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THE SOVIET STRATEGIC INTEREST IN LIMITED DISARMAMENT

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CAESAR XXIII
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THE SOVIET STRATEGIC INTEREST IN LIMITED DISARMAMENT

This is a working paper. It is intended to be an informal airing of a critical intelligence problem, not a definitive statement on the subject. In this exercise, the question of disarmament is discussed in terms of Soviet strategic thought, planning, and goals. While political (propaganda) objectives have long seemed primary and are no doubt still important (if not primary) in Soviet positions on disarmament, this paper is concerned largely with the hard gains--in Soviet military strength relative to that of the U.S.--which the USSR may hope to make through the conclusion of agreements on limited measures of arms control.

Although the writer has benefited from the suggestions and research findings of colleagues, he is solely responsible for the paper as a whole. The [] would welcome comment on the paper, addressed to [] who wrote it, or to the []

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THE SOVIET STRATEGIC INTEREST IN LIMITED DISARMAMENT

Summary

Although the Soviets have in the past succeeded in temporarily deceiving the world public about the magnitude of Soviet strategic power, their actual military capabilities have been incommensurate with both Soviet political aspirations (especially in Europe) and the U.S. strategic military challenge. Their past inability to preserve a world image of Soviet military pre-eminence or to effect a significant change in the actual correlation of strategic forces does not seem to have dampened their desire to achieve such goals.

The Soviets have always regarded the fundamental question as that of the balance of power: while they have often talked tough and invoked strategic threats, they have generally been cautious in their actions. (The Cuban missile base venture was not an exception: the decisions to place missiles in Cuba and then to remove them were both taken because of felt strategic inferiority; Khrushchev grossly miscalculated the risk in deploying the missiles and withdrew them rapidly when the risk was made clear to him.) Khrushchev still appears to regard a favorable strategic situation as critical to his foreign policy. While he may find the current strategic posture of the USSR adequate to the task of deterring the West from initiating general war, he almost certainly finds that the still markedly inferior strategic position of the USSR does not satisfy Soviet political requirements. He undoubtedly realizes that as long as the United States maintains a credible military supremacy, the USSR will be without an effective basis for changing the political order of things in Europe--no more through negotiations than through direct military action. He is consequently eager to neutralize U.S. strategic supremacy, to foster the idea of nuclear stalemate and strategic balance.

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Khrushchev will strive to improve the strategic situation of the USSR, we believe, in part through direct increments to Soviet military power, and, in part, by an indirect method: controlling the arms race. Indirect competition in the struggle for military supremacy is typically a Soviet tactic. Because of important advantages (notably secrecy) and disadvantages (notably strained resources), the Soviets have almost never engaged the United States in a direct, numerical weapons competition. Thus, instead of producing long-range bombers and, later, ICBMs, on a crash basis, Moscow has tried to compensate for deficiencies in these capabilities by indirect methods. These have included, at various times and in various combinations, (1) deceptive propaganda claims about Soviet missile strength, (2) political exploitation of early technological breakthroughs in weaponry and space exploration; (3) the build-up of powerful forces to cope with a threat from Western Europe and the holding of Europe as strategic hostage under the numerous medium and intermediate range ballistic missiles; (4) major military demonstrations, such as increasing the explicit military budget and exploding very high yield nuclear weapons; and (5) the Cuban venture--in the sense of being an effective alternative to a crash ICBM program.

Having failed with these schemes to produce the desired effects, Khrushchev now seems to have turned to limited disarmament to augment the relative power position of the Soviet Union; he has clearly rejected the alternative of a radical step-up in the production and deployment of strategic weapons. This is not to say that a firm policy line on limited disarmament has been set. On the contrary, we are inclined to think that this issue, like important military problems such as troop size, is still in flux. The military elite, who have in the past resisted certain of Khrushchev's military programs, have also shown signs of dissent from certain of his arms limitations schemes. They may for professional reasons tend to regard not arms control but substantial arms expansion as the best way to approach the problem of strengthening national security. Hence, negative Soviet actions at Geneva may to some extent reflect indecision or controversy in Moscow.

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Through arms control accord--whether formal treaty or reciprocal unilateral actions--the Soviets probably hope at the very least to prevent the strategic military gap from widening; at most, they may hope to tip the power balance in their favor. A medium expectation may be to improve their strategic military position with respect to the West to a significant degree without jeopardizing other essential domestic programs.

Thus, the Soviets may see in arms control an opportunity (1) to gain in the strategic rivalry by means of maximizing Soviet power at a lower level of military expenditure; (2) to reduce the size of the arena of competition in a way that would exclude fields in which the USSR is comparatively weak or has no particular incentive (e.g., bombardment satellites), and allow the USSR to compete in fields of its own choosing (e.g., ABMs, Lasers); (3) to clear the decks of "obsolete" weapons, installations, and unnecessary personnel (Khrushchev's conception of obsolescence is much broader than that of many of his military colleagues); (4) to deprive the United States, even in symmetrical force cuts, of an important inherent advantage: greater potential for strengthening its military power; (5) to make immediate, if small, military gains even where agreements seem to be mutually beneficial; (6) to undermine Western military cohesion and strength; (7) to inhibit the dissemination of nuclear weapons; (8) to make political gains at home and abroad; and, finally (9) to channel the active arms competition into the R&D field--which the Soviets seem to regard as less dangerous and more promising (for them) than direct competition in numbers of offensive weapons.

The same concerns which impel the USSR toward reaching accord with the West on arms control will probably set limits on disarmament. It is highly doubtful that any Soviet leaders seriously regard GCD as a strategic goal. Indeed, we think, GCD may be counter to the assumptions which the Soviets make about power and national interests. Such considerations as the desire to freeze strategic nuclear power, to make general war appear as virtually suicidal, to avoid inviting Chinese or French or German rivalry in strategic power, will probably determine the degrees of reductions which the USSR might be willing to make in

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strategic nuclear forces within the next decade. Similarly, the problem of keeping the East European empire intact may dictate requirements for minimum levels of Soviet conventional forces, irrespective of United States positions.

At the same time, however, because the Soviets (or some of them) seem to have a strong strategic interest in regulating the arms competition, they may be willing to abandon some taboos, such as aerial surveillance of Soviet territory, which, whether by their choosing or not, are perhaps becoming dispensable items-suitable for international bargaining.

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I. THE DILEMMA OF POWER

A. The Problem

Driven by their great power pretensions as well as by purely military considerations, the Soviets have long felt compelled to rival the military might of the United States. This compulsion has been vexing to Soviet strategists who have found themselves at a great disadvantage in respect to material resources at their disposal, and who at each juncture have had to face the reality of military capabilities which were incommensurate with both Soviet political aspirations and the U.S. challenge. Except for short periods in which Soviet bravado and public credulity combined to project a mirage of a power imbalance in favor of the USSR, the Soviets have been in this predicament since at least 1957. It was then that the Soviets, giddy with the first successful ICBM test which symbolically ended the invulnerability of the United States to strategic attack, began to challenge the primacy of U.S. military power.

Plainly, the Soviets see military force as a symbol and instrument of their total power position. They expect the world to see in the growth of their military power proof of the success and invincibility of their social system. Moreover, the political ambitions of the USSR seem to place different, even greater, demands on Soviet military development than, say, might be deemed necessary for deterrence of general war. It has appeared to be a basic Soviet policy assumption--and a sound one--that a world belief in Soviet military superiority would be extremely helpful to the success of the Communist movement and of Soviet foreign policy. A corollary assumption evidently is that a world image of Soviet military inferiority vis-a-vis the West--an image developing since 1961--is a serious liability. If Soviet leaders, political and military, are at odds on a number of basic defense questions, they seem to be of one mind on this.

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1. A Modern Day Bismarck

Khrushchev himself is an unabashed practitioner of classical realpolitik. He has regarded the strategic power balance as critical to his foreign policy, and on the basis of claimed "shifts in the correlation of forces" he has demanded concessions from the West. Basing policy on claimed Soviet military strength, he has tried to erode the Western will to oppose Soviet political offensives. And he has exploited the world's fear of nuclear war, brandishing his weapons in naked attempts at nuclear coercion.

