

UNCLASSIFIED

FBIS Concatenated Daily Reports, 1991

Document 5 of 9

Page 1

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FULL TEXT OF ARTICLE:

1. [Interview with Army General Ivan Moiseyevich Tretyak, commander in chief of Air Defense Forces, by V. Vovnenko at the Air Defense Forces Main Headquarters; date not given--recorded]
2. [Excerpts] [Vovnenko] Each year, in the second 10 days of April, the barrier at the restricted zone of the Air Defense Forces [PVO] Main Headquarters is raised for us. This time we arranged to meet Army General Ivan Moiseyevich Tretyak, commander in chief of the PVO troops. [passage omitted]
3. [Tretyak] Well, if we look here we see an establishment shift team of a formation command post. These kind of establishment teams are in all the formations and units. We have them everywhere, and the viewers should know that all the comrades here are not especially selected here. This, I repeat, is an establishment team of which we have many. Everyone is well trained; everyone is a professional.
4. [Vovnenko] Could they conceal airspace violations from you, not report them to you, well, let us say, to avoid disturbing the commander in chief?
5. [Tretyak] No, they could not.
6. [Vovnenko] Is that out of the question?
7. [Tretyak] It is out of the question. There may be cases-- for instance, in the Imishli salient, in Azerbaijan, where Iranian agricultural aviation was operating and flew in at an altitude of some 30, 40, 50 meters. The radars cannot see at that altitude. The

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12

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UNCLASSIFIED

FBIS Concatenated Daily Reports, 1991

Document 5 of 9

Page 2

border troops reported it. That means I learn about it from the border troops, or rather information is passed through our system that we did not see that target. So you could not say we concealed it. We simply did not see it. It is impossible to conceal a target because it goes up on the plotting board both here and in my office; we get it simultaneously. Whatever situation he has here, I get it on the same kind of board, but for the whole of the forces, both our aircraft that are airborne and reconnaissance aircraft. For instance, during the Team Spirit exercises in the east there were 10 or more Orion aircraft operating every day around the Sea of Okhotsk and the Kurils. We saw all of them. They were fully plotted on the board. We knew about them. When Mr. Cheney came here, we showed him at the command post of the Moscow District PVO where the aircraft were flying in the area of Alaska, Kamchatka, and the Kurils. He could see for himself that we saw them. So there is no problem of that kind.

8. They may report it late, be late in providing the information. They may delay it, which is bad. For that kind of thing we tell them off. He is supposed to provide data immediately. As soon as he has the data, he immediately passes it up, passes it on to the commander, and immediately makes a decision himself. He himself has to make a decision, because that is his job. The commander of the duty shift has to make a decision, and he does.

9. [Vovnenko] So, Ivan Moiseyevich, it seems that in fact your working day and your life around the clock takes place on a kind of map with coordinates, around which targets move all the time. How do you cope mentally?

10. [Tretyak] I think for me it is easier, as a participant in the Great Patriotic War, because there for four years we worked from dawn until dawn. There were no days off, no rest periods. Everything was done on the move, dynamically. Here it is a bit simpler because here we have certain rest periods. If, for instance, I go away, the duty shifts remain here and they report only when there is a clear violation either by our plane, or a hijack, or a violation by aircraft of adjoining states. They report those, but on the rest, they make decisions themselves. From the beginning to the end of a working day I am with them, working.

11. [Vovnenko] Ivan Moiseyevich. What about the fact that the Warsaw Pact ceased to exist as of 1 April? How are we now going to defend the Western border?

12. [Tretyak] You see, the Warsaw Pact included something else. I was officially the air defense commanding officer a unified Warsaw Pact system. Now it is no longer there. Now, so far, we only have

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

FBIS Concatenated Daily Reports, 1991

Document 5 of 9

Page 3

several countries working with us. The rest have pulled out. Naturally....

13. [Vovnenko, interrupting] Which ones have pulled out?

