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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

Soviet Policy in Asia

(Supersedes NIE 11/13-69)

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE IN FULL

~~SECRET~~

NIE 11-9-71

15 April 1971

Nº 292

~~SECRET~~

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Date 11/31/94
HRP 94-3

NIE 11-9-71

SOVIET POLICY IN ASIA

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SOVIET POLICY IN ASIA

PRINCIPAL OBSERVATIONS

A. The roots of the conflict between the Soviet Union and China have grown strong and deep. There will certainly be changes in the intensity of the struggle—even, as now, periods of relative calm and modestly improving state relations. But differences between the two states—contending national interests, warring ideologies, and antipathetic cultures—are simply too basic and too vital to permit a durable resolution of the dispute.

B. Soviet policies toward China have been fairly restrained since the tense spring and summer of 1969. In effect, the Soviets are trying to buy time: time in which to contain Chinese power in Asia and elsewhere; time in which to improve their already impressive military position along the Sino-Soviet border; and time in which somehow to convince the men who will one day succeed Mao that their future must lie in closer, or at least less troublesome, relations with the USSR.

C. The Soviet leaders seem to be at least mildly satisfied with the results of their moderation. China, though still antagonistic, is behaving with much greater circumspection than it once did and has ceased altogether its efforts to aggravate tensions along the border. Thus, assuming that Peking does not itself revert to a more actively hostile policy, the Soviets are likely to try to maintain their restrained approach, at least for the next few years.

D. But whatever their plans and hopes, the Soviet leaders remember the bitter past and must also allow for some grim possibilities in the

future. They are apprehensive that Chinese political and economic power will grow at more impressive rates; that Chinese foreign policy will become increasingly vigorous and effective; and that China will further damage Soviet interests in East and South Asia and will in general undermine the USSR's role as a world power. And they are fearful that by the mid-1970s China's offensive strategic strength will be sufficient to pose a major threat to important targets in the USSR.

E. This serious concern about long-term Chinese military capabilities, together with anxieties about Mao's intentions, particularly along the Sino-Soviet border, has led the Soviets to ponder the use of force against China. The continued strengthening of their forces along the border certainly suggests that the Soviets have decided to keep this option open. But they seem also to have concluded, at least for the time being, that the disadvantages of this alternative—including certain military risks and possibly severe political costs—would outweigh the rather uncertain net advantages in any situation short of imminent threat or extreme provocations from China. And if the Soviets should decide that military action were necessary, they would be more likely to engage in cross-border operations, limited in both time and scope, than to undertake more ambitious and risky efforts to neutralize China's strategic potential or to occupy large portions of Chinese territory.¹

F. The problem of China—especially the problems of trying to contain Chinese power and influence—has come to be seen in Moscow as central to Soviet policies throughout most of Asia. But concern about China is not the only major motive force behind these policies. Efforts to undermine US and Western positions is also an important common

¹ Lt. Gen. Donald V. Bennett, the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, does not agree with this paragraph. Brig. Gen. David E. Ott, for the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, and Brig. Gen. Edward Ratkovich, for the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF, join him in this dissent. All three believe that the thrust of this and the foregoing conclusions concerning the Soviet policy toward China imply that the Soviets have decided to live with the Chinese threat and hope for the best in the post-Mao period. They believe it more likely that the Soviet leadership has not yet decided among basic policy options toward China and is probably not content with the results of its current moderate tactics. In particular, they believe that the question of military action against China is still under active consideration in the Kremlin. This is indicated by the continuing buildup of military capabilities opposite China which are already more than adequate for defensive needs. If the Soviets should choose to attempt a military solution, whatever course of action they adopt would probably include a strike against Chinese nuclear weapons production and delivery facilities. For a more complete treatment of this view, see footnote to Part II, page 12.

theme, one which, moreover, would (and did) exist independently of Soviet troubles with China. And much of Soviet policy in Asia is, of course, formed by and tailored to the particular—and perhaps unique—problems and opportunities presented by the individual Asian states. (A discussion of these may be found in paragraphs 39 through 61.)

G. The Soviets face a formidable problem in seeking to assess the overall correlation of forces in Asia in the decade ahead. They face, in fact, a series of crucial imponderables: the policies and strengths of post-Mao China; the scope and intensity of US interests in Asia; the impact of Japan's growing strength; and, in general, the effects the emerging quadrilateral balance of forces in Asia, i.e., the consequences of the interaction between the four major powers on the scene.

H. The growing complexity and uncertainty of international politics in Asia is not likely of itself to diminish the USSR's interests or lessen its opportunities in the area. On the contrary, Moscow may over time find itself forced and in some cases encouraged to devote more and more of its energies to its position in Asia. There could be new crises vis-à-vis China, arising either from renewed troubles along the border or from conflicts elsewhere in Asia. But aside from its relations with China, the USSR is not likely deliberately to press its interests to the point of confrontation, and, in general, the more complicated the circumstances, and the more perplexed the Soviets are about the likely shape of the future in Asia, the more Moscow will be inclined to react rather than to initiate, to play it warily and by ear, rather than incautiously by some sort of pan-Asian grand design.²

² Lt. Gen. Donald V. Bennett, the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, does not agree with this paragraph. Brig. Gen. David E. Ott, for the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, joins him in this dissent. They believe that these longer range predictions tend essentially to rule out the possibility of a Sino-Soviet military clash. This possibility does not appear to be foreclosed either in Moscow or in Peking. Should a major military conflict occur by design, miscalculation or accident, the Soviet perceptions described in this section would be drastically affected, as would the interrelationships of countries world-wide, especially those in Asia.

DISCUSSION

I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1. Asia has long been a target of Russian encroachment. From the 15th to the 18th century the Russians continually warred with the remnants of the Mongol Empire in Siberia and Central Asia. Beginning in the 16th century, Russians expanded into Siberia until they reached the Pacific and encountered China. In Central Asia their conquests were halted by confrontation with British power in Persia, India, and Afghanistan. Japan's decisive victory over Russian forces in 1905 probably prevented Russia's outright annexation of part of Manchuria and Korea. The Bolshevik regime initially renounced expansionist aims in Asia and elsewhere, yet by the early 1920s the former Tsarist protectorate of Mongolia had been restored to Moscow's control, Russian influence had been reasserted in Sinkiang, and several Communist parties had been commissioned by Moscow to gain influence elsewhere in Asia.

2. But the Russians have probably conceived of Asia at least as much as a source of danger as an area of opportunity. From the early 13th to the late 15th centuries the Mongol Khans controlled Moscow, and their harsh

rule has left a deep impression on the Russian consciousness. And in modern times, during the first half of this century, Moscow found itself in more or less continuous conflict with Japan, which intervened in the Russian civil war in the early 1920s—apparently in part in order to annex all Soviet territory east of Lake Baikal—and engaged the Soviets in major land battles along the Mongolian and Manchurian borders in the late 1930s. During World War II, until the defeat of Hitler's forces, the USSR adhered to an uneasy neutrality with Japan because Stalin feared that the Red Army could not withstand a two-front war.

