

Summary of the Oral History Roundtable
“Military Planning for European Theatre Conflict During the Cold War”
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Opening session

Petr Luňák (NATO, Brussels): The understanding of military decision-making of the cold war should help us understand the future. It is also the aim of the project to facilitate NATO-Russia cooperation.

Vojtech Mastny (PHP, Washington–Zurich): The aim of the [Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact \(PHP\)](#) is to document the military dimension of the cold war. This cooperation is network-based. Our task is to draw the lessons from the cold war. It is a question, however, what the right lessons are and whether we can draw them.

Threat Assessment and War Plans on the Central Front in the mid-Cold-War Period (1970s and 1980s)

Robert Legvold (Columbia University, New York): Previous meetings of the group were much based on documents that came from the archives. On the subject matter that we study less documentary evidence is now available. We will focus on the end of détente in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Change was incremental during that period although some major events, like the deployment of SS-20s, the invasion of Afghanistan and the declaration of martial law in Poland were the chokepoints of the process.

Neal Creighton (United States): According to Mikhail Gorbachev the early 1980s was an unpredictable period. The Polish crisis was developing, Ronald Reagan got elected as president of the USA in 1980. The Warsaw Pact enjoyed significant conventional superiority, and there was a further shift in the military force ratios in favour of the Soviet Union/Warsaw Pact. The USA has gradually recovered from the aftermath of the Vietnam war. Between 1965 and 1972 the USA earmarked most of its defence expenditure on the Vietnam war. After the war’s “Vietnamization” the USA started to increase defence investment gradually. Many of the investments bore fruit after the Reagan administration came to power and has been, falsely, attributed to it. NATO had 26 divisions (including 12 armoured) on the 650 miles-long frontline. The Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact held at least 90 divisions on the other side. The Soviet forces were equipped with T-64 and T-72 battle tanks, although reinforcements would have been

possible by troops equipped with T-54 and T-55 battle tanks.

Roger Cirillo (Institute of Land Warfare, Alexandria VA): It represented a major change that on the basis of the study of the Soviet military NATO introduced a AirLand Battle concept with the aim of attacking the Warsaw Pact rear lines and thus depriving the Soviet forces of reinforcements [in NATO Secretary General Joseph Luns' words, 'brutally compensating for quantity']. Furthermore, NATO AWACS capability was introduced. At the same time, problems continued as NATO did not enjoyed permanent readiness as "the Dutch were going home for the week-end". On the other hand, the SDI ('star wars') concept, while protecting the US homeland gave rise to strong European concerns.

Creighton: The Follow-on Forces Attack (FOFA) concept and those new weapons that have been introduced started the process of closing the gap that favoured the Soviet Union in the 1960s and 1970s.

Leopold Chalupa (Germany): What was our assessment of the Warsaw Pact? It was an alliance that wanted to extend its sphere of influence and was ready to launch an attack with short warning time by conventional forces. The Warsaw Pact, enjoying conventional superiority, was not interested in a nuclear escalation of the conflict. NATO, on the other hand, wanted to build its defence on the Rhine and there were no allied plans to go over to the other side. NATO was on the defensive, building credible deterrence with flexible response.

Legvold: Why did the Warsaw Pact have exercises that aimed at seizing the strategic initiative? (For example, the Soyuz '83 exercise assumed that NATO would attack; it would be interesting to know whether they did not know?)

Aleksandr A. Lyakhovsky (former Soviet Union): There were no attack plans against the West. The general plan of war assumed that the main adversary was the USA; strikes were envisaged against the US territory; and long-range aircraft attacks were to be launched. In the late 1970s, the USSR suffered the economic weakness stemming from the arms race; Moscow was convinced of NATO's growing advantage; and the crisis in the Far East made the Soviet Union to regroup its forces out there in the late 1970s and early 1980s. When Dmitriy Ustinov became minister of defence he brought his experience with him. He was responsible for armaments before and that's where he had expertise. (He had previously been head of the defense industry since Stalin appointed him People's Commissar for Armaments in 1941). Ustinov's background influenced his views on the needed structure of Soviet military forces and armaments, and caused the unbalanced (excessive) development and production of armaments during his years in office.

