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Issues and Options in Soviet Military Policy

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ISSUES AND OPTIONS IN SOVIET MILITARY POLICY

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NOTE

This paper represents a departure from previous NIEs 11-4 in the extent to which it goes beyond strictly military and resource factors to consider Soviet military issues in the context of overall Soviet attitudes and policies. The first two sections of the paper outline the framework within which issues of military policy are considered in the USSR. The third, and main, section discusses the key issues themselves, indicates various options and suggests what some of the Soviet choices are likely to be. The table of contents on the following page indicates, under three very broad headings, some of the important questions Moscow will have to consider as it shapes its policies for the years ahead.

The approach here is thus quite different from that undertaken in the series of military estimates on major Soviet forces and programs. Comprehensive treatment of that subject matter is available in:

NIE 11-8-71: SOVIET FORCES FOR INTERCONTINENTAL ATTACK

NIE 11-3-71: SOVIET STRATEGIC DEFENSES

Memo to Holders of NIE 11-3-71: SOVIET STRATEGIC DEFENSES

NIE 11-14-71: WARSAW PACT FORCES FOR OPERATIONS IN EURASIA

NIE 11-10-71: THE USES OF SOVIET MILITARY POWER IN DISTANT AREAS

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The Framework for Decision-Making

A. The issues which the Soviets face in defining their military policy are closely linked to their foreign and economic policies as a whole, and it is in this broad context that their choices will be made. Because of the general improvement in recent years in their relative international position, and especially because of their achievement of rough strategic parity with the US, the Soviets are more confident than ever before regarding the "relation of forces" between the two countries. The Soviets recognize that the contest for international primacy has become increasingly complicated and less amenable to simple projections of power. They feel, nonetheless, that they can now consider a wider range of options in military policy.

B. Resource constraints on the development of Soviet military forces and programs are relative, not absolute. The Soviet leadership would no doubt prefer to shift some scarce resources—technical, material, managerial—from military production, or from research, development, testing and evaluation (R&D), to the civilian sector. But the USSR would not be *obliged,* for purely economic reasons, to forego military programs its leaders see as essential.

C. In the complex mechanisms for decision-making on matters of military policy in the USSR, the military leaders have an important

institutional and advisory role, but the political leadership—i.e., the Politburo—clearly has the final say. One consequence of the whole process seems to be a tendency toward the conservative—toward trying to cover all risks, toward working deliberately along established lines, toward pressing for consensus to avoid strong opposition, toward minimizing the chances of error or waste. And to some extent the process makes difficult a shift of resources from one major military program to another, or a change in the size and overall disposition of military forces.

The Strategic Relationship with the United States

D. In the sphere of strategic competition with the US, the policy course the Soviets have chosen, at least for the immediate future, is to attempt to stabilize some aspects of the relationship through negotiations. They appear to believe that a formal antiballistic missile (ABM) agreement and an interim freeze on some strategic offensive weapons, on terms they can accept, are within reach. They have committed themselves, in the context of such a first-stage agreement, to follow-on negotiations on comprehensive limits for strategic offensive weapons.

E. The Soviets have strong incentives to continue the strategic dialogue as a means of exercising influence over US strategic decisions and keeping the competition in bounds; a complete breakdown in the SALT talks seems highly unlikely. In this setting, the Soviets will probably recognize a need to set some outer bounds on further deployment activities, lest these activities lead to US charges of bad faith and possible breakdown of the talks. But there will almost certainly be strong countervailing pressures in the USSR to achieve the goals involved in their ongoing programs, as well as to keep up bargaining pressure on the US and to hedge against the failure of the negotiations. And in the event that a situation of stalemate developed in the future, with little or no progress toward agreement on comprehensive limitations, the Soviets would presumably make such selective additions to their forces as they judged necessary; they might hope, in the process, to achieve some margin of advantage without triggering a spiralling competition.

F. The Soviets realize, of course, that what they are contemplating in continuing with serious negotiations in SALT is not a matter of

ending strategic competition between the two countries, but rather narrowing its focus. One important area where intense competition will continue no matter what the outcome of the talks is that of military R&D. Moscow has for several years been increasing efforts and expenditures in military R&D, and apparently intends to continue doing so. Yet even given such sustained efforts in R&D, the resource savings realized by the Soviets in a state of "stabilized parity" as compared with wide-range competition would permit them, over time, to consider various trade-offs—shifts of funds and facilities to other military programs, or perhaps to the civilian sector.

Military Posture Toward China and Europe [1]

G. The Soviet leaders have necessarily emphasized the military aspect of their containment policy toward China. They will have to meet growing requirements for air defense and ballistic missile early warning in the years ahead. On the offensive side, they will have to consider questions concerning the deployment of additional strategic weapons suitable only for peripheral attack, relying on dual missions for some of their existing intercontinental weapons, or installing intercontinental weapons which they would not otherwise have deployed. With regard to their ground forces, the Soviets are likely at least to proceed somewhat further with their present buildup in the border area, particularly by strengthening support elements.

H. Partly because of the urgency they attach to the China problem, the Soviets evidently see their interests in Eurasia as a whole served by further movement toward détente with Western Europe. The Soviet leaders seem to be coming to accept that they could withdraw some forces from Eastern Europe, particularly some of their 300,000 personnel in East Germany, and still retain the capability to maintain a strong posture against NATO, to intimidate the East European populations, and to reassert control in Eastern Europe quickly and decisively in an emergency.

I. All this does not mean the Soviets have decided on any reduction in their forces or that they are likely to make such a decision in the near future. They will presumably see advantage in thoroughly exploring the possibilities for a negotiated agreement on

[1] Dr. Ray S. Cline, the Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State; Maj. Gen. Phillip B. Davidson, Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army; and Maj. Gen. George J. Keegan, Jr., the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF, disagree with some of the views expressed in this section. Their position is set forth on pages 14-15.

mutual reduction of forces. But they may, if they decide an agreement is not in the cards, proceed to make limited withdrawals on their own. They might do so in part on the calculation that US force reductions, which could be politically and militarily far more significant, would surely follow.

Issues Concerning More Distant Areas

J. The Soviet leaders probably expect that, having attained rough parity with the US in strategic weapons, they will be able to exercise wider political and military options in distant areas—notably those in the Third World—over the next few years. The USSR clearly intends to give particular attention to the regions on its southern periphery.

K. The USSR's existing capabilities for military operation in distant areas have developed largely as a by-product of military programs designed for other purposes. The Soviets now have substantial ground, air and naval forces which can be used to establish *their presence* in distant areas, but their capabilities *to use force* at long range against opposition are limited. What Moscow must now consider is how much emphasis to place in the future on forces and equipment *designed to fight* in areas remote from the USSR's borders.