3. The defeat of Japan in World War II resulted directly in Soviet territorial gains in Asia—South Sakhalin and the Kurils—and the establishment of a pro-Soviet Communist regime in North Korea. World War II and its aftermath also restructured the politics of Asia. The Western colonial empires were dismantled under the pressure of resurgent Asian nationalism and were replaced by independent states—in most cases politically weak and economically undeveloped. In these circumstances, Stalin emphasized a revolutionary line and provided at least moral support to the

strong Communist forces which had emerged in China, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaya, and elsewhere. He was principally concerned, however, with the advancement of Soviet interests—and even, in some instances, the acquisition of territory—in areas adjacent to the USSR. Stalin's successors, however, adopted a more flexible and opportunistic approach, concentrating on efforts in Asia and elsewhere in the Third World to enhance their influence through state-to-state relations (with both radical and conservative regimes), extensions of military and economic aid, and various forms of political pressure.

4. But, to Moscow, the prime postwar development in Asia was the Chinese Communist victory on the mainland. Whatever Stalin's reservations about Mao Tse-tung, this victory encouraged the Soviets to believe for a time that their security in Asia and their influence world-wide had been greatly enhanced. Some Soviet optimism on these counts apparently survived both the Korean war and signs in the mid-1950s that Peking was becoming increasingly restless with its subordinate international role. But by 1960 all such Soviet expectations had evaporated: the Sino-Soviet alliance had begun to come apart, and the USSR's position in Asia (as, for example, in Indonesia) no longer seemed so secure. A few years later and Moscow perceived (and publicly proclaimed) that Chinese foreign policy had become "clearly hostile."

5. Today, the Soviets look upon China as a competitor and adversary and even as a growing security threat. Yet other important Soviet concerns in Asia, chiefly the US role and the visible re-emergence of Japan, also demand Moscow's attention. Moreover, as public and private Soviet statements acknowledge, these other concerns greatly complicate Moscow's approach to the China problem.

II. SOVIET POLICY TOWARD CHINA

A. Origins of the Conflict

6. Manifestations of serious differences between the USSR and China began to appear—for the most part privately—in the late 1950s. Peking, distrustful of Khrushchev's "revisionist" internal policies and anxious to assert its own notions about economic development and social discipline, in effect declared its doctrinal independence of the USSR in 1958, in the course of putting into effect the Great Leap Forward. Strains in the relationship subsequently grew rapidly as a consequence both of China's growing pride and sensitivity concerning its own sovereignty and the USSR's mounting concern about the hazards of China's aggressive foreign policies. In 1959, according to Peking, the Soviets reneged on a promise to provide major aid for the development of a Chinese capability in nuclear weapons. In the following year, disputes over foreign policies and the nature of the international Communist movement came into the open, and Moscow, seeking to apply heavy pressure, suddenly terminated its economic aid programs (already a subject of contention) and withdrew all its technicians and advisors from China. By 1963 to 1964, tensions had grown significantly along the borders and the issue of Chinese territorial claims to large portions of Siberia and Soviet Central Asia had been joined in public.

7. The origins of this bitter, vital dispute are varied and complex—political and psychological, ideological, and even cultural. There has been contention because each state wishes for its own purposes to play a leading role in Asia, and neither relishes competition from the other. There have been fundamental disagreements concerning policies toward the US, differing assessments of the risks involved in one or another aspect of East-West contention, and disputes over the level of support one partner owed the other in particular situa-

tions (such as the Sino-American confrontation in the Taiwan Straits in 1958). Behind such clashes of interests lay China's strong resentment of its subordinate status, a strong Soviet suspicion that Mao wished to dominate the partnership, and the well-founded concern of each that the other would in the end prove to be an unreliable ally. And contributing to ill will were conflicting ideas about the proper courses of domestic policy, themselves reflections of the fact that the two states are in vastly different stages of economic development.

8. Ideological factors have also been an important source of contention and have at times added to the forcefulness of the conflict. Mao's challenge to Soviet ideological supremacy, together with differences over strategy for the spread of communism, have provoked serious bilateral disputes and disarray in the world's Communist movement. And largely because of ideology, Soviet and Chinese conceptions of each other's motives and behavior have tended to become encapsulated in doctrinal formulae. This, in turn, has made it extremely difficult for the two sides to compromise their quarrels, even on minor issues.

9. Finally, broad cultural differences, compounded by strong historical and racial enmities, have helped to give the dispute a strong emotional cast and an extra degree of intensity. Indeed, mutual misunderstandings and resentments may have been inevitable in the wake of the encounter of these two self-contained and antipathetic cultures after 1949. Even during the period of at least superficially cordial relations, many Chinese showed their dislike of the Russians' patronizing attitude toward Chinese traditions, and after 1958, and particularly after the onset of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in 1966, popular aversion in China to things Russian was raised to the level of regime policy. The Soviets, for

their part, have always regarded Oriental mores as alien and vaguely menacing and often exhibited their uneasiness by demanding acknowledgement of the superiority of Russian (and European) ways.

B. The Military Aspect

10. At least until the mid-1960s, the Soviet leaders seemed to view their conflict with China as almost exclusively political and ideological. Initially, they did not seem especially concerned about Chinese military capabilities or interested in the use of their own forces vis-à-vis China, even for essentially political purposes. But gradually Moscow perceived that the Sino-Soviet dispute was developing a military dimension as well. This perception may have been based on a rather broad and simple calculation: it is prudent to improve military capabilities vis-à-vis a large, increasingly hostile and perhaps not altogether rational neighbor. Moscow presumably wished to be better able both to protect its own territory and to apply military pressure on Peking, should this prove desirable. And it knew that the buildup would at a minimum require the development in place of a theater force structure as a credible deterrent or as an effective combat force should deterrence fail. Of course, the Soviets realized that as a last resort they could count on their strategic nuclear capabilities—any Soviet intercontinental ballistic missile can be targeted against China—but they also presumably feared that these capabilities would be too overpowering to be suitable for contingencies short of general nuclear war.