The Warsaw Pact did not have plans to attack NATO forces first. Instead of that the Warsaw Pact forces planned to withstand first conventional attacks by NATO and then launch a counterattack. To this end the Warsaw Pact had a 'defensive front line', and based its planning on the fact that its reserves were located quite near to the areas of

planned hostilities, so logistics were much simpler than those for NATO. The Soviet Union wanted to have shorter lines to bring in reserves to the theatre of operations and wanted to bring them nearly exclusively on land. Warsaw Pact military planners were convinced that the war with NATO would not be confined to Europe and will inevitably lead to the extension of hostilities directly onto the USA. 'The European theatre of war was not the main one in this sense, although important'. The Warsaw Pact military had a feeling that there will be no war in spite of all preparations, because hostilities in Europe would most certainly lead to a world war. Any use of tactical nuclear weapon would inevitably cause an exchange of strategic nuclear strikes. Pershing-2 and cruise missiles destabilized the situation, because their approach time period was extremely short.

Economic weakness has created some problems even though there existed military superiority in NATO's eyes. There were severe problems with the communist China that required the deployment of troops and equipment in that theatre.

SDI was perceived partly as propaganda by the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union did not have any 'adequate response', but realized that SDI was a 'science fiction'.

Nevertheless, 'no one wanted to be an aggressor'.

Legvold: The Warsaw Pact 3:1 superiority overall, 5.6:1 in battle tanks and 3:1 in artillery. Were NATO estimates perceived as accurate to that account by the Warsaw Pact and Soviet strategic planning?

Vitali Tsygichko (former Soviet Union): It is a good question how all this weaponry could be employed? The Soviet Union conducted research and assessments since 1965-66 on the use of tactical nuclear weapons (TNWs) in Europe. It was shown scientifically that such hostilities would be pointless if one-third or more of tactical nuclear weapons deployed in Europe by both sides were used. Studies also showed that, regardless of who was to strike first, escalation toward a world nuclear war was inevitable. Thus, 'no one wanted to start the war with the already known result'. Elimination of both military blocs was understood as inevitable under this scenario. All relevant plans were essentially a 'bluff'. For example, operations in an environment with radioactive contamination were considered. Back in the 1960s, it was assumed that conventional advance could follow the employment of TNWs as the advancing forces could cope with radioactivity for a short period of time (2-3 days). However, various scenarios concluded that it was not possible to carry out war operations against the West. As a result, the Soviet Union found pointless the research into the use of TNWs in Europe.

In 1965-66 the Warsaw Pact forces received the US assessments on the pace of advance of Soviet military forces in case of war without the use of nuclear weapons: Warsaw Pact forces would have reached the English Channel within 3-4 days. The Soviet Union had similar assessments. Thus, NATO had to deploy nuclear weapons.

However, such assessments suffered methodological problems. Such assessments were made using the outdated 'method of military potentials', which involved summing up all

available military units with weighted co-efficients (assigned accordingly to their perceived military effectiveness), and comparison of such sum with the corresponding one of the enemy. This method had been proven inaccurate. Later, new better methods were employed, including those using more precise mathematical models. Those methods and models have shown that the above-mentioned advancement was difficult due to 'real life problems', including logistics. For example, the tempo of attack, 150 km/day, was too optimistically assumed in the directive of Marshal Grechko. Even if the rear area was not attacked this was unrealistic, because the rear forces plus transportation of ammunition would not be able to catch up. Realistically, the rate of no more than 60 km/day could have been achieved.

W. Y. Smith (United States): Military staffs are prone to perceive their own weaknesses and their adversary's strength. The Soviets saw more problems than Americans did (who had their own problems with forward defence). Why did the USSR think that the war would not be confined to Europe?

Legvold: Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger introduced horizontal escalation, i.e. reacting (geographically) elsewhere than the venue of the initial confrontation. Did this make sense in the Soviet/Warsaw Pact eyes?

