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The WEEKLY REVIEW, issued every Friday morning by the Office of Current Intelligence, reports and analyzes significant developments of the week through noon on Thursday. It frequently includes material coordinated with or prepared by the Office of Economic Research, the Office of Strategic Research, and the Directorate of Science and Technology. Topics requiring more comprehensive treatment and therefore published separately as Special Reports are listed in the contents pages.

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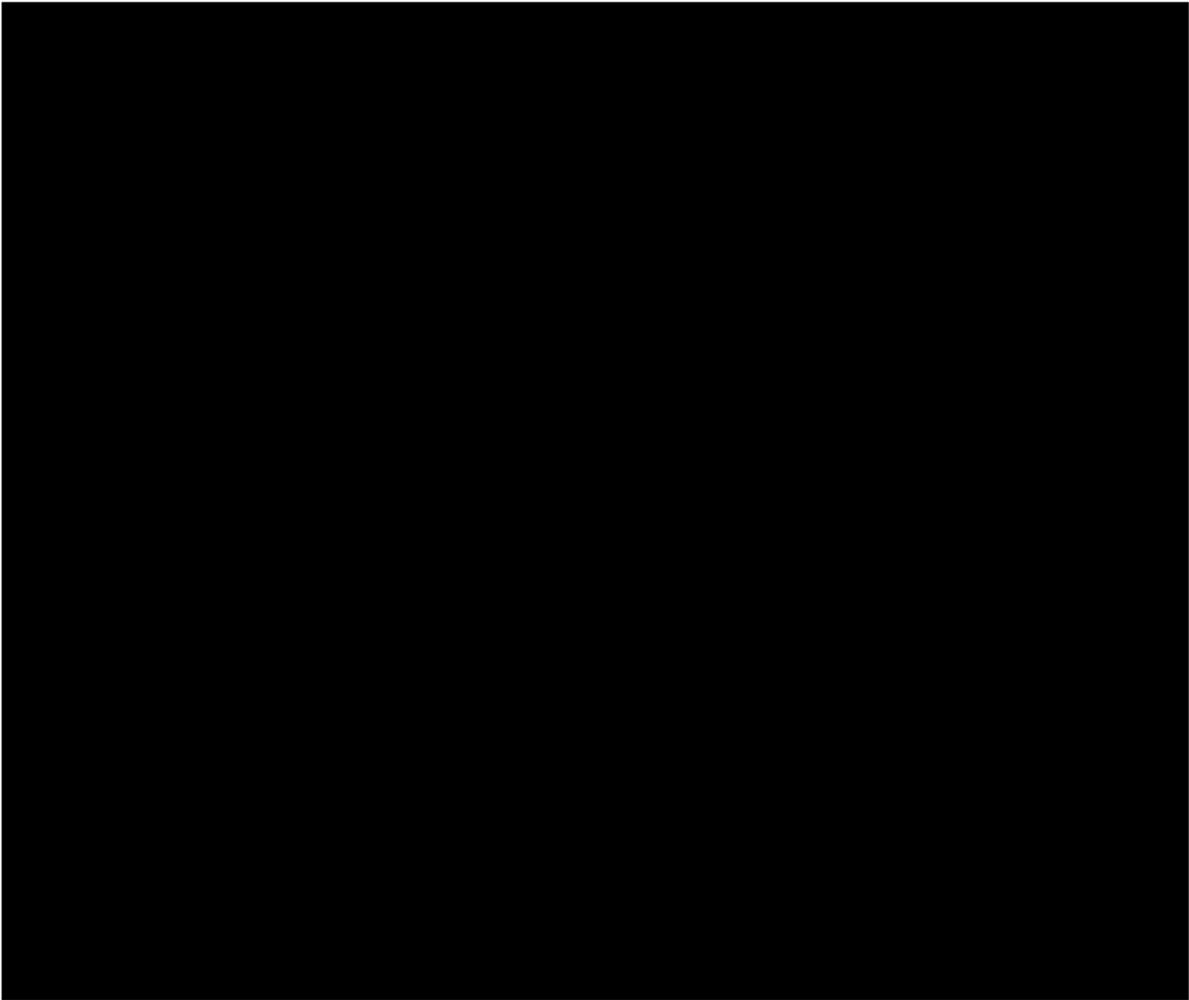
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EUROPE

