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*Interviews and Discussions with Cold-War Era
Planners and Analysts*

This volume contains much of the raw material on which this study is based. All items in this collection represent the testimony, in some form, of Soviet and American strategic planners and analysts whose professional careers were largely dominated by the need to understand and respond effectively to the military threat from their Cold War opponents.

Most of the items are structured as records or summaries of interviews conducted on the basis of a specific list of questions. In follow-up interviews or interviews with difficult subjects, the questions served only as a general guide to research. Long, narrative responses also often did not address questions in the same format and sequence in which the questions were presented.

For many reasons, items do not follow precisely the sequence and contents of the interview questions. Soviet interview subjects often were uncomfortable with the interview situation, the questions, or the implications of the research (the Cold War was over and the West had won). As a result, the nature of the record of interview or discussion varies from interview to interview. Transcripts of taped interviews are the record of choice, of course, followed by records based on notes and, finally, summaries based on the memory of the interviewer prepared shortly after the interview.

Many Soviet interview subjects were uncomfortable with tape recorders, especially early in the project (1989-1990) when several were far from convinced that the Cold War was, indeed, over. Likewise, several of the questions caused discomfort which forced rephrasing and special prompting (provocative statements or allusions to other information) on the part of the interviewer. Some interview subjects responded with almost a stream-of-consciousness flow of information that moved from association to association through an entire series of related issues. Stopping such a response to adhere precisely to our questions could result in the loss of valuable insights and information not anticipated by the questioner.

Cold War Interviews

This resulted in incomplete coverage of some questions requiring, when possible, subsequent, supplementary interviews focused on specific issues. To compensate when possible, we revisited some of the most knowledgeable interview subjects several times over the course of 3 or 4 years.

We tried, when possible, to isolate the interview subject from his colleagues during questioning to avoid mutual intimidation, collegial responses, and contamination of data and observations. We were generally successful in meeting this objective but were sometimes forced by those who helped arrange a given interview to involve them in the process. When possible, we would subsequently isolate the interview subject and revisit one or two key questions to validate the original response.

The record that follows, therefore, is inconsistent in level of detail and comprehensiveness despite the planning and good intentions of the researchers. Imperfect as they are, they nevertheless represent a unique record of information and beliefs of Cold War participants who were able to trust their former enemies sufficiently to share their thoughts and beliefs in some detail before they themselves passed into history.

For the convenience of the reader, a list of acronyms and abbreviations appears in the appendices, as well as a selective list of decision makers and analysts cited or referred to in the interview record.