PRESIDENT BREZHNEV AND THE SOVIET UNION'S CHANGING SECURITY POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The Soviet Union's definition of national security policy has changed markedly over the course of strategic arms limitation negotiations with the United States. The reigning orthodoxy in Soviet strategic discourse in the 1960's equated security with preponderant military power and optimizing the Soviet nuclear deterrent. As SALT began in 1969, Soviet policy statements stressed the importance of the negotiations but were vague on how they would affect overall security policy. Over the following decade, and especially since 1974, the USSR has come to recognize the limitations of military power and the benefits of military balance with the West in achieving national security. The new approach has been codified in the USSR's formal acceptance of strategic parity with the United States and public acknowledgment that, given the balance that has developed, efforts to achieve anything more would be pointless. The key changes have been announced in a series of public statements by President Brezhnev, who appears to have supplied the political impetus behind this evolution of policy and strategic thought.

There were indications even before the end of Stalin's rule that responsible officials in the military as well as the party were urging a revision of traditional doctrinal postulates to accommodate the new realities of the nuclear era. After Stalin's death, his successors hastened to establish their understanding that the awesome destructive potential of the nuclear arsenals that were accumulating on each side required a rethinking of the issues of war and peace. Soviet statements of the period on the probable consequences of a nuclear conflict clearly recognized the reality of mutual deterrence.

Yet, at the policy level, the USSR stopped short of acknowledging that this development placed limits on the ability of military power to underwrite national security. In a period when Soviet strategic power was measurably inferior to that of the United States, Soviet officials showed no interest in military balance as an important goal for the East-West relationship. Soviet discourse remained faithful to a tradition which denied that the USSR's weapons were as threatening to human values as those in the West and accordingly did not admit that they were equally in need of restraints. SALT I brought the concept of "equal security" as a goal for the negotiations. It also saw a slackening of support for some traditional strategic postulates--but only limited movement toward a declared security posture to replace them.

The results of the 1972 and 1973 U.S.-Soviet summits--the agreements on principles of mutual relations, limiting strategic arms, and the prevention of nuclear war--appear to have opened the way to a new push by those advocating a more radical adjustment of Soviet security policy to the reality of nuclear weapons. Evidence of debate on these subjects appeared in the wake of the 1973 summit in Washington. Although the full outline and implications of this debate were obscure at the time, it centered on whether a change in the Soviet Union's traditional approach to military power was appropriate given the emerging strategic balance and the development of detente in relations with the West.

In retrospect, it is apparent that the revisionists in this debate won a significant victory. Beginning in 1974, President Brezhnev introduced new concepts and accompanying vocabulary into Soviet strategic discourse, signaling a clear break with the notion that security derives directly from military power. Brezhnev began by describing the world's strategic arsenals as excessively large and already redundant and arguing there was greater risk in accumulating arms than reducing them. He completed the process of adjustment, beginning in 1977, by embracing the concept of military parity with the West and suggesting that the pursuit of anything more was pointless.

The new security posture introduced by President Brezhnev, while in the first instance a recognition of the realities of military balance, was not brought about without controversy; there was evidence of resistance to the idea that security could be enhanced by arms control arrangements with the West that restricted the core elements of Soviet military power. They thus represent a cardinal victory for proponents of change in the USSR who have argued, since early in the nuclear era, that the mutual vulnerability introduced by nuclear weapons required a departure from traditional doctrine on war and peace. The changes establish a more hospitable domestic environment for joint efforts to restrain the strategic arms competition than existed during SALT I or even the early stages of SALT II. They also challenge the traditional dominance of military professionals in the sphere of defense policy by clarifying that the primary goal of strategy in the nuclear age is to prevent war, not to win it.

POST-STALIN DEVELOPMENTS

A signal development of the Khrushchev era was the USSR's official acknowledgment that the advent of nuclear weapons presented new imperatives for Soviet policy on the issues of war and peace. Khrushchev and other leaders announced their understanding that the vast destructive potential of nuclear weapons ruled out resort to war as a means of settling East-West disputes. That understanding clearly was behind Khrushchev's revision of the Stalinist dogma on the inevitability of war. Nonetheless, the Khrushchev era's accommodation of the harsh realities of the nuclear age was limited. Soviet discourse continued to approach security as a national concept dependent on unilateral decisions and determined by military power. Soviet leaders did not acknowledge that the mutual vulnerability of the nuclear era or the search for a stable relationship with the West legitimately raised the prospect of balanced restraints on the dimensions of the West's and its own, then rudimentary, strategic arsenal.