In the 'fifties, he waged a hard campaign for a summit conference to try to settle outstanding international issues with the West on the basis of an alleged new alignment of power. Having pictured the ICBM breakthrough in the USSR as ending U.S. superiority, he made the specious claim that the Soviets were now roughly equivalent in military power with the United States. While he achieved agreement in 1959 over an exchange of visits between President Eisenhower and himself, and established the "Spirit of Camp David" which marked a new phase in Soviet foreign policy and domestic policy as well, a series of unfortunate circumstances (for him) prevented the multilateral summit conference in Paris in 1960 from materializing and led the Soviets to undertake a major reassessment of the strategic situation.

Having failed to make progress toward a political settlement on the basis of a claimed new alignment of power during President Eisenhower's administration, Khrushchev again used this stratagem with President Kennedy. Soon after meeting with the President in Vienna in July 1961, Khrushchev declared:

The Western leaders state that the military power of the capitalist and socialist camps now is equally balanced... In the policy of the Western powers, unfortunately, there is no common sense, a common sense which should flow from the acknowledgement of the correlation of forces that has arisen in the world....

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Again in July 1961, Khrushchev plaintively argued--on the basis of alleged admissions in the West that bloc strength was "not inferior" to Western strength--that "with equal strength, there must be equal rights, equal opportunities." But once again, Khrushchev's efforts came to nothing. The American part in the East-West dialogue was not to concede a changed power relationship as a basis for negotiations. In fact, the United States in 1961 pursued a policy of substantially strengthening its strategic and tactical forces, and, consequently, of widening its military lead over the USSR. By September 1961, U.S. spokesmen were claiming clear military supremacy for the United States (and adding insult to injury by publicly downgrading earlier estimates of Soviet ICBM strength).

2. Foreign Policy Record

The record of Soviet foreign policy in respect to the East-West confrontation over the past decade shows a mix of gains and losses. On the one hand, Soviet military power, though inferior to that of the United States, has succeeded in inhibiting certain Western initiatives and in making the United States reconcile itself to gains already achieved by the USSR. Thus, Soviet power was sufficient to discourage the West from intervening in the Hungarian uprising of 1956 and from smashing the Berlin Wall constructed in 1961. On the other hand, the Soviet posture was not formidable enough to force the West into perceptible political retreat on major outstanding international issues. Soviet power failed, for example, to prevent the United States from deploying nuclear weapons at European bases in the 'fifties; it failed to cow the West into a Berlin settlement; and it failed in the most direct confrontation with the United States to establish a strategic military base in Cuba (although it succeeded in establishing a politically important Soviet presence in Cuba).

Although the pattern of success and failure in Soviet foreign policy defies attempts to draw a strict correlation between them and the power balance, the record

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of Soviet actions nevertheless shows that, at least since the Korean War, the Soviets have always been sensitive to the United States posture and policy and to the changes in the world military structure.* Although they have talked tough and liberally invoked strategic threats at different times since Stalin's death, they have generally been extremely cautious in action. It can be said, that, as a rule, their aggressive declaratory policy has been occasioned by seeming changes in the power balance in their favor--ICBM breakthrough, space feats, high yield explosions, etc.--but their conservative actions have been occasioned by a realistic appreciation of the strategic power situation, in which they have always been second-best.

The logic of power takes unexpected turns, however, and problems of strategy in real life can seldom be reduced to simple formulas or equations. Consider, for example, the following paradox: the clear strategic supremacy of the United States has prevented the USSR from forcing its program for a European settlement on the West; on the other hand, anxious to redress the imbalance of power in order to restore dynamism to their foreign policy, the Soviets embarked on the venture to place missiles in Cuba. Superior U.S. power in the Cuban case did not restrain but rather tended to provoke the USSR to undertake a risky venture; however, when the moment of confrontation occurred, the situation reverted to the first instance, in which the Soviet leadership believed it the better part of valor to retreat in the face of a superior U.S. power.**

*Even in the case of Korea, the Soviets probably had calculated that the United States would not intervene militarily in the event of a North Korean attack: the U.S. administration had indicated such a course but the President reversed himself upon learning of the North Korean treachery.

**In regard to the Cuban venture, long and careful study of the Soviet action has led us to believe strongly that the Soviets, at least until the President's speech of 22 October, did not estimate that there was a great risk of strategic attack against even Cuba, let alone themselves, at any stage of the venture.

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B. The Policy of Indirect Competition

The Soviets, then, have long had a consuming desire to be ranked as superior or at least equal to the United States in military might and to effect political changes on that basis. This motivation, in turn, has given impetus to the more strictly military needs to compete with the United States in an arms race. For what would suffice as a "minimum deterrent" fell short of the political need to close the strategic military gap. However, because of the peculiar philosophy of the present Soviet leadership, and the array of advantages (notably secrecy) and disadvantages (notably strained resources), in comparison to the United States, the USSR has almost never attempted to compete directly with the United States in an arms build-up, but has repeatedly turned to indirect methods to achieve its strategic objectives.

The indirect methods used have included, at various times and in various combinations, (1) deceptive propaganda claims about Soviet missile strength, (2) political exploitation of early technological breakthroughs in weaponry and space exploration; (3) the build-up of powerful forces to cope with threats from Western Europe, and the holding of Europe as strategic hostage under the numerous medium and intermediate range ballistic missiles; (4) major military demonstrations, such as military budget increases and very high yield nuclear explosions. There was also the Cuban missile base venture, which was indirect in the sense that it was a bold alternative to a direct competition in numbers of intercontinental weapons for the purpose of substantially improving Soviet strike capabilities against the United States.*

*The missiles which were to be deployed in Cuba were intended to supplement and ease requirements on the Soviet ICBM program, but not to substitute for it.

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In the late 'fifties, when the Soviets in the political-propaganda realm boldly and repeatedly challenged the primacy of U.S. military power, they paradoxically failed to convert a technological head-start into a superiority in forces-in-being. Until 1962, Soviet intercontinental forces grew very little. It had been decided in the early 'fifties not to have a major intercontinental bomber force, and a decision was evidently made in 1958 to forego deployment of the first generation ICBM in favor of second generation systems, the first of which would not become operational until early 1962.

The pattern of actual development and deployment of weapons of the intercontinental strike forces of the USSR between 1957 and 1962 reflected no governing strategic concept, except, perhaps, that of seeking, with minimal means, to deter the United States from attacking the Soviet camp and to achieve military respectability. Furthermore, during that period the USSR possessed none of the following capabilities claimed or intimated by the propaganda and by Soviet writings on military doctrine:

- (1) a militarily effective pre-emptive capability;
- (2) a sure-fire retaliatory capability;
or
- (3) a war-winning capability against the United States.

Nor can it be said that, in the period in question, Soviet planners sought to effect a shift in the balance of power by means of real increments in Soviet intercontinental strike capabilities. If there was in fact a strategic philosophy which guided the development of offensive intercontinental forces up to 1962, it was that of a "very minimum deterrent."

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For before that date, the USSR had a force of dubious reliability which, in relation to U.S. offensive and defensive forces, was capable of doing very limited damage to American territory in the event of general war. A much more serious deployment program, more or less consonant with the strategic threat, was in evidence before that date in respect to strategic air defense weapons.

In short, as national intelligence estimates have pointed out, the USSR was willing to tolerate an actual condition of limited intercontinental capabilities and considerable vulnerability over a long period of time. But this was not true of the seeming condition of the strategic military situation.

In the period in which critical defense decisions were being made--1958--Khrushchev was firmly in the saddle. It was in all probability his ideas about Soviet long-range force development that carried the day. Faced as he was with competing demands for limited resources (he had, for example to choose between a large ICBM program and a large MRBM program), and confident about his ability to understand his counterparts in the West and to control risks, Khrushchev was in no hurry to upset actual U.S. military supremacy by deploying a powerful intercontinental striking force. Khrushchev, rather, was confident that a seeming alteration in the power situation would serve his purposes, at least in the near run. He understood quite well that what matters in regard to the power balance question in peacetime is not the actual military capabilities of a state, but what others think about the state's capabilities--or more accurately, what one state's beliefs are about another. In 1960, he exaggerated Soviet rocket capabilities against the United States because he was aware of actual Soviet inferiority in strategic forces, but was confident that his claims would be generally believed.

Thus, in the years 1958-61, strategic deception--in which Soviet propaganda formed a bond for Western self-deception and fears about the trend in Soviet strategic weapons development--to bolster the image of Soviet military power and, consequently, the Soviet strategic deterrent. As pointed out in other intelligence issuances,

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strategic deception, as an integral part of Soviet policy, had as objectives not only compensation for an unavoidable, adverse imbalance in strategic power, but also the concealment from the West that the Soviet ICBM force programmed for the period 1958-1962 would not close the gap and might even permit it to widen substantially. The effort to deceive, moreover, was intended not merely to deter an attack on the Soviet Union, but to secure political gains as well.

