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The Changing Sino-Soviet Relationship

National Intelligence Estimate

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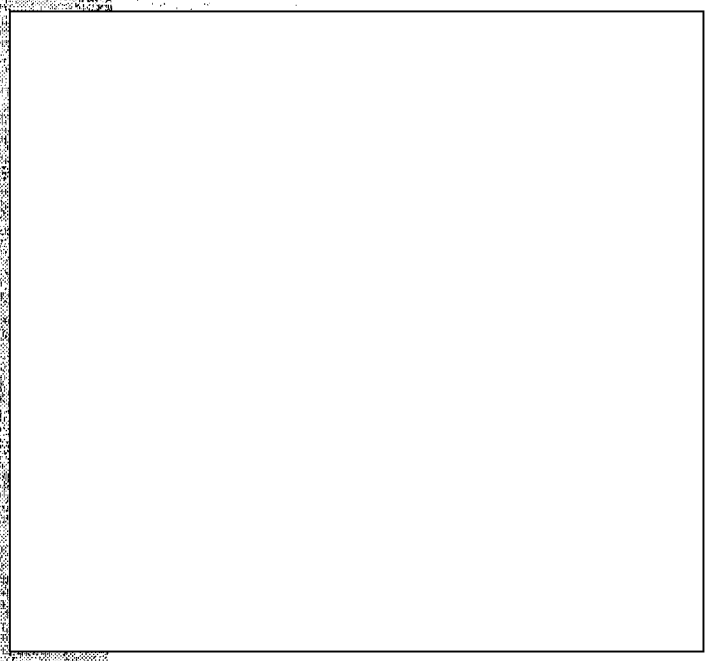

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THE CHANGING SINO-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP

Information available as of 30 March 1984 was used in the preparation of this Estimate.

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THIS ESTIMATE IS ISSUED BY THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE.

THE NATIONAL FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE BOARD CONCURS.

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The Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, and the intelligence organization of the Department of State.

Also Participating:

The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army

The Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy

The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force

The Director of Intelligence, Headquarters, Marine Corps

CONTENTS

SCOPE NOTE

For almost two years the USSR and China have been actively probing the possibilities of improving their relations with one another—at the very time that the Soviets have continued to develop and modernize their already formidable strategic and conventional military forces adjacent to China. These negotiating probes are not wholly new; they have occurred before. But this time there has been some forward movement, at least on secondary issues and political atmospherics. This raises several questions for us:

- In what manner is the relationship between these two powers in process of change?
- How do Soviet consultations with China fit into the USSR's broad strategic-military objectives in East Asia?
- How far are present Sino-Soviet consultations going to carry Moscow and Beijing?
- In addition to probable trends, what alternative outcomes are possible and what would be their likelihood?
- And what will be the significance of the Sino-Soviet future for US interests?

This Estimate addresses these questions, examining both the constraints on and incentives for improvement in the Sino-Soviet relationship. The Estimate also explores the possible effect of certain variables, and proposes indicators by which to measure changes in the relationship. Except where otherwise indicated, the period of the Estimate is the next two to three years.

Because of the complexity of issues discussed in this Estimate, it is being published in two versions: for broad readership, the complete text; for senior readers, the Key Judgments.

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KEY JUDGMENTS

The present consultations between the USSR and China are unlikely to produce major concessions on the part of either, and the many issues that divide them will largely continue. A change in their relationship is nonetheless taking place. We believe this process will continue during the period—the next two to three years—covered by this Estimate.

As a result largely of Soviet initiative and of an increased Chinese responsiveness, Moscow and Beijing have reached numerous agreements over the past year or so on relatively minor economic and cultural questions. But the change taking place in their relationship does not so much involve their basic positions or any "moving closer" to one another, as it does a moderating of the intensity of conflict. These two powers will almost certainly remain suspicious, wary antagonists, continuing to arm against each other and to criticize each other's aims and conduct—but within a less hostile climate.

Many issues will continue to divide China and the USSR—and will continue to prevent either from making major concessions to the other. *The principal such forces:*

- *On both sides*, historical enmity, suspicions, ideological pretensions, and racist attitudes toward each other.
- The sensitivity of the Sino-Soviet issue in the inner politics of both Beijing and Moscow—with the consequent need for their leaders not to become vulnerable to charges of betraying vital national interests to the other power.
- Chinese concerns about Soviet power over the coming decades; Soviet concerns about potential Chinese power over the coming century.
- *On the part of China*, Beijing's continuing belief that the USSR retains expansionist ambitions, and that Moscow's long-term desire to expand Soviet presence and influence around China's periphery is aimed directly at isolating China and diminishing its influence in Asia.
- The desire of China that the USSR make concessions on three major issues: that is, that the USSR significantly reduce its

military power (nuclear and nonnuclear) in the eastern USSR and Mongolia, cease its support for Vietnam's occupation of Kampuchea, and withdraw its combat troops from Afghanistan.

— In the absence of any major Soviet concessions on these questions, Chinese reluctance to come to terms with Moscow on the Sino-Soviet border dispute.

— Beijing's bitter experience with the high costs of close association with Moscow: remembrance of unacceptable past Soviet efforts to subvert the politics and armed forces of China and to subordinate China's national interests to those of the Soviet Union.

— The fact that China's boss, Deng Xiaoping, was himself one of the foremost anti-Soviet officials indentified with the split of these two Communist powers, a generation ago, into rival Third Romes.

— *On the part of the USSR*, a bedrock, absolute refusal on the part of Soviet leaders to halt Moscow's continuing buildup of military power adjacent to China, or to give up or markedly lessen the great military superiority the USSR enjoys over China.

— Moscow's reluctance to yield the geopolitical advantages it currently derives from its ties with Vietnam, especially the forward deployment of ships and aircraft, and the barrier these developments constitute to Chinese influence in Southeast Asia.

— The fact that the buildup of Soviet military power in Asia serves many strategic and political purposes beyond those relating directly to China, and is but a portion of the Soviet global strategic buildup.

— Soviet unwillingness to make the major concessions demanded by Beijing unless China significantly reduces its relationships with the United States or moves to settle the border dispute.

At the same time, certain other forces will tend to support a reduction of the intensity of Sino-Soviet hostility. The principal such forces:

— *Overall,* the numerous changes in time, situation, and personality that have occurred since the Sino-Soviet split of a generation ago—which render extreme hostility between Moscow and Beijing somewhat of an outmoded phenomenon, the product of certain circumstances of the time that now have less relevance.

— The mere fact of reaching agreement on at least some (secondary) issues in itself creates an environment for momentum and the possibility of further agreements.

— *On the Soviet side,* as Moscow's leaders perceive increasing strategic challenge from more forceful US policies and future US weapon systems and deployments, a strong wish on their part to lessen the possibility that Sino-Soviet hostilities might greatly complicate the USSR's basic security interests or its overall strategic objectives.

— A basic desire to reduce the danger of a two-front war.

— A strong desire to prevent close cooperation between China and the United States (and Japan), and to that end to take advantage of known dissatisfactions on the part of Beijing with its American connection.

— A desire to enhance the security of the USSR's eastern borders by means additional to military power.

— Concern about what the long-term political implications would be for China's economic modernization programs if outside assistance to those programs were to come only from the United States and the West.

— A sense in Moscow that the danger of Chinese adventurist actions against the Soviet Union—one of the original reasons for the beginnings of the Soviet military buildup, years ago, on the Sino-Soviet border—has greatly diminished.

— The opportunity to take advantage of the more businesslike attitudes and procedures that have come to mark Chinese politics and society since the death of Mao Zedong, in the process lessening some of the emotional content that Mao and Nikita Khrushchev personally contributed to Sino-Soviet estrangement.

— *On the Chinese side,* Deng Xiaoping and his associates have determined that (a) China's greatest problems are those it faces as a vast, poor LDC; (b) the process of national development in China will be so difficult that it will need a prolonged period of respite from outside pressures; (c) to these ends a reordering of China's foreign policies is needed, one that reduces the level of tension with the USSR; and (d) such a reordering would not seriously risk jeopardizing the continuance either of strong US-led opposition to Soviet expansion in the world, or of US and Western willingness to continue cooperating economically with China.

— Associated with those decisions, almost certainly low expectations on the part of Beijing's leaders that the United States would come to Beijing's aid in the event of a Soviet attack on China.

— China's discovery during its invasion of Vietnam in 1979 that it faced a formidable military antagonist on its southern border, and Beijing's consequent desire to reduce the pressures on China resulting from its two-front confrontation with the USSR and Vietnam.

— Views on the part of China's leaders that a modest improvement of relations with the USSR serves to increase Beijing's leverage on Washington.

— A desire to diversify further the foreign sources of input into China's modernization, and to take advantage of certain benefits that would derive from expanded economic and technological ties with the USSR.

— A view on the part of Deng and his fellow pragmatists that less hostile relationships with the USSR will also signal that, in accepting some US economic and military assistance, Beijing does not intend to embrace the United States too closely or completely refuse all assistance from the USSR.

It should be stressed that present Sino-Soviet talks are taking place against the background of a continuing substantial augmentation of Soviet military strength adjacent to China—which has continued during the Sino-Soviet consultations of the past two years. Roughly one-fourth of all Soviet ground force personnel are now stationed opposite China, together with more than 2,000 Soviet aircraft, over 100,000 air personnel, greatly enhanced naval strength, a rapidly expanding SS-20 force, and considerable additional nuclear weapons carriers in the form of Backfire and Badger bombers, SLBMs, and ICBMs.

And, a principal net result of the buildup will be certain continuing marked asymmetries in Soviet and Chinese military forces: the Chinese seriously lagging, qualitatively, in modern arms; Soviet ground and air forces generally positioned fairly close to China's borders, Chinese forces deployed deeply behind those borders.

Moscow's leaders see their military augmentation as insurance against Chinese military provocations along the border, and against the prospect of a significantly enhanced Chinese nuclear threat to the USSR

over the long term. They almost certainly also consider that their forces will continue to serve meanwhile as a deterrent to China from invading Vietnam once again, or from otherwise effectively challenging Soviet interests in Indochina. And, these forces will strengthen Moscow's negotiating hand vis-a-vis the Chinese.

This ongoing Soviet augmentation will at the same time continue to stem from many causes beyond those directly relating to China and will continue to serve many broader Soviet interests. That is, the augmentation of forces in the East also reflects the USSR's plans to upgrade all of its forces, everywhere; its desire to strengthen its capability to fight a two-front war, in Europe and Asia; the felt need to compensate for dependence on a very long, vulnerable railroad to reinforce and resupply the isolated Soviet Far East; the traditional Soviet practice of overinsuring, of massing more military strength than outside observers might think necessary; the Soviet effort to use the military buildup as an instrument for political intimidation and further expansion of influence in East Asia; and a desire to reinforce Soviet security against the perspective of much-enhanced Western military capabilities in the Pacific.

It should also be stressed that the Sino-Soviet future is not just a bilateral matter, but will develop within the dynamic of triangular relationships with the United States. This dynamic will be a crucially important factor affecting the behavior of Moscow and Beijing toward the other. Each leadership will remain highly sensitive to its perceptions of the US relationship with the rival Communist power, and especially to any development that either power might consider to represent a major discontinuity in US orientation or strategic priorities.

What developments appear most likely in the Sino-Soviet relationship over the next two years or so?

— Chances favor continuance of the process of markedly increasing trade relations and reaching agreements on other secondary issues of economic and technological ties, cultural interchanges, and the like, amidst continuing reflections of a more business-like, less intensely hostile overall atmosphere. This may proceed to the point of including agreement on certain confidence-building measures (CBMs) such as mutual notification of troop exercises.

— The two sides will upgrade the level of negotiating representation. The Soviets will continue to press for broader ties with Beijing, in the belief that agreement on enough small steps will lay a path for progress on major issues. The Soviets will also seek

to institutionalize the negotiating process. The Chinese will probably continue to draw the line well short of the most far-reaching Soviet proposals in the absence of major Soviet military concessions.

— While continuing to emphasize its maximum demands for large-scale Soviet force reductions in the Soviet Far East, Beijing would welcome even small concessions from the Soviets in their force deployments against China. The Chinese would particularly welcome Soviet troop withdrawals from Mongolia.

— For their part, the Soviets will continue their force improvements in the East. And, the Soviets will probably not make more than token gestures to China over the next two to three years.

— Moscow will almost certainly continue to withhold *major* concessions regarding its forces along China's border and in Mongolia until Beijing has made more fundamental concessions than it has yet been willing to consider. There is nonetheless a modest chance that the Soviets will make a token pullback of perhaps a division or so from Mongolia during the next two to three years. This would not constitute a material change of much consequence, but could represent a symbolic concession of some magnitude that might induce the Chinese to reciprocate in some way—and thus perhaps encourage Moscow to make further concessions.

— Even if there were a token Soviet military pullback from Mongolia, however, we doubt that the Chinese would make major concessions on the issues of greatest concern to Moscow—particularly the border dispute—until Soviet force withdrawals had gone well beyond the token stage.

— Nor is the USSR likely to give up its control over the regime in Afghanistan, to abandon support for Vietnam's war effort in Kampuchea, or to surrender its military privileges at Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam—where since late 1983 the Soviets have deployed Badger bombers.

Contingent developments that could upset the above-estimated course of Sino-Soviet relations:

— Major escalation of Vietnamese war efforts in Kampuchea or along Thailand's borders.

— North Korean reversion to incendiary policies.

— Major Soviet efforts to destabilize Pakistan.

— Vietnamese clashes with China, either along the border or in the South China Sea.

— The adoption of major new policies on the part of post-Deng or post-Chernenko leaderships.

— A Japanese move toward major rearmament.

Possible alternative outcomes:

— There is an off chance that during the period of this Estimate the Sino-Soviet relationship could take on a much more hostile character than the Estimate holds probable:

  - This could occur because so many variables are present, many of them not fully within the control of the present leaderships in either Moscow or Beijing: the advent of new policies on the part of post-Deng or post-Chernenko leadership, initiatives taken by other governments (in Korea or Vietnam, for example), and so on.

