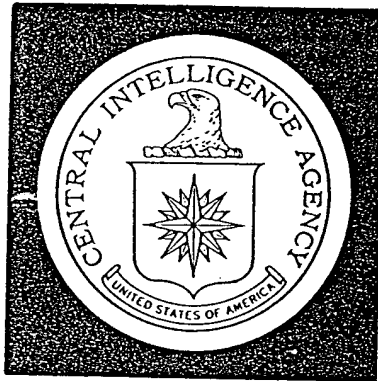


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DIRECTORATE OF
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Intelligence Memorandum

Military Forces Along the Sino-Soviet Border

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
30 January 1970

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Military Forces Along the Sino-Soviet Border

From the end of World War II until the middle Sixties, the Soviets did not look upon China as a hostile power. The only Soviet force of any consequence along the border with China was a low-strength army with four divisions near Vladivostok, and it was oriented primarily against US forces in Korea and Japan. By 1965, however, the ideological and territorial disputes between the Chinese and Soviet leaderships were growing increasingly bitter. At that time, the Soviets made the decision to build up their military forces significantly along the border with China.

Soviet Forces

Since 1965, Soviet ground and air forces in regions adjacent to the Sino-Soviet border have more than doubled and now total about 280,000 men.

ground forces along the border have been built up from some 14 divisions in 1964--only two of which were combat ready--to a total of at least 28 divisions now.

About half of these are now combat ready. In addition, units which could form the base for as many as six more divisions have been identified along the border. Some 75,000 well-armed KGB border guards are also stationed in the area.

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It was prepared by the Office of Strategic Research.

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Since 1965, the Soviets have created a new tactical air army with some 360 combat aircraft in the Transbaykal/Mongolia area. One new fighter regiment with about 40 aircraft has been added to the Far East Military District, bringing the total for these two air armies to 600 combat aircraft.

The Scaleboard mobile missile system, which can deliver a nuclear warhead to a range of 500 nautical miles, has been deployed along the border since 1967.

The Soviet buildup continued throughout 1969 at about the same steady rate as that which had prevailed in previous years. There is no evidence so far that the pace of the buildup has been changed as a result of the border clashes which began last March or because of the opening of the Sino-Soviet talks in Peking last October. Although the number of new divisions identified last year was considerably below that in 1966 and 1967, the filling out of existing divisions probably kept the flow of men and equipment to the border as high last year as it was in 1966 and 1967.

The initial stages of the Soviet buildup were concentrated in the east on the two military districts opposite Manchuria--the area in which the Chinese are strongest.

The Soviets now appear to be concentrating on filling out existing units there rather than sending in new ones.

A new military district--which the Soviets call the Central Asian Military District--was established last summer,

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probably to improve Moscow's command and control of forces along the western portion of the border.

In Mongolia, one Soviet division has been stationed in Ulan Bator since 1966, and a Soviet installation in the southern part of the country now is being expanded to division strength.

Continuing construction of other facilities and the pattern of communications indicate that the Soviets are forming a corps or army in Mongolia, which probably will be comprised of three or four divisions.

Without the use of nuclear weapons, Soviet forces presently deployed along the border will not be strong enough, even when brought up to full strength, to invade and occupy a significant portion of China. They will be capable, however, of delivering a decisive rebuff to any Chinese attack or of launching a limited offensive in northern China. Before undertaking any larger ground operations against China, the Soviets almost certainly would want substantially more service and combat support forces than those which now are being deployed.

Chinese Forces

The Chinese have for many years had a substantial number of troops stationed in northern China and no large-scale buildup beyond these forces has taken place so far. More than 450,000 troops are stationed in the Shen-yang Military Region, and ground forces strength in Inner Mongolia has been increased from 40,000 men in 1966 to about 75,000 now. Another 70,000 Chinese troops are located to the west, opposite central Siberia. Although the Chinese have built defensive positions along likely routes of advance into the country, most Chinese garrisons are well back from the border.

The limited Chinese air defense capabilities along the border have been improved somewhat during the past

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few years.

and several airfields have been built or improved. Since mid-1968, jet fighters have been deployed to those airfields from bases more remote from the border.

Peking's response to the Soviet buildup has shown an awareness of Soviet capabilities and an appreciation for the geographic and logistic factors which condition the situation. The Chinese have not redeployed military units close to the border where they would have to rely on extended supply lines and be vulnerable to sudden attack.

