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## Maintenance of an Empire: Soviet Foreign Behaviour in the '80s

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Maintenance of an Empire:  
Soviet Foreign Behaviour  
in the '80s

By

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B.A. Wilfrid Laurier University, 1978

Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfilment of  
the requirements for the Master of  
Arts degree

Wilfrid Laurier University  
1980

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To My Parents

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## Abstract

The thesis undertakes an examination of certain Soviet problems which upon analysis serve to support the views of publicists such as Richard Nixon, Richard Pipes, Edward Luttwak, Paul Nitze, and Eugene Rostow. These experts argue that the Soviet Union is bent on a course of world hegemony. The objective of the thesis is to determine if the Soviet leadership is under lateral pressure to expand. Two propositions underline the broad theme of the thesis: that the Soviet Union is the de facto Russian empire, with the same concerns, i.e. stability and Russian domination; that real arms restraint on the part of the United States has given the Kremlin a "window of opportunity" in which to exploit its military superiority. The thesis is composed of chapters examining traditional influences on Soviet foreign behaviour, the place of the Soviet Union in the International State system, the internal problems of the USSR, the major external threat [China] to the Soviet Union, and a final chapter on Soviet Global strategy, tactics, and possible courses of action. The study may contribute to the understanding of motivating factors in Soviet foreign behaviour in the '80s, given its military superiority and consistent pattern of foreign behaviour, whether Tsarist or Soviet. It therefore follows that this study may also contribute to alerting those who refuse to accept that the United States and hence the West, is seriously vulnerable to probable Soviet foreign policy options in the early '80s.

## Introduction

Given the present global situation with its recurring crises and dislocations, there is a tendency on the part of some to view the global order as one out of control. This lack of control, or agreed upon rules of procedure and behaviour, is often considered to be the result either of a lack of clear foreign policy objectives on the part of certain major actors, or the result of the actors reacting "willy-nilly" to a series of so-called unforeseen crises. Hence, foreign behaviour is seen to be incrementalist in that it is seen as a reaction to problems as they arise rather than as the pursuit and fulfillment, over time, of a set of desired objectives.

In opposition to the incrementalists we will argue that Soviet foreign policy and behaviour have been the result of certain concrete objectives--pursued over time and bridging both Tsarist and Soviet regimes. The pursuit of these objectives has been necessitated by a series of internal and external exigencies. Thus, Soviet foreign behaviour is largely an outcome of the reaction to these perceived exigencies on the part of Soviet elites. A good deal of international behaviour is then the result of not only one nation's interactions with others, but rather the result of behaviour patterns and attributes within the nation itself.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>J. Wilkenfeld (ed.), Conflict Behaviour and Linkage Politics (New York: David McKay Co., 1973), p. 7.

In our discussion we will proceed along the lines of a descriptive historical analysis; it is not that we are adverse to the application of certain analytical models but are rather cautioned by the story of Kierkegaard's man who lived his life in abstractions--he had abstracted himself to such an extent that one morning he woke up to find that he had died some time ago.

The focus of this paper will be on the USSR as a Russian empire, and how internal difficulties in maintaining Russian domination will result in foreign policy outputs. We will attempt to demonstrate that the Soviet government will feel compelled, like its Tsarist predecessors, to resort to external expansionism to secure the empire.

Our examination will look at the three most serious internal exigencies, and the dominant external threat, which threatens the domination of the "Great Russian" Slav over the Soviet Union. The internal problem areas are: (1) the legitimacy crisis of the C.P.S.U.; (2) the problem of non-Russian minorities within the Soviet Union; and (3) increasing Soviet-economic dislocations. Simultaneously, the external threat is posed by China. The first three of these are, of course, problems leading to what may be termed "lateral pressures," [see appendix], while the last exigency is direct--its ramifications challenge the internal stability of the Soviet Union.

Before entering a discussion of our four major problem



areas, as cited above, we need to briefly examine (1) the Geographical, Historical, and Cultural influences on Soviet foreign behaviour and (2) the perspective of the elite on the place of the USSR in the International State System. These factors will influence the understanding and perception which the Soviet elite has of those pressures which we see as leading to patterns of Soviet foreign behaviour.

Crucial to our argument is the demonstration that the analytical components of what has been called the "New I.R." no longer hold. The premises of this are:

1. Both powers must possess nuclear arms and must, furthermore, keep their arms at a level to match the other side's capabilities;
2. Both sides must accept the concept of non use of the nuclear arms; and
3. Military victory is useless.

Instead, we now find that the Soviets are fast approaching a first-strike capability and as a consequence the old notions of brinkmanship no longer pertain. If this is so, Americans also will no longer be able to operate according to the precepts of "New I.R.". Thus Rostow warns:

Many tend to dismiss the vision of nuclear war as unthinkable. But the vision of Soviet political coercion backed by overwhelming nuclear and conventional forces is so far from unthinkable as to have become a likely possibility, thanks to the drift of American foreign and defense policies in the post-Viet Nam period.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Eugene V. Rostow, "The Case Against SALT II," Commentary, Feb. '79, p. 23.