  - It does not follow that US interests would necessarily benefit from the coming of a much more frigid Sino-Soviet relationship. The effect on US interests would depend on the nature and intensity of the estrangement between Moscow and Beijing: up to a point, US interests would clearly benefit from probable increases in Chinese cooperation against Soviet policies in the world, in Chinese receptiveness to US advice and counsel, and—possibly—in willingness to permit expanded levels of Western economic and technological presence within China. But, if Sino-Soviet relations deteriorated to the point of actual or threatened large-scale hostilities, US diplomatic and security policymaking could be greatly complicated.

— Conversely, there is also an outside chance—though less likely than the above—that the Sino-Soviet relationship could become a much closer one during the period of this Estimate than we now judge likely:

  - This might come to pass if no great disruptive contingencies should occur; if the Chinese should back away in practice—though not in principle—from certain of their key "demands"; if agreements reached on a number of secondary issues should begin to create a somewhat greater momentum toward Sino-Soviet rapprochement; or if for some reason Beijing's leaders should come to depreciate the value of China's relationships with the United States.

- The coming of significantly closer relations between the USSR and China could seriously harm US interests; the warmer the Sino-Soviet relationship, the more damaging to US geopolitical concerns, defense policies, targeting, and alliance systems, to the role of Japan, and to numerous other key US interests.

— Although the possibility cannot be excluded that alternative outcomes such as the above could occur in the Sino-Soviet relationship, we stress that the most likely outcome, by far, is that which this NIE has postulated: namely, that the level of hostility between Moscow and Beijing will decrease, that some additional agreements on secondary matters or possibly CBMs will be reached, that at most the USSR may make a token withdrawal of perhaps a division or so from Mongolia, and that continuing basic differences between Moscow and Beijing will not permit any significantly greater degree of rapprochement between them to develop over the next two to three years.

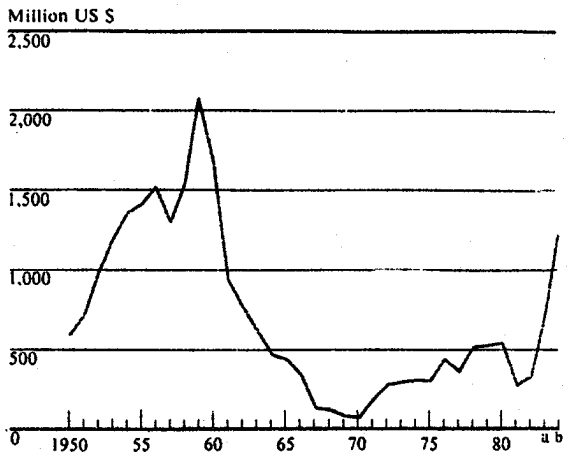
DISCUSSION

The Wary Thaw

1. Since the Intelligence Community last addressed the subject of Sino-Soviet relations,[1] the USSR and China have begun to moderate the level of hostility between them. Evidence indicates that theirs is still, fundamentally, a hostile and distrustful relationship, and that the most important of the factors that have preserved this animosity for more than two decades will probably remain substantially unchanged over the next two to three years. Incremental improvements have occurred in secondary aspects of the relationship, and these will probably continue and grow in importance over time. These improvements will probably continue to have only a modest effect on the central issues that divide the two powers—barring certain developments discussed below.

2. Over the last three years, and particularly since the fall of 1982, important changes have occurred in the atmosphere of bilateral Sino-Soviet dealings. Polemics have been significantly reduced, particularly on the Soviet side. Exchanges of technical, sports, and cultural delegations have increased. Student exchanges have also been reinstituted for the first time in many years, although on a very small scale—and in no way even faintly approaching China's present student exchanges with the West.[2] Sino-Soviet dealings on river navigation matters have become more cooperative. Mutual trade was doubled in 1983, to a target figure of some $800 million, the highest level since the early 1960s (see figure 1), and the 1984 trade protocol calls for total trade to increase to some $1.2 billion.[3] Also, local trade crossing points have been opened in the northeastern and northwestern sectors of the Sino-Soviet border, for the first time since the early 1960s. The Soviets have proposed and the Chinese have in principle accepted Soviet assistance in the modernization over the next few years of two to four of the industrial plants built by the Chinese with Soviet help in the 1950s. And two sets of semiannual consultations at the deputy-foreign-minister level have been instituted to maintain channels of contact on both contentious and noncontentious issues. It is noteworthy that the scope of many of these developments has tended to broaden over time, implying that the process of change has some momentum.

Figure 1
Sino-Soviet Trade, 1950-84



[a] Trade for 1983 estimated.
[b] Trade for 1984 projected according to trade protocol of 10 February.

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3. At the same time, an intense conflict of interest in Asia persists between these two Communist powers. This conflict has many sources, including racial antagonism, historical grievances, territorial aspirations, the difference in military potential, the heritage of past border hostilities, the great contrast in population density, Chinese memories of past Soviet heavyhandedness, ideological pretensions, and the rivalry for political advantage in states around the periphery of China and, more generally, in the Third World. Fundamentally, the Soviet Union seeks to constrain the growth of China's geopolitical weight in Asia, and continues to regard Chinese ambitions as incompatible

[2] There were 100 Chinese students in the USSR in 1984, as compared with some 14,000 in the West.

[3] The increased deliveries of timber, fertilizers, and ferrous and nonferrous metals by the Soviet Union have accounted for much of its increased exports, with sales of machinery and equipment playing a less important role than in the past. The Chinese are supplying the Soviets increased quantities of food products, textiles, and other manufactured consumer goods.

Aims and Tactics in the Sino-Soviet Consultations

Objectives:

- Moscow's leaders hope that these consultations will help ensure the security of the USSR's eastern borders, undermine Sino-US and Sino-Japanese relations—particularly with respect to any strategic discussions, and moderate Chinese hostility.
- Beijing's leaders hope that the consultations will help China to manage the Soviet threat, so that a prolonged period of reduced tensions can facilitate China's progress toward modernization.

Each side wants to:

- Reduce border tension and the risk of armed clashes.
- Gain leverage in its respective dealings with the United States.
- Increase trade; resume technical assistance.
- Increase cultural, educational, and other exchanges.
- Without having to make major concessions, gain leverage for ultimate substantial gains at the other's expense.

The Soviet tactic is to:

- Dramatize small steps toward improved relations.
- Defer the more difficult strategic issues.

The Soviets therefore want to:

- Formalize improvements in relations in a joint statement of principles.
- Negotiate long-term trade agreement, agreements on exchanges, etc.
- Achieve understanding on some bilateral security issues.
- Resume party-to-party relations if possible.

The Chinese tactic is to:

- Maintain a calculated distance from the USSR, even while benefiting from various improvements in relations.
- Focus from the outset on major strategic concerns, even if there is no hope of agreement in the foreseeable future.
- Identify areas of Soviet policy that can symbolize the Soviet strategic threat in a way that will gain support for China in the Third World, among Asian countries, and in the West.

The Chinese therefore want to:

- Go slow on formal agreements, but without blocking progress on practical issues.
- Continue to focus attention on the "three obstacles" to full normalization: the Soviet military presence in Mongolia and on the Sino-Soviet border; the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan; and Soviet aid to the Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea.

with its own security and goals. The Chinese, for their part, view their present dealings with Moscow against the background of a long-term buildup of forces in the Soviet Far East since the start of the Brezhnev regime, and of an ongoing Soviet effort to consolidate geopolitical advances in Afghanistan and Indochina. The Chinese interpret the Soviet buildup as intended to intimidate China and Japan, to facilitate the Soviet struggle to advance Soviet presence and influence around China's periphery, to assist in the Soviet worldwide geopolitical contest with the United States, and to offset the growth of US military strength in the western Pacific and the improvement of US military cooperation with Japan. Thus, over the last few years China has taken the position that Soviet force deployments along China's borders, Soviet moves in Indochina, and Soviet actions in Afghanistan are three key issues where there must be some movement on Moscow's part before substantial Sino-Soviet rapprochement can take place.

4. In the last year, as bilateral contacts have expanded, each side has received confirmation that it should not anticipate early progress toward major concessions. Beijing has found that the prospect of increased trade and contacts has not caused the Soviet Union to reduce its threat to Chinese security or to alter those policies that undermine China's interests around its periphery. Moscow has found that, in the absence of what it considers radical and unpalatable Soviet concessions to China, Beijing will not abandon the use of important ties with the United States to contest Soviet policy and to reinforce China's security. Although both sides apparently regard the improvements registered thus far as useful, almost certainly neither state is reconciled to failure to move the other

thus far on the issues of greater concern. Each may retain residual hopes that the further development of the process of amelioration will eventually bring it the concessions it seeks, without surrendering the concessions the opponent demands.

The Soviet Perspective

5. The attitude of Soviet leaders toward China is one of arm's-length encouragement. Moscow is clearly gratified at the recent improvements in the bilateral atmosphere and the trend toward expansion of Sino-Soviet intercourse. The Soviets initiated this current process in mid-1982 through a series of public overtures, acting partly in response to perception of a new opening created by the emergence of heightened Sino-US friction in 1981, as well as in response to setbacks Soviet fortunes had experienced vis-a-vis the West—the derailing of the SALT II agreement, NATO's two-track decision on intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF), and sharply adverse world reactions to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. As in previous occasions of Sino-Soviet diplomatic explorations, dating back to 1970, the Soviets have consistently sought to broaden the scope of bilateral dealings as far as the Chinese will permit, seeking both to create the prerequisites for the restoration of some Soviet influence in China and to encourage Beijing to distance itself further from the United States. Evidence indicates that Soviet leaders thus hope to erode the Sino-US relationship or at least reestablish a more balanced Sino-Soviet-US triangular relationship, and to render more remote the contingency of Soviet involvement in a two-front war.

6. There is some indication that there have been differing views within the Soviet foreign policy establishment in recent years, however, over the advisability of initiating the kind of overtures Moscow began making to Beijing in 1982—but it is not clear how significant any such differences have been. Because all the USSR's recent proposals to China are long-established themes of Soviet policy that evade Beijing's requests for major military concessions, however, they probably are not objects of major controversy in Moscow. But, should the Soviet leadership ever come to weigh seriously the advisability of some concessions to China on Soviet troop dispositions, the degree of controversy would probably rise sharply.

7. For the moment, we believe that there is probably considerable satisfaction in Moscow that the bilateral movement seen so far is a useful Soviet achievement registered at little cost, the first fruit of more than 20 years of sporadic efforts to secure Chinese consent to some improvement in the relationship without major Soviet concessions in advance. Soviet leaders doubtless regard Chinese modification of previous attitudes as itself a unilateral tacit Chinese concession.

8. Because no significant Soviet concessions are yet involved, continuation of the strategy now being pursued toward China to attempt to change Chinese policy is generally approved in the Soviet leadership. There appears to be solid support in the Soviet elite for further efforts to expand trade and contacts along present lines, along with renewed attempts to persuade the Chinese to accept bilateral improvements in areas where they remain recalcitrant, particularly their consent to top-level meetings. The Soviets will surely continue to press them hard for further substantive and symbolic movement, across the spectrum of bilateral relations, in order to bring the level of Sino-Soviet dealings closer to that existing between the United States and China. Moscow and Beijing have agreed to double the level of their trade, and evidence indicates that Moscow would like to be able to raise the turnover still further. Acutely conscious of the acceleration of Sino-American mutual ministerial visits in 1983 and the scheduling of a new Presidential visit to China in April 1984, the Soviets chafe at the restrictions Beijing continues to impose on their own reciprocal diplomatic exchanges with China, and seek to upgrade the level of contact. The Soviets would probably like to secure a restoration of bilateral party-to-party contacts severed by Beijing in 1966—particularly since they constitute an aspect of the relationship that the United States of necessity could not match.

9. In addition, there is likely to be wide support in Soviet decisionmaking circles for concrete efforts to appeal to Chinese concerns that seem to run counter to US policy. One leading example is Chinese anxiety about the possibility of a revival of Japanese militarism. The Soviets have already made efforts to use this issue (unsuccessfully to date) as a vehicle with which to elicit Sino-Soviet political cooperation against the United States, and they will almost certainly repeat such efforts in the future.

10. At the same time, however, available evidence indicates that Soviet leaders regard the progress reached in Sino-Soviet talks to date as superficial. And, although the Soviets welcome Chinese criticisms of the United States and China's abandonment of calls for a "world united front" against the Soviet Union, authoritative Soviet spokesmen have made it clear that they

see Chinese policy as still fundamentally hostile to Soviet goals, and as aligned with the United States against the USSR in most important respects.

11. Furthermore, the question of how to deal with China is clearly a sensitive issue in Moscow. The available evidence suggests that two currents of opinion on this matter exist in the Soviet foreign policy establishment. One, which appears to be much the weaker of the two, seems to favor more active Soviet steps to conciliate China, possibly including some concessions regarding troop dispositions on the border. Those who lean to this position evidently argue that only through such concessions can the Soviet Union extract major dividends from favorable tendencies in Beijing. Certain of the USSR's academic specialists on China take such a position. These figures have drawn encouragement from the increased Chinese civility in bilateral dealings, from the disappearance of Chinese ideological charges against the Soviet Union, from the similarities between the Chinese and Soviet social systems and state structures, and from the resentment shown by some Chinese leaders over what they regard as the subversive effect of Western influence. Such trends, these figures argue, bode well for future trends in Chinese foreign policy.