L. The deficiencies of the present Russian forces in such matters as military air transport, integral naval air support, and amphibious lift and assault ships cannot be quickly or easily overcome. Yet as modest additions are made to the USSR's capabilities to lift and land forces in distant areas, these very improvements will tend to strengthen the arguments for acquisition of further special purpose items. As the USSR further involves its policy and prestige in remote areas Moscow will have to consider requirements for forces to respond to a wide range of contingencies, whether to prevent setbacks or to exploit opportunities. We believe that step-by-step the Soviets, perhaps without ever making a decision on the general principle, will acquire capabilities which will permit them to employ combat forces in distant areas.

M. Obtaining the kind of bases abroad which would be most suitable for such a military purpose will be difficult for them. They have so far succeeded in acquiring such overseas facilities where the host country felt urgent need for extensive Soviet support against an external threat—Egypt and Cuba. In most instances the Soviets will probably seek to acquire lesser facilities or arrangements, and reconcile themselves to the limitations involved.

DISCUSSION

I. THE LINKS BETWEEN MILITARY AND FOREIGN POLICIES

1. There are important elements of continuity underlying Soviet concepts of military power and its uses. These derive primarily from geopolitical considerations, but are influenced by ideology as well. Certain broad aims of Soviet military policy can thus be described today in much the same way as a decade or more ago: (a) security of the homeland and of the world communist "center"; (b) protection of the "gains of socialism" and more specifically maintenance of loyal communist regimes in Eastern Europe; (c) fostering awareness everywhere of Soviet military strength and readiness so as to support a strong foreign policy aimed at expanding Soviet influence.

2. These constants notwithstanding, Soviet military policy has changed over the years in many of its aspects. The factors that have most visibly influenced these changes in recent years are the USSR's perception of its own power vis-à-vis the other major states of the world, its estimate of the source and nature of the external threat, and the influence of science and technology on Russian forces and on the forces of potential enemies. The present mix among strategic offensive, defensive, and the various elements of general purpose forces is, for example, a far cry from that which prevailed during Stalin's time, when the emphasis was on massive conventional forces. This change, in the broadest sense, reflects changes in the nature of the threat and in the impact of technology. It also reflects in part certain changes in the approach of Soviet leaders since Stalin's departure. There continues to be a personal element in Soviet military decision making but this now appears less important than it once was; the calculations of risk and gain made by the present regime contrast markedly with the impulsive quality of some of Khrushchev's decisions.

3. Not only have developments in other parts of the world caused Russian assessments to change, but many of the mechanisms and circumstances within the USSR which help

to shape policy have also altered. The relationship between political, economic, and military interests (and among the proponents of these interests) has changed. Progress (or lack of progress) in disarmament negotiations has become an increasingly important consideration; and the formulation of tactics and strategy has become more complex as the USSR has begun fully to play the role of a superpower.

4. In trying to achieve its aims, the present Soviet leadership, like its predecessors, has been intensely concerned with the international balance of power—in Soviet terms, "the relation of forces". In the Russian tradition, military power bulks large in the conduct of foreign policy. This is true not in the sense that the Soviets are irresistibly drawn to the actual use of force to achieve foreign policy objectives although on occasion they have taken that course—but rather in the sense that they believe in the implied threat of its use as a way of affecting the attitudes and decisions of other states. In giving major weight to military power as a determinant of the conduct of states, the Soviet leaders do not measure such power entirely by the numbers, i.e., of missiles or divisions. They also judge it in the context of more general considerations: they attach great importance to underlying social-economic forces, to the degree of internal unity or division to be found within adversary states, and to the capacities of opposing leaders and their will to confront risks.

5. The Soviets have clearly become more confident than ever before regarding the "relation of forces" between the USSR and the US. They have achieved what they evidently regard as rough strategic equality with the US, and their acceptance of strategic arms limitation talks (SALT) has been based at least partly on the desire to have the US formally recognize this equality. Moreover, they have ample reason to regard their general position in the world as greatly improved since the low point of the Cuban missile crisis in 1962. Although they face persistent internal problems, particularly in the economic sphere, their posture and policy abroad have led to a betterment in their relations with a variety of non-communist governments. Inter alia, they have largely repaired the damage to their interests posed by crises in the Middle East in 1967 and in Eastern Europe in 1968. And the Soviets perceive that the world influence of the US has declined, that its alliances have been under strain, and that it has been faced with considerable internal discord—involving sharp clashes over external policies.

6. The Soviets do not now regard NATO as an imminent military threat, and they see opportunities to pursue a more forward diplomacy of their own in Western Europe. In view of the changing relationship between the US and Western Europe, and of persistent West European desires for détente, the Soviets now see themselves in a good position to promote long-standing objectives in Europe: recognition of the status quo in Eastern Europe and in Germany, the achievement of greater leverage in Western Europe, and eventually, a withering of Atlantic ties and the withdrawal of US forces.

7. While some of the USSR's concerns in Europe have eased during the past decade, the problem of China has grown; the Soviet leadership now seems to regard the rivalry with China as having become as intense as the rivalry with the US or more so. In addition to the requirement the Soviets see for keeping pace with the US and its ongoing strategic program, they must give appropriate weight to China's potential. In the nearer term they must take account of the emerging Chinese peripheral strategic capabilities—medium bombers, medium-range ballistic mis-

siles, and intermediate-range ballistic missiles—which they regard as directed primarily against them. The Soviets also must guard against further Chinese attempts to build political influence, even in Eastern Europe. Moreover, Moscow continues to face the threat of being outflanked politically on the left by the Communist Chinese, particularly in the underdeveloped world.

8. The Soviets' own increasing involvement in the Third World has been paralleled by a growing capability to undertake new activity there. Soviet military forces which can operate effectively in distant areas have developed as a part of the strengthening of their overall military posture. But such forces, together with the continuing emphasis which Moscow gives to its military assistance programs, support the enlargement of the USSR's international role.[2]

9. The Soviets are clearly aware that their moves to expand and strengthen their influence outside the communist camp will not always go smoothy. Their détente efforts in Western Europe could over time have adverse effects on their position in Eastern Europe. They have been obliged to assume larger commitments and to accept some increase in military risks in order to preserve their prestige and influence in parts of the underdeveloped world, notably in the Middle East and South Asia. They have also found in many places that nationalism and parochial self-interest are more vigorous forces than they had supposed and not easy ones to harness. In other places they have been disappointed by the ineptness or instability of regimes they have supported. In a number of cases the extension of aid has proven more expensive and less useful to Soviet aims than Moscow had anticipated. For reasons such as these, the Soviets recognize that the contest for international primacy has become increasingly complicated and less amenable to simple projections of power.