Khrushchev's public confidence in the deterrent effect of Soviet deceptive missile claims reached a high point in early 1960. In his speech to the Supreme Soviet in January of that year he boasted that the USSR was "several years" ahead of the United States in the "mass production" of ICBMs, and that the "Soviet army today possesses such combat means and fire power as no army has ever had before," sufficient "literally to wipe the country or countries that attack us off the face of the earth." Consequently, Khrushchev said, "the Soviet people can be calm and confident; the Soviet army's modern equipment ensures the unassailability of our country." At the end of the following month he would announce unambiguously that the Soviet Union is "now the world's strongest military power."

Over the same period, the principal military element in the Soviet deterrent scheme was the massive force intended for war against Europe. This might have been a meaningful anti-U.S. strategy in a purely military sense had the withdrawal of SAC forces from Europe not coincided with the emergence of the Soviet MRBM force. The real deterrent against the United States, hence, was largely indirect; Europe, as Khrushchev would acknowledge (in September 1961), was a "hostage."

By the end of 1961, the Soviet leaders realized that the strategic deception scheme had backfired; not only was it exposed to the whole world but in the meantime it had done irreparable damage to the USSR by stimulating a major improvement in the defense posture of the United States, thereby resulting in a substantial widening of the actual U.S. military lead. Furthermore, it was by that time clear to the Soviet leaders that the effectiveness of the counter-Europe threat had been undermined by the proven inability

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of the Soviets to force Western political retreats and to provide the necessary backing for Soviet political offensives in Western Europe.

Painfully conscious of slippage both in respect to the power balance and the stability of Soviet strategic deterrence (their retaliatory threat was no longer credible in the West), Soviet leaders undertook a general reappraisal of the peacetime Soviet military posture and the strategic situation. They concluded, it seems, that their strategy--of building deterrence and pursuing foreign policy objectives on the basis of bluffing the West about Soviet long-range attack capabilities, while holding Europe hostage under the threat of mass annihilation of Soviet MRBMs--was no longer adequate for political purposes or, perhaps, for national security.

The immediate Soviet reaction to the crisis in military strategy was to take a new series of essentially indirect measures to improve the strategic situation (and, in regard to the immediate political problem, to strengthen the weakened bargaining positions of the USSR in Berlin). Some of these measures were demonstrations or counter-demonstrations; others amounted to real increments in Soviet military power. To help obscure or compensate for their strategic deficiencies, the Soviets emphasized super-bombs, manned bombers, and nuclear submarines. They resumed nuclear testing, suspended the troop reduction program, deferred transfer of specialized categories of servicemen to the reserves, and announced increases in the overt military budget.

In fall 1961, in a major policy speech at the 22nd CPSU Congress, the Defense Minister drew a picture of a large and versatile military establishment that was prepared to launch a pre-emptive attack against a would-be aggressor and to fight either a short or a protracted war in Eurasia if necessary. Malinovskiy's speech also gave doctrinal underpinning to the policy measures bearing on the size and composition of the armed forces, thereby indicating that the changes were intended to have greater permanence than was suggested by previous Soviet public statements.

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The decision to make public in thinly veiled language the doctrine of pre-emptive action was evidently taken with the aim of countering possible intentions of the U.S. adversary to follow up its new claims to military superiority with a more aggressive foreign policy. The Soviets, in effect, intimated that the USSR had lowered the threshold for initiating war. They presumably estimated that the threatened initial use of nuclears by them (if threatened with imminent attack) would be more credible than their previous claims to a reliable second strike capability.

With the shifting of the sands, the Soviet leadership had to find a new basis on which to build the image of Soviet military power. The dramatic measures taken in 1961 would not have a lasting effect. The collapse of strategic deception, the diminution of strategic secrecy, the emergence of Communist China as a rival power and potential threat to Soviet security, the changes in the composition and deployment of U.S. strategic forces, and probably such domestic problems as scarce resources and divisions in the leadership--all these factors combined to force the Soviets to search for new answers to the strategic dilemma. The conclusion must have been unavoidable to the Soviet leaders: a real intercontinental attack capability had to be developed. The United States in 1961 was still in a position to devastate the Soviet Union with relatively little damage to its own territory.

In 1961, the Soviets were indeed taking measures to improve their intercontinental strike capability. They stepped up construction of sites for advanced ICBMs; and they sought to improve their retaliatory capability by hardening a portion of the new launch sites.

Such measures take a long time to implement, and time--at least as far as the competition in ICBMs is concerned--was plainly on the side of the United States. In view of the urgency which they attached to the problem of redressing the strategic imbalance which could no longer be concealed from the world, the Soviets in 1962 tried a typically indirect and unusually imaginative maneuver to effect a changed strategic situation almost overnight. Having estimated that their action would not provoke U.S. intervention

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(beyond a possible blockade) and that if the United States were about to intervene (i.e. to take military action beyond a blockade) the USSR could withdraw without irretrievable political loss, the Soviet leaders took a chance on deploying MRBM and IRBM launchers in Cuba. Had this gamble succeeded, their additional strategic strength would have significantly altered the general strategic situation, so great would have been the psychological impact of even a small number of Soviet IRBMs and MRBMs in Cuba.

C. Policy Since Cuba

1. Controversy over the New Course

With the collapse of the Cuban venture, the crisis in Soviet military strategy had deepened. Not only had the Soviets failed to effect a radical improvement in their strategic posture--they suffered the embarrassment of a grave defeat which cost them prestige with their Eastern comrades as well as with the Western adversary.

Both the deployment in and withdrawal of missiles from Cuba were tacit admissions of Soviet strategic inferiority. The Central Committee organ Kommunist (No. 18, 1962) explicitly admitted in an editorial that the Soviet leadership had "soberly weighed the balance of power" during the crisis in the Caribbean and took the only reasonable course open to them. As Soviet prestige dipped low in the wake of the crisis, the remaining dynamism went out of foreign policy, leaving it aimless and virtually immobile. The Chinese taunted the Soviet leaders with accusations of both "adventurism" and "capitulationism." Soviet military morale seemed to slip to a low ebb and there were indications of dissatisfaction among the military over Khrushchev's handling of the Cuban operation.

Under such conditions, the need to improve the relative strategic position of the USSR with genuine increments to the military became a politically irrefutable argument, and the position of the advocates of greater defense spending was consequently strengthened.

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But again, the expected, the logical, did not happen. Rather, Soviet leaders fell into a policy struggle, lasting until spring 1963, over what course to follow in pursuit of the common objective of improving the country's relative strategic position. On the basis of largely indirect and inconclusive evidence, we have discerned two principal schools of thought in contention over a whole range of basic national policy matters. There was, on the one hand, the traditionalist-minded school which argued for direct measures to improve the country's strategic position. This grouping, which probably attracted most of the military elite and was apparently led by Kozlov in the Party Presidium, sought (1) to increase the defense establishment's share of the country's strained resources; (2) to make even greater the disparate growth of heavy industry by greatly expanding, among other things, plant facilities for heavy machine-building; (3) to strengthen conventional as well as strategic military forces; (4) to take a hard line on foreign policy, and, hence, to undermine earlier efforts to achieve accommodation with the West (e.g., disarmament negotiations).

The other school of thought, which we shall call Khrushchev's inasmuch as he was plainly its principal spokesman, preferred to steer an almost diametrically opposite course (although toward the same objective of improving the relative strategic position of the USSR). Khrushchev's plan was to maintain the pace of growth of Soviet armed strength without further impairing the country's economic growth or stimulating the West into another cycle in the arms race. In the pitch of the debates, Khrushchev thus sought (1) to hold the line on resource allocations, resisting a radical distribution of resources either in favor of the military establishment or economic development; (2) to resist any widening of the gap in rate of development between heavy industry (military) and light industry, and specifically to oppose any major expansion of the heavy machine-building industry; (3) to cut back the size of conventional forces while strengthening strategic forces; (4) to pursue rapprochement with the West and generally to reduce international tensions; (5) to engage in disarmament negotiations with the aim of slowing down the arms race and improving the relative strategic position of the USSR. The last aim, which is central to this study, will be discussed at length shortly.