12. Such thought, however, appears to be considerably outweighed by dominant forces in the Soviet leadership that are strongly suspicious of Beijing's intention, particularly while Deng Xiaoping remains China's boss. These views seem particularly strong in the Central Committee apparatus and among the Soviet military. These harder-line figures probably believe that recent Chinese conciliatory behavior toward the USSR has been driven in large part by a desire to exert pressure on the United States for bilateral concessions within an overall framework of continued opposition to Soviet policy by both powers. Those Soviet officials are apparently vividly aware of the extent to which the USSR's interests and ambitions clash with China's in Asia, and of the fact that the United States and China continue to work in parallel to contest Soviet policies in Indochina and Afghanistan. They have remarked that recent Chinese invitations to the US Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and the President to visit China are further confirmation of these attitudes. These Soviet skeptics apparently interpret these Chinese invitations as evidence of the strength of Beijing's long-term interest in acquisition of American industrial technology relevant to China's defense against the Soviet Union. They almost certainly doubt that the Chinese can be induced to abandon this relationship with the United States merely as a result of improvements in China's trade and contacts with the USSR, although they apparently see no harm in attempting to do so.

Figure 2
Soviet Peacetime Force Manning Opposite China, 1965-83

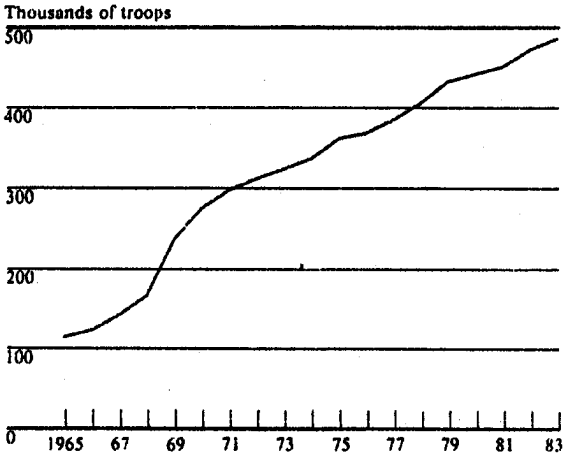

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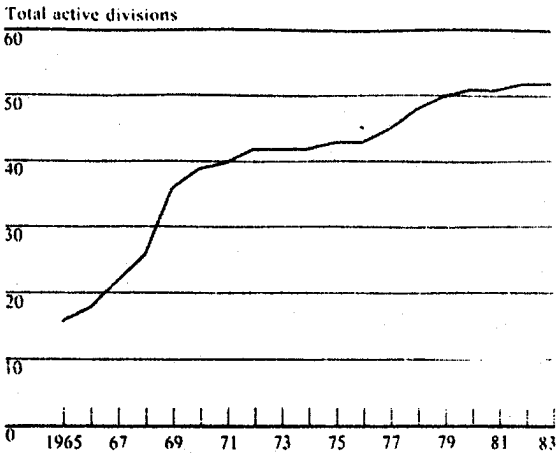
Figure 3
Active Ground Forces Divisions Opposite China, 1965-83



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13. Although these tough attitudes do not exclude all Soviet concessions to China during the period of this Estimate, they suggest that any such concessions are likely to be largely token or atmospheric in nature, in the absence of major changes in the Chinese position or a generational turnover in the Soviet leadership that might bring a different set of attitudes to the fore.[4] Representatives of all tendencies in Moscow, however, doubtless hope that internal political factors in China or the United States may eventually cause a multiplication of Sino-American frictions that will in turn produce major changes in China's posture toward both superpowers. And there clearly appears to be general agreement in the Soviet leadership that the USSR has a vested interest in limiting Sino-US cooperation and, if possible, in encouraging a deterioration of Washington-Beijing relations.

14. For the moment, the passing of Andropov and the advent of Chernenko do provide Moscow with an opportunity to make another effort to advance the Sino-Soviet dialogue. There have already been a few such signs from the Soviet side—for example, hints of a more forthcoming stand on the question of China's "socialist" nature. But Chernenko has bluntly reiterated Moscow's refusal to budge on the basic issues in dispute: Afghanistan, Indochina, Soviet force strength adjacent to China. The early emphasis of the new Soviet leadership has been on continuity in policy, and there has been no sign that Chernenko has made improved relations with China a top priority. Furthermore, the continued prominence of Foreign Minister Gromyko and Defense Minister Ustinov suggests that Moscow will make few, if any, major departures on foreign policy issues at the outset under Chernenko. His leadership is likely to stick with the present course of "small steps" toward a normalization of relations with China.

The Chinese Perspective

15. Although the initiative for the recent bilateral improvements has come from the Soviet Union, the important shifts in policy required to allow any improvements to begin have come from China. As already noted, most of those measures that have now been put into effect had for many years been periodically proposed by Moscow and rejected by Beijing. Indeed, a continuing central issue for the future is that many important proposals long on the Soviet list—such as requests for summit meetings and restoration of party contacts—still have not been accepted by China.

16. The degree of movement that has occurred in Sino-Soviet bilateral relations has resulted in part from gradual changes in the thinking of Chinese leaders about how much improvement in these dealings is compatible with China's defense of its geopolitical interests against the Soviet Union. This evolution in Chinese attitudes began in 1979, was halted by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, but has resumed again since 1981. We believe that this pattern of sporadic starting and stopping in Chinese policy toward dealings with the Soviet Union has been influenced not only by security and foreign policy considerations, but also by the interplay of differing opinions within the Chinese leadership. Such differences from time to time seem to have affected Chinese tactics toward both the Soviet Union and the United States.

17. The most recent modifications in Chinese calculations about the Soviet Union have emerged as part of a broader pattern of changes in the Chinese posture toward the world, carried out incrementally over the last three years, aimed at cultivating a more independent image on the international scene. While retaining a considerable degree of cooperation with Washington against Moscow, Beijing has thus sought to blur the impression created in the late 1970s of a China almost totally identified with the United States in polar opposition to the Soviet Union. To this end, China has repudiated the notion of a strategic alliance with the United States, has abandoned earlier calls for a "world united front" against the Soviet Union, and has somewhat contracted the scope of its criticism of the USSR.

18. The Chinese have evidently decided to make these changes in their general posture for a mixture of reasons. Certain of these shifts were reflected in China's exploratory talks with Moscow in 1979. Beijing was later influenced to increase somewhat its distance from America in 1981 and 1982 because the rise of bilateral difficulties tended to strengthen longstanding skepticism in Beijing about the willingness of the US government and public to take risks for China in the event of a Chinese crisis with the Soviet Union. Beijing's leaders were apparently also interested in using the process of Sino-Soviet amelioration as an instrument of leverage on the United States, particularly in the two most important areas of Sino-American friction: the US relationship with Taiwan, and US policy regarding the transfer of advanced industrial technology to China. Simultaneously, the Chinese apparently hoped that the resulting shifts in relations with the United States would create a more appropriate backdrop for Chinese efforts to elicit Soviet concessions.

[4] These matters are discussed in greater detail in the section beginning at paragraph 27.

19. Evidence indicates that Beijing's leaders found China's partial disassociation from the United States convenient in other respects. It enabled China to separate itself from identification with those US policies in the Third World that Beijing disapproves. It also made it somewhat easier for Beijing to court political actors hostile to the United States but important for Chinese interests, and to strive to avoid isolation from important sections of Western public opinion opposed to certain specific American policies.

20. At the same time, however, China has been reminded by Soviet intransigence that, whatever the uncertainties in the Sino-US relationship, this relationship provides China a welcome margin of security. Because Beijing has continued to perceive a Soviet threat to Chinese security and undiminished Soviet opposition to Chinese interests in Asia, it has also had an ongoing reason to find a way to compromise differences with Washington. China has therefore sought not to eliminate its strategic cooperation with the United States against the USSR, but rather to redefine that cooperation in terms that preserve its advantages for China while giving Beijing greater flexibility and leverage in dealing with both powers.

21. In both 1979 and 1982 China opened talks with the USSR after a major step in relations with the United States had assured it that ties with Washington had been consolidated—in 1979 the visit of then Vice President Mondale, and in 1982 the conclusion of the 17 August communique on arms sales to Taiwan. It is likely that the Chinese leaders felt that these actions, which stabilized relations with the United States, were important prerequisites for the talks that were opened with the USSR shortly thereafter.

22. Despite the improvement that has taken place in the atmosphere of Sino-US relations over the past year, we believe that China will continue to disavow any intention to join Washington in a formal strategic relationship. Also, the Chinese will continue to soft-pedal attacks on Soviet policies in some areas of the world, and will continue to criticize US policies on occasion. And, additional new areas of Chinese disagreement with the United States could emerge. But Beijing's leaders will also continue to hold on to the relationship with the United States as important to China's security and economic development, and as the essential underpinning for their exploratory dealings with Moscow.

23. The Chinese have a number of associated reasons for lessening the level of tensions with the USSR:

— A desire to reduce tensions and relieve the pressure on China resulting from its two-front confrontation with the USSR and Vietnam.

— A desire to put pressure on Vietnam. Beijing is well aware of Hanoi's discomfiture over Sino-Soviet contacts and negotiations, and of Vietnam's obvious anxiety at the possibility of Soviet betrayal of Vietnam's interests to appease China. However remote China's leaders consider the likelihood of such a turn in Soviet policy, they welcome the difficulties the issue has created for Vietnam, and they doubtless hope for a consequent exacerbation of Soviet-Vietnamese frictions.

— The desire to build a calmer strategic environment that will provide a margin of safety for Chinese economic priorities, for despite China's military weaknesses its leaders are determined to maintain a measured pace of military modernization and to avoid hasty diversion of badly needed resources from the civilian economy to the military sector.

— A desire to further diversify the foreign sources of input into China's modernization. Beijing is not likely to cease relying primarily upon the capitalist industrialized world for such inputs, despite Soviet hopes to change this priority. But Deng and his associates have apparently come to believe that expanded imports and a limited use of expertise from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe can play a useful supplementary role in modernization. This view has apparently been reinforced by the difficulties China has sometimes experienced in assimilating advanced Western or Japanese technology. Evidence indicates the Chinese have come to believe that some less advanced but easier to assimilate Soviet middle-level technology should be given a somewhat larger role in modernization, and particularly in reequipping some of the industrial plants built with Soviet help in the 1950s. Evidence also indicates that Beijing's leaders remember past Soviet efforts to exploit Chinese economic dependence for political purposes; they are highly unlikely to allow themselves to be put in such a position of dependence again. We believe that with this consideration in mind they will place sharp limits on the number and activities of Soviet technical experts used in China to help in plant modernization.

— A belief on the part of Beijing's leaders that China can make good use of expanded raw material imports from the Soviet Union, and that the USSR furnishes a convenient outlet for textiles and other Chinese light industrial products that are surplus to Chinese export markets else-

where. China's leaders also apparently find convenient the fact that barter trade with the Soviet Union conserves hard currency.

— A Chinese desire to reestablish a political presence in the East European states and to expand useful economic relations with them, a process that will be furthered by a context of Chinese improvements with Moscow.

— A Chinese hope—if not the expectation—that Beijing may eventually obtain major concessions from Moscow that would reduce Soviet geopolitical pressure around China's periphery.

24. Available evidence indicates that, after two years of consultations with Moscow, China retains little expectation of receiving meaningful concessions regarding Indochina or Afghanistan for the foreseeable future. On the other hand, Chinese behavior suggests that some elements in Beijing's leadership may still retain hopes that concessions can eventually be obtained regarding the Soviet force posture to China's north. Such Chinese views have apparently been encouraged by hints advanced by the Soviet Union implying the possibility of eventual unspecified concessions regarding military deployments. The Chinese may also harbor hopes of obtaining such gains because they perceive the Soviet Union as heavily burdened by its economic difficulties, its military commitments in Afghanistan and Europe, and heightened Soviet competition with the United States. Finally, the Chinese may have been led to hope that the tougher US posture toward Moscow in recent years would enhance Beijing's leverage over the USSR, and therefore produce Soviet concessions.

25. Despite all their reasons to expand bilateral dealings with the USSR, however, the Chinese have powerful reasons to maintain limits on their dealings with the USSR:

— Perhaps most important, the need to avoid creating the impression in the USSR that the Chinese leadership is permanently reconciled to the status quo in East Asia, and is willing to accept the Soviet presence in Southeast Asia and a continuing Soviet force buildup in East Asia as compatible with good relations.

— Chinese care not to go so far in improving relations with Moscow that this might jeopardize the gains China receives from its existing relationships with the United States and other non-Communist states. China's leaders wish to be able to imply to Moscow—as a prod for concessions and a disincentive to more forceful policies toward China—that they retain the option to greatly strengthen security cooperation with the United States; and they also strongly desire to maintain US acquiescence in the flow of industrial technology to China from the United States, Japan, and Western Europe, and to enlarge that flow into more sophisticated and sensitive areas. Evidence indicates that Chinese leaders also wish to preserve the option to purchase some advanced weapons production technology from the West, and particularly from the United States, believing that the creation of expectations of far-reaching changes in Sino-Soviet relations could alarm the United States sufficiently to endanger all these benefits.

— Beijing's wish not to be perceived by Third World leaders as moving closer to the USSR. Beijing has found that Chinese actions viewed in Asia as seeking to propitiate Moscow can evoke negative reactions from certain states, notably Japan and Thailand.

26. For all these reasons, we judge that, in the absence of major Soviet concessions, Beijing over the next two to three years will probably continue to resist Soviet pressure for bilateral improvements of a type that would be likely to raise serious warning flags elsewhere. Chinese response to Soviet overtures will therefore continue to be differentiated: in some areas Beijing will probably allow further progress, while in others China is likely to continue to reject Soviet requests:

— In the first area, Beijing will probably consent to some reciprocal visits by important *government* figures (without acknowledging their party status), as well as to continued expansion of dealings on those fronts where improvements have already begun in the last two years: notably, student exchanges, and multiplication of economic, sports, and cultural contacts; and trade volume—where agreement may be reached on a five-year trade pact.

