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Sino-Soviet Relations

*An Inter-Office Projection Based on
Quantitative Methods*

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**DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE
OFFICE OF REGIONAL AND POLITICAL ANALYSIS**

Progress Report No. 20

28 January 1977

**SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS
An Inter-Office Projection Based
on Quantitative Methods**

This project consists of three quantitative approaches to Sino-Soviet relations. A team of analysts, drawn from various components of the CIA and concerned with different aspects of Chinese and Soviet affairs, examines on a continuing basis all relevant intelligence items. The first part of this project is to consider the effect of this evidence on the possibility of one or another level of Sino-Soviet hostilities. The analysts' numerical assessments of the likelihood of such hostilities, calculated according to the Bayesian formula of probabilities, are presented in the graph on page 2. The second part of the project is an application of the same Bayesian technique to scenarios of improved relations. The third part of this project is a chart of Sino-Soviet tensions, based upon subjective overall evaluation by the participants. Progress reports are published on a periodic basis by the Office of Regional and Political Analysis.



PRINCIPAL TRENDS:

The major event during this two-month period was the return to Peking of Deputy Foreign Minister Ilchev, head of the Soviet delegation to the border talks [Item 1]. Soviet media continued to avoid direct polemics against the Chinese, [Item 2], and on the other side, some reduction was noted in the volume (though not the tone) of Chinese criticism of the Soviet Union [Items 3 and 6].

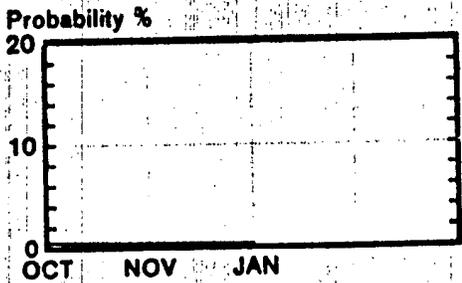
The probability of any form of hostilities remains quite low in the next six months (see page 2). The possibility of various forms of reconciliation increased significantly from the Soviet side, but the Chinese appear adamantly opposed. The overall level of tension remained about the same.

Regular readers of this publication will notice changes in the title and graphics. These reflect a shift in the focus of the project toward the possibility of improved relations.

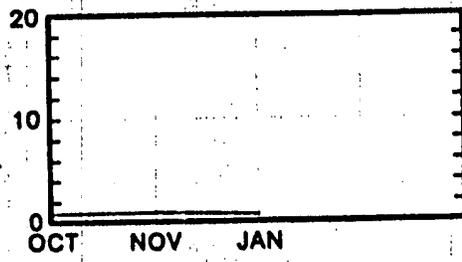
NOTE.—Comments on these reports will be welcomed by [redacted] of the Methods and Forecasting Division, [redacted] who is coordinating this project. For the assessments from June 1974 through November 1976, see [redacted]

A Bayesian Analysis of the Likelihood of Sino-Soviet Hostilities

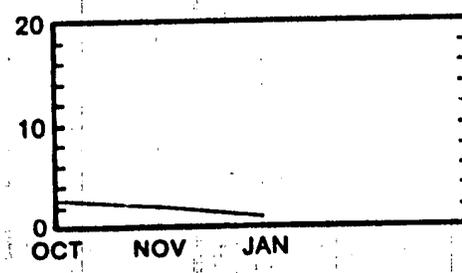
A The Soviets will undertake a nuclear strike against Chinese strategic or nuclear targets within six months.



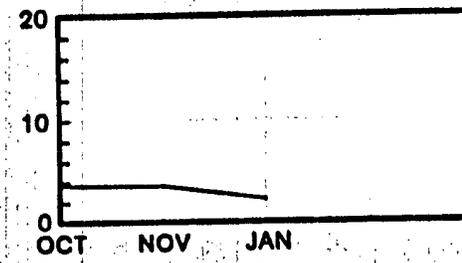
B The Soviets will launch a large scale conventional attack against China within six months.



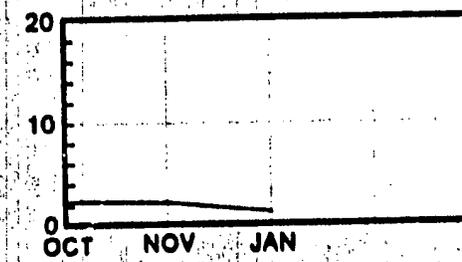
C The Soviets will launch a localized cross-border attack, with limited objectives, on a scale larger than the 1969 incidents, within six months.



D The Chinese will launch a localized cross-border attack, with limited objectives, on a scale larger than the 1969 incidents, within six months.