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It appears, in retrospect, that during the winter of 1962-63, Khrushchev suffered serious loss of prestige in Soviet ruling circles; that his strategic if not political thinking was put into question; that he had some very rough sledding, especially in January and February; and that Soviet foreign policy lapsed into a confused and rather aimless state in the course of the internal policy debates. Eventually, toward the end of March, Khrushchev managed to get the upper hand. At that time, Soviet foreign policy seemed to take a more deliberate course--an optimistic Tsarapkin made a "big concession" at Geneva; accord was reached on a "hot line"; the Soviets asked for resumption of bilateral talks on Berlin and Germany, etc.--and signs of a settlement in Khrushchev's favor of outstanding domestic issues, notably resource allocations, began to appear.

Thus, Khrushchev's course eventually won out in the internal rough and tumble, and it is this course we see being charted today. His success has been illustrated by the signing of a partial test ban treaty in July, and the announcement in December of a mammoth chemical investment program, a reduction in the military budget (nominal though it may have been), and a "contemplated" cut in the size of Soviet forces.* Although Khrushchev's views now seem to prevail, there is still important resistance which must be overcome if certain of his foreign and domestic programs are ever to see the light of day or are to have any lasting effects. Each of his programs is fought for individually; each tends to give way to a greater or lesser degree to the inertia of the Soviet bureaucracy. The result is that, however radical Khrushchev's original plans for change may be, the bureaucracy seldom makes radical swings in national policy,

*In his speech at the February 1964 plenum of the Central Committee, Khrushchev mentioned at one point that the USSR "is proceeding with certain reductions in military expenditures and the numerical strength of the armed forces."

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because of omnipresent strongly entrenched interests.* As we shall see shortly, there is evidence of internal resistance to Khrushchev's arms reduction and control schemes, as there was evidence of resistance to his resource allocations program.

2. Strategic Assessment

Looking now at the strategic power situation, the Soviets probably see their relative position improved since the Cuban debacle of October 1962, but still greatly inferior to the United States in terms of actual military power, and still precarious in terms of the world image of the balance of power. Thus, on the one hand, they may see in the world today a fairly stable strategic situation which is owing in part to the deployment of a relatively modest ICBM force combined with a massive European theater capability, and in part to the U.S. acknowledgment that the Soviet Union is capable of doing great damage to the

*Khrushchev's speech at the February 1964 plenum of the Central Committee contained an illuminating discussion of the problem of bureaucratic inertia in the Soviet Union. In an effort to explain why his chemical program adopted in 1958 was never fully implemented, Khrushchev said: "...It is very difficult to change existing proportions. To make it clearer, I shall make use of geometrical terms. Take a circle, divide it into 360 degrees among the committees, ministries, and Gosplan departments. Everyone then guards his own sector within the limits assigned him. As a rule, while working out the plan for the next year and determining the extent of capital investment by individual branches, the level of increase achieved last year is taken as the base. So if a branch in the past year has shown an increase of 8.5 percent, then this is taken by the departmentalists protecting the interests of their branch of their sector as the starting basis of the plan for the next year, without taking changed conditions into account."

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United States (even in a retaliatory strike) and thereby has a credible (although not absolute) strategic deterrent. Repeated by the Secretary of Defense on several occasions since the Cuban crisis, this acknowledgement has been eagerly received by the Soviets and used to substantiate strident claims, resumed in 1963, to a reliable and credible second strike capability. The previous Soviet compulsion to threaten pre-emptive action--that is, to advertise a lower threshold of war in the event of impending Western military initiatives--has thus diminished, as has the appearance of such threats.

The Soviets, on the other hand, cannot help but be disquieted about the well-publicized fact that the U.S. strategic forces are far more powerful than counterpart Soviet forces, can kill the USSR several times over, and even after receiving a Soviet first nuclear salvo, can in a retaliatory strike annihilate the main strategic targets in the USSR. Soviet military officers' appreciation of the magnitude of power and versatility of combat capability of the "main adversary" is plainly registered, among other places, in the Defense Ministry book, "Military Strategy," in both its versions.

The great disparity in forces-in-being is only part of the story. The other part is the fact that the United States has a far greater potential to increase the firepower of its strategic forces (it can add some 1000 Minutemen a year to its arsenals) at far less cost to the country's general economic development and pursuit of other military programs than has the USSR.

The disparate situation in respect to both forces-in-being and potential, moreover, is bound to be a chief factor motivating the Soviets to alter the status quo in the international power structure. While the Soviets are probably confident that their present power position is sufficient to deter the West from initiating general war, they have little reason to believe that they can win such a war, or even survive as a nation should deterrence fail. Nor can they be complacent about the political worth of their military power vis-a-vis the West.

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What the Soviets learned from the abortive effort to place missiles in Cuba is that the United States, so long as it had strategic superiority (local superiority is not necessary, as in the case of Berlin), would act against any Soviet effort of that kind to change the balance of power. President Kennedy had warned Khrushchev of such a determination on several occasions in 1961 and 1962, but the Soviet leader had evidently not been convinced. While Khrushchev may decide that it is necessary to test President Johnson as well, Khrushchev seems at present to be of a different persuasion, and to be attempting to change the power balance in other, less sudden and provocative ways--e.g., arms control.

To sum up, the Soviets at this juncture probably find the international strategic situation more comfortable than at any time since early 1960, in that their deterrent has recognizably increased. They nevertheless desire to improve their relative strategic position, which remains very inferior, though they are under less compulsion than in 1961-62. As suggested earlier, forces suitable for deterring the West from initiating general war might not satisfy Soviet political requirements. The far more powerful and less vulnerable U.S. strategic forces, if the United States makes clear its determination to use them if necessary, will generally act as a brake on aggressive tendencies in Soviet foreign policy. If the United States maintains a credible strategic military supremacy, the USSR would be without effective grounds to change the political order of things in Europe--no more through negotiations than through direct military action. Consequently, the Soviets are eager to neutralize U.S. strategic supremacy, to foster and preserve the idea of nuclear stalemate and strategic balance; they are certainly anxious to prevent the gap from widening any further; and their current policies suggest that they are unwilling to tolerate the existing strategic gap indefinitely and are acting to reduce it. Their preferred method of achieving these goals, is not the multiplication of strategic attack weapons to parallel those of the United States, but--as we shall argue in the pages that follow--a reverse strategy of arms control in conjunction with a vigorous R & D program, especially in the field of essentially defensive weapons.

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II. THE STRATEGY OF DISARMAMENT

A. General Attitude Towards Arms Limitations

These days it is very difficult to speak of a "Soviet attitude" as if all Soviet elite views conformed with Khrushchev's. Plainly, they do not. There exists, rather, a diversity of views among the Soviet elite on perhaps the whole gamut of domestic and foreign policy matters. We are on firmer ground when we speak of Khrushchev's views and the opposing views of identifiable special interest groups, such as the military high command.

1. Khrushchev's Views

On the question of reaching accord with the West on arms limitations, Khrushchev's thinking may differ greatly from that of his military associates. He has long displayed an interest in using disarmament issues as an instrument of policy; whereas the Soviet military, traditionally, have seen little value in disarmament outside of propaganda, although of late they have evidently begun to take a professional interest in disarmament questions.*

Khrushchev, we think, now sees in certain types of arms limitations, even when symmetrically imposed, a means for advancing the interests of the Soviet Union. He probably

*There now exists in the USSR Ministry of Defense a small staff concerned with disarmament. (Similar staffs have been set up in Poland and Czechoslovakia.) In the USSR, the staff provides military consultants to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Organization Section, which is responsible for disarmament organizational work. Actually, however, the disarmament policy questions are handled on a much higher policy level.

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hopes to improve the general strategic-political-economic situation of the USSR through arms limitations. He has already demonstrated a willingness to agree on some measures for limiting the arms race, indicating that disarmament is more than a propaganda tool for him. While he has pursued certain arms control schemes in conjunction with creating an atmosphere of political detente, it seems likely that various arms control schemes have an intrinsic value for him, rather than being dependent on a "soft" phase of Soviet diplomacy. In other words, a warm international climate facilitates accord on arms limitations but is not essential for the preservation of agreements which have already been made. The Soviets would expect, because of the strong mutual interest in not stimulating a new cycle in the arms race, to retain a good amount of political flexibility. Such was the case during the 1958-61 moratorium on nuclear-testing; and such was the case again in the fall of 1963--after the signing of the three-environment test ban treaty--when the Soviets harassed the West in respect to convoy passage on the Autobahn and Professor Barghoorn's arrest. Indeed, the Soviets in these recent actions may well have been testing their room for maneuver (and perhaps demonstrating to the Chinese that conciliation in one area does not entail conciliation in all areas).