Through the mid-1960's, as the USSR strove to overcome its position of strategic inferiority, Soviet posture statements reiterated the traditional maxim that a superior military force was the best way to insure Soviet national defense. It was not uncommon for Soviet political leaders to echo that idea, however ill-defined. A notable example was the June 1966 Supreme Soviet election speech of First Secretary Brezhnev, who claimed that the USSR would seek "to preserve the superiority" of its armed forces over those of the West.

SALT I AND EQUAL SECURITY

The notion that national security should be considered in a broader international context began to emerge in Soviet official discourse after the initiation of strategic arms limitation negotiations with the United States in the fall of 1969. The USSR's initial public statements in connection with SALT gave little insight into Soviet goals in the new diplomatic venture. In his benchmark address to the 24th CPSU Congress in 1971, however, Brezhnev--by now party general secretary and increasingly the dominant force in foreign policy--set forth the Soviet desideratum in the talks as "the security of the parties considered equally" and the renunciation of attempts to seek unilateral advantage. Shortened as "equal security," that formula served as the USSR's stated goal for the SALT I negotiations.

While clearly a step away from the notion of Soviet superiority the precise implications of "equal security" remained somewhat ambiguous. It was on occasion employed in Soviet SALT commentary to justify the notion that the USSR should be allowed special compensation--for its long border with China and its greater vulnerability to attack from

short- and medium-range systems. Even more illustrative of the nature of the concept, the equal security formula was employed strictly in the SALT context while Soviet leaders remained reluctant throughout SALT I to address the broader issue of their perceptions and intentions regarding the East-West strategic balance. Even in responding periodically to assertions in the West that the USSR was seeking a position of advantage, Soviet officials were less than unequivocal in rejecting them. Typically their responses treated the issue strictly as one of intentions: They dismissed as mythical the notion that there was a Soviet threat to the West, offered reassurances that the USSR had no intention of attacking anyone but stopped short of directly addressing the question of capabilities.

IMPACT OF SUMMIT ACCORDS: DEBATE OVER DEFENSE POSTURE

A further and more significant evolution of the USSR's policy on nuclear weapons, the strategic balance, and an appropriate security posture has occurred since 1974, coincident with the beginning of serious negotiations on a SALT II treaty. Its final result has been the USSR's official recognition of the benefits of stabilizing the East-West military balance--a recognition that has been expressed by its acceptance of strategic parity as the basis of relations with the West and by its acknowledgment that increments of military power will not by themselves add to Soviet security. The Soviet change of posture was made evident in a series of key statements by President Brezhnev, apparently aimed at resolving internal disputes over the issues.

That some further movement in Soviet security policy might be in prospect during SALT II was first suggested by indications of debate that appeared in the summer of 1973 on an obviously sensitive issue: Whether the improving international climate, the results of the 1972 and 1973 U.S.-Soviet summits, and the emerging military balance had made necessary a new look at the Soviet approach to insuring national security. Although the precise program of those proposing a change never surfaced fully at the time, their public contributions to the debate made clear they were objecting to the traditional preoccupation with military power as the wellspring of Soviet security and suggesting that diplomacy was the best way of building on the recent improvements in the situation. In response, those defending the orthodox position argued in strongly polemical terms that the improvement in the international situation was not yet sufficient to justify any questioning of traditional military-political tenets and that adding to Soviet power remained the best way of improving the USSR's position.

Through 1973 and into early 1974 occasional evidence appeared that the debate was continuing, with little apparent resonance at the official level. The most significant contributions to the debate in

the Soviet press suggested the possibility of a civilian-military dichotomy. The USSR's leading academic Americanologist, Georgiy Arbatov, and his colleague at the Institute of the USA and Canada, IZVESTIYA political observer Aleksandr Bovin, wrote key articles for the revisionists. RED STAR's propaganda department head Col. I. Sidelnikov, Col. Ye. Rybkin, and Rear Admiral V.V. Shelyag--the latter two with the Lenin Military-Political Academy attached to the Ministry of Defense--weighed in with the most significant responses.

Arbatov, in a 22 July PRAVDA article entitled "Soviet-American Relations in the New Stage," acknowledged the importance of the changed correlation of forces and the USSR's enhanced defense might in bringing about the improvement in U.S.-Soviet relations and relaxation of international tensions. But he went on to warn that excessive reliance on military power was a self-defeating approach and stressed the importance of diplomacy in the recent changes:

> The consistently peace-loving foreign policy course of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries is a very important reason for the current relaxation of tension. For of itself power does not guarantee peace and still less detente. The growth of power at one pole can in the final analysis, as has happened quite often in the past, lead to attempts to build up power at the other--in other words to unrestrained military rivalry. Also important is the direction in which this power is turned and the aims which he who has acquired it sets himself.