10. Despite this, there is much confidence in the Soviet attitude, and on two principal counts. First, the Soviets probably feel that they are free of any immediate threat to their national security. The immediacy of the threat posed by NATO is seen as having diminished; the Chinese threat is seen as potentially grave but not immediately so. Secondly, by achieving equal status with the US in strategic terms, the Soviets believe they have earned at last an equal voice in world affairs. "There is not a single question of any importance", Foreign Minister Gromyko told the Soviet Party Congress last April, "which could at present be solved without the Soviet Union or against its will".

II. SOME INTERNAL FACTORS BEARING ON MILITARY POLICY AND PROGRAMS

A. Economic Considerations

11. Resource constraints upon the development of Soviet military forces and programs are relative, not absolute, and decisions on expenditures probably derive as much from bureaucratic processes and pressures as from carefully thought out political and economic decisions. For the most part, physical capacity does not constitute a constraint; the plant capacity of Soviet industry existing or under construction is adequate to support high levels of output of land armaments, aircraft, warships, and missiles. Moreover, given the great size of the Soviet economy, an expansion of physical capacity could be undertaken relatively easily; even low growth rates increase available resources considerably. Thus the USSR would not be *obliged,* for purely eco-

[2] See Annex I, NIE 11-10-71, "The Uses of Soviet Military Power In Distant Areas", dated 15 December 1971, SECRET.

nomic reasons, to forego military programs its leaders see as essential.

12. On the other hand, the increasing technical complexity of the military forces, together with the growth of military research, development, test and evaluation (R&D),[3] plus civilian space programs, has produced a rapid increase in requirements for highly trained technicians and managers and the most advanced equipment and materials. The military's first claim on these scarce resources has contributed to the difficulties that the Soviets have experienced in increasing material incentives for the labor force. It has also contributed to the problems of introducing new technology into the civilian economy and, to some extent, to the resulting decline in the productivity of new investment. The interest of the Soviet leaders in SALT is in part a consequence of a desire to limit the economic cost of further expanding and strengthening the military establishment. Consequently, the perennial problem of resource allocation is a major issue in deliberation on Soviet national policy and is likely to remain so in the years ahead. But the same, of course, can be said of the US. To be sure, economic resources in the USSR are more limited than in the US, but political and social controls are such that the Soviet leadership enjoys relatively great freedom of action in deciding how to allocate them.

B. Political and Military Influences on Decision-Making

13. Certain distinctive features of the Soviet system affect the way in which decisions on military policy are made. The decision-making power over a very broad range of matters is reserved to a small collective in the top political leadership. The principle of close and relatively detailed Party supervision of military affairs is well established. The military, in turn, have become deeply involved in the Party system.

14. The Soviet military do not, by any means, constitute a separate political element and they do not view the country's future in terms which are basically at odds with the concepts of the Party. But they do constitute an interest group which must contend with other bureaucratic interests. The present political leaders, unlike Khrushchiev, have preferred to avoid direct conflict with the military in the area of the latter's professional competence. In the case of military programs, the members of the Politburo appear to call on the military to formulate requirements and recommendations. While they have machinery for screening and evaluating such recommendations, they appear, in practice, to be heavily dependent on the technical judgments of their military advisers.

15. The military leadership is not, of course, always of one mind. There is ample evidence of rivalries in the past; these became acute, for example, when Khrushchev was trying to build up the Strategic Rocket Forces at the expense of the general purpose forces, but they have been evident on other issues as well. Such differences, though now muted, almost certainly continue. Yet the combined arms tradition is strong, and since the time of Khrushchev, the military appear to have been successful in working out their internal differences and presenting a united front. Part of the reason, perhaps, is that under the collective leadership the total military expenditures have increased each year, which has made the competition for resources among the various military contenders less keen than if expenditures were constant or diminishing.

16. Despite the institutional power of the military, and of the scientific establishment, defense industry, and other groups involved in defense planning, the political leadership—

[3] When the term military R&D is used in this estimate, it does not include civilian space expenditures.

i.e., the Politburo—clearly has the final say. Beyond their role in determining overall political-military policy, Politburo members on occasion project themselves into quite narrow and specific matters. For the most part, however, they must operate within the context of these other forces, and not only take them into account, but often—perhaps for lack of effectively formulated alternatives—approve what they advise. The growing complexity of the decisions to be made, and the impossibility of acquiring independently all the information needed to make them, impose this limitation on the leadership.

17. One consequence of the whole process seems to be a tendency toward the conservative—toward trying to cover all risks, toward working deliberately along established lines, toward pressing for consensus to avoid strong opposition, toward minimizing the chances of error or waste. In many areas of weapons development and procurement, solutions seem to be devised more by building on proven approaches than by vigorously pushing the state of the art. And to some extent the process makes it more difficult to shift resources from one major military program to another, or to change the size and overall disposition of military forces.

III. ISSUES OF POLICY: OPTIONS AND PROBABLE CHOICES

A. What Kind of Strategic Competition With the United States?

18. Probably the single most important issue of military policy now facing the Russians is their future strategic relationship with the US. As Moscow clearly realizes, the US for years to come will be the only nation with the capability to inflict such damage on the USSR as to challenge its existence. But, in Moscow's view, the character of the problem is no longer the same as it was; the Soviets have finally caught up strategically and the options they can now consider cover a considerably wider range than before.[4] The broad alternate lines of action now available to them can nonetheless be indicated simply: to pursue the competition with the US intensively across a wide spectrum with a view to achieving some kind of superiority, or to find means of narrowing the realm of competition with a view to maintaining something close to rough parity.

19. Yet, for the Soviet leaders, each of these broad choices involves various complexities. There is no easy way to define, in practical terms, what the most appropriate means is to assure continuation of rough parity, or even to specify confidently which weapons and forces on the one side offset which weapons and forces on the other. Such determinations will quickly encounter questions of geographic-strategic asymmetry and will become increasingly difficult as technology changes and new programs are introduced. Thus there is ample room for differences within the Soviet leadership and between leaders and advisers on many particular questions, as well as on more general issues, and in these circumstances the tendency in Moscow will probably be to build in a "safety factor" when they make their calculations.

20. A further problem centers on the provisions Moscow feels it must make—at least over the longer term—to cope with the Chinese nuclear threat. Deployment of certain types of strategic weapons against China may appear to increase, or indeed actually increase, Soviet capabilites against the US—and thus risk escalating the US-Soviet competition.

[4] For discussions of the earlier decisions and programs that brought the Soviets to rough parity see Section I of NIE 11-3-71, "Soviet Strategic Defenses", dated 25 February 1971, TOP SECRET, and Sections I and IX of NIE 11-8-71, "Soviet Forces for Intercontinental Attack", dated 21 October 1971, TOP SECRET.