Khrushchev and his colleagues, plainly have regarded disarmament as a very useful means of political agitation to capture peace sentiments and to mobilize pressure against Western military positions and actions. Still, even in the light of the disappointing record of disarmament negotiations, it would seem fair to say that the Soviet interest in disarmament has almost always transcended the interest in propaganda. An abiding aim--beyond that of propaganda exploitation--of Soviet disarmament proposals over the past decade has been to restructure world military power to the advantage of the USSR. Some proposals have tried to trade-off reductions in force that would have been (or already had been) undertaken unilaterally irrespective of the Western response; and some have sought to disarm the West of its distinct military advantages by eliminating those weapons which were in ample supply in U.S. arsenals but hardly existed at all in Soviet arsenals.

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Moreover, while the Soviets since 1954 have usually called for formal treaties on arms limitations, they have also tried to place limits on the arms race by tacit agreement. The 1958-61 moratorium on nuclear testing was a successful outcome of such a policy. Similarly, the current practice of bidding for reciprocal unilateral reductions, or, in Khrushchev's words "a policy of mutual example," is not really new. Thus, in March 1957, after the Soviet budget had been cut and Soviet troop size had been reduced by nearly 2 million men to the pre-Korean war level, Zorin declared at the United Nations that "actions of this kind do much to improve the international atmosphere and strengthen confidence between states. All governments, and particularly those with large armed forces, would do well to follow that example."

Khrushchev himself advocated reciprocal unilateral arms reduction in early 1960 in appealing to the West to follow his announced plan of a one-third reduction in troop size. At that time, however, he was bidding for cuts in conventional forces while claiming superiority in missiles and military power in general. Once again in December 1963, in announcing plans to cut military spending and forces, he did the same thing. This time he made no claims to Soviet military supremacy, and he has since had some success in getting the United States to respond in the manner desired by him. In a year-end statement to the UPI, Khrushchev spelled out his preferred disarmament scheme, which he appropriately called a "policy of mutual example":

I should like to note one other aspect of the matter, which is that if solutions of some of the above mentioned issues require appropriate international agreements, for others a different approach can be found. Take for instance the question of military budgets. The Supreme Soviet of the USSR has already taken a decision to reduce our military expenditure under the budget for 1964. It would be a good thing if other states also took similar action. I am quite sure that the peoples would wholeheartedly indorse such a policy--I would call it a policy of mutual example--in the curtailment of the arms race.

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Or take the question of reductions of forces. I recently said we were contemplating the possibility of certain further reductions in the strength of our country's armed forces. There is hardly any need for detailed explanation that if similar action were taken by the other side too, new chances would appear for further constructive measures to achieve an international detente.

At least at this stage, the idea of reciprocal unilateral disarmament seems to appeal most to Khrushchev as a means of achieving arms control and improving the relative strategic military posture of the USSR. He undoubtedly sees a number of advantages in this approach to the overall strategic power struggle. Reciprocal unilateral disarmament precludes the problem of inspection; does not bind the Soviets to international treaties (and like the moratorium, can be undone at lower cost in terms of world opinion than if the USSR were legally bound by treaty); affords the Soviet Union generally greater flexibility than in a negotiated disarmament; and does not involve the Soviets in drawn out East-West negotiations over measures that the USSR would like to take quickly irrespective of Western actions (such as a cut in conventional forces).

On the other hand, the Soviets do not have the assurance in this approach that the West will follow suit. The West did not, for example, respond in kind to earlier Soviet force and budgetary cuts. For this reason, one can speculate, internal opponents of troop cuts might find allies among foreign affairs officials who may feel that more could be gained from the West by negotiated arms control settlements.

Khrushchev himself has indicated that the idea of unilateral reductions had to be sold to his skeptical colleagues. In the summer of 1963 he told a visitor about a previous Moscow debate on unilateral versus negotiated force reductions, in which he argued successfully that the West should not be allowed to control the Soviet decision. He evidently also had encountered resistance to the idea of unilateral disarmament as opposed to trading-off in formal

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negotiations in late 1959, when he was trying to gain approval in ruling Soviet circles for his plan for a one-third cut in the size of Soviet forces. Thus, two weeks before announcing his plan in January 1960, Khrushchev remarked at a Kremlin reception: "...If the supporters of the cold war drag us into the labyrinth of endless debate, must we follow their path, the one to which they wish to impel us? Should we not think for ourselves and unilaterally reduce our armed forces and place rockets to guard our frontiers?"

2. Military Skeptics

The military elite, who have been known to hold ideas very different from Khrushchev's about force requirements, also have shown signs of dissent from his arms limitation schemes.

The military elite may, contrary to Khrushchev, tend to regard not arms control but arms expansion as the best way to approach the problem of strengthening national security. Military elite attitudes, to be sure, are colored by professional interests in maintaining and increasing the strength of the military establishment. Soviet military officers, moreover, may fret that severe military cuts--even though accompanied by similar or greater reductions in the West--tend to undermine the prestige and power status of the military in Soviet society.

On the other hand, the military may not regard all types of accord on disarmament as prejudicial to the interests of Soviet national security, or to their professional interests. They would probably offer no resistance to types of disarmament arrangements that do not adversely affect Soviet force structure, and that tend to be more political in nature, such as non-aggression pacts and denuclearized zones.

There is fairly good evidence that the military high command (presumably with some exceptions) was very reluctant to have the USSR sign a treaty banning nuclear testing

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in three environments. A study of RED STAR between the initialing of the test ban treaty on July 26 and its signing on August 6, showed that the principal organ of the defense establishment had nothing whatever to say in favor of the ban. In contrast, PRAVDA kept up a constant stream of propaganda in favor of the treaty during that period. Moreover, Marshal Malinovsky's 28 July Order of the Day, honoring Navy Day, pointed in the same direction. In sharp contrast with the mood of the time, Malinovsky stressed that the danger of war had not diminished and that the USSR was "strengthening" its defense capabilities.* After the treaty was signed, however, the senior officers resigned themselves to the accomplished fact and acknowledged it as an earnest of the peaceful intentions of the USSR.

The military again subtly demonstrated opposition to Khrushchev's intention, announced at the December Plenum of the Central Committee, to undertake another unilateral force cut. A study of the Soviet press and radio broadcasts found another instance of conspiracy of silence on the part of the military, while the question of further force cuts has been under deliberation in higher policy circles.** Thus not until the end of February did a senior marshal mention Khrushchev's proposal for another troop cut. Some military spokesmen--notably Marshal Chuykov in an IZVESTIYA article on 21 December--have seemed to argue against it, principally by warning of a continuing build-up of Western manpower strength. Soviet military organs have given minimal attention to the proposed troop cut; at the same time, they have published materials calculated to draw a threatening picture of Western military power and hence to reinforce the warning given by Chuykov.

*See FBIS Radio Propaganda Report CD. 233 of 5 September 1963, "Indications of Soviet Military Opposition to the Test Ban Treaty."

**See FBIS Radio Propaganda Report CD. 241 of 17 January 1964, "Soviet Military Demonstrates Resistance to Threatened Force Cuts."

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Khrushchev has since mentioned--once briefly in his February 14 speech at the Central Committee plenum--that the Soviet Union "is proceeding" with "certain reductions" in military expenditures and troop strength. However, his carefully ambiguous language regarding the precise status of these measures, taken together with his commitment in the same speech to ensure the satisfaction of all military requirements, raises a question as to how successful Khrushchev has been in putting across his program for military cuts.

B. Strategic Objectives

The Soviets now seem to be pursuing a policy aimed at controlling the East-West arms race. On the basis of the current Soviet actions, the character of past Soviet disarmament proposals, our understanding of Soviet strategic military thought and capabilities, and the general strategic predicament of the USSR described in the first section of this paper, we infer a range of probable strategic (politico-military) objectives of the current Soviet policy of limiting the arms race.*

*Terminology, evidently, no longer poses a problem for the Soviets. Their rejection or acceptance of the American usage of "arms control" depends upon whether a stated objective of "arms control" is general and complete disarmament. Thus, Sheinin, vice chairman of the Committee on the Study of Disarmament in the USSR Academy of Sciences recently wrote in an American journal:

At the present time, after the American Government has agreed with Soviet Government on principles of complete and universal disarmament, measures of "arms control" are proposed as ways toward the realization of these principles, not as alternatives to them. Such, at least, should be the case--and such is the belief of Jerome Wiesner, who wrote that "arms control" means the same in the United States as disarmament means in the USSR. (BULLETIN OF ATOMIC SCIENTISTS, January 1964)

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1. Alter the Power Balance

In working to reach accord with the West on--limiting the arms race, the Soviets (notably Khrushchev's coterie) seems to have as a primary objective the improvement of the relative strategic military position of the USSR. They see in a regulated arms competition, we think, an opportunity--perhaps the only opportunity in this decade--to resolve the predicament which has confronted them for a number of years: their felt need to rival the United States in strategic military power, but their inability and/or reluctance to rise to the challenge in direct fashion. In this respect, the Soviets have a greater interest in placing limits on the arms race than the United States.