Sino-Soviet Relations

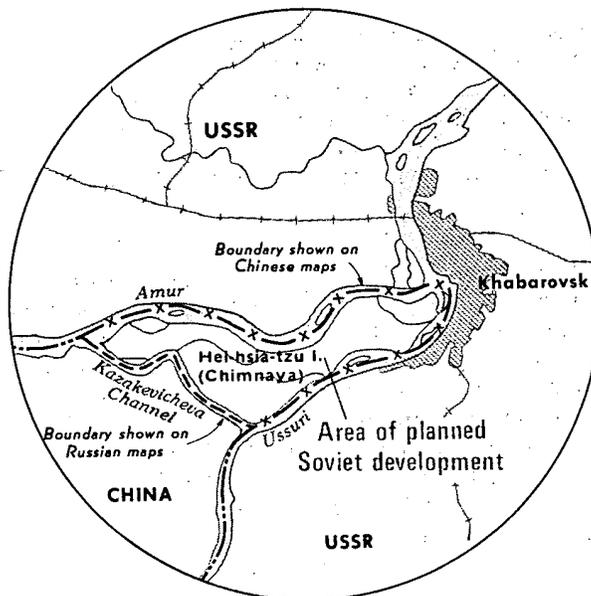
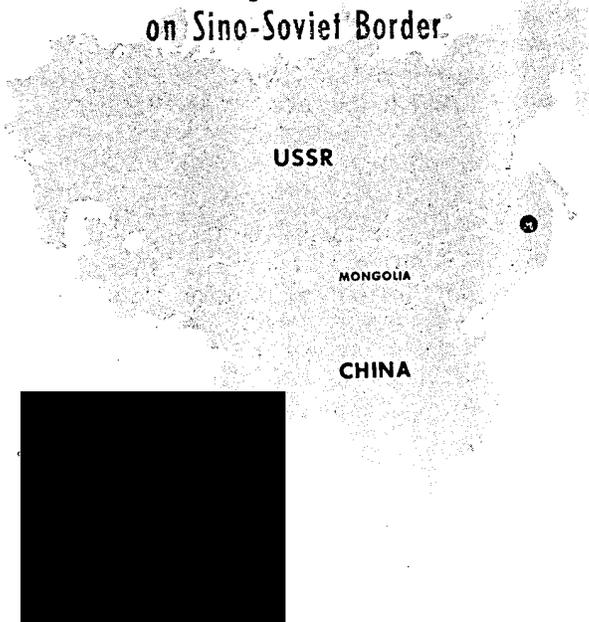
The Soviets are taking steps to bolster their claim to a highly sensitive section of the disputed Sino-Soviet border at a time when their relations with Peking are as sour as ever. A Soviet party newspaper reported on 2 August plans of Khabarovsk—the important Soviet Far Eastern city—for extensive agricultural development of two islands in the Ussuri River, which forms part of the Soviet-Manchurian frontier.

These islands are by far the most important of the more than 700 in the Amur and Ussuri that are subject to conflicting claims by Moscow and Peking. They amount to strips of land about 25 miles long at the Amur-Ussuri confluence, which dominates Khabarovsk. Soviet officials have stressed that they view this area as particularly critical because of its strategic location, and Moscow is clearly eager to consolidate its control. Development of the islands is billed innocently as

merely a part of a program announced at the July central committee plenum to increase Siberia's self-sufficiency in food production. Nevertheless, Moscow privately recognizes that the Chinese have a good legal case based on international law to support their claim to the islands, and it evidently hopes that the island's development will enhance the shaky Soviet claim.

The Soviet leaders are aware that deliberately reviving this crucial frontier issue runs the risk of triggering loud protests from Peking, which may be provoked to mount its own "development" program for disputed border territory. In any event, the Soviet plan clearly underscores the lack of movement in the ten-month-old border negotiations and bodes ill for any progress in the future. A previous round of border talks in 1964 broke down, in part because of unresolved disputes over these islands. Until the appearance

Soviets Planning Development of Islands on Sino-Soviet Border.



of the newspaper article, both sides had carefully avoided public mention of the islands near Khabarovsk since the talks got under way last October.

Meanwhile, the widely rumored exchange of ambassadors between Moscow and Peking appears to have run into additional difficulties. Some rumors circulating in diplomatic circles in Moscow now allege that the Soviet nominee's departure for Peking has been further delayed because of "illness." Others claim that he has been successful in evading the assignment, which in effect would be diplomatic exile from Moscow politics, and that Moscow has selected a new candidate.

The impasse over the on-again-off-again ambassadorial exchange has been complemented by an upsurge in Soviet polemics against Peking in the form of reprints of East European diatribes. One recent article displayed an unusual degree of Soviet concern over China's nuclear-missile pro-

gram, and other articles have warned that Peking is not to be trusted despite its adoption of a more moderate foreign policy posture.

For its part, Peking used the anniversary of the People's Liberation Army last week to focus attention on the Soviet military buildup. In particular, Peking charged that Moscow "greedily eyes" Chinese territory, but this probably does not reflect concern over immediate Soviet military intentions. Nevertheless, Moscow radio quickly responded by warning the Chinese that this kind of talk could "sabotage" the border negotiations.

Meanwhile, the Soviet military buildup continues along the border. Since early May, for example, over 170 Soviet military transport aircraft have been noted flying to the Far East from their bases in the western USSR. [REDACTED]