This seems sure to become a more difficult problem over time as the Chinese develop increased strategic capabilities.

21. Beyond these considerations, there are undoubtedly some in Moscow urging that the USSR maintain the momentum that has brought it to rough parity. The Soviet leadership would no doubt be attracted by the notion that some margin of advantage—or at least the appearance of some margin—could be established without precipitating a new competitive cycle. And they might reason that such a margin, in addition to its possible military benefits, could be useful in political-psychological ways to enhance the USSR's international position.

22. There are, on the other hand, a number of important factors which would deter Soviet leaders, in a quest for advantage, from plunging ahead with programs and deployments so extensive as to upset the strategic balance. They have shown themselves to be sensitive to the high costs of such efforts, and they apparently recognize that major new endeavors on their part would produce a new element of uncertainty in the arms race and risk triggering vigorous US countereffforts long before Moscow's objective could be reached.

23. The policy course the Soviets have chosen, at least for the immediate future, is to attempt to stabilize some aspects of the strategic relationship with the US through negotiations. The above considerations will probably lead the Soviets to recognize a need to set some outer bounds on further deployment activities, lest these activities lead to US charges of bad faith and possible breakdown of the talks. But there will almost certainly be strong countervailing pressures in the USSR to maintain enough deployment to achieve the goals involved in their ongoing programs, as well as to keep up bargaining pressure on the US and to hedge against the failure of the negotiations. Moreover, the Soviets will continue to be hard bargainers. Despite their apparent desire for accommodation, the Soviets have emphasized in SALT that they will not accept any agreement that in their view, would compromise their concept of equal security.

24. During the more than two years of SALT they have laid greatest stress on limiting antiballistic missile (ABM) deployment—presumably because of concern that major US deployments would be destabilizing to their disadvantage, and probably also out of a desire to avoid the heavy new expenditures that any large-scale ABM deployment on their side would entail. However, they realize that any agreement would have to provide for some interim limitations on the further deployment of strategic offensive weapons. They appear to believe that a formal ABM agreement and an interim freeze on some strategic offensive weapons, on terms they can accept, are within reach. They have committed themselves, in the context of such a first-stage agreement, to follow-on negotiations on comprehensive limits for strategic offensive weapons.

25. The Soviets have strong incentives to continue the strategic dialogue as a means of exercising influence over US strategic decisions and keeping the competition in bounds. They would probably see political disadvantage in permitting SALT to fail. Perhaps more importantly, they would see the end of SALT not only as removing a useful means of restraint on full-scale arms competition, but also as possibly compelling them to return to such competition. They recognize that an escalating arms race could be to their disadvantage—beyond the matter of its very high costs, they would see a danger that they could fall behind the US and thus again be in an apparent, if not actual, position of strategic inferiority.

26. A complete breakdown in the SALT talks seems highly unlikely; a possibility

worthy of more serious consideration would be a continuation of the talks over an extended period of time with little progress toward agreement on comprehensive limitations. If such a situation of stalemate developed in the negotiations, the Soviets would presumably make such selective additions to their forces as they judged necessary; they might hope, in the process, to achieve some margin of advantage without triggering a spiralling competition.

27. The Soviets realize, of course, that what they are contemplating in continuing serious negotiations in SALT is not a matter of ending strategic compeition between the two countries, but rather narrowing its focus. There is one important area where intense competition will continue no matter what the outcome of the talks—that of military R&D. Neither side has shown strong interest in limiting such R&D, because of uncertainties about monitoring the qualitative improvements which might result and also because neither side wants to forego the possible advantages which might be involved.

28. Moscow has, for several years, been increasing expenditures and efforts on R&D for military and space purposes; apparently it intends to go on doing so. The Soviet leaders are known to have great respect for US prowess in R&D; presumably they will maintain their own high priority as insurance that they won't again fall far behind in some important strategic regard.

29. Even given such sustained efforts in R&D, the resource savings realized by the Soviets in a state of "stabilized parity" as compared with wide-range competition would permit them, over time, to consider various trade offs. A shift of funds could be made to provide additional or more modern conventional arms for Soviet military forces in Eurasia—and/or for forces to be used in areas more distant from the USSR. A shift of some funds and facilities from strategic military production to the civilian sector would also be possible.

B. Reshaping Forces Facing Europe and China? [5]

30. With respect to their military policy for Eurasia, the most recent and pressing Soviet concern has to do with the threat—present and potential—from China, and with the size and scope of Soviet military deployments required by that threat. A second issue which may be drawing Soviet attention is whether the size and character of the Soviet forces deployed in the West against NATO will continue to make sense in terms of Moscow's reading of the situation there and in terms of the détente policies it is now pursuing in Europe. Moscow's view of this latter issue will be conditioned by the requirement it sees for military deployments sufficient to assure control over Eastern Europe, as well as its need to sustain a strong Warsaw Pact posture *relative* to that of NATO.

Maintenance of Forces or Reductions in Europe?

31. From Moscow's standpoint, there now seems to be a certain loss of force in the argument that Soviet objectives in Europe require the maintenance of troop strength at present levels. Deployments remain large: there are now, for instance, some 27 Soviet and 31 East European divisions in East Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, opposite

[5] Dr. Ray S. Cline, the Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, Maj. Gen. Phillip B. Davidson, Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, and Maj. Gen. George J. Keegan, Jr., the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF, disagree with some of the views expressed in this section (paragraphs 30-41). Their position is set forth at the end of the section on pages 14-15.

the Central Region of NATO.[6] Yet the Soviets clearly do not see themselves in imminent danger of NATO attack, even though they almost certainly remain distrustful of the US and West Germany, and apprehensive regarding the long-term economic and political implications of the Common Market. The old "hostage Europe" concept now has less meaning, for the USSR is in a position to pose a powerful direct strategic threat to the US. Beyond this, the Soviets may see the retention of large forces arrayed against NATO as complicating the pursuit of their policy of détente toward Western Europe: the Soviet military posture strengthens the stand of those officials in NATO countries who remain reluctant to reduce security ties with the US.

32. Opposed to these considerations is Soviet concern for the internal situation in Eastern Europe—a concern reinforced by the Czechoslovak crisis of 1968, by the persistent independence of Romania, by the revival of national pride in post-Gomulka Poland, and by the uncertainties (and perhaps opportunities) looming in the twilight of Tito's rule of Yugoslavia. To some extent, Moscow's recent efforts to make the organization of the Warsaw Pact and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance more attractive to the East European members have been directed at containing East European nationalism by subtler means than the implicit threat of Soviet military intervention. But Moscow can hardly be confident that it is making effective progress at this point or that nationalistic tendencies would be contained in the long run without an imposing Soviet military presence. And running through Soviet policy are enduring anxieties centering on Germany and the belief that the Soviet military presence in Eastern Europe serves as a check on the reassertion of German power.