A minimum Soviet expectation is undoubtedly to prevent the imbalance of power--actual military and political--from worsening. An extreme expectation may be to alter the balance of power in their favor. (This, we think, appears to Soviet leaders as a realistic if remote development, as we shall argue later in this discussion.) The Soviets probably calculate that, within this decade, they can achieve through arms control measures (in conjunction with some forward movement in armaments) a more symmetrical, stable strategic situation--that is, more than the minimum but less than the maximum objectives.

Fulfillment of the interim expectation--a strategic standoff--would be a great achievement for the USSR. It would presumably be the Soviet calculation that the United States, which was not provoked to attack the USSR when the United States had great superiority, would be even less inclined to do so when the military strengths of the two powers were more nearly equal. Such a situation would then afford the USSR greater flexibility and opportunity to challenge and probe U.S. positions militarily and politically. In this respect, the proximity of the USSR and a local preponderance of Soviet conventional military forces in Europe would take on exceptional significance in international disputes in Europe.

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On the other hand, it does not seem that the primary interest of the USSR in controlling the arms competition is a lasting relaxation of international tensions. Such a goal would imply acceptance of the status quo in--internal relations--including being resigned to an indefinite state of marked strategic inferiority, in military power and at the negotiations table. We think, rather, that the Soviets are eager to relax international tensions in order to facilitate progress toward more specific political, economic and strategic goals. Such goals include (a) the basic need to improve the relative strategic military stature of the USSR; (b) the long-standing desire to make some substantial progress on Berlin, and (c) the immediate goal of obtaining substantial and long term credits from the West to support new Soviet economic programs.

2. Maximize Power at Lower Level of Expenditures

A corollary of the basic objective of altering the balance of power may be the perceived opportunity to gain in the strategic rivalry by means of maximizing Soviet power at a lower level of military expenditure. Hence, Khrushchev, who is eager to strengthen his two bases--economic development and military power--for political maneuver, sees an opportunity to have his cake and eat it too. He could ease the economic burden of staying in the arms competition. He might see a comparative advantage in a limited arms competition inasmuch as the USSR is forced to pay a much greater economic penalty for defense than is the United States.

3. "Contracting the Arena"

Not only might Khrushchev move to slow down the rate of expansion of forces in both camps; he might also see the possibility of reducing the size of the arena of competition in a way that would exclude fields in which the USSR was comparatively weak but allow the USSR to compete in fields in which it was comparatively better off or might be thought

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to benefit more in terms of increments to its strategic power.

Perhaps a good example of what we might call the strategy of "contracting the arena" is the agreement made last fall at the U.N. not to orbit strategic weapons. Here the Soviets may have seen clear advantages for themselves: the agreement removes the necessity to compete in the development of a weapon in which, we believe, they have no immediate interest, at a time when critical resources are under great strain by competing requirements, military and civilian, within the USSR. (The agreement removes the need to compete not only in the development of orbital bombardment systems but in the development of costly counter-weapons to neutralize the adversary's capability as well.) The agreement thereby enables the Soviets to concentrate their limited resources in pursuits of their own choosing, where they may feel themselves to be in a stronger position to compete effectively--to enjoy the prestige of another "first." Hence, "contracting the arena" would afford the Soviets greater flexibility both in respect to shifting resources within the military establishment and from the defense to the civilian economy.

4. Symmetrical Measures Seen as Advantageous

While asymmetrical force reductions in favor of the USSR are, of course, preferred by the Soviets, symmetrical reductions or other restraints of apparent mutual benefit may also serve the aim of improving their strategic situation. They may calculate that apparent symmetrical measures can be advantageous to them in the following respects:

(a) The disparate strategic situation, which has a tendency to widen, can be prevented from doing so. Even fairly symmetrical arms control measures tend to deprive the United States of an important inherent advantage: greater potential for strengthening its military power (e.g., the ability to add some 1000 Minuteman rockets a year). The greater potential of the United States is likely to be an advantage so long as the Soviet deterrent is generally

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effective, but not absolute. (Such a situation obtains at the present time when the United States acknowledges the existence of a Soviet strategic deterrent but insists that this country is not absolutely deterred, on the contrary, that it is willing to risk all-out war in defense of its commitments and interests.) We doubt that there will ever be a situation of absolute mutual deterrence; there is always the possibility that a nation would prefer death to surrender. In other words, a proclaimed "vital interest" may be just that, the loss of which would be regarded as equivalent to loss of life, an interest therefore defended with the life of the nation.

(b) The strain on Soviet resources, created by the demands of the new chemical program, moreover, will probably be prohibitive as regards the USSR's ability to close the strategic gap by direct competition with the United States in the expansion and diversification of strategic forces. What is more, the task of maintaining the viability of the Soviet deterrent, of preventing further slippage in the strategic position of the USSR, is becoming increasingly burdensome. (According to the best judgment of the U.S. intelligence community, the pace of Soviet military procurement will be forced to slow down to satisfy the economic program. And even though the Soviets in the short term have the option of reducing conventional force levels to ease pressures on the strained resources, in the long term they will probably have to cut back or stretch out one or more programs for advanced weapons.) Hence, again the attraction of symmetrical arms limitations as a way out of the dilemma.

(c) The Soviets may also believe that through what seem to be mutually beneficial disarmament agreements they can obtain immediate military gains. For example, the Soviets might have seen some military advantage in the signing of the test ban treaty last August. In fact, they have explicitly claimed, evidently in answer to unnamed internal critics, that the USSR has protected its lead in high yield weapons, while leaving open the possibility of testing small weapons underground--a field in which the United States already has a military lead. There is no telling, moreover, how much information and what kind of conclusions they have

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drawn about the effects of their very high yield explosions,

5. Eliminate Obsolescent Forces

Another goal (which may be supported by only a minority in the military who share Khrushchev's views on war) may be to clear the decks of "obsolete" weapons, installations, and unnecessary personnel. Khrushchev's conception of what is obsolescent is much broader than that of many of his military colleagues, and has been a continuing source of contention between them. To the extent that Khrushchev desires to "clear the decks" by disarmament accord, it is not surprising that the ground forces commanders are cold to his arms control schemes: the ground forces now are an immediate object of such schemes. It is noteworthy that while in past, Soviet military officers justified the retention of a large standing army on the grounds that it was necessary in the event of general nuclear war, they now advance the additional argument that the USSR must be prepared for the contingency of limited war. The latter argument is probably a more compelling and more difficult one for Khrushchev to refute; it may be the chief obstacle in the path of the troop cut which he has "contemplated"--and which is probably much greater than the one now said to be underway. (Khrushchev may, in other words, be trying to restore the program temporarily adopted in 1960--of severe unilateral cuts in conventional forces--which was gradually defeated by a combination of internal and external factors.)

Again assuming that it is a "clear the decks" program, Khrushchev would want to cut conventional forces irrespective of U.S. actions. Reciprocal U.S. actions, in this case, would probably make it easier for Khrushchev to push his program through. In 1960 Khrushchev was more frank in explaining his objectives: the nature of war had changed radically from World War II and a new philosophy was needed for the development of Soviet forces, etc. And he explicitly

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stated in public that it was no longer important whether the West reciprocated in cutting its forces; the USSR would do so in any case, although reciprocity was desirable.

6. Prevent Dissemination of Strategic Weapons

The Soviet interest in preventing the spread of nuclear power is probably at least as strong as the American interest. The Soviets wish to concentrate bloc nuclear power in their own hands; this being impossible, short of making war on China (or colluding in it), the Soviets have acted to inhibit, at least to defer, Chinese development of nuclear weapons. (We would not rule out a Soviet decision at some future time to destroy or to cooperate in destroying China's nuclear facilities in order to prevent China from rivalling and threatening the USSR as a major nuclear power.) The Soviets are also greatly concerned about weapons-sharing in the West; as is known, they interpret multilateral or multinational forces as a form of dangerous nuclear proliferation. Their principal concern clearly is West Germany, which they fear as a historically hostile power, and against which they have developed enormous conventional and strategic forces. (It might explain, in large part, the Soviets' "European myopia" reflected by their force structure.)