Chalupa: The Soviet position was that it was NATO who was offensive, but this is not true. Why did the Warsaw Pact have such military superiority then? NATO did not have plans to attack first. What do you think about NATO's field fortifications?

Tsygichko: Please do not confuse the Warsaw Pact military planning in Europe with the global US-USSR confrontation. Hungary and the Czech Republic were attacked due to ideological considerations, not military ones. The USSR did not plan to attack Poland under General Wojciech Jaruzelski's regime. It had other things to do. The USSR was more concerned with the situation on its Chinese border, and its resources were moved to the Far East.

Mojmír Zachariáš (former CSSR): There is no military academy that teaches only defensive operations. Between Czechoslovakia and Germany where I served there is only one narrow gap (2-4 km) where one could advance in battle order. I would have needed 20-30 tanks plus some artillery and aviation to defend that pass. Other passages are just roads in the forest where forces were able to advance only in march (route) columns, which are very easy to stop. The ratio between NATO and Warsaw Pact in the southern part of the European Central Front was approximately 1:1.1 in the latter's benefit. In this sense, trying to interpret force correlations is a joke. It was also necessary to count with the qualitative relationship of forces. It is hard to believe that NATO did not have attack plans. The Warsaw Pact had a plan to defend itself against the first NATO attack and then to counterattack.

Lyakhovsky: The operation in Afghanistan and threats from China made it necessary to divert resources and hence stop operational planning for Poland.

Chalupa: NATO was always thinking about nuclear weapons in an escalatory way. Their employment was considered defensively in case of losing the conventional phase of the war.

Tadeusz Pióro (Poland): During the Polish crisis of 1980-81, the USSR did not want to enter. However, all the war games carried out in the General Staff were oriented to offensive, there was 'no trace of defensive approach'. It is an interesting question why the [Czechoslovak plan](#), approved by Novotny in 1964, envisaged dropping 130 nuclear bombs and also using other TNWs in the first days of a conflict at the distance of 150 km from Czechoslovakia and then advance to Dijon, approximately 600 km in 8 days, through contaminated territories.

Zachariás: I have never seen a military plan that would have violated the declared neutrality of a country. During the Polish crisis forces were deployed and ready, close to the Polish border but there was no order to attack. 'Offensive operations were to start after a border conflict'.

William Odom (United States): What if the war would have started? How the situation would develop in the first 2-3 weeks?

Tsygichko: There was no scenario of attacking first, only counterattack. Political leadership of the USSR did not want to start a war, because the Soviets were 'overstretched' in Afghanistan and in regions close to China. The operation in Afghanistan and the continuing tension with China brought the Soviet economy to the edge. 80 per cent of the Soviet economy was militarized. Thus, it wanted a détente and sought preserving the status quo. 'War was not the case'. Moreover, the modernization of US/Western forces made the war less and less plausible. In 1980s very effective munitions were already available: MIRVs, anti-tank missiles, etc. As assessments have shown, in the first two days of military operations the Warsaw Pact would have lost 30 per cent of its aviation, and both sides would sustain other very severe damages, including to their rear areas. The Soviet bloc could not advance being confronted with NATO's superiority in the air. After 200-300 km the offensive would wear off.

The point is that back in the 1960s it was indeed possible for Soviet bloc to conquer Europe within three weeks, but the new advanced armaments of the 1980s, especially the one designed to attack the rear areas, made it impossible. In the 1960s a division was able to fight for 2-3 days, but in 1980s it would lose 30-40% of personnel in one day. The strategic situation was changed. Defence planning worked with 30 to 60 days' operations. Reserves were planned accordingly.

Legvold: The Warsaw Pact went for unit replacement whereas NATO went for individual replacement. Unit replacement would have made sense in case of high attrition only. It is correct to assume that unit replacement was better for the morale of the soldiers than individual replacement in case of high losses (from 10 per cent up).

Tsygichko: We used the experience of the World War II. Individual replacement is less

effective, because cooperation within one unit is established in the long training process, and the replacement of individuals would make it necessary to conduct training once again. Unit replacement is thus more effective. Additionally, it makes sense from the point of view of unit's morale in the face of losses.