— In the second area are those Soviet desires whose satisfaction Beijing will probably regard as not justified by Soviet conduct and as likely to be overly provocative to the United States. For example, in the absence of major Soviet concessions (which are themselves unlikely), Beijing will probably not agree to the Soviet request, pressed by Moscow since 1978, for a formal umbrella document to establish the underpinning for a new Sino-Soviet relationship. Beijing also is unlikely to agree during the period of this Estimate to reciprocal visits by top *party* leaders, and the

chances are less than even that the Chinese will consent to a restoration of party relations. Finally, we do not believe that Beijing will consent to any overtures from Moscow for concrete Sino-Soviet political cooperation against the United States.

The Major Issues Precluding Sino-Soviet Improvement

27. The three primary preconditions that Beijing has posed for a major improvement in the Sino-Soviet relationship are that the USSR significantly reduce its military power (nuclear and nonnuclear) adjacent to China, cease its support for Vietnam's occupation of Kampuchea, and withdraw its combat troops from Afghanistan. These issues have different degrees of importance to Moscow and Beijing; and it should be noted that, if past Chinese negotiating patterns hold, Beijing's "preconditions" often remain in a formal sense but ultimately give way somewhat in fact. The following are the three primary issues, in order of *increasing* importance to the Sino-Soviet relationship.

Afghanistan

28. Evidence indicates that the Chinese regard the issue of Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan as the least important of the three "obstacles." The Chinese interpreted the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 as alarming new evidence of Moscow's willingness to use force to attain its goals, and as a significant advance of the Soviet military presence in Asia, creating a new potential for eventual further advance of Soviet influence. In particular, China's leaders are almost certainly concerned that success for the USSR's "southward strategy" in Afghanistan could endanger China's close ally Pakistan and the oil routes of the Persian Gulf so important to the West. Beijing also sees the Soviet assertion of hegemony in Afghanistan as, among other things, an extension of other Soviet efforts to encircle China geopolitically, and as part of an unending struggle to counteract China's influence in Asia.

29. At the same time, however, the Chinese have not seen the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan, remote from China because of geography and terrain, as adding significantly to the Soviet military threat to China. Also because of Afghanistan's remoteness, Beijing's sense of its vested interest in the political orientation of this country has always been much weaker than its view of its stake in Indochina. Finally, Beijing has come to regard the extended punitive war Moscow is waging in Afghanistan as a protracted source of Soviet weakness—a point of political vulnerability, a drain on Soviet resources, and a possible constraint on Soviet ability to take military initiatives elsewhere. Beijing's leaders therefore see the present situation as offering important compensation for Soviet failure to withdraw, and do not seem to be greatly concerned at the prospect of continued stalemate.

30. We judge that the Soviets are unlikely to abandon efforts to consolidate control over Afghanistan. The Soviet leaders are unlikely to modify their view of the importance of maintaining a friendly regime in power there that also serves as a bridge potentially extending Soviet power and influence significantly further in Southwest Asia. This view has probably been reinforced by the Soviet commitment there to preserve Soviet local domination. In any case, the Soviet leaders almost certainly regard China's concerns as secondary concerning Afghanistan. If more important negative consequences of this policy are insufficient to modify Soviet behavior there, the Soviets will certainly not do so to appease China.

Indochina

31. Beijing's leaders take a far graver view of Soviet actions in Indochina, which they regard as incompatible with China's security. Since 1978, the Soviet Union has provided economic, political, and military backing for Vietnam's efforts to consolidate its domination over the Indochinese peninsula and to exclude Chinese influence from the region. The Soviet Union has also served as a sizable deterrent to a major Chinese intervention to halt Vietnam's conquest of Kampuchea. China has been compelled to rely instead on supporting a Kampuchean insurgency that for five years has denied final victory to Hanoi and Moscow. This insurgency has been nourished in part by Chinese weapons and supplies funneled through Thailand; as well as by the diplomatic support of China, the ASEAN countries, and the United States; and, indirectly, by US security backing for Thailand against the threat of Vietnamese reprisal. In return for the USSR's commitments to Hanoi, Soviet influence has followed in the wake of Vietnam into Kampuchea and Laos, and the Soviet Union has obtained use of Cam Ranh Bay to support growing air, naval, and intelligence capabilities on China's southeastern flank.

32. Available evidence suggests that, while Moscow's leaders do not regard the present Soviet position in Indochina as comparable with Afghanistan in importance, they surely regard it as an important geopolitical gain registered at the expense of both the United States and China. They are well aware of Chinese

concern over the two-front military confrontation Beijing has been forced to accept since 1979, and they doubtless consider that the Soviet deterrent factor has humiliated Beijing by demonstrating Chinese inability effectively to coerce Vietnam—in an area of traditional Chinese pretensions to dominant influence. They also probably regard their alliance with Vietnam as a source of augmented Soviet pressure on China which has already paid dividends in the new Chinese willingness to accept Soviet proposals for modest bilateral improvements. Over and above these considerations, Soviet leaders almost certainly see their growing military presence at Cam Ranh as a major advance that enhances Soviet capabilities to conduct and support naval and air operations in the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean.

33. The Soviet relationship with Hanoi that yields this Soviet military presence is not without frictions and problems for both sides. Evidence clearly establishes that the Soviets are sensitive to the costs of supporting Vietnam; and that the Vietnamese resent Moscow's attempts to establish its own independent ties with Hanoi's satellites, Laos and Kampuchea, and fear that the USSR might someday betray the interests of Vietnam in favor of its huge neighbor, China. The demonstrated behavior of the USSR and Vietnam makes it clear, however, that both parties consider their relationship on balance to be a most beneficial one.

34. Hence, we believe it unlikely that the Vietnamese will change their course in Kampuchea in any major way, or that significant change will take place in the Moscow-Hanoi relationship over the next two to three years, or indeed perhaps for a much longer period. The Soviet leaders are well acquainted with the intransigence of the Vietnamese leadership, and almost certainly believe that only drastic Soviet pressures on Hanoi might conceivably bring sufficient Vietnamese concessions to satisfy Beijing, but that the attempted use of such pressures would gravely endanger the Soviet relationship with Vietnam, the Soviet military presence in Cam Ranh, and indeed Soviet objectives in Southeast Asia. To run political risks of this magnitude concerning Vietnam, the Soviets would want commensurate gains in advance from Beijing.

35. The Soviets are unwilling to risk losing the bird in the hand—their present advantages in Indochina—for the uncertainties of hypothetical Chinese gratitude. They therefore have consistently refused to bargain with Beijing on the subject of Indochina during their bilateral talks with the Chinese. They have on occasion gone so far as to attempt to intimidate ASEAN states, on Vietnam's behalf, into abandoning opposition to the fait accompli in Kampuchea. They have maintained intact their deployments along China's northern borders, which constitute conspicuous threats against the possibility of a new Chinese military reaction to Vietnam's operations to China's south. In sum, the inertia created by existing Soviet geopolitical advantages is likely to continue to dominate Soviet policy in Indochina, and to perpetuate Chinese resentment.

36. Our confidence in this conclusion has been further strengthened by the Soviet deployment in [redacted] 1983 of nine TU-16 Badgers—including some five configured as bombers or air-to-surface missile carriers—to Cam Ranh. The Badgers apparently will remain under Soviet control and probably will maintain a continuous presence there, rotating periodically back to the USSR and being replaced by others. If the Badgers remain at Cam Ranh, the Chinese may surmise that the Soviet Union has extorted from Vietnam permission for this deployment as partial compensation for the Soviet refusal to betray Hanoi to conciliate Beijing. Chinese leaders almost certainly interpret the advent of the Badger bombers as fresh evidence that the Soviet Union is likely to remain intransigent on the Indochina issue.

The Augmenting of Soviet Military Power Adjacent to China

37. In view of the poor prospects for Sino-Soviet accommodation regarding Afghanistan or Indochina, the third issue—the question of whether the Soviet leaders will make major concessions regarding force deployment policy in Asia—is likely to have a great influence on the evolution of the Sino-Soviet relationship over the next few years. We review in turn, below, the evidence of existing trends in Soviet and Chinese deployments, the possibilities and probabilities of Soviet concessions, and the role of the Sino-Soviet border dispute in Soviet thinking on these matters.

38. ***Trends in Soviet Deployments and Modernization.*** The improvements noted in the Sino-Soviet relationship have taken place in the face of a continuing strengthening of the Soviet military position in the eastern USSR and the Pacific. The pace of quantitative buildup has tapered off from that of the late 1960s and early 1970s; Moscow now seems intent on fulfilling longstanding force modernization plans in the area, upgrading the capabilities of deployed units, and increasing logistic support. Nonetheless, one-fourth of

all Soviet Ground Forces personnel—nearly 500,000 troops—is now stationed opposite China. Ground units in the eastern USSR and Mongolia devoted to the anti-China mission include 48 active divisions and an independent army corps. These units are supported by well over 2,000 aircraft and over 100,000 air personnel. During the past year, while Sino-Soviet consultations have been in progress, the Soviets have added two motorized rifle divisions to their active forces, converted a motorized rifle division into a tank division, and formed a fighter-bomber regiment facing the Chinese. In addition, at least one air assault unit and an additional artillery brigade are now being formed along the border with China. Meanwhile, the Soviets over the last year have also made costly investments in military logistic capabilities in the Far East, and have begun construction there for a new garrison, probably intended to house part of another new division. We think it likely the Soviets will also continue over the next few years an ongoing construction program to expand fortified zones in certain sectors of the Sino-Soviet border.

39. The Soviets have also continued slowly to strengthen their military position in Mongolia, despite China's known sensitivity on this subject and repeated Chinese demands for reduction of these deployments. There the Soviets have constructed new SA-5 air defense regimental complexes and radar stations, replaced older tanks with new T-72 models, and upgraded some of their artillery and armored personnel carrier holdings. In result, the Soviet army in Mongolia, which is in position to threaten the North China plain and routes to Beijing, is the most combat-ready force facing China and receives a relatively high priority in the USSR's gradual modernization of Far East equipment.

40. In addition, the weight of the Soviet strategic nuclear threat directed against China is continuing to grow even while the small-scale improvements in Sino-Soviet relations proceed. The Soviets currently have 135 SS-20 launchers deployed at 15 bases in Siberia—plus 90 additional SS-20 launchers in the central USSR that could hit targets in western China—and are constructing facilities at two more bases for 18 additional SS-20 launchers. It should be noted that the present SS-20 force threatens China with more warheads than were on the older single-reentry-vehicle missiles that were directed against targets in China before deployment of the SS-20.

41. But the Chinese face not only the present SS-20 force and Soviet ICBMs, but a considerable array of other Soviet nuclear weapon systems as well: over 200 Backfire and Badger bombers, shorter range ballistic missiles, tactical aircraft, and two older Y-class ballistic missile submarines in the Sea of Japan [redacted] but we judge that the great majority of all present Soviet strategic targets in Asia are probably in China, although the Soviet nuclear systems are flexible and could be shifted to other targets. For their part, however, Beijing's leaders are convinced that China remains the primary target of these various deployments, despite considerable Soviet efforts in dealing with Asian states to obfuscate the purpose of the USSR's heavy SS-20 deployment in Asia.

42. The total number of aircraft assigned to Soviet units in the Far East is expected to decline slightly during the next few years. Nonetheless, technological improvements in aircraft, avionics, and weapon systems will allow the Soviets to upgrade their ability to perform their assigned missions while deploying fewer aircraft to each regiment. In strategic aviation, the initial deployment of the new Blackjack bomber in the late 1980s will highlight developments. The Blackjack, together with increased numbers of Bear H bombers, creates a formidable standoff air-launched cruise missile capability east of the Urals. A third Backfire regiment will further increase strategic strike options. In the tactical air force, a key development will be the deployment of lookdown/shootdown fighters: the Foxhound, Flanker, and Fulcrum. These aircraft will be faster and more maneuverable, and will carry missiles suited for both dogfighting and engagements beyond visual range engagements. Ground attack aircraft are expected to be equipped with new longer range tactical air-to-surface missiles. This improved deep strike capability will be complemented by the introduction of Frogfoot and additional helicopters dedicated to supporting Soviet ground forces along the Sino-Soviet border.

43. The Soviet Pacific Fleet has significantly increased its size and capability over the past decade by acquiring more modern submarines, surface combatants, amphibious ships, and aircraft.[5] During the next

[5] Since 1979 major improvements to Pacific Fleet Forces have included frontline D-III SSBNs, V-III (nuclear) and K-class (nonnuclear) attack submarines, two Kiev-class carriers (CVHGs), a number of Kresta and Kara cruisers (CGs) and Krivak frigates (FFGs), Ivan Rogov amphibious ships (LPDs), Bear F long-range antisumbarine (ASW) aircraft, Helix ASW helicopters, and two regiments of Backfire strike bombers. Additionally, a Fitter C fighter-bomber regiment has been formed in the Pacific Fleet. Not least, the Soviet Pacific Fleet has acquired the above-discussed naval and air facilities at Cam Ranh, Vietnam.

few years the new Kirov-class cruiser (CGN), Sovremennyy- and Udaloy-class destroyers (DDGs), and S-class attack submarines (SSNs) are expected to be introduced into the Soviet Pacific Fleet. These units will provide significantly improved weapons and sensors for antisurface attack, air defense, and antisubmarine warfare. We believe the Soviet Pacific Fleet will continue to be structured primarily to oppose US naval forces although it will also devote attention and resources to counter other potential threats such as those from some Japanese or Chinese naval forces. While the overall force level of the Soviet Pacific Fleet will remain about the same, its capability will increase with the introduction of new classes of submarines, principal surface combatants, amphibious ships, and shipboard aircraft.

44. Overall, given these trends in Soviet force strength, the nature of the Sino-Soviet relationship over the next few years will be strongly influenced by the decisions the Soviet regime adopts regarding force modernization and deployment policy in Asia. On both the nuclear and the conventional sides, however, the momentum of existing Soviet policy—the impetus for further incremental growth rather than either stagnation or reductions—is unlikely to be overcome.