Bovin's article, which had appeared earlier in the evening edition of IZVESTIYA on 11 July, provided insight into the specific arguments of the revisionists that were to shape the further evolution of the debate and the pronouncements of President Brezhnev.* Summing up the significance of international trends, Bovin argued that the advent of nuclear weapons had led leaders in both the socialist and capitalist worlds to rule out nuclear war as a means of attaining political objectives. Bovin underscored the policy implications of this development:

> At the basis of the agreements (between the USSR and the United States) lies sober calculation, understanding of the catastrophic nature of a global thermonuclear conflict, awareness that under conditions of a nuclear missile balance further growth of nuclear arsenals loses political meaning and does not increase, but diminishes, the security of the parties.

* There were indications at the time of the sensitivity of Bovin's arguments. Articles published in the evening edition of IZVESTIYA are normally carried in the next morning's editions that are mailed abroad, but Bovin's article did not so appear.

Apparently anticipating a doctrinal objection, Bovin noted that this development raised questions about the appropriateness of the Clausewitzian formula, expounded by Lenin, that war is a "continuation of policy by other means." But he insisted that the realities of the nuclear age could not be ignored: "Stockpiles of nuclear-missile weapons are such today," he argued, "that it would be possible to destroy all life on our planet." Hence, Bovin argued, "the time has come to solve practically another problem--the preservation of human life."

The potential scope of what was at issue in the arguments by Arbatov and Bovin became more apparent from the orthodox response. In a 14 August 1973 RED STAR article entitled "Peaceful Coexistence and the Security of the People," Colonel Sidelnikov acknowledged that unnamed "military theorists and publicists" were "now returning" to Marxist-Leninist teachings on defense and many were "connecting their interpretation with the relaxation of tension and the Soviet-American agreement on the prevention of nuclear war (signed by President Nixon and General Secretary Brezhnev at the June 1973 summit)." Sidelnikov responded by defending orthodox positions and pointing to the limitations on what U.S.-Soviet negotiations had yet achieved. The prevention of nuclear war agreement, Sidelnikov noted, still does not mean a prohibition of nuclear weapons, and, pointedly listing all four opposing nuclear powers, he contended that as long as they possess nuclear weapons the Soviet Union must remain ready to "wage war with the use of any means of armed struggle." Clearly taking issue with Bovin on the best defense posture to accompany detente, Sidelnikov argued that further adding to Soviet power was the best way to consolidate what had been achieved:

> The higher the military might and combat readiness of the armed forces of the USSR and all armies of the fraternal socialist countries and the better their cohesion and cooperation, the more durable (is) peace on earth, the more reliable the security of our peoples and the broader the opportunities for consolidating and developing the successes of the policy of peaceful coexistence and for making irreversible the positive changes in the international arena.

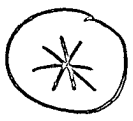
Several more orthodox spokesmen subsequently weighed in with attacks on the revisionist arguments. Notable among them was Col. Ye. Rybkin--a conservative spokesman in earlier military debates of the 1960's. In an October 1973 issue of COMMUNIST OF THE ARMED FORCES, Rybkin attacked Bovin by name for a "notable methodological mistake" in "several" recent publications: questioning the validity of the Lenin-Clausewitz dictum and failing to make a "scientific analysis of the essence of war."

Perhaps the most important rebuttal to the revisionists, and certainly the most illuminating of what was at issue, came in a 7 February 1974 RED STAR article by Rear Admiral Shelyag. Entitled "Two World Outlooks--Two Views on War," the article strongly reiterated the orthodox viewpoint on how nuclear weapons affected the matter of national security. Shelyag took strong exception in particular to the arguments on the excessive level of current strategic arsenals and the potential consequences of using them that Bovin had offered in his article in IZVESTIYA the previous July:

> If arguments about the death of civilization and about no victors in a nuclear war are to be presented in an oversimplified manner, they are based on mathematical calculations. The authors of these arguments divide the quantity of the accumulated nuclear potential in the world by the number of people living on earth. As a result it emerges that all mankind really could be destroyed. This is an oversimplified, one-sided approach to such a complex sociohistorical phenomenon as war.