Chalupa: The Warsaw Pact forces could afford that, since they had more echelons [**Garry Johnson (United Kingdom):** 2 echelons *versus* NATO having one plus nuclear weapons use.] In fact, FOFA was aimed exactly at interruption of the unit replacement process during the combat.

Creighton: Possible attacks could have been launched in 1948 (Berlin), 1956 (Hungary), and 1981 (Poland), but room for manoeuvre was limited due to the opposition inside NATO. Besides, would limited attacks have been manageable, without a risk of spilling over? [**Johnson:** Was the mission by the Polish army doable?]

Zachariás: It was a problem that mobilization-based units had no permanent structures. The commander did not know his subordinates, there were no known reserves for such a unit and the dictated tempo was unrealistically high. The Warsaw Pact's assumption was NATO's sudden attack. In Czechoslovakia we did not believe in surprise attack. Mobilization and preparations would take several days to week's time. Moreover, such factors as bad conditions—weather, night, winter, plus the threat of nuclear attack, missile strikes etc., would have slowed down the advance considerably. 100 km/day would be too much even for the training manoeuvres.

Pióro: According to a plan approved in Sep. 1961 (based on staff war games of various years) operations were considered with the employment of huge amounts of nuclear weapons (dropped, e.g., on Hamburg). According to it, the Warsaw Pact forces were scheduled to reach the Atlantic coast in three weeks' time. No one was assessing if this plan was realistic, it just existed on paper.

Lunák: How could Novotny (and later Husák) approve such plans? Did anybody discuss whether such plans were realistic?

Zachariás: I and other military commanders had to carry out tasks according to the approved decisions. The Soviet units in Czechoslovakia were in the 2nd position; Czechoslovak troops were in the first one. Soviet bloc planned to defend against NATO's first attack and then to counterattack. In turn, the Polish troops had only attack plans, because the East German forces were supposed to defend against the first strike (for geographical reasons), and then counterattack along with the Polish army.

Tsygichko: It was the fundamental ideological assumption of the overall Cold War confrontation that the West wanted to attack us. Support for militarization was based on the view: Let war not occur. That support also grew from the fact that many cities were dependent on military and nuclear facilities they hosted. This fear motivated the stupid policy leading eventually to the collapse.

Chalupa: The credibility of our military capabilities had to be demonstrated in order to prevent a war. The biggest challenge was to convey the credibility of NATO plans to the East. Another issue was the political process within NATO. The problem of ‘Germans fighting Germans’ gave rise to additional considerations.

Legvold: Military balance was pretty stable at the end of the 1970s. Development in the field of nuclear technology has endangered it. Nuclear ammunition that could be delivered by artillery, and the availability of low-yield nuclear weapons upset it.

Creighton: The Vietnam war had to end before the U.S. military could spend more on military modernization. The Reagan Administration only took credit for the realization of the modernization. The Warsaw Pact, primarily the Soviet Union, developed a lot in its military technology. The SS-20s caused a change in the doctrine and strategy, Soviet Union got new battle tanks and aircraft, and in 1970s and 1980s NATO lost its technological edge. What mattered for the USA was to be able to fight a protracted nuclear war. The change was not due only to the deployment of the Pershing-2s but to the developments in the conventional field as well, like the entering in service of the M1 Abrahams, the Challenger and the Leopard-2.

Chalupa: There were, however, difficulties with standardization of all this equipment.

Legvold: In 1975-83 NATO was at the lowest point of its developments. Soviet leaders assessed this period as very dangerous.

Tsygichko: The question was: at what stage would NATO use nuclear weapons? Another question was: what NATO would do to stop the advance of Soviet troops? For example, would it blow up dams in the North Sea or damage the crucial infrastructure in any other way? 1979-81 was declared then as ‘the most dangerous period’.

Chalupa: When an enemy attack advances, breaks through, your airfields are ruined and there is hence no air support, and you face the loss of defence capability—then commanders had to ask for authorization to employ nuclear weapons. But there were no plans to damage civilian infrastructure.