45. ***Comparative Chinese Military Strength.*** The Soviets confront (a) Chinese ground forces that are much larger than Soviet Far East ground forces in manpower, but much weaker in firepower, maneuver capability, and air support; and (b) Chinese strategic nuclear forces that are still fairly small in size and rely upon concealment and mobility rather than numbers for their deterrent effect. In the four Chinese military regions bordering on the USSR and Mongolia, the Chinese now deploy some 68 main-force combat divisions, which are largely stationed a hundred miles and more back from the border, defensively positioned to trade space for time in the event of a Soviet attack and to guard against the possibility of converging Soviet assaults to overrun Beijing or to cut off Northeast China. In the last four years, the Chinese have increased their tanks, armored personnel carriers, and aircraft in the border regions by some 30 percent, and they have formed new units and strengthened their fortifications along probable invasion routes.

46 [redacted] The deterrent effect of these weapons, which can reach Moscow, is supplemented by the mobility of [redacted] CSS-1 MRBMs and [redacted] CSS-2 IRBMs, as well as the availability of [redacted] TU-16 intermediate-range bombers, all of which can deliver nuclear weapons to parts of Soviet Asia.[6] In addition, the Chinese in recent years have launched their first nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine, intended to carry the CSS-NX-3 SLBM (which is still undergoing flight tests). Deployment of this weapon system as an additional element in the Chinese deterrent against the USSR is expected between 1984 and 1987. Finally, the Chinese have also shown considerable sensitivity about their potential vulnerability to Soviet use of tactical nuclear weapons, and have conducted and publicized exercises that reckon with this contingency. The Chinese have no deployed weapons comparable to Soviet tactical nuclear weapons in flexibility and accuracy, and they probably believe that the Soviets are more readily inclined to use such weapons in the Far East than in Europe. Overall, although the Chinese are making important improvements in their deterrent and warfighting capabilities, they are not closing the gap in relation to the growing and improving Soviet forces that face them; on the contrary, they are continuing to fall further behind.

47. ***The Future of SS-20s in Asia and in Europe.*** We believe the Soviets will fill out the existing four SS-20 divisions in Siberia to a total of six bases each by the late 1980s. Because each SS-20 carries three reentry vehicles, the advent of this IRBM capability in East Asia has already significantly expanded nuclear capabilities against China. With four divisions of six regiments each, the Soviets would have 216 missiles with 648 warheads for an initial strike against Asian targets. In addition, by the end of the decade the Soviets may begin to deploy a new IRBM to replace the SS-20, and may also deploy ground-launched cruise missiles in the region.

48. SS-20 deployments reflect long-range Soviet strategic plans. These are importantly influenced by the visible trends in Chinese weapons development and deployment policy, and by the prospects of increased US military strength in the Far East in the 1980s. In both regards, the Soviets will almost certainly take action in advance to guarantee undiminished force advantages against worst-case eventualities.

49. The Andropov regime showed that, given sufficient strategic political gains concerning Europe, it might be willing to contemplate curtailment of its plans for a much greater SS-20 buildup; this will

probably characterize the Chernenko regime's objectives as well. During the INF negotiations, the Soviets offered not to transfer SS-20s to Asia if an agreement acceptable to the USSR materialized. They subsequently offered, if such an agreement were adopted, to halt new SS-20 deployment in East Asia through new construction so long as deployments in that region aimed at Soviet territory did not subsequently increase.[7] These proposals reflect the great importance to the Soviet Union of an advantageous INF agreement, and implied willingness at the time to trade off planned enlargement of their existing nuclear advantage in East Asia in order to prevent American deployments in Europe. Secondarily, those Soviet offers were also intended as gestures to Japan and China, calculated to place the onus for any further Soviet SS-20 buildup in Siberia on US deployment policy in East Asia.

50. The future of the SS-20 program in Asia and the ultimate size of the total Soviet nuclear threat against China have thus been made partly dependent upon the prospects for INF agreement in Europe. In the wake of the beginning of Western intermediate-range nuclear deployments in December 1983, and the Soviet withdrawal—at least for the time being—from INF negotiations, the Soviets are very unlikely soon to halt SS-20 deployment in Siberia. In the continued absence of an INF agreement, we believe that within the next two to three years the Soviets will probably not stop further SS-20 deployments in Asia merely to conciliate Beijing and Tokyo.

51. We believe there is even less chance than this that Moscow over this period will actually reduce its SS-20 deployments as the Chinese have demanded, either unilaterally or as the result of Sino-Soviet bargaining. The Soviet leaders are likely to be skeptical that an acceptable nuclear arms agreement can be negotiated with Beijing in view of the enormous asymmetries in the bilateral balance of forces.

52. ***The Issue of the Ground Force Posture Adjacent to China.*** In principle, the Chinese demand the simple elimination of the Soviet capabilities that threaten them: that is, a reduction of the Soviet force structure in East Asia, back down to the level existing almost two decades ago in Khrushchev's day. The Chinese have privately indicated that they would be satisfied with much less to start with, and some leaders in Beijing may hope that a unilateral Soviet local pullback of some forces may eventually be procured that would start a process of Soviet reductions that might later be expanded. A general Soviet pullback to conciliate Beijing appears highly implausible—for several reasons:

- Because of geography, Soviet forces in the easternmost sector of the border, which must defend large vulnerable cities and the Trans-Siberian Railroad near the frontier, have no defense-in-depth option and thus are necessarily deployed much closer to the border than Chinese main-force units. Consequently, any ostensibly mutual pullback of Soviet and Chinese forces from the border must in fact be essentially a unilateral Soviet withdrawal unless it is limited to minuscule border guard forces at the frontier itself. This is likely to remain politically unacceptable to any set of Soviet leaders.
- In the narrow Far East Military District salient from Khabarovsk to Vladivostok, the most important part of the Soviet Far East and the most heavily defended area of its size in the Soviet Union, Soviet forces have little room to maneuver or space for a pullback.
- There are some points on the border where a pullback could be construed as compromising Soviet border claims.

53. Furthermore, we believe that Moscow will not agree even to selected pullbacks of selected units in certain localities. The Soviets are highly reluctant to agree to unilateral constraints on their troop dispositions and more broadly perceive their overall relationship with China as impelling them to continue strengthening their force dispositions opposite China. In recent years, the Soviets have followed a pattern of activating at least one new division each year in the Far East from existing mobilization bases that hold the pre-positioned equipment for such divisions. We have identified additional mobilization bases in the Far East that we believe the Soviets intend to convert incrementally into active divisions over the next few years, with the additions entering active status at about the same measured pace we have seen in the past. We see little reason to believe that the Soviets have yet decided to alter this long-term pattern of behavior.

54. This Soviet pattern of thinking has been most clearly shown in the Soviet Union's refusal, in its talks thus far with Beijing, to discuss changes in Soviet

[7] As was the case with their moratorium on deployments in Europe, the Soviets would almost certainly interpret their conditional offer to halt SS-20 Asian deployments as a promise to top them off at the level created by completion of all construction then in progress.

military deployments in Mongolia.[a] In principle, this is the sector in which noticeable Soviet concessions could be made to China without major impact upon the Soviet Union's ability to defend itself against China. In Mongolia alone, the Soviets have a large buffer against China and could if necessary trade space for time. The token withdrawal of perhaps a Soviet division or so from Mongolia northward to the Soviet-Mongolian border would not endanger any Soviet city, and would not expose any Soviet territory to Chinese attack. Additionally, over the past year and more, the Soviets have significantly upgraded the equipment and capabilities of Mongolia's own armed forces. Between 1980 and 1983 the Soviets provided the Mongolians with enough additional equipment to upgrade their two existing brigades to motorized rifle divisions and form two additional MRDs, although all four are at low strength.

55. It seems likely that the Soviet leaders intend to withhold concessions regarding their forces in Mongolia until Beijing has made more fundamental concessions than it has yet been willing to consider. We do perceive a moderate chance, however, that within the next two to three years the Soviet leaders will be willing to offer China some token concession regarding their force posture in Mongolia, in the hope of beginning a process of mutual concessions that could eventually produce a breakthrough to major Soviet goals. A local pullback of perhaps one or so of the USSR's five divisions now in Mongolia might be such a step. If the Soviets did make such a withdrawal, this would constitute a symbolic concession of some significance. It would not be too meaningful in military terms, however, since such units could be reintroduced into Mongolia at any time. If the Soviets did withdraw a division or more, we judge that the Chinese would welcome the move and would wish to respond in a fashion likely to encourage more such Soviet gestures. Beijing's response, at least initially, would also be likely to be largely symbolic in nature.

56. In the meantime, in the absence of the kind of large-scale withdrawals the Chinese are requesting at the moment (for the total border area), it is probable that the Soviet Union will continue to propose cosmetic substitutes. Since the early 1970s, the Soviets have unsuccessfully offered the Chinese proposals for a nonaggression pact and for an agreement on no first use of nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union in the last year has evidently made a number of additional suggestions for confidence-building measures (CBMs). Although the Chinese will probably continue to regard most such Soviet proposals as essentially evasions of China's central concerns, they may no longer reject all such suggestions out of hand. It is possible that China will come to see agreement with the Soviet Union on one or more selected CBMs, such as mutual notification of troop exercises, as having a marginal usefulness in helping to reduce tensions. Should any CBMs in fact be agreed upon during the next two to three years, it would probably not have an early impact upon the hard issues separating China and the USSR regarding the status of the border or the question of overall Soviet force dispositions. Agreement even on such superficial CBM measures, however, would give some impetus to the process of improving Sino-Soviet dealings.

[a] The Soviets state that they will not discuss their troops in Mongolia because this is a matter concerning a "third country." The Chinese almost certainly regard this as a hypocritical evasion of the issue. The Soviet Union effectively controls the Mongolian regime, and any Mongolian reservations about possible Soviet troop withdrawals would be a relatively minor consideration for Moscow if the Soviets felt some withdrawals to be otherwise desirable. We also believe that the Soviet Union does not need five divisions in Mongolia either to enforce the loyalty of the Tsedenbal regime or to safeguard Mongolia against Chinese attack.

The Central Role of the United States and Japan

The American Factor

57. The Sino-Soviet future will not be a bilateral affair, but will develop as part of the broader dynamic of Sino-Soviet-US triangular relations. And the evolution of the future relationships of the Soviet Union and China with the United States, whether improvements or setbacks, will continue to be one of the most important factors affecting the behavior of Moscow and Beijing toward each other. US policies toward the USSR and China will of course not determine the conduct of the two Communist powers toward each other, but will certainly help condition that behavior, and on the margin could conceivably be decisive.

58. Both Moscow and Beijing remain highly sensitive to their perception of the US relationship with the other. The Chinese have traditionally feared "superpower collusion," while the Soviet leadership has for many years been deeply concerned at the prospect of Sino-US security collaboration at Soviet expense. Since the first stages of Sino-American rapprochement in the early 1970s, Soviet Politburo members have warned US leaders against anti-Soviet cooperation with China, and have occasionally sought to entice the United States into commitments incompatible with good US relations with Beijing. At the same time, the Soviets have for years vainly sought to better their position in the triangle by improving relations with Beijing, and

to this end have repeatedly sought to reestablish personal contacts with Chinese leaders.

59. Today, available evidence clearly indicates that both Moscow and Beijing remain concerned at the possibility of sudden changes that would heighten the prospect of US collusion with the other. Beijing, while reassured by the depth of Soviet-US differences, has nevertheless retained residual concerns about the possibility of sudden deals between the two superpowers, particularly at summit meetings, that might have adverse implications for Chinese interests. Such Chinese concerns remain especially strong regarding INF issues. The dominant current of Soviet opinion, on the other hand, has never ceased to believe that despite Sino-US differences, the basic character of the relationship between Beijing and Washington remains one of cooperation against Soviet policy. This view has been strengthened by many of the events of 1983 and 1984 that signal a warming of Sino-US relations, particularly the visits of the US Secretaries of Defense and State and Premier Zhao Ziyang, and the scheduled visits of President Reagan and Defense Minister Zhang Aiping.

60. Chinese policy faces a dilemma on these scores. On the one hand, Beijing has a need for a strong and continuing relationship with the United States in order to support Chinese economic and military development and to assist China in resisting ongoing Soviet geopolitical pressure in Asia. On the other hand, the Chinese may sense that this association with the United States, even if formally disavowed, remains a factor that renders major Soviet concessions to China—though not gestures—unlikely.

61. The present strained relationship between Moscow and Washington also poses another dilemma of sorts for Beijing. In general, it welcomes US toughness toward Moscow, both because it desires that United States inhibit Soviet expansionist impulses, and because it hopes that China will derive additional leverage over both Moscow and Washington as a result of marked Soviet-US tensions. At the same time, the Chinese have indicated that their own position could be greatly endangered if these tensions were to escalate to produce a severe Soviet-US crisis. We judge that the Chinese leadership has no desire to become embroiled in such a crisis if it arose over issues remote from direct Chinese security concerns, and that under those difficult circumstances Beijing would endeavor to maintain China's neutrality. Nevertheless, China's leaders probably also recognize that if such a crisis arose in an area more directly relevant to China's security interests—such as the Indochina area or Pakistan—they would face more difficult risks and choices in their posture toward the Soviet Union. More broadly, the Chinese recognize that they have a vested interest in the continued ability of the United States and Western Europe to offset Soviet power, and that Chinese vulnerability vis-a-vis the Soviet Union would be enormously increased if that offset were greatly weakened.

62. Over time, the Sino-Soviet relationship may become more responsive to adverse changes in the US relationship with either of the other two powers. Over the last three years, bilateral difficulties with the United States have already, to one degree or another, influenced both Moscow and Beijing to wish to be able to improve relations with each other. In October 1982, a month before his death, Brezhnev gave public expression to this motive in an address to military commanders, warning Soviet marshals that the aggravation of Soviet relations with the United States had given added importance to the possibility of improvement with China. Meanwhile, the Chinese desire to test Soviet willingness to make concessions had been given impetus in 1982 by new frictions with the United States over the question of the US relationship with Taiwan.