E Either side will undertake a level of activity sufficient to instigate a revolt by one or more minority groups near the border within six months.

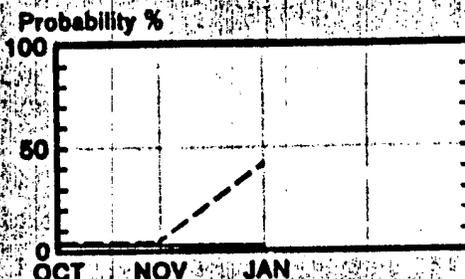


Values shown are average figures for all participants.

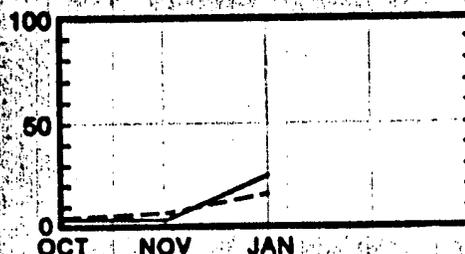
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A Bayesian Analysis of the Likelihood of Improvements in Sino-Soviet Relations

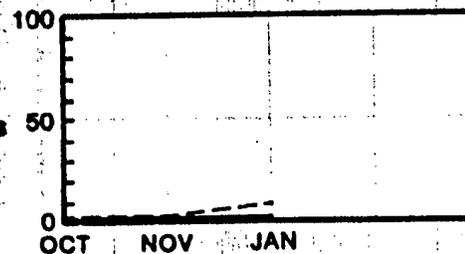
G There will be an effort to settle the border dispute within six months.



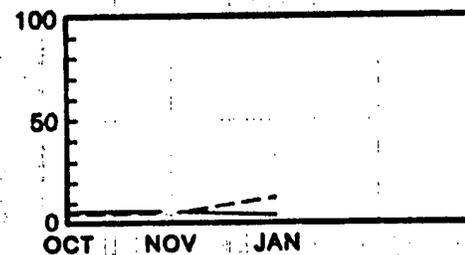
H There will be an effort to significantly improve economic relations within six months.



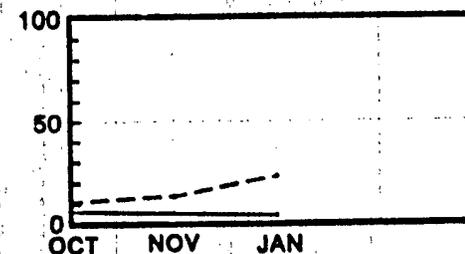
I There will be an effort to restore party-to-party relations within six months.



J There will be an effort to issue a joint statement about mutual relations within six months.



K There will be an effort to hold a meeting of Politburo-level representatives within six months.



———— Average figures for Chinese analysts
 - - - - Average figures for Soviet analysts

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ITEMS OF EVIDENCE CONSIDERED IN THE REVISION OF 7 JANUARY:

1. Head of the Soviet delegation for border talks with China, L. Ilichev, returned to Peking on 27 November after an 18-month absence. He was greeted by his counterpart, Yu Chan. Border talks were resumed on 30 November. (Press, [redacted])

Soviet officials in Peking played down his return, calling it a routine contact after a long absence. [redacted] A counselor of the Soviet embassy in Peking told a [redacted] embassy official that Sino-Soviet border talks had struck a sour note even before they started. He said that when Ilichev's plane stopped over at Chita instead of Irkutsk, the Chinese refused a request to reroute the flight, delaying Ilichev for two hours. The counselor said that Ilichev did not bring to Peking any new proposals, and what the Soviets really want to do at the talks is to determine China's attitude toward the USSR after Mao's death. [redacted]

[redacted] High-ranking Chinese officials expressed the view that the return was a deceptive tactic to lead the US and Eastern Europe to believe that a reconciliation is still possible. [redacted] Chinese diplomats in Moscow were skeptical that Ilichev brought any new Soviet offers. [redacted]

2. Soviet media continue the moratorium on direct polemics with China instituted after Mao's death on 9 Sep. Soviet radio broadcasts to China, however, continued to initiate veiled criticism of Peking's positions in the Sino-Soviet dispute. (Various FBIS, [redacted])

3. Since the death of Mao Tse-tung the volume of Peking media criticism of the Soviet Union has been reduced. However, routine level Chinese commentaries continue to frequently attack Soviet domestic and foreign policies. And authoritative Chinese spokesmen have occasionally rebuked the Soviets for "dreaming" that Mao's death would result in a change in Peking's hostility toward the Soviet Union (FBIS Trends throughout the period, [redacted])