33. As long as concerns of this sort persist, at least some in the Soviet leadership probably will favor no reduction at all in the numbers of forces deployed in Eastern Europe and the western USSR. Soviets of this cast of mind feel that the USSR's position in Eastern Europe is vulnerable to Western influences which would spread more easily in a relaxed political setting, and they worry that even modest Russian troop withdrawals would whet nationalist aspirations among the peoples of East European countries and among some of the Party leaders as well. The further argument will be advanced that a position of undiminished Soviet military strength in Europe not only serves as a powerful deterrent to NATO, but could also have useful political and psychological impact on the West.

34. There now appears, however, to be an inclination in Moscow to move away from this view. We believe that Moscow is coming to accept that it could withdraw some of its forces from Eastern Europe, particularly some of the 300,000 Soviet military personnel in East Germany, and still retain sufficient capability to maintain a strong posture against NATO, to intimidate the East European populations, and to reassert control in Eastern Europe quickly and decisively in an emergency.

35. All this does not mean the Soviets have decided on any reduction in their forces or that they are likely to make such a decision in the near future. They will presumably see advantage in thoroughly exploring the possibilities for a negotiated agreement rather than acting unilaterally in any reduction of their forces in Eastern Europe. They might see in this method a way of giving greater momentum to political forces in the West which they wish to encourage. They might also see in it a means of insuring that the US would proceed

[6] At present, these forces with their tactical air support amount to some 425,000 Soviet and some 350,000 East European personnel.

with withdrawals, as well as a means of influencing the kinds of forces the US would withdraw. If events develop so that a negotiation on mutual force reductions seems to be a serious possibility in the next year or two, the Soviets are unlikely to move unilaterally, in order to avoid giving away any bargaining chips. On the other hand, if they conclude that negotiations are not feasible at all, or that negotiations once undertaken would prove too difficult to promise a favorable result, the Soviets may then make limited withdrawals on their own. They might do so in part on the calculation that US force reductions, which could be politically and militarily far more significant, would surely follow.

A Stronger Soviet Posture Toward China?

36. Concern about China is undoubtedy a factor in the USSR's view of appropriate policy and posture toward Europe as well as in its calculations regarding its overall security interests. Friendly relations between the regimes in Moscow and Peking lasted for barely a decade; mutual hostility has now extended for a longer period. China's emergence as a nuclear power, the events on the Soviet-Chinese frontier, the recent strengthening of China's defenses in the north, and the accompanying signs of improvement in China's relations with regimes hostile toward or mistrustful of the USSR, have stimulated Soviet efforts to contain China politically as well as militarily.

37. Soviet political initiatives to this end have not, however, been overly successful. For example, the Sino-Soviet border talks probably have helped to keep the border reasonably quiet since 1969, but they have not, so far as we can tell, resolved any basic disputes between the two countries. Soviet proposals to enlist other Asian countries in containing China, through some type of Asian collective security arrangements, have been received for the most part with suspicion or apathy. Moscow has recently made cautious new overtures to Japan, but many key Japanese political figures seem to give higher priority to the future development of Japanese relations with the Chinese. Unequivocal Soviet support for India in the war against Pakistan has gained the Soviets political favor in Delhi and embarrassed China—but it may also have stimulated still more vigorous Chinese competition with the USSR all over the world. What is most certain of all is that there has been no slackening of Chinese hostility toward the USSR.

38. In such circumstances, the Soviet leaders have necessarily emphasized the military aspect of their containment policy. Although the buildup of Soviet theater forces in Asia since the mid-1960s has been gradual, it has become quite massive in the aggregate. Since early 1965, the number of Soviet ground force divisions opposite China has increased from 15 to some 40, the number of tactical aircraft from 200 to over 1,000, and the number of tactical nuclear missile launchers from about 50 to over 300.[7]

39. The prospect is that Soviet military planners will find it necessary to make continuing provision of resources for assuring Soviet military preponderance over China for a long period. During the 1970s China probably will deploy ballistic missile systems of intermediate and intercontinental range, and

[7] At present the Soviet ground forces opposite China amount, with their tactical air support, to about 400,000 personnel. Since 1968, the pace of the buildup has slackened. The emphasis in 1970 and 1971 has been on building up tactical air forces and army and front level service support. As of the end of 1971, the only field commanders of four star rank in the Soviet ground forces were the commanders of the three principal military districts bordering on China, although the newly appointed commander in chief of Soviet forces in Germany, by virtue of his position, should be promoted to that rank in the near future.

will increase its capabilities for air attack along the borders of the USSR and into key areas of the Soviet heartland. The Soviets will have to meet growing requirements for air defense and ballistic missile early warning, but apparently do not now contemplate extensive ABM deployment beyond Moscow. They must also weigh the question of whether to deploy additional strategic weapons suitable only for peripheral attack, rely on dual missions for some of their existing intercontinental weapons, or install intercontinental weapons which they would not otherwise have deployed. It would be consistent with the cautious attitude of this Soviet leadership to deploy some strategic offensive units against China alone, rather than rely completely on dual mission systems.

40. In considering how much further, and how rapidly, to proceed with the deployment of theater forces opposite China, the Soviet leaders could conclude that they will soon reach a point where no further buildup will be required. The argument to justify this would be that the forces now in place should be sufficient to deter the Chinese; or that these Soviet forces would be able to contain any real threat the Chinese could pose in the near-term future, and would have a limited offensive capability. Yet it seems clear from the very scope of the effort they have already undertaken that the Soviets appraise the "danger" from China in a special way. Historical and emotional factors play a part in this; at the same time, there are purely military considerations of some importance. There is the matter of the vulnerability of the Trans-Siberian rail line because of its proximity to the Chinese border. And there is the possible requirement for offensive Soviet action well into Chinese territory in the contingency of major hostilities between the two countries.

41. It seems likely, on balance, that the Soviet leaders will at least proceed somewhat further with their present buildup, in particular by strengthening support elements so as to improve their force structure in the area. The Soviets may, beyond this, feel the need to expand their ground forces, developing a stronger strike force for operations in western and northern China and Manchuria, and in the process providing a more visible, and therefore a more credible, deterrent. Meeting the requirements of either alternative would be facilitated if the Soviets determined, essentially for reasons having to do with their policy toward Europe, to undertake some reduction of present deployments in the West.

Statement of the position of the Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army; and the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF.

It is our belief that the USSR is likely to remain reluctant to weaken its military forces aimed at Western Europe and that Moscow will continue to try to pace its buildup against China in such fashion as to avoid substantial changes in its European theater forces.