Smith: The 1979-81 period did not look dangerous for the U.S. President Jimmy Carter, despite plans, they actually did not cut defence appropriations.

Garry Johnson (United Kingdom): It was INF that made the situation more dangerous than it was.

Chalupa: Initial use could be delegated several level down, whereas initial release went back high. Employment at a later stage depended upon higher command.

Tsygichko: The period 1979-81 was not so dangerous, as Ustinov and Andropov had claimed. It was due to the domestic situation in the USSR. There was a need to work on the Soviet people to make them accept higher military spending. Throughout the cold war

there was significant knowledge of the plans and the activity of the other party. The stereotype of being encircled and threatened was very difficult to eliminate. AirLand and FOFA changed the way the Soviet general staff thought of war planning; it made their approach more flexible.

Odom: What was actually more important: AirLand Battle or SDI? I think, SDI, as it ruined many arms control-related assumptions. AirLand Battle alerted the air defence forces of the Soviet Union.

Tsygichko: The reaction to SDI was originally nervous. Moscow did not know initially if it is possible. Then, 6 months later, the Soviet Union realized that it is a bogeyman. Some technical improvements were offered to counteract, but nothing serious. AirLand was, however, taken very seriously, and the Soviet Union began to develop anti-aircraft capabilities, S-400, etc.

Mastny: In Brezhnev's eyes, China was a "silent partner" of NATO. Due to its challenge in the Soviet Far East, there was a perceived danger of a two-front war for the Soviet Union.

Lyakhovsky: The China impact was quite heavy on the Soviet military (fuel, ammunition, possible casualties, transportation, logistics, etc.). The Soviet Union made a great deal of effort to reduce the danger. The building of the Baikal-Amur railway (the BAM) was important to support the Trans-Siberian railroad in providing reinforcements to the Soviet Far East in case of conflict. It is difficult to say how dangerous the Chinese-Soviet situation could be. The Soviet Union was preparing to fight 25 million Chinese troops with high morale and low personal requirements.

Tsygichko: China was neither ready nor able to fight a war. It had antiquated aviation and had no transport routes to the north. Although it did not threaten with military confrontation it was impossible to stop the political confrontation between the two. There was a military threat from China, but it was possible to stop it with much less resources that were delegated for it.

Legvold: The Soviet Union prepared for a war on two fronts (one in the Far East, one in Europe). Dmitry Ustinov and Viktor Kulikov briefed the defence minister of the GDR, Heinz Hoffmann about a Soviet war game that started out from this in the summer of 1982.

Chalupa: We contributed to the defence of Europe, by protecting U.S. assets in Europe.

Nuclear Plans on the Central Front

Odom: In the 1950s the United States planned massive retaliation in case of a Soviet nuclear attack and began deployment of TNWs in Europe. US budget funds were spent to establish a nuclear triad. During that decade consequences of the nuclear attack against

tanks, trucks, inhabited terrain, etc. were studied. Low-yield 1.5 kT munitions were assessed practical. The doctrine of the use of TNWs began to be implemented in 1957 in the 11th airborne division in Germany. The Vietnam war diminished the reliance on TNWs. Kennedy replaced the doctrine of mass retaliation with the doctrine of flexible response. Robert McNamara introduced the concept of mutually assured destruction. Arms control talks started in 1960s.

Lots of uncertainties remained as far as the use of nuclear weapons and its consequences. Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara wanted to cap the number of ICBMs at 1000. Later, arms control added to the increase of the number of nuclear weapons. On the other hand, anti-ballistic missile defence was cut, except for a small research programme.

The U.S. pre-planned to attack *only* fixed targets. There was no reconnaissance to target the mobile weapons. The nuclear targeting of land forces was out of consideration. In September 1980, President Carter issued PDD 59, a new targeting doctrine. Accordingly, targeting was extended to large land force components (farther echelons). It focused upon counter-force targeting and aimed at attacking missile launchers before launch. Aimed to attack Soviet forces that were moving in East-Central Europe. It was not a good idea as the severe damage caused to forward-deployed Soviet forces still did not mean not losing Western Europe. The strategy assumed avoiding targeting civilian objects. Regional strategic options were reflected in National Security Memorandum 242, signed by President Richard Nixon, and prepared by Secretary of Defense Schlesinger. INF was originally demanded by German fearing decoupling (extended deterrence). The deployment of Pershing-2 missiles to Germany was not a good idea. (Should have been deployed farther, e.g., in Portugal.) They were deployed too close to the East-West divide which carried the danger of losing them early.