To such arguments suggesting that weapons on both sides were part of the problem, Shelyag countered that nuclear weapons in the West are indeed a threat to mankind but those in Soviet hands are dedicated to its defense. As for the consequences of nuclear war, Shelyag reaffirmed the traditional view:

> Our understanding of the consequences of a possible world war are defined in the CPSU Program (approved by the 22d CPSU Congress in 1961): 'In the event the imperialists nevertheless dare to unleash a new world war, the peoples will no longer be able to tolerate a system which plunges them into devastating wars. They will sweep imperialism away and bury it.'*



* The early outlines of this debate and some of its individual contributions are discussed in several FBIS publications of the period, including the TRENDS SUPPLEMENT of 23 August 1973, "Soviet Debate over Role of Military Power during Detente," and the TRENDS of 26 September 1973, pages 3-4; 13 February 1974, pages 2-4; and 21 February 1974, pages 6-8.

BREZHNEV AND THE REDUNDANCY OF NUCLEAR ARSENALS

Within a year of the first signs of this debate, Brezhnev entered the dialogue, borrowing directly from the language of the revisionists, making precisely the argument to which Shelyag had objected, and clarifying some of the policy implications. In a series of speeches beginning in the summer of 1974, Brezhnev pointed to the excessive and indeed redundant levels of current nuclear arsenals and argued that restrictions rather than further additions were the best way to further enhance Soviet security. Brezhnev's intervention effectively ended further public arguments from the traditionalists.

In his 14 June 1974 USSR Supreme Soviet election speech, Brezhnev observed that "supporters of the arms race" argue that limiting armaments, and the more so reducing them, "means taking a risk." In rebuttal, Brezhnev claimed that "there is an immeasurably greater risk in continuing to accumulate weapons without restraint." He returned to the issue during an official visit to Poland just over a month later. During a speech to the Sejm (parliament) in Warsaw on 21 July, Brezhnev drew on the arguments presented by Arbatov and Bovin the year before and made clear, through his choice of phraseology, that the need for a new approach to security had arisen:

> For centuries mankind, in striving to insure its security, has been guided by the formula: If you want peace, be ready for war. In our nuclear age this formula conceals particular danger. Man dies only once. However, in recent years a quantity of weapons has already been amassed sufficient to destroy everything living on earth several times. Clearly understanding this, we have put it and continue to put it another way: If you want peace, conduct a policy of peace and fight for that policy. This has been, is, and will be the maxim of our socialist foreign policy.

In several subsequent public appearances, Brezhnev reaffirmed his new emphasis on the unacceptable consequences of nuclear war and the notion that "mankind" might be wholly destroyed.

The innovative nature of Brezhnev's intervention on the matter of the potential consequences of nuclear war is best appreciated in light of his own historical record. The last time he had addressed the issue was in September 1964. Only a month before replacing Khrushchev as party first secretary Brezhnev faithfully echoed what was in effect the Khrushchev-era compromise: stressing the

devastating consequences of a nuclear war without objecting to the dimensions of nuclear arsenals—warning that such a war, if the West were to start it, would end "in the complete defeat of capitalism." Brezhnev's remarks in Warsaw broke 10 years of silence he had maintained on the issue—a period that coincided with the USSR's strategic buildup toward parity with the United States.*

Four months after Brezhnev's remarks in Warsaw, the USSR agreed—in the November 1974 Vladivostok understanding with President Ford—to equal overall ceilings on the two sides' strategic arsenals (technically, the number of strategic delivery vehicles) and to the principle of equality as well as equal security as the basis of the negotiations. While the "equality and equal security" formula marked a further step in the USSR's public definition of its strategic goals, it was not broadly publicized outside the SALT negotiating context. Soviet leaders remained reluctant to address directly the desirability of global strategic balance.

* More recently, in a May 1978 interview, Brezhnev appeared to take direct issue with remarks on this subject made the previous fall by President Carter's National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski. Stressing the disastrous consequences of a nuclear conflict, Brezhnev said the USSR is "not heartened at all by predictions in the West that 'only 10 percent' of the world population will perish in a world nuclear war and that this, don't you see, is not so horrible, is not the end of the world." The reference apparently was to a Brzezinski interview with the Washington POST published on 9 October 1977, in which he was quoted as saying that "if we used all our nuclear weapons and the Russians used all of their nuclear weapons, about 10 percent of humanity would be killed. Now this is a disaster beyond the range of human comprehension. It's a disaster which is not morally justifiable in whatever fashion. But descriptively and analytically, it's not the end of humanity. It's not the destruction of humanity." A historical look at Soviet views on the potential consequences and outcome of a global nuclear war are discussed in an article in the TRENDS of 17 August 1977, pages S1-S5.