We feel that the discussion in paragraphs 30-41 understates the degree to which the USSR will remain (a) concerned about ensuring the deterrence of the NATO Powers by Warsaw Pact strength and at the same time (b) interested in maintaining the political and psychological impact on the West arising from awareness of undiminished Soviet military strength in Europe. The Soviets so far have evidently paced their buildup against China so as not to require major change in their posture against Europe; barring unexpected new pressures on the China border, further incremental growth in the East seems to be manageable in terms of available Soviet resources.

In recent years Soviet policy toward NATO's signalling of interest in mutual and balanced force reductions (MBFR) has developed very slowly and evidently within the context of European developments. There is no sign that the Soviet attitude has been driven by pressures resulting from the buildup against China. Basically, policy on mutual force reductions forms part of Soviet détente efforts in Europe. Moscow now appears to anticipate detailed negotiations on

force reductions only after a conference on European security and seems content to let it proceed at this slow pace.

Of course the possibility cannot be ruled out that the Soviet Union may at a moment of its leaders' own choosing elect to make some unilateral reduction. Such a drawdown intended for political effect in the West and designed as an opening gambit for reductions by "mutual example" would, however, be quite small and not very significant in terms of the buildup in the East.

Capability for a More Flexible Nuclear Response in Europe?

42. Along with the question of the appropriate size of their forces, the Soviets are also giving some attention to the question of how they would fight a nuclear war with NATO. In the mid-1960s, they reconsidered their long-held view that war in Europe would involve theater-wide use of nuclear weapons from the start. Their doctrine now appears to provide that they would launch a nuclear strike only when they had concluded that NATO would introduce nuclear weapons. The evidence with regard to present Soviet doctrine concerning the magnitude of their nuclear response in this contingency is inconclusive; [redacted] suggests that the USSR's planning calls for Soviet forces to respond to the initiation of tactical nuclear warfare with a massive, widespread nuclear attack. In such an attack, ground and aviation forces of the fronts would use tactical nuclear weapons, while the Strategic Rocket and Long Range Air Forces would deal with European strategic targets. As to the structure and training of the Warsaw Pact forces in Europe, they are directed toward the conduct of offensive operations.[8]

[8] For further discussion of Soviet nuclear doctrine, see NIE 11-14-71, "Warsaw Pact Forces for Operations in Eurasia", dated 9 September 1971, SECRET, paragraphs 17-22, 66-69, 82-86.

43. Thus the Soviet posture and strategy in Europe appear to have a certain built-in thrust toward offensive action designed to achieve quick results, and toward general nuclear war. The Soviets may feel that the prospect of a theater-wide nuclear response on their part would effectively deter NATO from initiating tactical nuclear war—even to forestall its own defeat in a conventional conflict. They may also believe that their strategic deterrent to US nuclear attack would be operative even in such circumstances.

44. They cannot be entirely confident of such an outcome, however, and many authoritative statements and their conduct in general indicate that the Soviet leaders believe that general nuclear war would pose a grave danger to the survival of the USSR itself, as well as to civilized life on the rest of the planet. Concern on this score could inhibit them from political or military actions in Europe which would threaten to lead to hostilities with NATO and, in due course, to all out nuclear exchanges.

45. The Soviets might see certain advantages in adopting a strategy of graduated response of the sort adopted in the West. This would involve a readiness to accept a more static tactical situation, a greater emphasis on defensive and lesser emphasis on offensive weaponry, and probably the acquisition of a wider variety of low-yield nuclear weapons. A few Soviet writers have discussed the possibility of waging war in Europe with tactical nuclear weapons in a way which did not escalate into general nuclear war.[9] The Soviets' present level of tactical nuclear weap-

[9] It is also possible that the considerations of these writers, which are expressed in fairly general terms, are actually focused on the China theater. There the Soviets have a clear advantage in tactical nuclear weaponry over their opponents, whereas they clearly do not against NATO forces.

onry would permit them to exercise some nuclear options short of a strategic strike. But evidently most Soviet military authorities believe that it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to limit or control nuclear war in Europe once it began. Their writings tend to evaluate NATO's advocacy of flexible response either as misguided and dangerous or—in some writers' view—as a deceptive screen behind which NATO would maneuver to launch a pre-emptive mass nuclear strike. In sum, then, while the available evidence suggests that the issue of more flexible nuclear response is being weighed in the USSR, the same evidence casts doubt that the Soviets are prepared to adopt such a doctrine.[10]

C. Pressing for Larger World Influence?

46. The issues of military policy commanding Soviet interest with regard to distant areas—notably those in the Third World—are quite different in character from the issues we have discussed above. Moscow's usual practice is to deal with the governments in power in these areas and to approach them by conventional paths: diplomatic ties, economic and technical assistance agreements, trade relations, educational exchanges, military aid and training pacts. The Soviets have not, of course, hesitated to employ clandestine or subversive methods when they thought these were useful. Until the mid-1960s the military ingredient was a relatively small part of the overall Soviet posture and policy toward these regions. Since then it has become a more integral part, as the Soviets have become involved in a more consistent way in trying to project their military power directly into distant areas.

47. For the most part, moreover, this new tendency on the part of the Soviets has resulted not from the adoption of a comprehensive plan, but rather from the cumulative effect of a series of incremental decisions made in response to particular circumstances in particular places. Their military presence in Egypt and their military aid relationship with India are two important cases in point. (See paragraphs 53-57, pages 17, 18.) Thus the broad issue at this point in time—in view of gains made, losses encountered, opportunities envisaged, and risks foreseen in the Third World—is whether or not the Soviet leaders are proceeding with a more generally assertive policy, one likely to call for increased reliance on the instruments of military power.

48. The Soviets now have substantial ground, air, and naval forces which can be used to establish *their presence* in distant areas. This capability enables them to support political forces friendly to their policies and influence. It may make it possible in some situations to pre-empt the actions of others or to deter their intervention. But Soviet capabilities *to use force* at long range against opposition are limited.

49. Indeed, the growth to date in the USSR's capabilities for distant operations can be attributed in large part to Soviet efforts to meet quite different requirements. Increasing Soviet naval deployments to distant areas were, in the first instance, in support of potential general war missions, for example, countering US strategic forces at sea or developing sea-based strategic forces of their own. The growth of the merchant fleet has been in line with the increasing requirements of Soviet foreign trade. Most of the transport aircraft added to military transport aviation are designed to improve airlift capabilities in theater

[10] We do not attempt here to examine what choices the Soviets would have to consider, and what decision they might reach, in the event of actual NATO use of tactical nuclear weapons. That subject is discussed in NIE 11-14-71, "Warsaw Pact Forces for Operations in Eurasia", dated 9 September 1971, SECRET, paragraphs 82-86.

operations. The capabilities of amphibious forces have improved but continue to be oriented primarily toward the support of theater forces on the flanks. The USSR has recognized, however, that as a by-product of these activities, it would have more and more opportunities to buttress its claim to a world power role equal to that of the US.