11. The buildup near China has taken place mainly under Khrushchev's successors. Perhaps Khrushchev—who had ordered only minor improvements in border security—would have in time authorized more substantial measures in response to Mao Tse-tung's

revival of Chinese territorial claims in July 1964. In any case, presumably some time in 1965, soon after Khrushchev's removal and after the subsequent Sino-Soviet talks had come to naught, the Soviets decided to increase substantially their ground and tactical air forces near the Chinese frontier. Since then, the total number of divisions in the area has about tripled and tactical air strength has been raised accordingly. These increases have been accompanied by roughly proportionate increases in overall Soviet theater force strength; thus they have not necessitated any major drawdown elsewhere in the USSR or Eastern Europe. The buildup opposite China has, however, absorbed new equipment which otherwise might have been available for modernization of theater forces in the West.

12. While continuing to add new units to their forces in the border areas, the Soviets since 1969 seem to have concentrated primarily on efforts to fill out existing units and to improve command and control procedures and the support structure. Among other measures, they have created a new Military District (MD) opposite Sinkiang. They have also pulled back or realigned certain strategic offensive units, in order to make them less vulnerable to Chinese attack.

13. The border areas have been quiet since the last serious military clash in the late summer of 1969, and the ground forces of both sides have remained in essentially defensive postures. Though the Chinese have moved several field armies northward over the past two years, the bulk of Chinese ground forces are still deployed generally well back from the border. And most Soviet divisions have not yet been given sufficient men, transport, or support above division level, to engage in sustained offensive operations. Although they now maintain many combat-ready elements in the area, the Soviets would probably need

three weeks or so, in a crisis situation, to bring all their forces to full strength in personnel and equipment.

C. The Current Soviet View and Policy Problems Ahead

14. The view of the China problem expressed in Soviet media and in intra-Party discussions has glossed over the conflict of national interests and cultures and tends to be self-contradictory. On the one hand, the Soviets have repeatedly and bitterly denounced China's "great power chauvinism"; on the other, ideology precludes the admission that fundamental disputes or rivalries can develop between Socialist states. And, since 1969, when the strident and even semi-hysterical Soviet propaganda campaign against China reached its peak, commentaries have generally down-played military aspects of the problem. Principal blame for the dispute is placed on Mao and a few associates. For about a decade after 1949, the Soviets say, Mao repressed his anti-Marxist tendencies because of the opposition of pro-Soviet elements in the Chinese Communist Party leadership. But in recent years, the indictment continues, Mao has purged the Party and used the armed forces and public media to turn his country onto an anti-Soviet course because, among other things, he realizes that the USSR constitutes the chief obstacle to his expansionist goals.

15. This official Soviet view of the China problem reflects a number of genuine beliefs and apprehensions. In part, however, it is intended to serve the purposes of propaganda and political warfare and thus offers a somewhat distorted picture of the general Soviet perspective. Emphasizing the personal villainy of Mao, for example, may be an effective means of attack, and no doubt accurately reflects strong dislike for the man, but it conceals the Soviet leadership's full awareness

that its problems with China—however exacerbated by Mao—are not solely personal in origin and will not of themselves evaporate once Mao has gone.

16. Clearly, the Soviet leaders wish to contain Chinese power in Asia and elsewhere and in the Communist movement, and they wish at the same time to be able somehow to influence the course of Chinese policies in general. Their pronouncements and general behavior indicate that they also hope that, without making any substantial concessions of their own, they can persuade China to mend its ways and re-establish good relations with the Soviet Union. They may not be convinced that these aspirations are altogether realistic; they apparently receive conflicting advice on this point from their experts, some of whom hold that the Chinese threat is receding while others suggest quite the contrary. But, lacking any attractive alternatives, the leaders nevertheless seem willing to proceed on the assumption that time is on their side.

17. In any case, the dominant notes struck by most Soviet spokesmen, including Brezhnev, since the summer of 1969 have been consistent with this approach: the Soviet military forces are prepared but will not be "provoked"; the USSR is patient and relies on its basic friendship with the Chinese people during this temporary period of misrule; the Chinese leadership which takes power in the relatively near future will be likely to follow a more normal state-to-state relationship with the USSR and seek a restoration of economic and cultural ties, some Party contacts, and even Soviet military assistance.

18. In the aftermath of the border incidents in 1969, the Soviets have in fact tried to develop correct if not cordial state-to-state relations with China. There have been prolonged, though so far inconclusive, border negotiations, an exchange of ambassadors (in

late 1970) after a four-year hiatus, and an apparent agreement to triple trade from the low level of 1970. Soviet propaganda concerning China is critical but is seldom bellicose. The Soviets seem generally satisfied with the general turn of events and willing, if necessary, to let the border talks drag on endlessly. The Soviets seem to be stalling for time—i.e., for a new regime in Peking. And, assuming no major new Chinese moves directly against the USSR, they are likely over the next few years to maintain this restrained approach.

19. Nevertheless, the Soviet leadership is probably unanimous in its dislike and distrust of China, and it still operates with a sense of profound disquiet concerning its relations with Peking in the future. Growing Chinese military power, in the absence of a favorable turn in Chinese attitude, could become a serious threat to the security interests of the USSR. And whatever hopes Moscow may have for improvements in Chinese attitudes, it has revealed continuing concern that before Mao and his entourage disappear, they will succeed in pushing China into a fundamentally non-Marxist and durably anti-Soviet mold, e.g., into a form of bureaucratic state, highly nationalistic and dominated by the military, with the Communist Party demoralized and moribund, watching from the sidelines. The Soviets also fear that, even if the Maoists should fail in this, Mao's successors may not represent much of an improvement, speculating that post-Mao China might go through yet another upheaval comparable to the Cultural Revolution or worse. They have implied that in this event China might then turn more vigorously against the Soviet Union as the principal enemy.

20. Whatever form the post-Mao regime assumes, it does not seem at all likely to us that Peking will ever again be willing to subordinate itself to Moscow. There is at the

same time little chance that Moscow could remain content for very long unless it enjoyed a dominant position. And even if Sino-Soviet relations should improve fairly substantially for a time—in the post-Mao era or even before—strong mutual distrust, differing doctrinal views, and divergent national interests will almost certainly preclude a basic healing of the dispute. Indeed, contention between the USSR and China, though it will surely vary in intensity, seems as firmly rooted and as destined to endure as the more familiar struggle between the USSR and the West.

21. This is our estimate. The Soviets' judgments are of course shaped by a different perspective and guided by different objectives, and prospects may not be in their view quite so pessimistic. Still, the Soviet leadership must prudently allow for grim possibilities. It must, for example, acknowledge the possibility that Chinese political, economic, and military strength will grow at an impressive rate and that Chinese foreign policies will become increasingly vigorous and effective. It will in any case remain apprehensive that China will more effectively threaten Soviet interests in East and South Asia; will complicate Soviet relations with the West, particularly with the US; and will in general undermine the USSR's role as a global power.