63. The desire for moderating Sino-Soviet hostility is not synonymous with the willingness of either of these two Communist powers to make the concessions necessary for far-reaching improvements in their relationship. The basic conflicts of interest are sufficiently great to make it improbable that improvement in the Sino-Soviet relationship will reach the point of a full rapprochement with harmful implications for US interests. Nevertheless, the readiness of the Soviet and Chinese leaders to contemplate key concessions to each other is a factor that is influenced by the state of their relationship with the United States. Both the USSR and China will probably endeavor to preserve and improve the negotiating process and to deal with issues on which agreement can be reached. At the same time they will seek to use their improved relationship to gain leverage in their dealings with the United States. Nonetheless, a radical growth in tensions between the United States and either the USSR or China might provoke one of them to consider making major concessions.

The Japanese Factor

64. A second very important external influence on the direction that Sino-Soviet relations will take in the next two to three years will be that of Japan. Japan's present set of relationships with Washington, Beijing, and Moscow exerts leverage on China, reinforcing the considerations that pull Beijing toward the United

States and that impose limits on Sino-Soviet conciliation. A major change in the Chinese attitude toward Japan—though unlikely—could have serious effects on the Sino-Soviet-US triangle.

65. The USSR's relations with Japan have worsened over the past decade and are not likely to be reversed during the period of this Estimate. The Soviets are increasingly exercised at what they see to be growing US-Japanese security cooperation, primarily because of the expectation that this cooperation will augment US capabilities against the Soviet Union in Northeast Asia. The Soviets also appear to be concerned about the long-term implications of the gradual but steady buildup in Japanese conventional military forces. Moreover, despite the fact that the Sino-US-Japanese military cooperation the Soviet Union feared in the late 1970s has failed to materialize in the 1980s, Soviet military planners take a worst-case view of this possibility and consider Japan as an enemy allied with the United States and China.

66. For a number of years the USSR's tough, obtuse efforts to intimidate the Japanese have greatly strengthened anti-Soviet attitudes in Japan. The Soviet leaders have not altered their adamant rejection of Tokyo's claim to the small islands that constitute the Northern Territories, and they have continued the militarization of these islands begun in 1978 and the modernization of the weapons deployed there. Moscow's propensity to continue strengthening its large existing military advantages in the vicinity of Japan has probably been given further impetus as a consequence of the September 1983 overflight and downing of the Korean Air Lines plane. Meanwhile, the growth of Soviet SS-20 deployments in Asia has significantly heightened Japanese anxiety. As noted earlier, during 1983 Japanese protests about these deployments were echoed for the first time by China,

Nonetheless, Moscow's leaders probably draw some encouragement from the recent Japanese national elections, hoping that the results will undermine Premier Nakasone's efforts to strengthen Japan's military programs. This will almost certainly serve to encourage Soviet leaders to continue generally their previous policies toward Japan, in the belief that political intimidation combined with economic incentives will pay off for Moscow over the long run in "softening up" attitudes in Japan. Prospects for successful use of economic inducements are not good: reduced Japanese demand for natural resources combined with the cutoff in official credits after the Afghanistan invasion suggest that, with the possible exception of Sakhalin gas, large-scale Siberian resource development projects will not be initiated any time soon.

67. For its part, China's economic ties with Japan are by far the most important it has with any country in the capitalist industrialized world, and also dwarf China's trade with the Soviet Union. This leading Japanese role in assisting China's modernization is therefore the second most important bulwark of Beijing's relationship with the West, after its broader connections with the United States. Because of the strength of Japanese-American ties, the Sino-Japanese relationship reinforces other Chinese incentives to maintain China's US connections.

68. Although most aspects of the Sino-Japanese relationship remain fairly healthy, in some areas the relationship has somewhat cooled over the past two years: China has become less outspoken in support of the Japanese-American security relationship, and more reserved about most issues relating to Japanese defense efforts against the Soviet Union; and Beijing has made sporadic strident attacks on what the Chinese sometimes profess to see as a rising danger of Japanese militarism. China still supports Japanese claims against the Soviet Union concerning the Northern Territories, though less vociferously, and, after years of concentrating almost exclusively on cultivation of the ruling Japanese conservatives, Beijing has reopened ties to the Socialist opposition, as well as to local antinuclear weapons movements.

69. The Chinese leaders are well aware of Japan's military weakness, and probably do not see a grave or imminent danger of Japanese militarism. And their latent concerns on this matter, while real, are at present far outweighed by their sense of the enormous economic contribution China receives from its relationship with Japan. The Soviet Union ardently seeks to reverse this Chinese sense of priorities, to alarm China about Japan and the Japanese alliance with the United States, and to use this alarm as a vehicle for Sino-Soviet political cooperation against the United States. The USSR has little hope of success in this effort unless fairly radical changes occur on the Japanese scene.

Since both contingencies are highly improbable over the next two to three years, we do not anticipate significant change in the present role Japan plays with respect to Sino-Soviet relations.

Variables, Uncertainties, and Possible Alternative Outcomes

70. The central judgments of this Estimate have been based on the belief that the broad structure of world affairs will more or less continue. We believe it likely that most aspects of this structure will continue in general, though there is sufficient uncertainty to warrant flagging the possibility—and the consequences—of certain developments.

Variables and Uncertainties

71. ***Stability of Chinese and American Policymaking.*** As noted earlier, the Soviets appear to believe that future changes in Chinese or US leaderships could cause Beijing to incline toward a much more substantial Sino-Soviet rapprochement than now seems probable. Soviet leaders are likely to hope that existing disagreements within the Chinese elite will eventually grow sufficiently important to bring about changed priorities and foreign policies in Beijing. They probably base this hope not on evidence that this is likely to happen, but primarily on the long record of Chinese political leadership instability. Soviet leaders doubtless harbor hopes that sentiment more favorable to the USSR and more hostile to the United States may emerge in leadership ranks of the Chinese armed forces—the People's Liberation Army (PLA). The Soviets appear to judge that some of the sharpest criticisms of Deng Xiaoping's "American connection" have issued from some old guard PLA circles, and they make special efforts to appeal to this

Dissent in Beijing Regime

Available evidence is thin on the question of differences within China's leadership concerning optimum policies toward the USSR and the United States. It has long been clear that there is no coherent, recognizable faction that is "pro-Soviet" as such. Certain Soviet overtures and propaganda over the years have nonetheless played to such presumed sympathetic Chinese leaders. And, in the last two years or so, some of these leaders apparently have been sharply critical of what they consider an unrewarding and unnecessarily pro-US policy on the part of Beijing. At a minimum the Soviets have been playing to such figures.

72. Such hopes as exist among Soviet leaders that a changed political scene in Beijing might lead to a less cordial Chinese relationship with the United States are doubtless buttressed by the fact of Deng Xiaoping's advancing age—he will be 80 years old this year—and of the advent of leaders who, unlike Deng, have not been personally associated in the past with strongly anti-Soviet attitudes. Even now within China there are signs of resistance to Deng's initiatives, and indication that there is some hesitance to accepting party Chairman Hu Yaobang as Deng's putative successor. Hence there may be some expectation in Moscow that a period of uncertainty and the absence of a strong successor to Deng, at least initially, might strengthen existing resistance within China's leadership to any significant strategic or economic modernization cooperation with the United States. That such a succession situation would necessarily redound to Moscow's benefit is by no means certain, however, whatever the Soviet expectation, inasmuch as new Chinese leaders will seek to avoid having their political ambitions damaged by becoming vulnerable to partisan domestic charges that they are "soft" on China's enemy, the USSR. Nevertheless, as they did when Mao died, the Soviets can be expected to use such an occasion to advance proposals for movement in the relationship.

73. ***Continuity of Present Chinese Policy in the Border Dispute.*** The border issue has been intractable to date because the adamant negotiating position of China has been interwoven with its much broader political struggle against the Soviet Union, and because Beijing's leaders have maintained this position as an instrument of political warfare against Moscow. It is unlikely that Beijing will give up this position during the next two to three years. Nevertheless, we believe that, if China did yield on this question and began to move toward a border settlement more acceptable to the Soviets, the chance of reciprocal major Soviet concessions over the long run would be enhanced, Sino-Soviet relations would then enter a period of much greater fluidity, and the possibilities for further mutual concessions would grow.

74. ***Continuation of a Kampuchean Resistance to Vietnam.*** Collapse of military resistance to Vietnam in Kampuchea would alter many of the terms of the present political equation in East Asia. Under these circumstances, the chances would grow that the present ASEAN consensus regarding policy toward Indochina would dissipate, and that the United States would come under considerable pressure from some ASEAN states to join them in finding a formula with which to come to terms with Vietnamese domination of Indochina. Any such situation would conflict with

The Sino-Soviet Border Dispute

Background

- Played down by both sides during alliance in the 1950s.
- Seen by the Chinese as a focal point of wrongs perpetrated by the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union against China. Now used by Chinese as instrument of political warfare against Soviet Union, to demonstrate the USSR's "great-power hegemonist" tendencies and its refusal to admit past injustices.
- Regarded by Soviets as a fundamental threat to the security of their eastern border and the most important single bilateral issue in contention with the Chinese. The immediate precipitant of the Soviet military buildup opposite China. Seen by Soviets as both a false issue and potentially only the first "bill" Chinese intend to present for return of territory historically acquired at China's expense.

Points at Issue

- Dispute centers on 19th-century treaties—worded imprecisely for some sectors, and subject to different interpretations—by which Russia acquired some 1.5 million square kilometers of territory in Central Asia and the Amur River Basin.
- Chinese have stated willingness to accept the boundary laid down by the old treaties as long as Moscow concedes they are "unjust," but demand return of certain Soviet-occupied territories they claim were not even granted by these treaties. The areas in dispute include 20,000 square kilometers of land in the Pamirs, some islands in the Amur and Ussuri Rivers in the Far East, and several small tracts depicted differently on each country's maps.

Tactics

- Both sides tabled some concessions at intial round of border talks in 1964, and Soviets eventually offered a few more concessions at second round, which began in October 1969 and continued intermittently over the next nine years.
- Chinese demanded that Soviets admit certain areas are in "dispute," recognize inequity of old treaties, agree to an unconditional return of "illegally" occupied territory, and withdraw their forces from all disputed areas pending settlement of China's claims.
- Soviets refuse to admit old treaties are "unequal" or to withdraw their forces from "disputed areas" (almost all of which are now in their hands), but have expressed a willingness to conduct a new survey of the boundary lines, and continue to urge a resumption of border talks.

Current Prospects

- Resumption of border talks unlikely at present, but the two sides maintain regular contact on matters related to dispute at Deputy Foreign Minister talks and, to a lesser extent, through the Sino-Soviet Border River Navigation Joint Commission.
- Situation along border remains quiet at the moment, with both sides forgoing aggressive patrolling where boundary is in dispute. Neither side, however, shows signs of a willingness to yield on key points—most notably, ownership of Heixiazi Island at the confluence of the Amur and Ussuri Rivers, adjoining the Soviet city of Khabarovsk and the Trans-Siberian Railroad.

one of the important props of the present Sino-American relationship, and could create the possibility of further changes in the Chinese posture toward the United States and the Soviet Union. It is unlikely that Hanoi will in fact find it possible to put a fairly complete end to Kampuchean resistance in the next two to three years. But it is clear that the stability of both the Sino-US relationship and the firmness of the Chinese position vis-a-vis the USSR will to some degree continue to be contingent upon the continuation of the present military stalemate in Indochina and the preservation of Sino-US cooperation against Soviet policy in Indochina.

75. ***Stability of Politics and Policies in the USSR.*** The initial statements and actions of the Chernenko regime indicate a desire to project orderliness in the succession and continuity in the USSR's dealings with China. But Chernenko—at age 72, and not in the best of health—could suddenly depart from the scene, leaving his colleagues with a new succession problem on their hands. There is no indication at this time that any of the likely contenders—even the younger ones such as Romanov or Gorbachev—are out of step with the USSR's long-established China policy. If, however, in the course of leadership turnover, a significant segment of the leadership came to question the general thrust of current policy, different ideas about Soviet foreign relations might ultimately ensue. Relations with China could be one of the major foreign policy issues under review during this period, particularly if

it involved a new set of leaders who had no role in the bitter exchanges of the 1950s and 1960s. It is conceivable that the situation could produce either a much more conciliatory approach or a significant toughening of the USSR's policy toward China. Sino-Soviet relations could, in fact, become very fluid if the Soviet leadership turnover should coincide with the changeover to a new leadership in China.

76. ***Preservation of Stability in the Korean Peninsula.*** Beijing's interest in maintaining good relations with the United States conflicts to some degree with its interest in preserving a close relationship with P'yongyang. Because of its geographic position, North Korea has always been of great importance to China, and over the last two years Beijing has taken vigorous initiatives to strengthen this relationship and to preserve the edge that Chinese influence has in P'yongyang over that of the USSR. In anticipation of the coming political succession to Kim Il-song, the Chinese have in fact reluctantly acknowledged the special status of Kim's designated heir, his son Kim Chong-il.