50. On the military planning side, the Soviets are now facing questions of the following kind. Should they place much greater emphasis on forces and military equipment specifically *designed* for use in areas distant from the USSR's borders? To what extent should they be looking to forces trained and equipped to *fight* in distant areas, as contrasted with those more suitable for demonstrative purposes? Should they concentrate on items like bigger and better air transports, or increased amphibious capability? What kind of navy will they require in the years ahead? How difficult a problem will they have arranging for basing facilities?

51. There are many reasons to believe that the Soviet leaders are considering these questions more seriously than they have heretofore. They probably expect that, having attained rough parity with the US in strategic weapons, they will be able to secure for themselves even wider political and military options in distant areas over the next few years. They are showing themselves more disposed to support potentially friendly governments, whatever their political complexions. They are demonstrating an increasing willingness to try to replace the declining Western presence in various regions, an interest which is all the greater when this can serve to block the potential expansion of Chinese interests. And they seem to be particularly optimistic about the progress they have made—and presumably hope to continue—in the Middle East and South Asia.

The USSR and the Regions on its Southern Periphery

52. The USSR's conclusion of friendship treaties with Egypt and India in 1971, and the extent of Soviet military involvement especially in Egypt, indicate a Soviet intention to give high priority to the regions on its southern periphery in the years immediately ahead. Moscow has a long-standing interest in these regions; the amount of attention it is currently devoting to them may also reflect its recognition of the uneven results of its efforts in some areas more distant from its borders.

53. *The Case of Egypt and the Mediterranean.*[11] The Soviet presence in the Mediterranean and the Middle East (some 50 surface ships and submarines in the Mediterranean, and some 16,000 Soviet personnel stationed in Egypt) has come about partly because of general Soviet tendencies but principally because of features peculiar to the area. With regard to the particulars of the case, the USSR's deepening involvement owes much to the urgent need felt by the Arabs for military support against Israel, and to Moscow's desire both to increase its influence in the area and to secure a more forward defense of the USSR against strong Western power in the Mediterranean; this situation is not precisely duplicated elsewhere in the Third World. On a more general plane, however, the Soviet-Egyptian relationship does show how a Soviet military aid program, and increasingly strong common interests, can develop over time into a substantial military presence, and how the Soviets can make bold decisions once they consider the stakes high enough and their interests and prestige sufficiently engaged.

[11] For a more detailed account of this subject, see NIE 11-10-71, "The Uses of Soviet Military Power in Distant Areas", dated 15 December 1971, SECRET, paragraphs 34-44.

These aspects of the relationship conceivably might reappear in the USSR's future relations with other Third World countries.

54. Unquestionably, the Soviets see both pluses and minuses in their military relationship with Egypt. Some aspects of the Soviet presence there are of benefit to Egypt rather than the USSR, other aspects are quite the reverse. An ill-considered Egyptian move against Israel could trigger a new conflict in which Soviet forces would be brought under fire; the risk of full-scale hostilities and a US-Soviet confrontation would be appreciable. Moreover, the Sadat government often exhibits more independence of Soviet counsel than the Soviets would like to see in a client state. On the other hand, the Soviets have developed a long-term working alliance with the most important—and in various respects—the leading Arab country. The long-term advantages to their standing and influence in the Arab world as a whole may be important. Meanwhile they derive tangible military advantage for their own military posture in terms of special basing arrangements for their ships and aircraft.

55. *India and the Indian Ocean.* The main Soviet political interest in the area is clearly India. The Soviet-Indian Friendship Treaty confirms this priority and marks a switch from the policy, inaugurated at Tashkent in January 1966, which attempted to put the USSR in a position of greater impartiality between India and Pakistan. With the treaty, and with the USSR's subsequent material and diplomatic support for the Indians in the war against Pakistan, Moscow must feel it has a strong claim to Indian cooperation in support of its military presence in the Indian Ocean. It may be that Moscow also sees the more intimate relationship with India as a first step toward creating, over time, a multilateral arrangement opposing China.

56. There is no reason to suppose that India, for its part, has become eager to help the Soviets build a powerful position in that area of the world or—the recent treaty notwithstanding—that the Indians now want to scrap nonalignment entirely in favor of all-out alliance with the USSR. For one thing, if any power is to dominate the subcontinent, they hope and expect that it will be India—now that Pakistan has ceased to be a potent rival or threat. Nevertheless, India remains needful of Soviet material support and of Soviet backing to deter and counter any Chinese threat—the more so because of strains in the relations with the US. These factors will make for close Soviet-Indian relations.

57. The Soviets are no doubt conscious that there is considerable potential for turbulence at many points along the littoral of the Indian Ocean and its contiguous waterways, the Arabian Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the Red Sea. The Soviets probably believe, for example, that the Persian Gulf States face an uncertain political future and that the withdrawal of the British presence will make possible some increase in their own influence. With respect to some states in the eastern reaches of the Indian Ocean, competitiveness with the Chinese will be a factor affecting the Soviet stance. But they will certainly not want to become embroiled in each and every troublespot in the whole region. In some cases they will see their interests best served by an easing of conflict. In other cases, the Soviets evidently believe that their clients in this area can, in certain circumstances, engage in hostilities with relatively little danger of thereby provoking major power reaction against the USSR; thus the Soviets have supported India's belligerence but have restrained Egypt's.

58. *Other Places on the USSR's Southern Periphery.* In seeking closer relations with a number of other states to its south, the USSR may have considerable success in some cases,

not very much in others. Iraq and Syria, feeling threatened by relatively powerful neighbors, are likely for example to be receptive to friendship treaties with the USSR and to a strengthening of military ties, beyond the present levels of military assistance. But as Soviet relations develop further with the Arab states, particularly in the military field, both Iran and Turkey are likely to become increasingly resentful and suspicious; neither is likely, in any case, to place itself in a position of economic—much less military—dependence on the USSR. Even if Moscow should establish a positive relationship with the Bhutto government in Pakistan, the embitterment of many Pakistanis over Soviet support of India will constitute an enduring problem in the relationship.

The More Distant Areas

59. For the most part, Moscow does not see the countries of the Third World which are farther removed from its borders as nearly so important to its security interests. Soviet policies toward such states—in Africa and Latin America, for instance—tend to be opportunistic and selective.

