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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

23 JUL 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE

SUBJECT: A Reordering of Soviet Military Priorities (40)

(47) The Ogarkov interview attached to your memorandum of July 2 has come to my attention before. Thank you for providing me with the interesting and insightful analysis.

(47) I agree that Ogarkov's portrayal of strategic deterrents on both sides as "sufficient" is interesting. It reveals the Soviets as not being seized with fear of the U.S. strategic arsenal and as being less concerned over GLCM and Pershing II deployments than their previous public utterances indicate. That is to say, Soviet rhetoric regarding MX and LRTNF and Soviet deployments in East Europe may be of greater political than military significance.

(47) The conclusions drawn in the analysis to the effect that the Soviets face a resource-allocation dilemma are less persuasive. We must reckon with an on-going Soviet build-up that is so vast in comparison to anything the West has undertaken in either nuclear or conventional deterrence as to make the USSR's capabilities in both areas "sufficient." Indeed, it may be this message that Ogarkov wished to deliver domestically. In the wake of frightening barrages regarding the need for defense against the West, he assures his public that Soviet defense will remain adequate to its tasks.

(47) As for our own need to make use of emerging technologies, I continue to feel that Soviet conventional preponderance as it currently exists warrants new initiatives. As one of our many efforts to strengthen the conventional arm of the Flexible Response triad, I have urged the Alliance to pursue a wide range of emerging technologies projects. I am sure the Soviets will seek to modernize their military technologies too. It is for these reasons -- and not because of any possible improvement in the START/LRTNF negotiating climate -- that we must continue our efforts.

(47) I am not inclined to see in the Ogarkov piece alone evidence of a significant reordering of Soviet military priorities.

USSR S&U.A.

23 JUL 84

*Handwritten initials*

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Authority: EO 13526  
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS  
Date: MAY 31 2019

330-86-0048, bx 11, T

(May - Dec)  
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Date: 31 MAY 2019 Authority: EO 13526

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