BREZHNEV AND THE STRATEGIC BALANCE

The next significant step in the public definition of Soviet security policy came in 1977 and 1978 through a series of statements by President Brezhnev on the strategic balance and some significant accompanying press commentary on strategic affairs. The benchmark in this case was Brezhnev's 18 January 1977 speech in Tula (south of Moscow). At Tula, Brezhnev addressed directly Soviet intentions regarding the strategic balance, denying explicitly for the first time that the USSR sought military superiority. In subsequent statements over the next year and a half, Brezhnev went on to embrace military balance as a goal of Soviet security policy, accepting parity as the basis of the U.S.-Soviet relationship and offering a rationale for why parity was sufficient for Soviet defense.

Brezhnev's address at Tula came two days before President Carter was inaugurated and conveyed his interest in working with the President for an "important advance" in relations and a prompt conclusion of the SALT II negotiations. Acknowledging renewed questioning in the West about Soviet intentions, Brezhnev conceded that the USSR was "improving" its defenses but rejected as "absurd and totally unfounded" allegations that it was going beyond what was necessary for defense and "striving for superiority with the aim of delivering a 'first strike.'" Brezhnev offered a definition of Soviet defense policy:

> The Soviet Union's defense potential must be sufficient to deter anyone from taking a risk to violate our peaceful life. Not a course of superiority in armaments, but a course of reducing them, at lessening military confrontation--such is our policy.

Brezhnev's disavowal of superiority was shortly echoed by other Soviet leaders, including Defense Minister Ustinov and Warsaw Pact commander Viktor Kulikov.*

Brezhnev's remarks at Tula coincided with Soviet press commentary which for the first time embraced the concept of U.S.-Soviet parity as a desideratum of Soviet policy and described the maintenance of that balance as a key ingredient in U.S.-Soviet

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* In an article in the authoritative party journal KOMMUNIST in early 1977 as well as an address marking the 60th anniversary of the USSR Armed Forces the next year, Ustinov conveyed support for this position while adding that the USSR had no desire to compete with the West in the development of new weapons technology.

relations. Perhaps not without significance, articles in the military press were especially prominent in this development. The military daily RED STAR published an article on 12 January, six days before Brezhnev's remarks in Tula, which called parity a "reality" and said it had in fact been the basis of U.S.-Soviet relations "in recent years."* The importance of parity was also acknowledged by Col. Ye. Rybkin--the conservative standard bearer in the debates of the 1960's and the accuser of Bovin in 1973--in the lead article of the January 1977 issue of MILITARY-HISTORICAL JOURNAL.

The greater significance of Rybkin's article--as well as of a second article by a prominent military commentator in PRAVDA the following June--was that it accepted revisionist arguments on the futility of adding to overkill capacity of current nuclear arsenals.

> The objective necessity of ending the arms race is apparent. In the first place because the quantity of nuclear weapons has reached a level whereby a further increase will in practice make no change. 'In recent years,' noted L.I. Brezhnev in July 1974, 'a quantity of arms has already been amassed sufficient to destroy everything living on earth several times.' In the second place, because 'nuclear parity,' as it is called, has been established between the USSR and the United States; that is, a definite balance of power, which was officially recognized at the Soviet-American talks in 1972-74 with a mutual agreement not to disturb this balance.

The PRAVDA article on 14 June, signed by Maj. Gen. Rair Simonyan, drew the same conclusion from the development of the military balance but even more forcefully. Expressing support for the notion that "in the modern world it is no longer possible to insure security by means of an arms buildup," Simonyan added:

> Given the equality of strategic forces, when both sides possess weapons capable of destroying many times over all life on earth, neither the addition of new armaments nor the enhancement of their destructive power can bring any substantial military--and even less, political--advantage.

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* Foreign policy specialists at the USSR's academic institutes had for several years previous employed the notion of parity to describe the existing U.S.-Soviet relationship, but as published those statements had stopped short of presenting the concept directly as a Soviet policy goal.

Both Brezhnev's remarks at Tula and the accompanying commentary endorsing parity came in the wake of controversy in the United States over a new intelligence estimate of Soviet strategic intentions. The Soviet statements could be seen as responsive to that controversy. It is clear in perspective, however, that they were of broader import. They signaled a new willingness by the USSR openly to discuss the East-West strategic balance and define Soviet intentions with regard to it.