60. Cuba and, in different ways, Chile, are special cases. The Soviets will almost certainly continue to provide Cuba with high levels of economic and military aid, along with demonstrative political support for the Castro government. Related to this, the Soviet naval presence in the Caribbean now seems to be becoming continuous and is likely within the next couple of years to become larger. For the Soviets, these increased naval activities will also serve the purpose of showing that the US has lost its exclusive naval role in the area. Beyond this, the Soviets will probably "show the flag" more widely elsewhere in Latin America and, in the case of Chile, will stand ready to provide new increments of economic and military aid quickly if the needs of the Allende government became urgent.

New Capabilities for Distant Operations? What Kind of Navy?

61. As indicated, existing Soviet capabilities for military operations in distant areas have developed largely as a by-product of military programs designed for other purposes—defensive, as well as offensive. Now Soviet policy makers need to consider how much effort and resources to devote to military forces designed principally for use at long distances from the Soviet Union.

62. A key question concerns the rapid, long distance transportation of troops and equipment—i.e., military airlift. The USSR's military airlift capability has increased somewhat in recent years to meet the demands of expanded objectives and missions. Compared to US military airlift, the Soviet military have about one-half the capacity, and much less ability to fly extremely long distances. Moreover, the Soviets cannot react as quickly and effectively to situations far from their borders because they lack an overseas support infrastructure.

63. Soviet Military Transport Aviation (VTA) will probably be expanded within the next several years. No large all-jet transport has yet become operational but a jet-powered aircraft similar to the US C-141 is now being flight tested. There are also indications that the Soviets will make an even larger jet transport; such an aircraft would probably be produced in both cargo and troop or passenger carrying versions. New aircraft will probably begin to enter the inventory by the mid-1970s.

64. The Soviet Navy is large and modern; it has already become a viable instrument for demonstrating Soviet military power in distant areas. Its main combat power is in its large

force of ships equipped with surface-to-surface missiles and in its submarines. These ships are found on a regular basis in all of the world's seas and Soviet fleet operations are based on a growing body of open ocean experience. The present Soviet fleet can perform a wide variety of functions in distant areas in a non-combat situation. It can show the flag anywhere in the world; it can provide a show of force in support of an allied state; it can provide escort for Soviet merchant shipping, and it can reconnoiter and conduct surveillance against potentially hostile naval forces.

65. Soviet sealift capabilities consist of merchant shipping and amphibious assault lift. The first is made up of non-combatant vessels which require some port facilities to handle cargo. The second is designed to land combat forces either in ports or across beaches. By diverting a large proportion of their merchant marine to military use, the Soviets could project large forces to great distances. However, the Soviets will have to increase production of amphibious ships if they are to develop significant capability for distant operations against opposition.

66. Probably the most glaring deficiency of the Soviet Navy for conducting distant operations ashore against opposition is its lack of integral air support. At present, the Soviet fleet must depend on land-based aircraft to provide long-range reconnaissance and air strike capabilities and to supplement fleet air defenses. A second, though less serious deficiency, is the lack of specialized ships for amphibious operations, such as assault helicopter platforms, ammunition ships and large troop and equipment transports.

67. These deficiencies will not be quickly or easily overcome. Yet in many respects a continuing improvement of Soviet capabilities for distant action can be anticipated. Some of this improvement will be a by-product of the expansion of naval, merchant marine and airlift forces in support of their separate primary missions. Naval programs presently underway will, by 1975, bring forth new surface ships and submarines useful for distant operations.

68. Beyond this, there is the issue of whether or not the Soviet Navy should develop a sea-based fleet air arm. Recent statements by ranking Soviet naval officers provide indications that the subject of aircraft carriers is now being discussed with renewed interest. They imply that no decisions have yet been made but that there are concepts for small, powerful carriers—perhaps employing V/STOL aircraft—which could serve missions particularly suitable to the Soviet Navy. To develop an extensive fleet air arm would take time, perhaps the rest of the decade. But if the Soviet leaders become convinced that their forces for distant operations should be designed for assault—capable of landing and supporting troops against opposition—then they probably will decide on a major expansion in their now very limited fleet air capability.

69. In any case, as modest additions are made to the USSR's capabilities to lift and land forces in distant areas, these very improvements will tend to strengthen the arguments for acquisition of further special-purpose items. As the USSR further involves its policy and prestige in remote areas Moscow will have to consider requirements for forces to respond to a wide range of contingencies, whether to prevent setbacks or to exploit opportunities. We believe that step-by-step the Soviets, perhaps without ever making a decision on the general principle, will acquire capabilities which would permit them to employ combat forces in distant areas.

70. *The Question of Bases.* The Soviets, having for years made propaganda capital over US bases abroad, are faced with a dilemma. They realize that bases outside of the Soviet Union have become important for them if

they are to compete successfully in the international arena. Their unsatisfactory experience with airlift during the aftermath of the Peruvian earthquake probably pointed this up as much as any single recent event. They must, however, obtain these bases without making themselves targets for local opposition and the same types of attack which they themselves mounted.

71. Up to this point, the Soviets have acted with great caution in establishing facilities for their naval and air power in foreign countries. Naval units have used exposed anchorages in international waters for routine replenishment. They have made use of foreign facilities for certain types of servicing activities (e.g., Egypt and Cuba). Long-range air movements have been facilitated by routine requests for landing rights, fuel, and servicing. These have not involved the airlift of large military contingents.

72. The military requirements of the Soviets for more elaborate facilities on foreign soil are clearly more likely to grow than diminish. Obtaining the kind of bases abroad which would be most suitable for their military purposes would be difficult for them. The successful installation and maintenance of any sort of overseas bases is highly dependent on the fortunate coincidence of favorable geography and political circumstances, as in the case of Egypt. The Soviets have been searching for such favorable circumstances elsewhere and they can be expected to continue to do so.

73. Of the countries which could offer both the location and the kind of facilities the Soviets might want, few would be politically willing to grant bases. So far, such facilities as the USSR has acquired have been granted in return for active support of various kinds to states which felt an urgent need for it against what they perceived as clear external threats—Egypt and Cuba. We do not rule out the establishment of other facilities in Third World countries—especially if comparable circumstances obtain—but the force of nationalism will remain an impediment to the establishment of such facilities in most cases.

74. In such foreign facilities as they have or may get, the Soviets will probably accept the need to disguise their activities under the cover of indigenous installations. Or they may simply have to settle for commercially-based arrangements. If they hope to support any of a series of possible military activities, they would see great advantage in arrangements permitting their stationing of forces abroad not only to service air and naval units but also to provide security and maintain a presence for political purposes. Such arrangements will, however, be extremely difficult to come by, and in most instances the Soviets will probably seek to acquire less and reconcile themselves to the limitations involved.

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