The Soviets are hence likely to have a keen interest in any suggestions or schemes which might prevent or retard the proliferation of nuclear weapons and strategic delivery systems, both inside and outside the bloc, or, failing that, which would impose international controls on various Nth countries after they develop a nuclear capability.

The Soviet proposal (first advanced in September 1962) to establish a fixed number of strategic weapons systems in the United States and USSR seems to represent the quintessence of Soviet policy: Let there be but two great military powers, each supreme in his own realm, and nearly equal to one another, so as to have a stand-off and to be able to settle differences with a minimum danger of resort to strategic weapons. (The arrangement implies maximum flexibility on a tactical scale, for military actions as well as political.)

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7. Undermine NATO's Military Structure

Little need be said about an obvious and related objective: to undermine Western military cohesion and strength. The current policy of pursuing a detente diminishes the apparent Soviet threat to Europe, and consequently undercuts U.S. efforts to build up European conventional forces. This tack may be more effective than the boisterous Soviet propaganda aimed at forestalling the establishment of a multilateral nuclear force in Europe. On the other hand, however, being interested in separating Europe from the United States and in exploiting De Gaulle's tendencies in that direction, the Soviets do not appear to be opposed to the idea (which at this stage is probably popular only in the Kremlin) of multinational conventional forces in Europe. Such a development would imply greater European independence of U.S. military power; would not pose a sharp threat to the Soviet Union, which is a major nuclear power; and would tend to promote Soviet flexibility in dealing with a Europe virtually free of the U.S. nuclear support.* It might be something that the Soviets someday will want to encourage. Consider the following statement by Marshal Yeremenko in the June 1963 issue of INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS:

In working out their own variants of a "multinational nuclear force," the West

*The changing political relationships in the Western alliance may also affect the military-political values that the Soviets attach to their counter-Europe military threat. While it may become less effective against the United States as Europe moves in the direction of political-military autonomy, the continued existence of a massive counter-Europe threat may on the other hand, make a more independent Europe more responsive to Soviet political demands. (This would be so especially if De Gaulle succeeds in persuading European members of the NATO family that the U.S. commitment to defend Europe with nuclear weapons is unreliable.)

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European NATO countries proceed from the premise that it is much safer to have a weapon in one's own pocket than in that of the most devoted friend. They proceed from the "need" to make it clear to a possible enemy that an attempt to launch aggression against a NATO country would involve a nuclear counter-attack, for the government of the given country would possess nuclear weapons or would have the indisputable right to have a say in deciding on their use.

If it were a question of conventional armaments, these arguments might carry some weight. But as applied to nuclear weapons they are nonsense...

8. To Make Political Gains

While contending that the basic Soviet objective in limiting the arms race is to improve the relative strategic position of the USSR, we recognize that individual Soviet proposals are designed to support Soviet foreign policy objectives, and, if realized, might themselves constitute important political gains for the USSR. With respect to Europe, for example, such measures as non-aggression pact, nuclear free zone, foreign troop withdrawal, and non-proliferation of nuclears, are directly tied in with such political aims as dividing the NATO countries, neutralizing Germany's future military-political potential,* gaining acceptance of Soviet holdings in Eastern Europe, etc. Other arms control arrangements may, more indirectly, also serve important Soviet political objectives. Thus, as has been suggested in other intelligence issuances, the Soviets saw

*We expect almost all Soviet proposals on limited measures to continue to aim at, or to be tied to other proposals aiming at, the weakening of the Western position in Germany and Berlin.

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the test ban as an ideal issue on which to isolate Communist China from the mainstream of world opinion.

There is also the problem of domestic politics. As we have already pointed out, Khrushchev had waged a difficult struggle at home before his present course in foreign and domestic policy could be charted. In order to carry through certain military reforms at home, he has had to establish a certain climate abroad. Thus, it was only after Khrushchev had met with President Eisenhower in September 1959, and returned with a highly optimistic estimate of the world situation, that the Soviet leader was able to put across his hard-fought military program at home. To rebut those who had misgivings about his program for sharp cuts in conventional forces (he may not have deceived all his colleagues about Soviet missile strength) he would point to a "definite" improvement in the international situation, a "considerable" relaxation of East-West tensions, and "more favorable" prospects for peace, as a safeguard for the risks involved in undertaking the military cuts.

Again in 1963, Khrushchev first had to claim that the threat of war had greatly diminished before formally declaring that a reduction in the budget was planned and a reduction in force size contemplated. Since early last year, Khrushchev had been campaigning behind the scenes for cuts in defense spending--notably in conventional forces--and during the summer intimated his intentions to several foreign visitors. But it was only after the signing of the partial nuclear test treaty and the fostering of the "spirit of Moscow" that Khrushchev was able to sell his chemical program and military budget cut to the bureaucracy and to announce to the Soviet people a "contemplated" plan for a troop cut.*

*There has evidently been some cutting of Soviet forces, beginning in the summer of last year, if only through attrition. Thus, in September, the small class of 1944 was called into military service, evidently without other call-ups to offset the manpower deficiency.

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9. Channel the Arms Race into R&D

Painfully aware of the difficulty of (indeed, the virtual impossibility of), as well as the danger of, striving to achieve a decisive lead in a quantitative arms race with the United States, Soviet leaders have long been trying to shift the competition to the less dangerous and more promising (for them) field of qualitative weapons developments. Their conception of superiority, insofar as it is revealed in the literature, is derived from an assessment of qualitative criteria as well as numerical comparisons. They have said that "if one side has more effective weapons, it is possible for that side (all other things being equal) to hold the upper-hand over the enemy which possesses inferior weapons." (KOMMUNIST OF THE ARMED FORCES, No. 6, March 1961). Reasoning thus, they have emphasized scientific and technological capabilities as such, and are very much concerned with gaining lead time over the United States in the development of new weapons and countermeasures. "The Soviet Government is not limiting itself to those military means which the adversary has," a Soviet Defense Ministry book said some years ago, "for undoubtedly that would be insufficient. Any pre-empting of the adversary's potential in the creation of the newest means of combat not only gives undoubted superiority in case of war, but also makes it difficult for the aggressive imperialist forces to unleash wars." (E.I. Rybkin, "War and Politics," 1959)

In the past, the Soviets have often based claims to military superiority on the qualitative factors. This has helped them to draw attention away from invidious comparisons of force size. In two important pronouncements in 1962, an article in KOMMUNIST in May and a pamphlet in November, Marshal Malinovsky declared that "in the competition for quality of armament forced upon us by aggressive forces, we are not only not inferior to those who threaten us with war, but in many respects are superior to them." In the KOMMUNIST article Malinovsky also threatened that "this superiority will increase if the arms race is not stopped"; and in the pamphlet, after asserting that the "development by our scientists of super-powerful thermonuclear bombs and also global rockets" was an index of Soviet superiority over probable enemies, he stated:

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Let them know we do not intend to rest on our laurels. This common vice of all victorious armies is alien to us. We do not intend to fall behind in development, and we do not intend to be inferior in any way to our probable enemies.

The Soviets have, in fact, made great efforts to surge ahead in the qualitative development of strategic weapons, just as they have done in outer space exploration. They undoubtedly believe that the world's image of Soviet power will be much enhanced by more technological breakthroughs, that the political returns will be great even though the real military value may be small (unless and until there is actual production and deployment on a substantial scale). The whole past record of Soviet activities in advanced weaponry and outer space is suggestive of a compulsion to be the first--to tip the strategic balance through psychological warfare. Thus the Soviets had the first ICBM, the first artificial earth satellite, the first manned space flight, the first (claimed) ABM. It seems that they also aspire to have the first Laser weapon system--a development which might have an impact on force posture comparable to nuclear and rocket technology.