Tsygichko: The Soviet evolution of the views on TNWs: In the 1950-60s division/army commanders could use nuclear weapons to 'support units' ('quite primitive', in Tsygichko's view, meaning that such weapons were often too powerful. Nuclear artillery shells suitable for use against targets located as far as 30-40 km were introduced in 1970s). The first doctrine envisaged mass-scale retaliation against the USA and reflected a first-strike preference. Nuclear military planning was separated for strategic and tactical nuclear weapons, and was combined only later.

It was analyzed whether it was possible to operate militarily after employing nuclear weapons. According to Soviet calculations at that time, one strike on a major U.S. city would result in 1-1.5 million casualties. Consequently, it could be regarded a national catastrophe. On the other hand, the consequences of an eventual nuclear attack against the Soviet Union were also analyzed. Accordingly, it was considered how to guarantee the survival of the party leadership (in the 1960s: underground towns, subway tunnels). It was also considered what could be regarded unbearable loss and the conclusion was drawn that the explosion of one nuclear warhead would constitute that.

It was also analyzed what would be the consequences of a nuclear strike with the use of the TNWs that Soviet Union had in Eastern Europe. On the Soviet side, the front possessed 400-500 items, the army – 150, the division – about 40 TNWs. The first model

– an all-out exchange of strikes. Already in the 1960s a study was prepared for the General Staff, according to which there would be no survivor in Europe. In light of the conclusions the programme of the build-up of the armed forces was revised. Mathematical modelling of the introduction of TNWs was prepared in 1965-7. In the 1970s, a scholar (an Aleksandrov) prepared a study of the disastrous consequences of nuclear war and came forward with a scenario of ‘nuclear winter’ consequences. The Soviet experimental studies concluded that partial use of nuclear weapons is ‘nonsensical’. Only the use of individual TNWs was considered possible, but even then it was considered impractical to make troops to advance through a terrain previously affected by nuclear strikes.

Military tests of this sort were conducted on the Totsk military test range in the Orenburg region. A lot of casualties were suffered among the troops which had to march through the area where a nuclear weapon was exploded shortly before. This was done to check the consequences of such an act, unknown at that time. NATO also knew that TNWs are essentially useless on the theatre of war. On top of everything, casualties among civilians would be unacceptably high.

The Soviet nuclear forces and the nuclear industry complex (Minatom - ‘a state in the state’) were lobbying very strongly (later, against common sense) for a fast development and production of nuclear weapons, which has led to the stockpiling of nuclear weapons, which, in turn, has led to the problem of their utilization.

It is not the question how to build anti-ballistic missile defence, but that of abolishing the threat.

Smith: Technological development speeded up the competition. In 1957 the Soviets’ success with launching the Sputnik into outer space shook the USA. It resulted in an action–reaction dynamics. The growing numbers of nuclear weapons showed to the US military that they had found themselves in a blind alley. The U.S. military wanted to make deeper cuts than the ones to which the U.S. government committed itself in SALT-II. Technological changes led to thinking over how to deter attack rather than how to win the war. A flexible response doctrine was adopted, as it had no alternative. Theatre and strategic nuclear forces were first separated (the 1960s) and later coordinated, but short-range nuclear forces were considered more important than TNWs.

Chalupa: Strategic exchange was regarded a last resort in Europe, once theatre operations are lost. However, the link between strategic and theatre nuclear weapons hardly existed. The logistical situation could result in the request for early nuclear release. Chalupa also mentioned ‘atomic demolition munitions’.

Alyson Bailes (SIPRI, Stockholm): The German government was divided on the INF issue. Chancellor Helmut Schmidt was in favour of deployment whereas Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher and others in the FDP were against it. NATO missed the opportunity to clear the whole theatre nuclear matter at this instant.