Brezhnev himself in statements following his remarks in Tula proceeded to elaborate significantly on his disavowal of superiority, address some of the remaining ambiguities, endorse strategic parity, and accept the revisionist argument on the futility of adding to existing armaments. In a major speech in November 1977 marking the 60th anniversary of the October Revolution, Brezhnev offered a comprehensive definition of Soviet strategic goals: The USSR, he said, does not want "to upset the approximate equilibrium of military strength existing at present" between East and West in central Europe and "between the USSR and the United States."

The following May, in connection with his visit to West Germany, Brezhnev made official the acceptance of East-West military parity as a policy objective that had been implied in unofficial press commentary surrounding his remarks at Tula.

In an interview granted to the FRG Social Democratic Party's weekly VORWAERTS on the eve of the visit--carried in full text by TASS on 2 May and published in all Soviet papers on the 3d--Brezhnev maintained that parity, "as is officially recognized by both sides," lies at the basis of the SALT negotiations. Brezhnev proceeded to accept parity as sufficient for the USSR's defensive needs and endorse in slightly different language the central argument of the revisionists against further adding to current strategic arsenals:

> As for the Soviet Union, it believes that an approximate equality and parity is sufficient for defensive needs. We do not set ourselves the goal of achieving military superiority. We know also that this very concept becomes pointless in the presence of today's huge arsenals of already stockpiled nuclear weapons and means for their delivery.

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The USSR's acceptance of parity was formalized in the Joint Declaration signed by Brezhnev and FRG Chancellor Schmidt on the 6th. In Article 3 of that document, published in the Soviet press on the 7th, the two sides agreed that "no one should seek military superiority" and that "approximate equality and parity are sufficient to insure defense."

The Bonn statements 5/78

THE SOVIET VIEW OF MUTUAL DETERRENCE

The USSR's formal acceptance of parity as a policy objective and recognition that security is not subject to a purely military solution represent in effect an acceptance of the necessity as well as the reality of East-West military balance in the nuclear era. President Brezhnev has indicated his realization of the benefits of such a relationship in more direct fashion on several occasions. In a speech to his Russian Republic Supreme Soviet electoral constituency in June 1975, Brezhnev assured his audience that Western leaders are effectively restrained by the balance that has developed:

> Nowadays leaders of the bourgeois world cannot seriously plan on solving the historic dispute between capitalism and socialism by force of arms. The senselessness and extreme danger of further heating the atmosphere in conditions when both sides possess weapons of colossal destructive force is becoming more and more obvious.

Brezhnev's assurances were the more significant in that they appeared to represent a calculated break with traditional tenets on the fundamental nature of the Western threat. The CPSU Program approved by the 22d party congress had maintained that Western states "refuse to reconcile themselves to the existence of a world socialist system and openly declare their mad plans for the liquidation of the Soviet Union and other socialist states through war."

As a group, the rest of the Soviet Politburo does not appear to have contested this relationship of balance and the calmer view of the Western threat upon which it seems to rest. Defense Minister Grechko was the only member of the Politburo who, in public remarks from 1974 until his death in April 1976, seemed to have doubts. Two weeks before Brezhnev's 1975 election address, for instance, Grechko contradicted the statement Brezhnev was to make by reaffirming the assessment of Western intentions stated in the Program. Speaking to an armed forces conference, Grechko warned that the forces of reaction and

aggression "have not abandoned their plans to resolve the dispute between capitalism and socialism by armed means." The current USSR defense minister, civilian defense industry specialist D. F. Ustinov, has shown himself a supporter of the leadership consensus.

While the USSR has publicly embraced a strategic relationship which seemingly is comparable to the U.S. concept of mutual deterrence, it is unlikely that Soviet officials will appropriate that concept itself. They would be reluctant to take as their own a formula so closely connected historically to the development of strategic thought in the West and so foreign to the Soviet vocabulary. Moreover, Soviet leaders acknowledge their uneasiness with what they often call a "balance of fear." They assert, however, that their problems with the situation do not signify an appetite for adding further to current arsenals but a belief that such a situation produces an unstable strategic environment. President Brezhnev has returned to this point a number of times. In his November 1977 address on the 60th anniversary of the October Revolution, Brezhnev added the point to his claim that the USSR did not want to upset the existing equilibrium of military strength. Needless to say, he said, "maintaining the existing equilibrium is not an end in itself. We are in favor of starting a downward turn in the direction of the arms race and gradually scaling down the level of military confrontation."

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Comments or questions on this report may be directed to [redacted] STAT