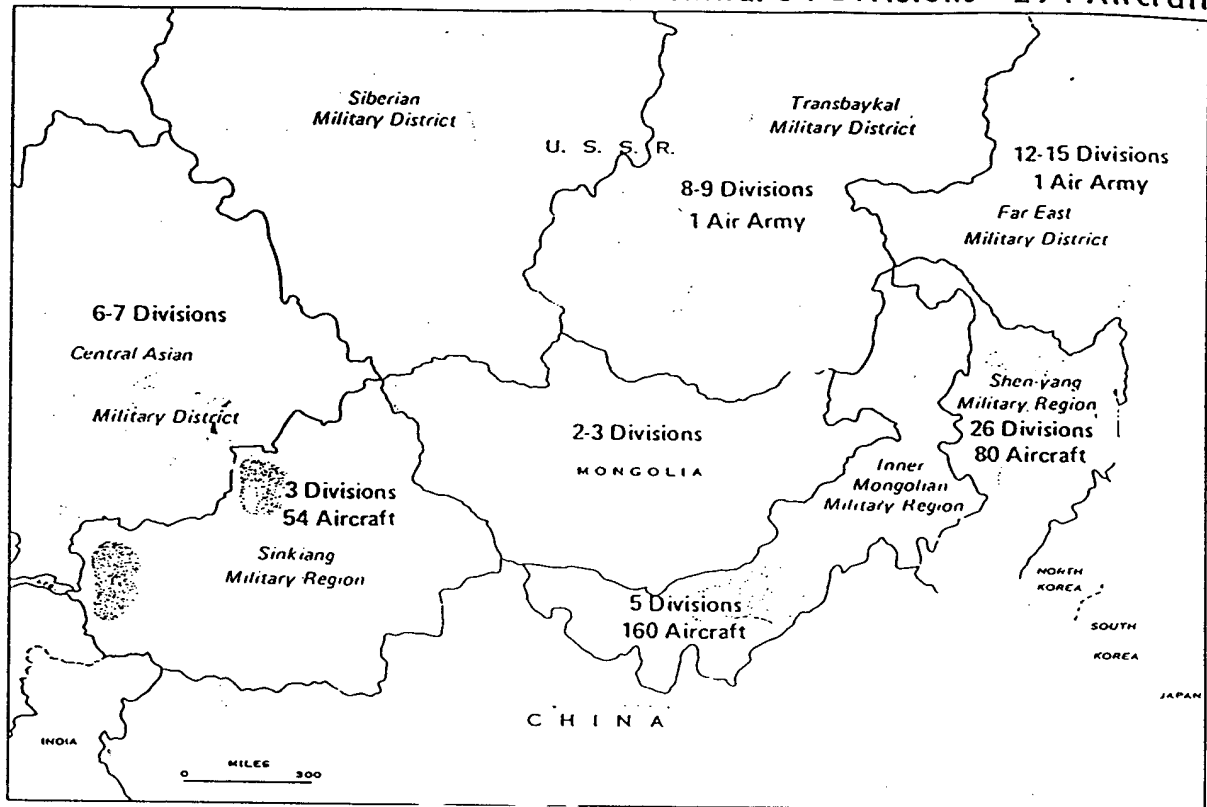
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Sino-Soviet Border

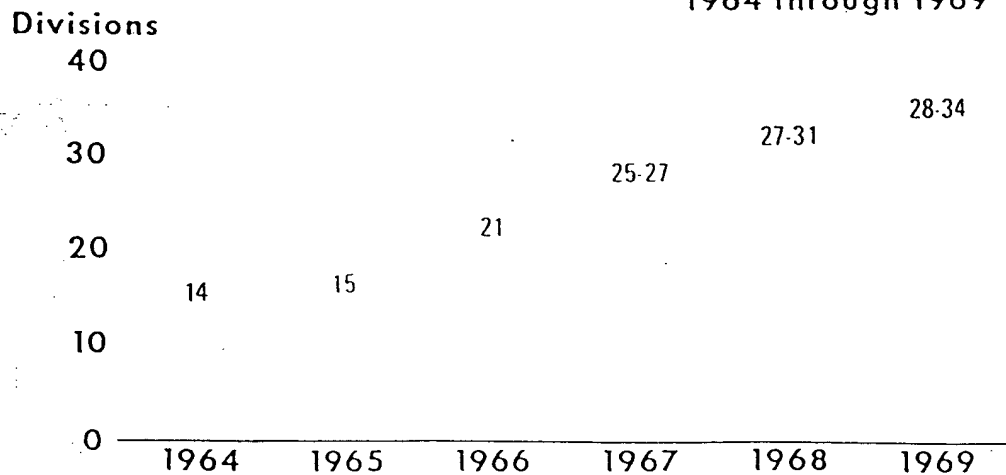
Soviet Union: 28-34 Divisions - 600 Aircraft

Communist China: 34 Divisions - 294 Aircraft



Troop concentration

Buildup of Soviet Divisions Opposite China 1964 through 1969



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