22. Moscow demonstrated in 1969 that it did not wish to raise tensions with the West while embroiled in a crisis with China. On that occasion, however, it was reluctant to make any basic changes in its approach and preferred instead to temporize. But over the long term, if the China problem persists in serious form, the Soviets may have to contemplate more far-reaching changes in their policies vis-à-vis one or another of their principal adversaries. They might, for example, ponder the advisability of offering some major concession to Peking in an effort to purchase good

will, or at least diminished hostility. Or, alternatively, they might consider the wisdom of making substantial adjustments in their approach to the West in an effort to buy time while pressures and perhaps even military action were brought to bear against China.

D. The Military Option

23. The Soviets have already given some thought to the possibility of dealing with the China problem through the use of force, in part because they are especially concerned about the security of their border, which is still a subject of controversy with Peking. This 6,800 mile frontier (including the 2,650 mile Sino-Mongolian sector) does not lend itself to linear defense. Moreover, the Far Eastern sector lies at the end of a thin, lengthy, and vulnerable logistic line (the Trans-Siberian Railroad), and most developed centers in this area of the USSR are close to the border. In the western sector the Soviet logistic position is much better, but here the problem is complicated by the various nationality groups which straddle the border.

24. In any event, during the summer of 1969 the Soviets gave the impression to the Chinese, and others, that they were seriously considering a resort to drastic military measures. It now appears that the main intent of their ominous hints was to move the Chinese into negotiations, but a number of military options were surely under review—presumably in part because there could be no guarantee that the Chinese would, in fact, step back and consent to negotiations.

25. Some Soviet leaders, especially after the Ussuri incidents, may have been attracted by the notion that it might be desirable to teach the Chinese an even stronger military lesson—i.e., stronger than already taught by Soviet actions in specific border incidents. Perhaps there was also some hope (though it could

not have been much more than that) in Soviet circles that the Mao-Lin regime could not survive a military defeat at the hands of Soviet forces and that its successor would be more "realistic" vis-à-vis the USSR, or at least less troublesome. And some Soviets must have argued that it would be better to move militarily against China sooner rather than later, when Chinese nuclear weapons deployment would be well advanced.

26. The Soviets apparently have difficulties in estimating Chinese strategic offensive capabilities, but their apprehensions probably incline them toward worst case estimating. The Soviets appear to believe that the Chinese can, by the mid-1970s, build up a substantial inventory of ballistic missiles capable of reaching the European USSR. They doubtless are aware of the small but steady Chinese production of TU-16 medium bombers, which can be used to drop nuclear bombs, and that the Chinese may be developing ASMs for these bombers. Finally, the Soviets may fear that the Chinese eventually will develop a submarine-launched ballistic missile system, capable of striking important targets within the USSR.

27. At a minimum the Soviet leadership seems concerned that such capabilities will eventually provide China with a credible deterrent force and that, under its cover, Peking might feel free to pursue, for example, more aggressive ground actions against Soviet or Mongolian territory. As a more remote contingency, the Soviets probably allow for the possibility of a major war between China and the USSR resulting from accident or miscalculation or a deliberate (though perhaps irrational) decision by Mao Tse-tung or his successor. And, finally, Soviet planners must have also considered the possibility of large-scale warfare deliberately initiated by the USSR itself.

28. In very broad terms, the Soviets might contemplate a number of different kinds of military options vis-à-vis China. One possibility would be a non-nuclear ground offensive of limited scale and with limited goals. This could be a raid in force against Chinese positions or localities fairly near the border, designed essentially to punish, impress, and perhaps deter the enemy (in the manner, for example, of Israeli punitive raids against Arab guerrilla bases in Jordan). Another possibility would be a more ambitious ground force move well into Chinese border provinces, such as Sinkiang or Inner Mongolia. This might proceed under the guise of a campaign to rescue or liberate oppressed minorities in these regions; some of the territory thus acquired might then be established as a buffer zone. Yet another possibility would be non-nuclear air strikes on Chinese nuclear and missile installations. More drastic options are of course available to the Soviets. But it is highly doubtful that Moscow has ever seriously contemplated as an available option a full-scale attempt to conquer China with conventional means or a large-scale nuclear attack intended to destroy China or to bring it immediately to its knees.

29. The military options which may have been weighed by the Soviets in 1969 probably would be generally relevant today and are likely to remain so for a time. Neither Chinese nor Soviet military capabilities have radically improved in the interim and no major changes in the balance seem likely for the next few years. The Chinese will probably be able gradually to expand their strategic offensive capabilities, but are not expected to have missile or modern bomber forces which the Soviets would consider formidable until at least the mid-1970s.

30. The disadvantages of military action against China have to date obviously outweighed in the Soviet mind the rather un-

certain advantages. The Soviets could not be certain of their ability to control either the nature or the duration of active conflict. No matter how successful a conventional Soviet attack might be initially, Moscow would have had to reckon with the possibility that Peking would be able and determined to wage a protracted conventional campaign against Soviet forces. It could not be certain that the Mao regime would be overthrown, though it could be sure that, in general, Chinese hostility toward the USSR would be greatly increased. And Moscow could foresee that once bogged down in such a protracted conflict, its alternatives would appear to be an inglorious withdrawal or resort to the use of nuclear weapons in an effort to force a decisive end to the conflict. It is also conceivable that, using their TU-16 aircraft, the Chinese could strike, for example, Vladivostok, Khabarovsk or Alma-Ata with a nuclear weapon with a yield in the megaton range.

31. If the USSR were to use nuclear weapons, it would have to face the possibility of nuclear retaliation. In addition, the Soviets seem to understand that they might pay a heavy political price indeed if they were the first to violate the nuclear truce of the past quarter century. They themselves have placed great emphasis on the desirability of an international ban on first use of nuclear weapons. They would surely be concerned that their violation of the truce might fundamentally alter world opinion toward the Soviet Union and lead to basic shifts in the foreign policies of major states. They would fear that the US might feel less inhibited about using its own nuclear weapons, for example, in Vietnam. They would also fear that their action would encourage a number of other countries—including India, West Germany, and Japan—to acquire their own nuclear capabilities.

32. Moreover, the Soviets would have to weigh the general effects of a blow against China on their policies elsewhere in the world. Moscow has invested heavily in its campaign to project an image of peace and reason, especially in Western Europe, and has long sought to convince Third World states that the USSR is the protector of the down-trodden and the non-white. A military move against China would in most circumstances jeopardize both these policies. Possible US reactions—could the US in some way take significant advantage of a Sino-Soviet conflict?—would also be a major Soviet concern, particularly if the USSR found itself more or less continuously engaged in China against an enemy which simply would not quit.

