

K's Defense Cost Cuts Arouse Soviet Dissent

By George Syvertsen

MOSCOW, Aug. 28 (AP) — Two high-ranking Soviet officers of the "big battalions" school today reasserted their dissent from Premier Khrushchev's cost-cutting national defense policies.

The two officers, Marshal Vasily Sokolovsky, former chief of the Soviet General Staff, and Maj. Gen. M. Cherednichenko published their controversial views in the Defense Ministry organ, Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star).

Their two-part article on military strategy appeared to be a continuation of a dispute touched off two years ago by the book "Military Strategy." Written by a group of 15 military specialists headed by Sokolovsky, "Military Strategy" drew strong Communist Party criticism after Western observers saw it as evidence of a defense policy conflict between Soviet military and political leaders.

The conflict has been described as one of differing modernist and traditionalist views on military doctrine and strategy in the nuclear-missile age.

The traditionalist, led by Sokolovsky and other top military figures, have expressed disagreement with Khrushchev's emphasis on

nuclear rockets and missiles at the expense of conventional land, sea and air forces.

They have also tried to claim a greater role in the development of military doctrine and strategic war plans than the Party is prepared to permit.

Sokolovsky and Cherednichenko began their article by recognizing that their views "may or may not coincide with the opinions and views stated by other comrades."

"The military reader, of course, will note this and we are sure will regard our observations critically," they added.

The author's two major points appeared to be that:

- Although the outcome of the next world war probably will be decided by nuclear weapons, the Soviet Union must also be prepared for conventional warfare.

- Military strategy, the realm of the professional soldier, must also include questions of defense preparedness—an area Communist Party policy-makers usually reserve for themselves.

"It is most probable that if the imperialists unleash a rocket-nuclear war, traditional types of military

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A 9

operations cannot but be applied," Sokolovsky wrote.

Throughout the article, the military specialists described new methods of conducting conventional warfare — in sharp contrast to Khrushchev's statements that such forces were becoming obsolete. Khrushchev has argued that conventional armaments could be dispensed with in the Soviet defense establishment.

Sokolovsky, who was dismissed as chief of the General Staff a few months after Khrushchev's speech, opposed this policy.

The dissenters argued that although rocket troops may become the mainstay of Soviet defense, "it does not follow at all that the need for other types of armed forces has passed."

On the issue of Party supremacy in defense planning and appropriations, the Sokolovsky-Cherednichenko article appeared to argue in favor of military participation in such policy-making activities.

"Military strategy in the literal sense of the word means the leadership of troops, the use of armed forces in war," they argued.

"It also studies, investigates, formulates and applies in practice questions of preparation and conduct of war as a whole."