Yeltsin presented US President Bill Clinton with some 40 documents pertaining to the November 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy. The document printed below—Lee Harvey Oswald's handwritten 16 October 1959 letter requesting Soviet citizenship—and the other documents were made accessible to the public later that year. Engaging in "archival diplomacy," the Russian president had selectively released historical documents on other occasions, such as in the mid-1990s when he brought top secret Politburo documents on the 1956 Soviet invasion of Hungary to Budapest or provided the South Korean government with high-level Soviet documents on the Korean War. The documents on the JFK assassination include

Soviet envoy Anastas Mikoyan's emotional cable on his meeting with Jacqueline Kennedy at the funeral of the slain president; and a personal letter from Jacqueline Kennedy to Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, dated 1 December 1963, in which Mrs. Kennedy emphasized "how much my husband was concerned about peace and how important the relations between you and him were to him in this concern." Much of the documentation deals with Moscow's and Washington's concern over the political fall-out of the assassination for Soviet-American relations in light of allegations that Oswald had had a Soviet connection, though his request for citizenship was denied in 1959. ("Judging from everything," Mikoyan cabled to Moscow, "the US government does not want to involve us in this matter, but neither does it want to get into a fight with the extreme rightists.") The documents are available at the National Archives (College Park, MD). CWIHP has published the documents (and translations) on its website at <http://cwiwp.si.edu>. —Christian F. Ostermann]

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 LEE HARVEY OSWALD, REQUEST THAT I BE GRANTED CITIZENSHIP IN THE SOVIET UNION, MY VISA BEGAN ON OCT. 15, AND WILL EXPIRE ON OCT. 21, I MUST BE GRANTED ASYLUM BEFORE THIS DATE. WHILE I WAIT FOR THE CITIZENSHIP DECISION.

AT PRESENT I AM A CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

I WANT CITIZENSHIP BECAUSE; I AM A COMMUNIST AND A WORKER, I HAVE LIVED IN A DECADENT CAPITALIST SOCIETY WHERE THE WORKERS ARE SLAVES, I AM TWENTY YEARS OLD, I HAVE COMPLETED THREE YEARS IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS, I SERVED WITH THE OCCUPATION FORCES IN JAPAN, I HAVE SEEN AMERICAN MILITARY IMPERIALISM IN ALL ITS FORMS,

I DO NOT WANT TO RETURN TO ANY COUNTRY OUTSIDE OF THE SOVIET UNION.

I AM WILLING TO GIVE UP MY AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP AND ASSUME THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A SOVIET CITIZEN.

I HAD SAVED MY MONEY WHICH I EARNED AS A PRIVATE IN THE AMERICAN M. TRY FOR TWO YEARS, IN ORDER TO COME TO RUSSIA FOR THE EXPRESS PURPOSE OF SEEKING CITIZENSHIP HERE. I DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH MONEY LEFT TO LIVE INDEFINITELY HERE, OR TO RETURN TO ANY OTHER COUNTRY. I HAVE NO DESIRE TO RETURN TO ANY OTHER COUNTRY. I ASK THAT MY REQUEST BE GIVEN QUICK CONSIDERATION.

SINCERELY

Lee Harvey Oswald

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