33. While the military option will remain open to the Soviets, it is thus likely to remain an unattractive and risky alternative. A major turnover in the Soviet leadership which brought to the fore men of a more radical disposition, or perhaps one which enabled the military to play a much more direct and important role, might raise the chances of a drastic Soviet move. The adoption of a more aggressive posture in Peking and the resumption of Chinese raids along the border might also revive Soviet interest in a military solution. In this event the Soviets would be more likely to resort to actions along the line of the limited, non-nuclear cross-border operations described above than to the more ambitious military actions with the grave risks and complications. Assuming relative continuity in the Soviet leadership and constancy in Chinese policies, however, the circumstances and considerations which have so far persuaded the Soviets not to attack China will probably persist at least for the next few years. And in the mid-1970s and beyond, the arguments in Moscow against a major military move may

be reinforced by the continuing build up of strategic nuclear capabilities in China.³

³ Lt. Gen. Donald V. Bennett, the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, disagrees with Part II, Sections C and D. Brig. Gen. David E. Ott, for the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, and Brig. Gen. Edward Ratkovich, for the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF, join him in this dissent. All three believe that this estimate inadequately expresses the Soviet concern for the threat to their national security posed by the Chinese; that it overemphasizes Soviet hopes for an improvement in relations after Mao; that it places undue stress on Soviet concern for world opinions; and, finally, that its implied judgment that Soviet military action against China is unlikely, is inadequately supported by evidence. The DIA, Army, and Air Force position is elaborated in the following paragraphs.

1. In the Soviet view Chinese hostility, the territorial dispute, and Chinese military capabilities add up to a clear threat to the national security of the USSR. It is this threat that has led the Soviets to undertake the military buildup along the border. Because of the disparity in military strength, the Soviets probably consider the present threat tolerable if uncomfortable. It is the future—the period in which the Chinese will have not only massive conventional forces but also a sizable nuclear deterrent—that gives them concern. It is true that there are other issues, such as competition for a dominant role in East Asia and competition for political and ideological prestige and authority throughout the world, but these issues, however important in themselves, are secondary to the concern for national security.

2. We doubt that there is any substantial body of opinion in the USSR which holds with confidence that a true settlement of differences with China is likely either under Mao or his successors. The antagonism is too deep and the basic objectives of the two nations are too contradictory for Moscow to believe that there can be a reconciliation on terms which the USSR could accept. This is not to say that there could not be a papering-over of differences if both sides desired it, but the basic conflict would remain. Thus, while the Soviet leaders may hope for a favorable turn in the relationship, they would not consider such a turn likely, and could not prudently trust the national security to the chance that it would occur. It is much more likely that the Soviets expect the future will bring only a continuation of Chinese hostility, a protracted cold war of greater or lesser intensity, and a steady increase in the Chinese nu-

clear capability. We believe that Soviet policies are designed with this future in view.

3. In any Soviet analysis of the military option, adverse political consequences, world opinion, and other such factors are not likely to weigh heavily against considerations of national security. Over the years the Soviets have repeatedly decided that they could afford to ignore such possible ill effects. Czechoslovakia is one case in point. They must now conclude that they were correct. They may even judge that in many parts of the world there would be a covert welcome for almost any action which would reduce the Chinese potential for creating dangerous situations. In any event, the Soviets are adept at finding or contriving rationales to justify almost any action.

4. Any Soviet decision to exercise a military option would result from a leadership decision based on a calculation of risks versus gains. We do not have and are not likely to get unambiguous information on such decision making. Nor do we know how the Soviet leaders would weigh all various factors involved in such a decision. In the absence of direct evidence on Soviet decisions or a clear understanding of Soviet perspectives, the clearest indication of their intentions is the evidence provided by the military buildup along the Soviet border.

5. This buildup has progressed to the point where the forces already deployed are more than adequate for defense against any minor Chinese incursion even when the Soviet penchant for overwhelming force is taken into account. Yet, additional forces are still being deployed, and the indications are that the buildup will continue for the next few years. Although it is recognized that the Soviets use their military power for political advantage, the scope of the buildup indicates that the Soviets are preparing for the possibility of large-scale hostilities. Since it is highly unlikely that the Chinese will initiate such hostilities, it must be assumed that the Soviets see a possibility that they may find it in their interests to initiate such hostilities themselves. We believe that the Soviets have not yet decided whether to exercise such an option, and we cannot estimate a future decision with any assurance. However, it is clear from the buildup that they wish to keep the option in hand. DIA and Air Force believe that if the Soviets should choose to attempt a military solution, whatever course of action they adopt would probably include a strike against Chinese nuclear weapons production and delivery facilities. Army considers that if the Soviets should attempt a military solution, it may include such a strike, but the evidence does not conclusively indicate that it *probably* would.

III. SOVIET POLICIES ELSEWHERE IN ASIA

34. Soviet concerns with China over the past decade have exercised a strong and perhaps predominant influence on Soviet policies elsewhere in the region of Asia. Nonetheless, it is possible to trace a quickening of Soviet interests in Asia to a period well before the Sino-Soviet dispute came to the surface and the motives for a more active Soviet role in Asia are not to be explained solely—and sometimes not at all—in terms of Soviet efforts to contain Chinese influence. Basically, the USSR has been impelled by its rapid rise to great power status in the past World War II era to assume a new and growing role in Asia. It feels that its prestige requires it to be active in the region, that its security interests are involved or threatened in various situations, and it sees opportunities to advance its influence and position in areas of both traditional and more recent concern.

35. The Soviets have not, however, assigned equal priority to all of their concerns in Asia, and these priorities have tended to fluctuate. Khrushchev, for example, did not regard Southeast Asia as vital to Soviet interests, while his successors have pursued a more active policy there, though still refraining from major involvement. The initial Soviet approach to India and Indonesia with offers of economic and military aid in the 1950s had as much or more to do with general Soviet strategy for advancing Moscow's influence in the Third World as with competition with China. The more recent quickening of Soviet activity in the Indian Ocean itself and in the straits of Malacca region also reflect the strategic interests of a great power concerned with global security as well as regional aims vis-à-vis China. And Soviet policy in the Middle East, a region which is mainly part of Asia geographically, has little to do with Soviet con-

cerns over China, and much to do with Soviet ambitions in the Mediterranean and European worlds.

36. As least since the death of Stalin, the Soviet approach to non-Communist Asia has been on the state-to-state basis; there has been relatively little effort to use local Communist parties as major instruments of Soviet policy and the ideological content in official Soviet dealings has been low. The region is too diverse to lend itself to grand designs and aside from the common themes of protecting Soviet security interests, limiting Chinese influence, and undercutting Western positions where feasible, the USSR has generally based its approaches on the particular circumstances and opportunities presented on a country-by-country basis.