The Soviets already have significant capabilities in basic fields related to Lasers and open Soviet literature provides evidence that some fundamental research is now underway.* Also, more than a year ago, Khrushchev

*Thus, a recent article in a Soviet scientific magazine discussed a Soviet experiment in which Laser light was focused on a plate immersed in water; the plate buckled and explosive boiling occurred as it was pierced by the light. It is also plain that the Soviets have a keen interest in U.S. research in exotic weapons. Also, the revised edition of the Defense Ministry book "Military Strategy," published last fall, made the following statement about weapons research in the United States:

Various systems of radiation, anti-gravity, anti-matter, plasma (ball lightning), etc., are under study as a means of destroying missiles. Particular attention is devoted to Lasers (death rays), and it is believed that in the future powerful Lasers will be able to destroy any missile or satellite.

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himself had indicated to a U.S. industrial official that the Soviets were ahead of the United States in the Laser field and were not limited in their research to communications; during a long conversation, Khrushchev fingered a steel ruler with tiny holes, which, he said, had been drilled by Laser beams.

Malinovsky, too, might have had Laser weapons in mind when he stated in a brief interview in the November (No. 21, 1963) issue of KOMMUNIST OF THE ARMED FORCES:

But the new weapons are also being modernized and being replaced by still newer ones. The possibility is not excluded that a fundamentally new weapon will appear. Comrade Khrushchev has spoken about the fact that the weapons we now have are terrifying weapons, but those which, so to speak, are on the way na vykhode are even more modern and even more terrifying.

The Soviets might see another important advantage in channeling the arms competition into R&D: secrecy. Even if the Soviets threw open to inspection large areas of their country, they could retain a substantial reservoir of secrecy which would afford them the opportunity to forge ahead in one or another field without the United States knowing the pace of development. The corollary advantage is that in an environment of a regulated arms competition--with respect to production and deployment of weapons--the United States might lose the stimulus to devote the vast amounts of resources necessary to keep military R&D on the move, while the Soviets might, under protection of secrecy, make important progress.

If the major powers do make significant progress in reducing the size of their forces and placing controls on their expansion, logically, qualitative developments in weaponry would tend to assume greater importance in the strategic power rivalry. The Soviets would, of course, welcome such a development. Moreover, their compulsion to move ahead technologically would probably be greater under circumstances of a partially regulated arms race, for the

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Soviets would then see a tempting opportunity to alter importantly the strategic power balance. Thus, whatever gains were made through arms control could be carried still further by vigorous work in the development of exotic weapons.

Consider, for example, the consequences of a Soviet breakthrough in defensive weapons. In a situation of strategic standoff, the development of a "perfect" defense theoretically could nullify the strategic stalemate and substantially alter the strategic balance in favor of the USSR. A technological breakthrough of this magnitude, even without full deployment of the radically new weapons, might alter the strategic situation: human fears and mass psychology, as in the past, might do the work of deployment. Any such development would, in turn, probably bring on another arms race; but the diversion of U.S. scientific energies to peaceful programs might result in a long period of Soviet military ascendancy with great political advantages.

C. The Limits of Disarmament

Against the backdrop of estimated motivation and objectives, how far might we expect the Soviets to be willing to go in disarmament? Or, put another way, what might the Soviets calculate to be in their best interest with respect to degrees of arms reduction and control?

There are, we think, limits on Soviet interest in disarmament that stop far short of general and complete disarmament (GCD). Arms control now appears to be an integral part of Soviet strategic planning; GCD does not. While GCD, ironically, plays a tactical role in establishing a general framework and environment for keeping negotiations with the West in motion, and propagandizing the "peace-loving interests" of the USSR, it is highly doubtful that any Soviet leaders seriously regard GCD as a strategic goal. In fact, Khrushchev has of late intimated--in notes to Western heads of government in December 1963--that GCD is not even a profitable tactical course to follow at this time, whereas partial disarmament measures are.

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This is not to question the strongly-enunciated Soviet desire to prevent a new world war. What we are suggesting here is that the Soviets do not in their strategic planning regard GCD, even supposing it were realizable, as a prerequisite for general peace (since 1956 the Soviets have been saying that world war is "not fatalistically inevitable"), or if fully implemented, as serving the national interests of the USSR.

GCD seems to be counter to the assumptions which the Soviets make about power and national interests. In the first place, Soviet leaders would not necessarily assume that a disarmed world would be a more stable one; they might, we think, well estimate the reverse. As noted, they have demonstrated a keen appreciation of the power of nuclear-rocket weapons, which they call "absolute weapons" in the sense that they tend to make large-scale war a totally irrational method of achieving political ends. Further, they probably assume that the presence of large stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction contributes to world stability if more or less symmetrically distributed between the two camps. The authors of the book "Military Strategy" said as much in the first edition of that work in 1962. They wrote that American strategists "have begun to understand" that the multiplication of strategic nuclear weapons in the United States and the USSR has already brought about a nuclear stalemate. Implying that they endorsed the idea, the authors wrote that "the growth of nuclear missile power is inversely proportional to the possibility of its use."* Moreover, the thrust of Khrushchev's thinking on nuclear war is that if it can be made to appear as suicidal, it will not occur; and it is partly on this basis that he and other Soviet spokesmen repudiate

*To suggest that the massing of weapons has increased stability contradicts the traditional Soviet line that the arms race increases the danger of war; it was probably for this reason that the statement was dropped from the revised edition of the work, which, significantly, retained references to a nuclear stalemate.

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American ideas on controlled strategic warfare, for they tend to make nuclear war manageable and therefore a possible rational course of action.

If this is indeed an operative Soviet assumption, then the Soviets would be averse to the reduction of strategic stockpiles below the "unacceptable damage" level. For then, general nuclear war might no longer appear as "madness" or an "impossibility," and the danger of another world war might be greater.

The problem of Communist China may also dictate a lower limit to cuts which the Soviets might be willing to make in their strategic and conventional military power. Sharp cuts in strategic forces, for example, would tend to invite Chinese rivalry--or French or German, etc. The Soviets have tried to get around the Nth country problem by proposing a disarmament scheme (first at the U.N. in September 1962; at Geneva in March 1963; at the U.N. again in September 1963; and at Geneva again this year) which provides for retention in the United States and USSR, alone, of a "limited" number of ICBMs, ABMs, and SAMs.*

Lower limits on arms reduction in general would also be dictated by the need to keep the East European bloc countries in tow, although it is difficult to say what influence if any this consideration would have on the level of Soviet strategic weapons. GCD, at least at this juncture, appears to be incompatible with the Soviets' interest in preserving their East European empire.

At the same time, however, there is reason to believe that the Soviets might be willing to take relatively large strides in the field of arms control, and to modify what had earlier been rigid positions and principles.

*We would not be surprised if a Soviet proposal of this kind were eventually accompanied by a direct Soviet proposal to take action against other nations possessing such weapons.

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The problem of inspection may be a case in point. In the past, secrecy had played a central role in virtually every aspect of military planning and force structure. A turning point was reached, however, with the U-2 affair, followed by the disclosure in 1961 of revised U.S. estimates of Soviet long-range strategic weapons. Such developments in strategic surveillance have probably had an enormous impact on Soviet strategy; at the very least they made the Soviets painfully aware that their capabilities for maintaining military secrecy in the sphere of strategic weapons deployment were dwindling. As a result secrecy is perhaps no longer a crucial ingredient in some aspects of Soviet military planning. And as the value (effectiveness) of secrecy lessens, it tends to become a dispensable commodity. In other words, we would not be surprised if the Soviets showed a willingness to make "concessions" regarding secrecy--e.g., in the form of inspection of deployed sites, or some sort of "open skies" inspection.*

There is still, however, a large reservoir of secrecy which is essential to Soviet military planning and which the Soviets in all likelihood will resist compromising. This is, most notably, the secrecy of the laboratories--of Soviet R&D, in which endeavor, they may believe that they will be able to alter the power balance in the world.

Put another way, in approaching the problem of arms control, the Soviets are probably more concerned about the consequences of the loss of secrecy than about giving in on the principle of no international inspection. In fact, the Soviets have already demonstrated that they no longer

*At the same time, we acknowledge that there may be other, perhaps stronger, reasons militating against important concessions on inspection, such as the desire to keep the option of making a rapid, temporarily secret deployment in the event of a breakthrough in some new weapon system.

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oppose inspection in principle--in their proposals for "black boxes" for surveillance of underground nuclear testing, for ground inspection posts to prevent surprise attacks, and for "control" of a limited number of strategic weapons in the United States and USSR.

In sum, we think that the same concerns that motivate the USSR to reach accord with the West on arms controls--the felt need to protect and improve the national power position of the USSR--will be instrumental in setting the limits of Soviet disarmament policies.

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