14. [Tretyak] Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. Of course, we had our reconnaissance range perimeter 600-700 km further forward. Now it runs along the USSR state border, and naturally the whole system has to be reviewed. That is what we are doing so we can see ahead, but now our friends are putting forward proposals to conclude bilateral agreements. Not multilateral like we had, but each country with our country, so we mutually inform each other. We have nothing against this option, and for example, the Romanian comrades have arranged a meeting with us in May, where we are going to sign an agreement on joint information on the air situation ahead. We will be providing information to them from over the sea and the flanks. Obviously things are more complicated for us now. But, we can reorganize the system and that is what we are doing.

15. [Vovnenko] Could you please tell us whether the people who work here have had the experience of the latest in the Persian Gulf brought properly to their notice? Is it being studied? How well are you, as the PVO commander in chief, informed about what took place?

16. [Tretyak] As the PVO, we have to be ready to fight against air space attacks at any time of day or night. Surprise plays a part here and raised combat readiness, or other states of readiness, is important so that we can at any moment go up against the enemy. That is the most important thing.

17. Well, as far as air forces were concerned, they had the [MiG] 21's there, the 23's, and 25's, and even the 29's, but Husayn sent most of them to Iran. According to the data which we have, depending on their accuracy, only several planes were shot down by the air forces.

18. [Vovnenko] The rest (?went through) space systems?

19. [Tretyak] Space systems had only one role there. First, they gathered intelligence and monitored surface-to-surface operational tactical missiles, just as over-the-horizon stations did, and oriented their Patriot anti-aircraft missile systems for firing. If one were to say that the Patriot is highly efficient, I would not agree. Although at one time the Americans stated the Patriot was not meant to be an antimissile defense weapon, they now have shown the whole world that they developed it not only as an anti-aircraft system, but an antimissile system as well.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

FBIS Concatenated Daily Reports, 1991

Document 5 of 9

Page 4

20. Their reconnaissance was very well deployed. There were the AWACS planes, there were the F-111E electronic countermeasures planes, the TR-1 reconnaissance planes, the RS-135 strategic reconnaissance planes. Everyday there were up to 10 of them. They were there all the time watching Iraq completely. They were completely in charge of the situation. Naturally, of course, things were very difficult for the defending side. The conclusion for us is, of course, to have high combat readiness and such air defense assets as can fight against the new, most advanced air and space means of attack at any moment. [passage omitted]

21. [Vovnenko] Do you believe in UFO's?

22. [Tretyak] As yet I do not. I believe something else, that modern science and technology are capable of creating such spacecraft that could appear above us.

23. [Vovnenko] That is something I believe in too.

24. [Tretyak] This is something we have to keep an eye on.

25. [Vovnenko] You have to believe in man's ingenuity.

26. [Tretyak] SDI is a complicated thing, and the platforms that they are promising to make in their thousands are going to appear in every part of the world, and, they can be programmed to be at any altitude. So, we have to watch this carefully.

27. [Vovnenko] When there is talk about cutbacks in weapons, about conversion, even more and more often about cutting back the army, how is all this received by the country's PVO? What about that?

28. [Tretyak] If I am to be unequivocal, this is painful to us. They said the right thing, that quantitative cutbacks should be made up for in quality--that is, weapons. That is correct, but they have taken money away from us. I cannot buy from the state as much of this equipment as I need to make up the quality. All we have is the money they allocated to the minister of defense and which he passed on to us, the commanders in chief. Consequently, the rates of reequipment are going to be significantly slower and this will effect combat readiness.

29. Of course, our science has to keep up. The cutbacks in monies for scientific research work is also going to have an effect. And these have been cut back a lot. Things that are fine now will be obsolete in five to 10 years. They have to produce new, advanced things.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Page: 15 of 18

FBIS Concatenated Daily Reports, 1991

Document 5 of 9

Page 5

30. [Vovenko] Of course, over 10 years any program would....

31. [Tretyak, interrupting] So here too it is a question of money. But we understand that the situation in the country is not easy. And for the time being, however much we might want it, the country cannot give anything even to the PVO troops which are on the very front line and are the first to go into battle, in the difficult conditions we are in now. Consequently we will have to maintain high combat readiness with what we have, maintain the technical state of all equipment, keep it well maintained, and be ready to carry out our tasks.

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