37. The idea of an all-Asian collective security compact, broached by Brezhnev in June 1969 represents something of a departure in this particularist Soviet approach in Asia. The vague Soviet scheme was put forward during the tense period of armed conflict on the Sino-Soviet border, and in the context of the fears generated among China's neighbors by the excesses of the Cultural Revolution. The initial Soviet aim was to take advantage of this concern to encourage a sense of common interest between the USSR and the Asians, and to raise for the first time the question of containing China as a common goal. The Soviets failed to follow up their idea with specific proposals, partly at least because the Asians failed to react favorably. This lack of positive response reflected the deep internal divisions in the area and the absence of any sense of common regional interest as well as a disinclination to serve Soviet aims. This does not preclude more vigorous advocacy of the proposal at some future date if it should appear useful, either to contain China or to take advantage of possible further declines in Western influence.

38. The rivalry between Moscow and Peking in Asia has had other far-reaching effects on the Soviet posture in Asia. Moscow's continuing efforts to promote a reconciliation between India and Pakistan, increasing encouragement of regional economic cooperation, and concern over other trouble spots, such as Pakistan's internal crisis, reflects the desire of the USSR to prevent regional disputes that might offer an opening for Chinese trouble-making. The Soviet Party no longer promotes the forceful seizure of power by Asian Communist Parties or seeks the installation of radical regimes, for fear they would be attuned to Peking rather than Moscow. The Soviets also appreciate the fact that their interests in Asia can be advanced more readily and easily at the present time by establishing closer ties with non-Communist Asian governments through normal state-to-state relations. For the time being, in fact, the USSR is being pushed in the direction of becoming something of a status quo power in Asia. As the other side of the coin, Asian regimes long fearful of Communist "subversion", including Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines—and even Taiwan and South Korea, have begun to believe, in varying degrees, that they can now deal advantageously with the USSR and other "non-hostile" Communist states under conditions of relative security.

A. Northeast Asia

39. *Japan.* The Soviets have long been anxious to pull or push Japan away from its close relationship with the US, envisioning a neutral Japan on friendly terms with the USSR and increasingly open to Soviet influence. But the Soviets do not appear optimistic about their ability to accomplish their objectives in Japan. On the contrary, they seem to be growing more and more uneasy about the role Japan may come to play in Asia, with or with-

out its ties to the US, and increasingly apprehensive about the possibility of closer ties developing between Japan and China.

40. Indeed, many Soviet foreign policy experts who worried principally about China in 1969 now seem to worry more about Japan. One Soviet academician claims that his institute has submitted to the Soviet leadership a study which concluded that Japan, rather than China, had the economic, political, and industrial competence, and would develop the necessary military power to "organize" the entire "Pacific Basin" and achieve dominant power there by the late 1970s or mid-1980s. Some Soviets apparently fear that, if present trends continue, the Japanese will establish some sort of partnership with Mao or his immediate successor, with Tokyo the dominant partner by virtue of technological superiority. And one high-level Soviet journalist familiar with Japan has argued that—despite what is said to the contrary in the Soviet press, including material in his own book—forces in Japan desiring cooperation with the Soviet Union are not very strong at present and have little chance of assuming power in the future.

41. This frank admission is close to the mark; the Soviets really have very little political leverage in Tokyo. Bilateral economic relations are still too slight to be more than that—economic. The USSR's share accounts for less than 2 percent of Japanese exports and about 3 percent of Japanese imports, less than \$800 million overall. The total Japanese trade with Communist China is about the same figure, but the level of Japanese exports to China is rising sharply. The Japanese would welcome prospects for greater sales of machinery, textiles, and light industrial products to the USSR. Moreover, they wish to join in efforts to exploit Soviet raw materials in Siberia, mainly coking coal, natural gas, and lumber. These considerations have elicited Japanese agree-

ment to participate in joint development this year of a new commercial port, Vrangal, on the southern tip of Primorskiy Kray. But Japanese behavior gives the Soviets no reason to hope that Japan will come to regard the USSR as a vital market or source of supply.

42. The Soviets must feel frustrated in their other dealings with the Japanese. The Japanese have always been deeply suspicious of Soviet political ambitions in Asia. Now they have also become increasingly cautious about closer ties with the USSR which might antagonize China. The Japanese Left offers little comfort to the Soviets. The Japanese Communist Party (JCP) sent a delegation to the 24th Soviet Party Congress, and agreed to mute its criticism of Soviet policies, at least temporarily. But the JCP evidently is determined to preserve its "independent" status. This determination has caused the JCP to be unhelpfully neutral in the Sino-Soviet dispute, to oppose the Soviet Union's invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, and to support the Sato government's claim to the Soviet occupied Southern Kuril Islands. The current leaders of the Japanese Socialists (JSP) are pro-Peking and are pressing for a rapid rapprochement between Tokyo and Peking. Like the Communists, the JSP advocates the return of the Southern Kurils by the USSR. Indeed, the Soviets seem almost friendless in Japan; Japanese public opinion polls invariably award the USSR the title of "most disliked" country in the world.

43. It can be argued that the USSR has a number of strong cards yet to play that would induce Japan to move toward close political—and even security—relations with Moscow. The Soviets could, in theory, return some or all the Kuril Islands, open up the Soviet Far East and Siberia to Japanese investment and development on much more generous terms than offered to date, and they might move from satisfactory economic relations to posi-

tive collaborations on security matters directed against the growing strategic power of China. But there are serious constraints on both sides. There are political and ideological obstacles within the USSR to a policy of welcoming large-scale Japanese development efforts in the eastern USSR and there are both strategic and political objections to the return of the Kurils. On the Japanese side, there is almost certainly a great reluctance to become overly dependent on Soviet sources of raw materials and for the next decade, at least, most Japanese resource requirements can be met from sources elsewhere in the Pacific Basin, which also have much lower investment requirements.

44. Beyond these practical considerations in Tokyo lie a deeply ingrained distrust and dislike of the USSR as well as a sense of cultural, and more recently, technical superiority. The Japanese have proven and will probably continue to prove very hard and irritating bargainers with the Russians. Tokyo is likely to remain much more concerned with maintaining good relations with the US and in improving relations with China than with drawing closer to the USSR. In sum the Soviets have very little leverage they can apply against Japan.

45. *North Korea.* The basic Soviet aim in northern Korea, like that of the Tsars, has been to gain a paramount influence there in order to enhance the security of the land and sea approaches to the Vladivostok area. Beyond this, Moscow has sought power in Korea to gain leverage against both Japan and China. The defeat of Japan in 1945 gave the USSR the opportunity to realize these aims, but the hand was badly played. Not only did Stalin's miscalculation of 1950 bring the US and then China into the Peninsula in strength; it also gave Kim Il-sung the opportunity in the following decade to purge his party of Soviet-

controlled Koreans, and to establish a position of balance and independence between the USSR and China.