Legvold: What was the Warsaw Pact’s attitude towards the French nuclear weapons?

Lyakhovskii: The USA wanted a nuclear monopoly back in 1945, when they exploded the first device, but the USSR followed in 1949, then UK, France and China.

The USA supported Pakistan in violation of U.S. law when the Soviet Union went to Afghanistan. Pakistan was developing nuclear weapons already then.

Nuclear planning was changing alongside with the development of nuclear weapons and their delivery means. The USSR and the US had different approaches towards the delivery means. It was in Nikita Khrushchev's time when the air force (strategic bombers) development funding was cut significantly. His leadership had a folly with missiles and nuclear weapons deployed on them. As a result, the USSR lagged behind the USA in the area of strategic aircraft, and missiles demonstrated their advantages and disadvantages. These facts had an effect on nuclear planning. Later 'Tochka' missiles have changed a lot in the nuclear planning due to their high accuracy. The USSR developed nuclear artillery shells only as a response to the corresponding developments in the US arsenal.

It was already studied at that time what impact a US nuclear strike would have on the population of the Soviet Union. Lyakhovskii participated in that study. It was shown that it is very likely that 50% of the population would die within one hour after the strike. It would be possible to reduce immediate casualties, but then people would be dying anyway due to the long-term effects of the fall-out. The Soviet Union invested in the 'civil defence' infrastructure (bomb shelters, storage facilities, etc.), but later it was found ineffective.

Deployment of intermediate-range missiles in Europe was considered a very dangerous development. The USSR did not find adequate countermeasures, except for deployment of missiles in Cuba. The INF Treaty was signed under the conditions not advantageous to the Soviet Union. (Mikhail Gorbachev did not represent the interests of the Soviet Union.) The US INF deployment in Europe had to be counted against strategic weapons as they could reach a good part of the Soviet Union.

Tsygichko: The appearance of British and French nuclear weapons was taken quietly by the Soviet Union (the French assured the USSR that their nuclear weapons were not included in Alliance planning) and they were not connected to American nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union did plan all-out nuclear strikes against France and the UK, but only a few since they were not a primary target.

Johnson: The British MoD discussed INF matters in political terms, and far less in military terms.

Legvold: [Introducing three documents: the Zakharov report on the military exercises with the use of nuclear weapons, the CIA report on possible uses of TNWs, and the [January 1981 OPLAN of the V Army Corps](#) describing possible uses of nuclear weapons].

Lyakhovskii: Intermediate-range nuclear forces on NATO's side were considered strategic by the Soviet Union, because they were able to perform strategic tasks on the territory of the USSR. Nuclear first use was not considered by the Warsaw Treaty, 'except in immediate retaliation'.

Chalupa: Nuclear strikes were never considered for 'fire support' in NATO. These weapons were a qualitatively different means. Pershing-2s were not considered only nuclear, but also conventional means to close the intermediate gap of deterrence.

Smith: When Turner was director of the CIA he introduced US policy in intelligence analysis. He was soon advised not to do that.

We should not forget that the Soviet rejection of nuclear first use was based on conventional superiority.

Tsygichko: The 'launch-on-warning' concept was one of the deterrence means. The military knew that an exchange of strategic strikes can lead only to mutual destruction, but for Soviet internal political reasons NATO had to be an enemy. And the USSR broke up for domestic reasons.

Mastny: According to an internal document, Marshal Konev said: 'The plans of NATO are defensive because they assume we are aggressive. NATO is aggressive as it is the alliance of capitalist countries'.

Lyakhovskii: The invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 was carried out by the USSR with some expectations of a possible military action of NATO. The USSR prepared 25 divisions to counteract such action, just in case.

Luňák: Did the limited strike option appear in the Soviet plans in the second half of the 1980s?

Johnson: It is amazing how similar the plans on the two sides were. 'Terrible stability'. We have learned from history and it is unfounded to assume that we plan for the last war.