77. Beijing, aware that its relationship with Washington could become hostage of North Korea's aspirations to dominate the south, has indicated to both Washington and Seoul its desire to maintain stability in the Korean Peninsula. Since China cannot control P'yongyang's actions, however, it faces a dilemma. The North Korean regime, apparently concerned that time is working to strengthen the relative economic and international position of the Republic of Korea, has taken an increasingly militant line over the past year, one that includes major terrorist initiatives against South Korea's leaders and stability. Simultaneously, however, P'yongyang has initiated an opening to the United States—via Beijing—to hold unconditional talks on a formal peace treaty, removal of US troops, and confederation of the two Koreas; Beijing's leaders support such talks but do not wish China to become directly involved. China's support for this proposal reflects its desire to reduce instability along its borders, and to remain the prime ally/supporter of North Korea. These contradictory policies on the part of P'yongyang are not atypical of North Korea's behavior. Thus, while progress toward a peaceful solution is not expected soon, we may see—for a while—some moderation in P'yongyang's pattern of violence. Should North Korea revert to an incendiary policy on the peninsula, this would complicate Beijing's relationships with the United States and possibly work to Moscow's advantage by heightening Soviet opportunities to compete with China for influence in P'yongyang. At the same time, however, Moscow might perceive North Korean radicalism as risking a possible confrontation between Soviet and US military forces in the Korean area.

78. It is likely that no war will break out in Korea during the period of this Estimate, and that both the USSR and China will continue to insulate their relationships with Washington from P'yongyang's policy toward the south. Nevertheless, the possibilities for accident and miscalculation in the peninsula are considerable and could grow, particularly in the event of an upsurge in internal instability in South Korea.

79. ***Avoidance of New Sino-Soviet Conflict in South and Southeast Asia.*** Any Sino-Soviet progress toward greater rapprochement could be upset by various possible crises to China's south:

- The emergence of new Chinese hostilities with Vietnam on a serious scale, as a result of either major Vietnamese military conflict with Thailand, or of Vietnamese clashes with the Chinese in the South China Sea. The latter possibility is highlighted by the conflicting claims to oil exploration rights in the Gulf of Tonkin, by recent actions by the Chinese to strengthen their military position in the Paracels, and by the growing boldness and scope of Chinese naval and air deployments in the area. Both the overall Soviet relationship with Vietnam and the enhanced Soviet military presence at Cam Ranh create the possibility that such a Sino-Vietnamese clash could spread to involve the Soviets.
- Substantial escalation of Vietnam's military efforts in Kampuchea and along the borders of Thailand. The many constraints on Hanoi's limited resources, concern over possible US and Chinese reactions, and Soviet lack of enthusiasm—make such actions by Vietnam improbable during the period of this Estimate. There is nonetheless some possibility that a much greater Vietnamese military involvement in Kampuchea could arise from escalating border clashes with Thailand. Should these occur, the resulting crisis might well arrest or reverse any movement toward greater Sino-Soviet rapprochement.
- A major new effort by the USSR to advance its geopolitical position in South or Southwest Asia, particularly if done at the expense of Pakistan. The Chinese would of course be greatly disturbed at any overt Soviet military threat to Pakistan arising out of that country's role in opposing Soviet efforts to subdue Afghanistan. Beijing would be equally concerned, however,

should the Soviet Union make significant progress in its efforts to destabilize Pakistan and/or succeed in persuading India to join in the effort. The Soviets have worked hard to block any improvement in India's relations with either Beijing or Islamabad. Although their efforts to get the Indians to work jointly to undermine Pakistan have not been particularly successful, this might change if Pakistan exploded a nuclear device or Prime Minister Gandhi became persuaded that manufacturing a "foreign threat" is the only way to ensure her continued political preeminence.

— A Soviet effort to change the status quo in Pakistan and to secure a realignment of that country away from its present orientation toward China and the United States. Any such effort, however indirect, would be regarded in Beijing as a serious new attack on Chinese interests. We consider that there is sufficient fragility in the present internal situation in Pakistan to make such a Soviet venture a fair possibility during the period of this Estimate, and that over the longer term this possibility may grow. Hence the Soviets may well face a choice between exploiting new opportunities in Pakistan, or taking a more cautious course out of regard for their relationship with China. Should the Soviets opt for a much more forward course toward Pakistan, the present thaw in Moscow's relations with Beijing would be an early and definite casualty.

80. ***Soviet Involvement in Major New Crises Elsewhere.*** Additional Soviet invasions or involvement in major hostilities in the Middle East or Southwest Asia would almost certainly reverse any movement toward significant improvement in Sino-Soviet relations. Such developments would cause Beijing to back away to dissociate itself from the Soviet action—and reassess Chinese policy in the light of subsequent developments concerning the crisis or crises, Soviet moves, and US moves. Chinese reactions would probably be somewhat similar, at least initially, in the event Soviet policy began moving toward some new version of armed intervention in Eastern Europe, some repeat of sorts of Budapest or Prague. Similar Chinese behavior would also probably occur in the event the Soviets got into open hostilities with Western forces, whether in Europe or elsewhere—in such case the Chinese would doubtless seek to stand clear of involvement, and to fish to China's benefit in the troubled waters. Moscow would be highly unlikely to try to solve its other major problems, foreign or domestic, by going to war against China; any Soviet leaders—Chernenko or others—would almost certainly fear that although their military forces could do China grievous harm, resort to such action might well divert Soviet attention from Moscow's principal antagonist, the United States, while possibly bogging the USSR down in war with China.

Alternative Outcomes

81. There is an off chance that during the period of this Estimate the Sino-Soviet relationship could take on a much more hostile character than this Estimate holds probable:

— This could occur because so many variables are present, many of them not fully within the control of the present leaderships in either Moscow or Beijing: the advent of new policies on the part of post-Deng or post-Chernenko leaderships, initiatives taken by other governments (for example, in Korea or Vietnam), and so on.

— It does not follow that US interests would necessarily benefit from the coming of a much more frigid Sino-Soviet relationship. The effect on US interests would depend on the nature and intensity of the estrangement between Moscow and Beijing: up to a point, US interests would clearly benefit from probable increases in Chinese cooperation against Soviet policies in the world, in Chinese receptiveness to US advice and counsel, and—possibly—in willingness to permit expanded levels of Western economic and technological presence within China. But, if Sino-Soviet relations deteriorated to the point of actual or threatened large-scale hostilities, US diplomatic and security policymaking could be greatly complicated.

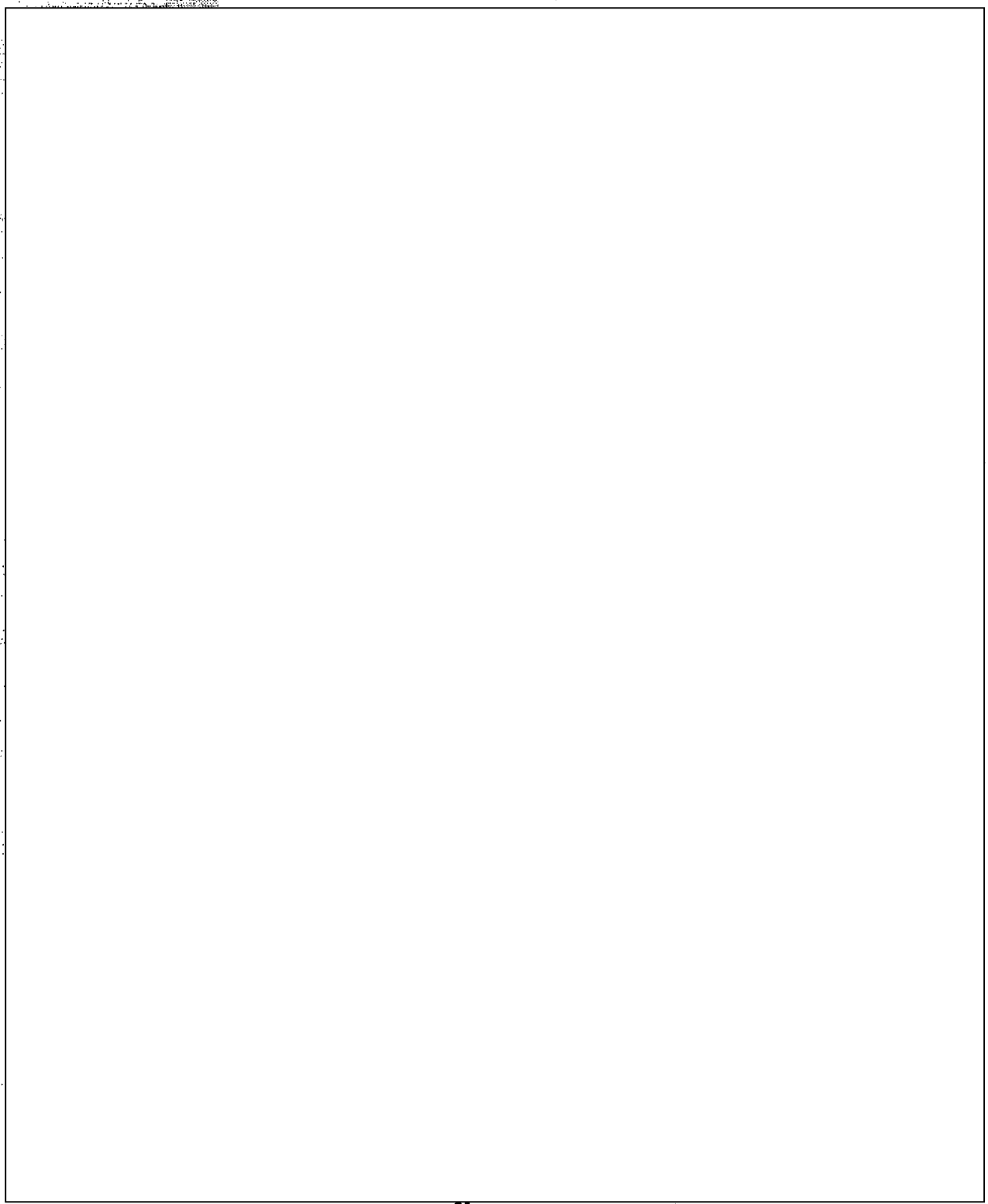
82. Conversely, there is also an outside chance—though less likely than the above—that the Sino-Soviet relationship could become a much closer one during the period of this Estimate than we now judge likely:

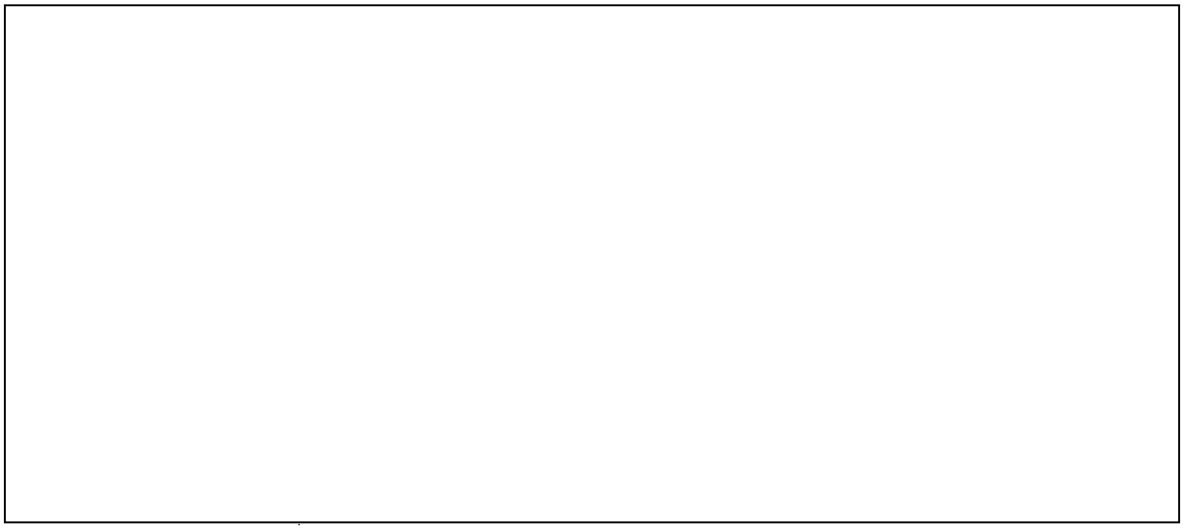
— This might come to pass if no great disruptive contingencies should occur; if the Chinese should back away in practice—though not in principle—from certain of their key "demands"; if agreements reached on a number of secondary issues should begin to create a somewhat greater momentum toward the Sino-Soviet rapprochement; or if for some reason Beijing's leaders should come to depreciate the value of China's relationships with the United States.