46. The Soviets are left in a difficult position. They cannot move by force as in Eastern Europe to install a more acceptable leadership without risking direct confrontation with China. Yet Kim's propensity for "adventurism" threatens from time to time to involve the USSR in unwanted confrontations with the US and perhaps, in time, with Japan. There is also the continuing possibility that Kim will line up solidly with the Chinese or that his continued purges will pull the house down and give Peking a chance to reassert its traditional influence directly in the area.

47. Military and economic aid provides Moscow with some leverage and this may suffice for some years to maintain an acceptable degree of Soviet influence in Pyongyang. But from Moscow's point of view the situation will probably appear as unstable with no resolution favoring Soviet interests in sight.

B. Southeast Asia

48. The USSR has no important security interests directly at stake in Southeast Asia except for its concern over freedom of passage in the Straits of Malacca. But it did see a chance to promote the growth of Communist influence in the unsettled conditions of the post-World War II period and it joined with Peking for a time in encouraging revolutionary struggle throughout the area. In the middle and the late 1950s, however, Soviet policy adapted more realistically to the particular situation in individual countries under the general slogan of peaceful co-existence.

49. *Indonesia.* As noted above, special efforts were made in the Khurshchev era to develop a position of influence in Indonesia through generous economic and military aid

and the cultivation of Sukarno. The flaw in this approach was the Soviet inability to compete with the Chinese for influence over the large Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). When the PKI, acting at least in the spirit of Maoist doctrines, attempted their coup and failed in 1965, the USSR's carefully nurtured state-to-state relationship collapsed. The fall of Sukarno saw the advent of a new Indonesian military regime which exhibited extreme distrust of all Soviet, as well as Chinese influence.

50. Lacking any significant base within the badly mauled PKI, the Soviets have had little choice but to play for time and to deal as best they can with the anti-Communist government and legal oppositionist groups. Since early 1969 the Soviets have assigned a new ambassador, resurrected their economic mission, agreed to reschedule the Indonesian debt, offered to renew credit sales of military spare parts on a small scale, expanded Soviet commercial and cultural programs, and quietly saluted "realistic" tendencies among the "ruling military clique." Moscow is enhancing its position with established Sukarnoist and other non-Communist leftist parties, organizations, and groups. All this activity is closely monitored by the government, which sees it as confirmation of the need to continue holding the Soviets at arms length. Thus prospects for any major expansion of Soviet influence in Djakarta itself are slim. Moreover, cognizant of China's importance in Asian affairs, the Suharto government is seeking to improve relations with Peking.

51. *Burma.* Burma is another country where the USSR has long since lost out to China in competition for control of the Communist movement and has devoted most of its efforts to relations with the government in office. Though not an area of major Soviet concern, the USSR has provided Burma with a modest level of economic and technical aid since the

mid-1950s. Moscow has been willing to describe the military regime of Ne Win as "progressive" and pro-Socialist. (While Sino-Burmese relations have eased since the peak of the Cultural Revolution, Peking did vilify the Ne Win regime as a fascist military clique, praised Burmese insurgents, and still gives haven and support to the Burmese White Flag Communists.) In March 1969 the Soviet Peace Committee declared that the "peace-loving people of the Soviet Union, India, and Burma" should constitute a "common front" against the "adventurous policies of the Chinese Government." But the USSR is not likely to commit itself to anything more than a very modest aid program. The USSR probably recognizes that Burma's need to placate the Chinese will continue to place strict limits on Burma's willingness to allow Moscow to expand its influence in Rangoon.

52. *Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore.* Soviet opportunities and activities in Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand developed much later than in neutralist Burma and Indonesia. Moscow realizes that each of these countries is apprehensive about a possible gradual decline in Western commitments and a consequent rise in the potential threat from China. In Moscow's view this enhances Soviet opportunities to play a direct role in containing Chinese influence in the area, in limiting Western influence, and in making local arrangements—air transit rights, shipping services, trade agreements—directly beneficial to the USSR.

53. Moscow's prospects for a modest increase in its influence in Thailand are fairly good. With a long tradition of independence, the Thais have grown somewhat uneasy about their alliance with the US, and to some degree they would welcome a compensating relationship with the USSR. Soviet advertisement of hostility to Peking provides an effective means

of entry and Moscow is indeed anxious to block Chinese inroads in Thailand (perhaps even to the extent of not wishing to see a complete US pullout). The Soviet-Thai trade agreement of December 1970—though modest in scope—affords the USSR certain opportunities to offer economic inducements for closer relations, at a time when concern within Thailand over the state of the economy is growing.

54. The USSR's anti-Peking stance appeals to the Malaysian leadership. Soviet endorsement of the Arab cause also gains the approval of the Malays, many of whom feel kinship with their Muslim brothers in the Middle East. In addition, the USSR is a big buyer and capable of increasing its purchases of Malaysian rubber. Moreover, the Malaysian Government is clearly determined to develop a more "non-aligned" image and friendlier relations with the Soviets would help. Although Malaysia's basic security interests remain with the West, there is a good chance of a modest increase in Soviet influence in the near term.

55. The Soviets also have an opportunity to improve their position in Singapore. Economic considerations play some part in this, since Soviet merchant ships, and eventually warships, could help Premier Lee Kuan Yew to keep Singapore's docks and repair facilities occupied. But more important, Lee feels threatened by his Malay neighbors and by possible Japanese ambitions in the area, and is concerned that neither the US nor his Commonwealth partners are sufficiently committed to defending Singapore's interests. While professing to be quite wary of Soviet political activity, he seems to feel that the Soviets could be useful in the overall balance of forces he hopes to see maintained.

56. *Indochina.* In the late 1940s, the USSR felt it necessary and desirable to identify with Ho Chi Minh's armed struggle against the

French because of the Marxist character of the movement and because of the implications of the struggle for French and European politics. From those beginnings, Soviet involvement deepened as the USSR sought to limit Chinese influence in Hanoi, Phnom Penh, and Vientiane. With the US military intervention in 1965, the USSR once again saw international implications in the struggle which could be exploited to its advantage vis-à-vis the US, particularly in Europe and the Third World.

57. But the Soviets have probably viewed the conflict for some time as one of diminishing returns for their interests. Its prolongation tends to complicate relations with the US in other areas of key interest to the USSR, threatens to force the Vietnamese Communists into a position of greater reliance on China, and erodes Soviet positions of influence in Cambodia and Laos. For several years, Moscow has probably been in the position of favoring a political solution (on terms favorable to the Communists but less demanding than those of Hanoi) but unwilling to risk Hanoi's displeasure by taking any initiatives in this direction.