Ross Johnson (Stanford University): The East was more impressed by AirLand Battle and FOFA than the West. What drives force postures? Is it correct to assume that intelligence contributed to transparency and stability? If the invasion in Poland had ever taken place, what would it be like?

Tsygichko: The Soviet military was fully kept out of politics. Politicians were basically influenced by the communist party/ideological tenets. Military developments and planning were influenced by the political leadership, which in turn was influenced by the ideological dogmas. The people were consolidated around these principles. (Although lobbyism was also quite a serious driving force). Those who had a separate view (like Marshal Ogarkov regarding the intervention in Afghanistan) had to quit decisive positions.

In the sphere of intelligence, again ideological expectations were decisive. On Afghanistan the GRU (military intelligence) had brought attention to the fact that it was a backward country at the level of the 14th–15th century. There was no chance that socialism could win out there. So the GRU offered to choose a warlord inclined to work with the Soviet Union and support him. There was another view, however, that of the KGB, and it won the day because it went along with the ideology better stating that the Afghan nation was craving for communism.

Legvold: The military were often opposed to arms control, like Marshal Grechko, or the Joint Chiefs and Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, on the other side. Politics and ideology determined everything.

Tsygichko: De-BAATH-isation meant disbanding the Iraqi military. Now it is being rebuilt but it is taking time and costs a lot.

Legvold: Marshal Ogarkov and General Varennikov objected to Ustinov to launch war on Afghanistan. Now the USA goes through something very similar in Iraq.

Lyakhovskiy: The plan was to help the Afghan leadership and then withdraw in 2-3 months. It was an illusion.

Vigleik Eide (Norway): It sounds surprising that neither alliance had aggressive plans. We have to trust the Warsaw Pact/Soviet Union that they had perceived NATO plans aggressive.

Legvold: Propositions:

1. Neither side wanted war or was aggressive in a manner that could/would lead to war.
2. By the 1970s, due to the nuclear umbrella, war was implausible.
3. Miscalculation exists not only among politicians, but also among the military. (Take the examples of Chechnya and Grachev; Iraq and US generals: The first war in 2003 was short and successful. The second war, the war of insurgency, was never thought of, and it is now there.
4. Stereotypes remain strong, and have survived, at least partly, the cold war.

Creighton: The ‘kindred spirit’ existed between the old enemies. The same logic and reasoning prevailed in military matters on both sides. The same conclusions were drawn. Incident could have caused war as neither side wanted to go to war. (The Cuban missile crisis was the closest call.) The U.S. commitment to Europe has been based on massive military presence and social interaction. This will, in fact, be over the next year. We do not know what would follow from this change of situation.

Now we have different actors with different mentalities engaged in new conflicts.

Legvold: The Cuban crisis could have resulted in a US–Soviet war in Europe as the Soviet Union could not project power onto American territory, and hence a strategic exchange was unimaginable.

Smith: The US Joint Chiefs of Staff was of the view that Cuba is not so important for the Soviet Union to risk a US–Soviet war.

The military argued to President John F. Kennedy that there is now a chance to get rid of Castro.

Legvold: We could be deterred in the Cold War context. What if there are now powers, which cannot be deterred.

Johnson: Are we getting carried away by ideological considerations? Now we seem to be doing this also in the west (spreading democracy).

Odom: Ideologies are there to define preferences. I.e. ideologies do not go away.

Legvold: Ideology creates distortions.

Cirillo: There existed the generational factor: young people were not so confident about the inevitability of war.

Odom: When Gorbachev in 1987 wrote in his book on perestroika that mankind's survival precedes class interests he changed the ideology.

Europe without a war was the objective. Both sides deserve credit for it.

Svetlana Savranskaya (National Security Archive, Washington): In 1983 the Soviet leadership perceived to be threatened by the West (SDI, Pershing plus cruise missiles). In October 1986 Gorbachev's main worry was that the Soviet Union was perceived in the West as threatening. This represented a major reversal of concerns.

Tsygichko: The cold war came to an end as a result of Soviet domestic developments that entailed the "Gorbachev factor" (the realization that the USSR was heading for disaster) and economic considerations (including 'bad Western prescriptions and advisers').