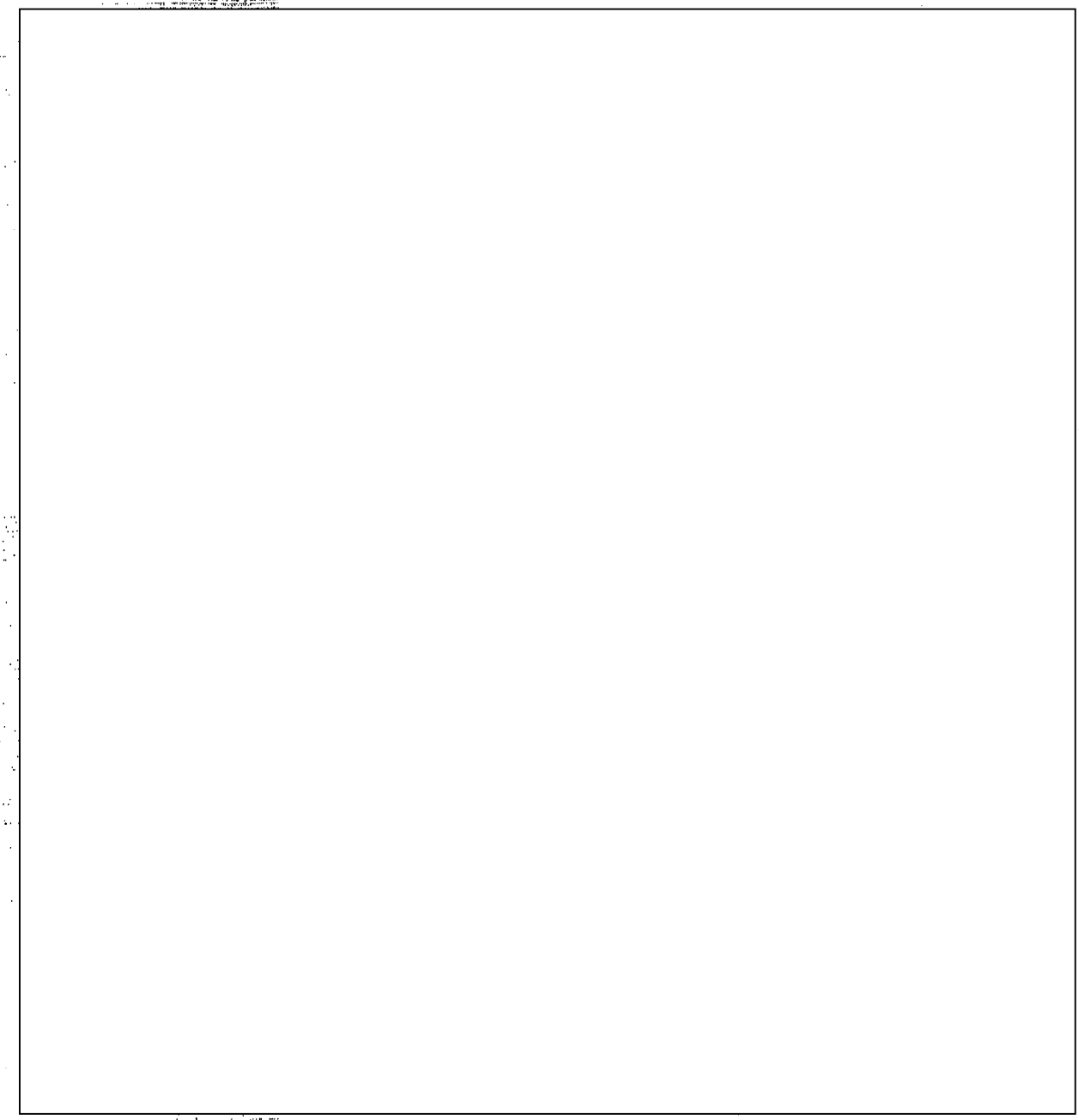
— The coming of significantly closer relations between the USSR and China could seriously harm

US interests; the warmer the Sino-Soviet relationship the more damaging to US geopolitical concerns, defense policies, targeting, alliance systems, the role of Japan, and numerous other key US interests.

83. Although the possibility cannot be excluded that alternative outcomes such as the above could occur in the Sino-Soviet relationship, we stress that the most likely outcome, by far, is that which this NIE has postulated: namely, that the level of hostility between Moscow and Beijing will decrease, that some additional agreements on secondary matters or possibly CBMs will be reached, that at most the USSR may make a token withdrawal of Soviet troops from Mongolia, and that continuing basic differences between Moscow and Beijing will not permit any significantly greater degree of rapprochement between them to develop over the next two to three years.







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ANNEX C

SINO-SOVIET CHRONOLOGY, 1949-84

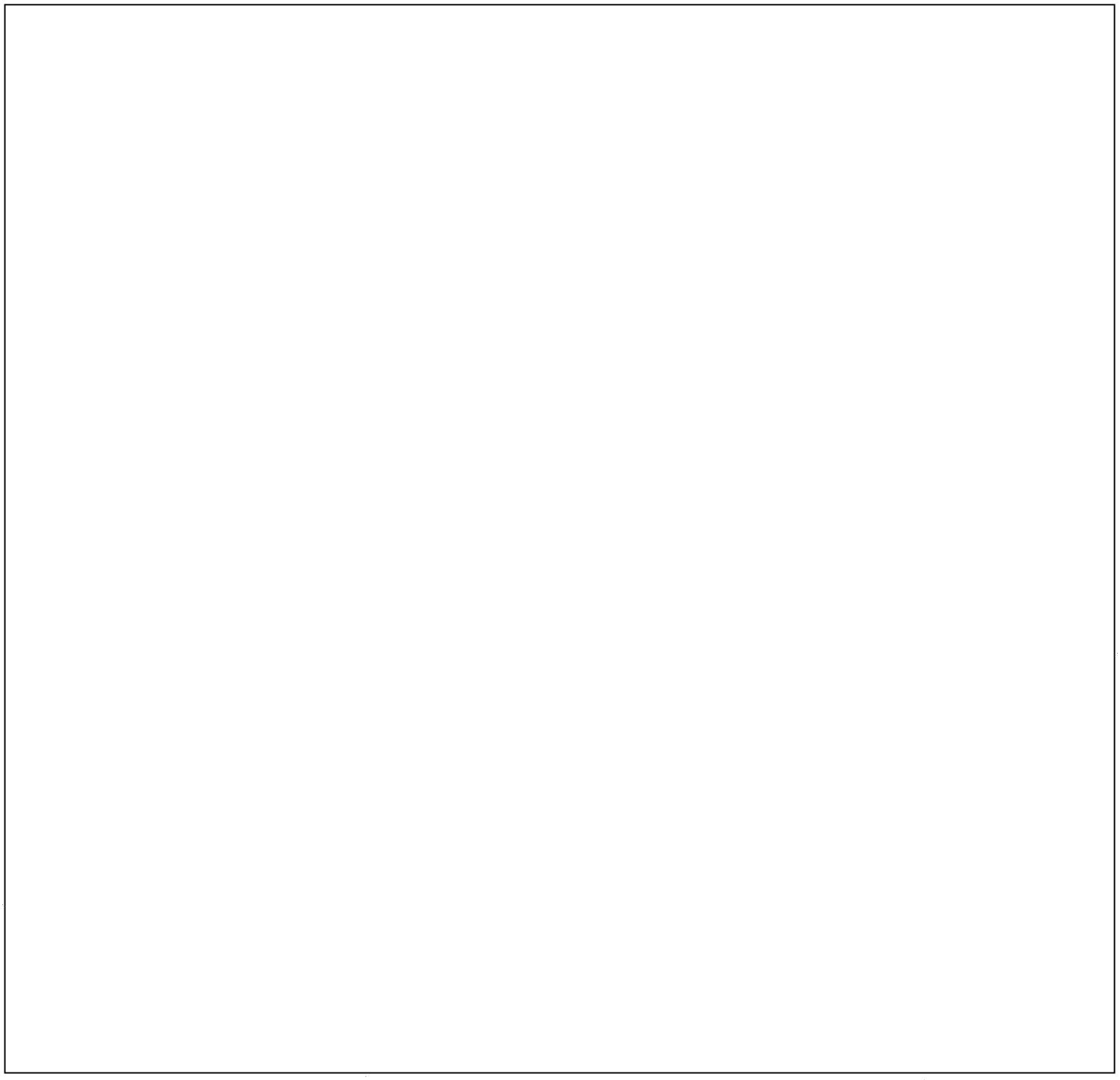
October 1949	Chinese Communist regime established in Beijing.
February 1950	Soviets negotiate Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance and other agreements with the new regime. In one agreement, USSR promises to surrender control of Chinese Eastern Railway and evacuate Dairen (now Luda) and Port Arthur (Lushun)—two ice-free naval ports on the Yellow Sea—by the end of 1952.
June 1950	Start of Korean War.
September 1952	Deadline for Soviet evacuation of Dairen and Port Arthur suspended because of the Korean War.
March 1953	Stalin dies.
October 1954	Post-Stalin Soviet leadership agrees to evacuate Dairen and Port Arthur.
February 1956	Khrushchev, at 20th Soviet Party (CPSU) Congress, delivers his "secret speech" criticizing Stalin, setting in motion East European attempts to reduce Soviet control.
April-December 1956	Chinese article in April implicitly corrects Soviet "one-sided" appraisal of Stalin. Chinese applaud Soviet promise to correct "errors" in intra-Bloc relations but seek to define limits of tolerable diversity within the Bloc.
October 1957	Secret agreement on "assistance to defense technology" has USSR promising to help China develop nuclear weapons.
November 1957	Mao, at Bloc conference in Moscow, publicly endorses Soviets as Bloc leaders, but privately presses Soviet for harder line on foreign policy.
April-May 1958	Soviets request (1) long-range submarine radio in China and (2) joint fleet to be dominated by USSR and to use Chinese ports. Chinese refuse.
August 1958	Chinese communes are formally unveiled, and Beijing implies it has found shortcut—via "Great Leap"—to full Communism.
August-September 1958	Chinese, during Taiwan Strait crisis, find Soviet support to be too little and too late.

January-February 1959	Khrushchev, at 21st CPSU Congress, indirectly attacks principles of Chinese commune system. CPSU declares that war can be eliminated while capitalism remains.
June 1959	Soviets refuse to give "sample atomic bomb" to Chinese, "tearing up" October 1957 military aid agreement.
Spring-Summer 1959	Chinese Defense Minister Peng Dehuai returns from visit to Moscow, challenges Mao's economic and military policies with alleged Soviet encouragement, and is purged.
Fall 1959	Khrushchev visits United States, and Soviet propaganda takes moderate line toward US. Chinese begin indirect criticism of Soviet detente line.
Spring 1960	Chinese launch massive press attack on Soviet line, and Soviets organize unsuccessful counterattack at a Bloc gathering at Bucharest.
June 1960	Soviets withdraw economic and technical advisers from China, including those concerned with defense effort.
October-November 1960	Soviets, at World Communist Conference in Moscow, fail in all-out effort to force Chinese to acknowledge CPSU's authority.
Fall 1961	Zhou Enlai walks out of 22nd CPSU Congress and goes home early after public and private arguments with Khrushchev.
Spring 1962	Unrest in Xinjiang Province among minority peoples, allegedly encouraged by Soviets, leads to mass flight into USSR. Central Asian borders reinforced on both sides. Soviet consulates there closed by Chinese.
Fall 1962	Soviet backdown over Cuban missile crisis brings violent Chinese attacks on Soviet "Munich." Soviets organize counterattacks at East European party congresses.
March 1963	Beijing publicly challenges Soviet right to Far Eastern territories once belonging to China.
Spring 1963	Chinese announce their "general line" for the international Communist movement to replace Soviet "general line." Sino-Soviet party talks in Moscow fail. Polemics hit all-time high.
April-September 1964	First series of Sino-Soviet border negotiations.
October 1964	Khrushchev ousted from Soviet leadership. First Chinese atomic explosion.
November 1964	Zhou Enlai in Moscow for talks with Soviet leaders.

1965	Soviets begin force buildup opposite China.
February 1965	Kosygin in Beijing, holds talks with Mao.
July 1965	Brezhnev–Deng Xiaoping talks in Bucharest.
January 1966	Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance with Mongolia.
March 1966	Chinese refuse invitation to 23rd CPSU Congress in Moscow.
1966-67	Cultural Revolution at its height in China.
March 1969	Border clashes at several spots along Sino-Soviet border, but especially on the Ussuri River in the Far East.
Mid-1969	Soviet war of nerves against China, with "threats" that USSR might launch nuclear strikes against China's nascent advanced weapons program.
September 1969	Kosygin-Zhou meeting at the airport in Beijing.
October 1969	First round of new border talks (sessions held intermittently through June 1978).
1970	Soviets and Chinese feel each other out on negotiations.
1971	Sino-US "Ping-Pong diplomacy"; Dr. Kissinger visits China.
1972	US summit meetings in Beijing and Moscow produce Sino-US Shanghai Communique and US detente with the USSR.
November 1972	US-Soviet summit in Vladivostok; Chinese propose Sino-Soviet nonaggression pact.
November 1974	US-Soviet summit in Vladivostok.
September 1976	Mao dies. Soviet overture to post-Mao leadership rejected.
July 1977	Sino-Soviet agreement on navigation around Xeixiazi Island, opposite Khabarovsk on Ussuri River, facilitates border river navigation talks, stalemated since 1974.
February 1978	Soviets propose joint statement on relations, rejected by Chinese in March.
March-April 1978	Brezhnev and Ustinov visit forces in Far East. (New stage in Soviet Far East buildup begins in 1978, leading to new Far East theater command by end of the year.)
April 1978	Communist coup in Afghanistan.

August 1978	Sino-Japanese treaty with "antihegemony" clause.
November 1978	Soviets sign treaty with Vietnam, following further rapid deterioration in Sino-Vietnamese relations.
December-January 1978-1979	Vietnam attacks and overruns Kampuchea; US and China complete normalization of diplomatic relations; Deng visits US.
February-March 1979	China invades Vietnam to "teach a lesson"; Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea unaffected. Soviets deploy two additional divisions into Mongolia and begin to expand their military presence in Vietnam.
April 1979	Chinese announce intent to abrogate Sino-Soviet treaty, but propose political talks.
June 1979	Soviet-US summit in Vienna.
September-November 1979	Sino-Soviet political talks in Moscow.
December 1979	Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.
January 1980	Chinese postpone political talks indefinitely.
April 1980	Sino-Soviet treaty expires.
February 1981	Brezhnev, at 26th CPSU Congress, proposes confidence-building measures (CBMs) for the Far East.
September 1981	Soviets propose resumption of border talks; Chinese silent.
Late 1981	USSR and China begin gradual expansion of contacts—trade, academic and sports exchanges, etc.
March 1982	Brezhnev speech in Tashkent expresses desire for improved relations with China.
October 1982	First round of Sino-Soviet consultations held in Beijing.
November 1982	Brezhnev dies; Foreign Ministers Gromyko and Huang meet at funeral in Moscow; Andropov becomes General Secretary.
March 1983	Second round of Sino-Soviet consultations held in Moscow.
September 1983	Deputy Foreign Minister Kapitsa in Beijing, opens a second channel for talks on "international issues."
October 1983	Third round of Sino-Soviet consultations held in Beijing.

February 1984	Andropov dies. Chinese send Deputy Premier Wan Li to attend funeral, where Wan holds talks with Soviet First Deputy Premier Aliyev—highest level Sino-Soviet discussions since Kosygin-Zhou meeting in 1969.
March 1984	Fourth round of Sino-Soviet consultations held in Moscow.



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