58. Given the USSR's reluctance to exercise its influence and leverage in Hanoi, Moscow will probably continue to follow Hanoi's lead, doing its best to provide the Vietnamese Communists with an alternative to greater reliance on China while encouraging the US to withdraw from the area. In this latter effort, Moscow will continue its efforts to impress the US with the spectre of much greater direct Chinese involvement in Hanoi and in the war. At the same time Moscow will continue to hold out the prospect that Hanoi itself would serve to limit Chinese influence in Southeast Asia if only the US would make terms and withdraw.

C. South Asia ⁴

59. Both India and Pakistan have cultivated increasingly good relations with the USSR politically and in terms of trade and aid. The USSR shows a great interest in the subcontinent, because of its desire for influence among its near neighbors to the south, its concern to counter China, and more recently, its wish to service a gradually expanding naval presence in the Indian Ocean. Since the 1950s, the Soviets have granted substantial economic assistance to India, and beginning in the 1960s large amounts of military supplies. In the last two or three years they have cultivated Pakistan, trying to reduce Chinese influence there and to enhance Soviet leverage. Since at least 1965, Moscow has actively sought to reduce Indo-Pakistani tensions, chiefly to prevent crises which Peking could exploit.

60. Moscow has had some success in its efforts. This is particularly true in the case of India, which now regards its ties with Russia as vital to its defense against China and considers its relationship with the USSR as a special one. At the same time, New Delhi has always insisted on retaining its independence and freedom of action. Thus it has publicly denounced the increasing presence of "foreign"—including Soviet—navies in the Indian Ocean, and has also opposed granting base rights to anyone. Pakistan has similarly shown itself unwilling to act as the Russians wish; while accepting Soviet military and economic assistance, it has not drawn back from its good relations with China.

61. Should Soviet interest in Asian collective security arrangements revive and assume more tangible form, Moscow might concentrate initially on one or another scheme for regional

⁴Moscow's view of the current conflict in East Pakistan is briefly discussed in paragraph 11 of SNIE 32-71, "Prospects for Pakistan", dated 12 April 1971, SECRET.

concord and cooperation in South Asia. In fact, the Soviets have been playing the theme of regional harmony in the area ever since the Tashkent Agreement of 1966. In May 1969, in Kabul, Kosygin recommended regional economic cooperation as well, and, as an aspect of that, a multilateral transit trade agreement involving the USSR, Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, and India. (Among other things, such an agreement would facilitate Soviet overland access to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean as a whole.) There are as yet no signs of an impending Soviet drive to the south even remotely comparable, for example, to the USSR's push into the Middle East. Still, the USSR's strong influence in New Delhi, its longstanding conviction that India can be useful to Soviet relations with both China and the Third World, and its growing interest in the Indian Ocean might all help to persuade the Soviets that there is both a need and an opportunity for the USSR to play a much larger role in the affairs of the area as a whole.

IV. SOVIET PERCEPTIONS OF ASIA IN THE 1970s

62. The balance of forces in East and South Asia during the 1970s may be complex, fluid, and precarious. In the aftermath of World War II and during most of the 1950s it was precarious enough (cf. Korea) but, at least as conceived by Moscow, it was essentially bilateral and fixed, between the USSR (supported after 1949 by its junior ally, China) and the US. During the 1960s, the Soviets recognized reluctantly that, with the emergence of a hostile Peking, the balance had become triangular and thus more complicated and uncertain. It now seems a reasonable proposition for the 1970s that Japan will more and more become a part of the balance and by the mid-1970s, if not before, will hold a good hand in a four-sided game.

63. The Soviets thus face a formidable problem in seeking to assess the overall correlation of forces in Asia in the decade ahead. They confront, in fact, a series of crucial imponderables: the likely attitudes and policies of post-Mao China; the scope and intensity of US interests in Asia; the nature and extent of Japan's political, economic, and military influence; and, in general, the consequences of interaction between the four major powers concerned.

64. The Soviets can, of course, construct alternate futures for the Asian scene and their role in it, and China would surely be central to many of these. An ever more powerful and active and menacing China for example—one which might even find its way to a rapprochement with the US—would face them with an array of hard choices specifically concerning China itself. And beyond these, it would confront them with the need to adjust policies elsewhere in East and South Asia to complement primary needs vis-à-vis Peking. The unforthcoming Soviet attitude toward Japan might shift; aid and support for Asian states which were willing to join in Soviet-sponsored efforts to oppose or contain the Chinese might accelerate; and other Soviet objectives—those intended essentially to win or steal influence for its own sake—might for a time be de-emphasized.

65. While the Soviets no doubt anticipate a continuing competition with the US in Asia, they cannot have a very clear idea about the probable form and severity of US-Soviet contention; are quite uncertain about the ultimate outcome in Indochina and its impact on developments elsewhere; probably are perplexed by the meaning and implications of the Nixon Doctrine for Asia and for Soviet interests in Asia; and remain apprehensive about the prospects for some kind of Sino-US understanding, reached at the expense of the USSR. A new

Sino-Soviet crisis might incline the Soviets toward moderation vis-à-vis the US; conversely, a reconciliation with China, or in effect, China's withdrawal from the Sino-Soviet contest, would probably encourage Moscow to engage in more active competition with the US in East and South Asia and perhaps elsewhere in the world as well.

66. While the growing complexity and uncertainty of international politics in Asia may from time to time lead to changes in Soviet policies, it is not likely of itself to diminish the USSR's interest in the area. On the contrary, especially if both Chinese and Japanese power continue to grow, Moscow may over time find itself forced and in some cases encouraged to devote more and more of its energies to its position in Asia. Some problems might loom larger as the decade progresses, but a quadri-lateral power relationship might create new opportunities for the Soviets as well. Japan could come to represent an increasingly alluring and perhaps increasingly susceptible target. Elsewhere, concern over the withdrawal of British power and possibly diminishing US role combined with continuing anxiety about China and a perhaps growing apprehension

about Japan, could also lead Asians to look to the Soviets for security. This in turn might establish a more favorable climate for a Soviet military presence, especially in the Indian Ocean. And growing and more visible Soviet military power in one or another region might eventually help to erode Asian resistance to Soviet blandishments or even pressures.

67. There could be new crises vis-à-vis China, arising either from renewed troubles along the border or from conflicts elsewhere in Asia. But aside from its relations with China, the USSR is not likely deliberately to press its interests to the point of crisis and confrontation. And, in general, the more complicated the circumstances, and the more perplexed the Soviets are about the likely shape of the future in Asia, the more Moscow will be inclined to react rather than to initiate, to play it warily and by ear, rather than incautiously by some sort of pan-Asian grand design.⁵

⁵ Concerning Section IV, Lt. Gen. Donald V. Bennett, the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, and Brig. Gen. David E. Ott, for the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, wish to call attention to their position with reference to paragraph H, page 3.

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