4. In private statements to foreign journalists, in the first week of November, Chinese officials reiterated China's willingness to "maintain" normal state-to-state relations but have taken a hard line on conditions for improvement. [redacted]

[redacted] 12 Nov. [redacted]

On 15 November Li Feng-lin, First Secretary of the PRC embassy in Moscow, told [redacted] officials there that the Chinese want better state-to-state relations—they have "never" hidden it—but there has been no sign that the Soviets are serious about improvement and that includes Tikhvinsky [redacted]

5. Soviet Foreign Ministry China expert G. Kireyev on 14 December commented [redacted] in Moscow on China's diplomacy. He said that it is based on the premise that the other side must do something in order that relations may become

normal. This is true in relations with the Soviet Union, he said, where they set out "preconditions" on the border; with Japan, where they insist on Japanese acceptance of "hegemony" language; and with the US, where they put forth preconditions concerning Taiwan. But the Chinese "do not take account" of what China should do in order to establish a relationship of true mutuality of benefits. This demonstrates China's one-sided "chauvinistic" approach, Kireyev concluded. [redacted] 20 Dec. [redacted]

6. A Peking Radio broadcast in Russian to the USSR on New Year's eve encouraged the "peoples of the Soviet Union" to advance in "the struggle against the fascist dictatorship of Brezhnev's revisionist clique." (Peking Radio, 31 Dec, [redacted])

7. Deputy Premier Li Hsien-nien, in a speech on 15 November at a banquet for the visiting President of the Central African Republic, declared: "But social-imperialism, while continuing to slander and threaten China, has kept *creating false impressions of relaxation of relations*. This is wishful thinking and daydreaming." (emphasis supplied) Soviet Ambassador Tolstikov and diplomats from Moscow's East European allies had walked out of the banquet hall earlier after Li had attacked Moscow's "wildly ambitious" and "criminal" actions in Africa. (Peking NCNA English, 15 Nov, [redacted])

8. Party Chairman Hua Kuo-feng, in a 25 December speech, declared that, "The imperialists, and the social-imperialists in particular, pinned their hopes on the possibility of a violent turmoil in China after the passing of Chairman Mao; their hopes have now come to nothing. They also dreamed of the emergence of a certain force that would alter the revolutionary line and orientation Chairman Mao had defined for us; their dream, too, has now been exploded." (Peking NCNA English, 28 Dec, [redacted])

9. A Japanese delegation was told by Chinese provincial officials that Soviet border violations were still frequent and that there had been 150 such violations between January and August 1976. The Chinese also said that between 1960 and 1975 there had been about 9,000 cases of Russian border violations and attacks against Chinese living along the border in Heilungkiang. In addition they asserted that the Soviets are constantly holding maneuvers along the border where "40" Soviet divisions are deployed. (Tokyo KYODO, 18 Dec, [redacted])

THE PARTICIPANTS:



ANALYTIC TECHNIQUES USED IN THIS PROJECT:

The graph on page 2 shows the average of analysts' estimates of the likelihood of hostilities; the Bayesian method of calculation is used. This method, as applied here, systematizes a series of appraisals of incoming intelligence made independently by individual analysts. Every participant weighs each new piece of relevant data in terms of the hypotheses shown, which, for the purpose of this exercise, are considered to be mutually exclusive. Simple mathematical calculations, applying the new evidence to the analysts' previous estimates, then yield updated estimates, which serve as the basis for the chart.

The chart on page 3 is an extension of the same Bayesian technique to scenarios of improved relations.

The chart on page 6 is an ongoing measurement of the level of Sino-Soviet tensions. It is not a Bayesian analysis: no specific hypotheses are posed and no prior mathematical calculations are made on the basis of prior estimates. Instead, at the start and at bimonthly intervals, each of the participants selects a position on the scale of 0 to 100 to represent his best judgment of the current general state of tensions between Moscow and Peking. (The points 10 and 70 have been designated as reference points, as explained on the chart.) Small shifts from the analysts' initial positions may not prove to be meaningful, but abrupt or sustained movement in the lines will be significant.

The measurement of the degree of general tension should be considered as complementary to—but independent of—the estimates of the likelihood of hostilities. Taken together, the two approaches ensure continuing examination of the probabilities of conflict and of the overall state of relations between the USSR and China.

The terms of new evidence considered each period are identified by the participants themselves, consolidated by ORPA and then resubmitted to all the analysts for their evaluations—both in terms of the Bayes hypotheses and as factors bearing on the general state of tensions.

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