Therefore the Soviets have achieved a "window of opportunity;" hence, if a goal can best be attained through the use of military force, they may feel secure in pursuing those means to that end. [The nature of this "window," and military capabilities of the USSR are dealt with in some depth in Chapter II.]

We will argue, that for the Kremlin now, given its present military superiority, not to seek actively to attenuate its problems (present and future) would be to mark a radical departure in foreign behaviour whether Tsarist or Soviet.

In the post-World War II era many academic circles argued that the use of force by either superpower against the other or against smaller parties was doomed to failure. This view gained credence by the failure of American armed forces in the Viet Nam war. Washington, which had accepted that military force was ineffective and suicidal against the USSR, drew the lesson from Viet Nam that military force would be doomed to failure "in a world of aroused nationalism."<sup>3</sup> Once this view had gained ascendancy there was little alarm (in official circles) over the massive Soviet arms build-up which accelerated unabated during the seventies. The prevalent attitude was that all the Soviets could achieve would be a "more costly plateau of impotence."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Edward N. Luttwak, "After Afghanistan, What?," Commentary, April '80, p. 40

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

This air of relative nonchalance in the face of the USSR's ever-increasing war making ability, was reinforced by experts such as George Kennan (widely recognized as the Dean of U.S. Kremlin watchers) who argued that the Soviet Union had become a status quo power. Hence, the intentions of Soviet leaders were viewed as basically moderate and peaceful.

Unfortunately for the west these views remained in ascendancy even while the USSR went about gobbling up the old Portuguese empire, using proxy troops supplied with Soviet arms and advisers. The Kremlin soon demonstrated how interested it was in the status quo in Angola, Ethiopia, and Indochina.

Perhaps the most damaging effect these views had led to, has been the acceptance in Washington of the Vance-Shulman school which held that "because the internal situation of the USSR is weak, there is nothing to worry about in Soviet behaviour. All the evidence, however, points to the conclusion that the weaknesses of the regime act as a powerful spur to action."<sup>5</sup> What the followers of the Vance and Shulman school chose to overlook is that dictators in possession of large armies and small civil success are easily tempted to go to war. As Kahler notes in a well-received article:

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<sup>5</sup>Brian Crozier, "Moscow's Strategic Speed-up for 1979," Soviet Analyst, Vol. 8 No. 1, 11 Jan. '79.

The greatest incentive to risk-taking is present when the internal prospects do not foreclose action altogether but are bad enough to encourage a foreign move that might aid in consolidation, particularly when this perception is coupled with an international setting that can still be challenged but with declining probability of success.<sup>6</sup>

Kahler goes on to draw the ominous parallel between 1980 and 1914; these sets of perceptions shared by the elites of Austria-Hungary and Germany then, could be held by the Soviet elite today.

This paper will argue that the equation<sup>7</sup> of: short-term military optimism (i.e. "Window of Opportunity") plus long-term national pessimism (i.e. internal and external exigencies) will add up to probable Soviet expansion in the early 1980s. This combination of internal and external exigencies leading the Soviet elites to seek expansion, combined with a "window of opportunity" provides circumstances which are highly conducive to the traditional, historical drive of Moscow's expansionism.

We have approached this paper as an exercise in strengthening the arguments of those who seek to warn us that the Soviet Union is actively pursuing a course towards world hegemony. Therefore our argument is very much a "worst case approach." Our analysis of Soviet problems, behaviour and intentions is thus necessarily one-sided. This paper will

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<sup>6</sup>Miles Kahler, "Rumors of War: The 1914 Analogy," Foreign Affairs, Winter 79/80.

<sup>7</sup>E.N. Luttwak, "After Afghanistan, What?," op. cit., p. 46.

incorporate the arguments of such analysts and publicists as Sir John Hackett, Richard Nixon, Richard Pipes, Paul Nitze, Eugene Rostow, Edward Luttwak, but its significance and contribution will be in encompassing their arguments with an analysis of the underlying problems in the Soviet Union which serves to support these views about Soviet motives and intentions. The entire exercise is predicated on the existence of a Soviet "Window of Opportunity" or that the Soviet elites have a reason to believe they can act as if they have one.

The final section of the paper will examine Soviet strategy, tactics, and possible scenarios based on our "worst case approach" analysis of Soviet intentions. Soviet foreign behaviour will be projected on the basis of trends in their behaviour currently and our perception of their goals. These goals being courses of action which provide for the maintenance of the de facto Russian Empire.

Chapter I: Traditional Influences on Soviet Foreign Behaviour

Geography and History

Geography and Fate have made it vulnerable to attack, and experience has impelled it to rely upon internal authoritarianism and external expansionism for defense.

Aspaturian<sup>1</sup>

Fate gave Russia space, and Russians have prided themselves on their vast distances; however, Russia is only Moscow.<sup>2</sup> Moscow, with an iron hand, has kept territories and conquered peoples on a tight leash. The realities of their geographic position, have been the most permanent conditioning factors on the foreign behaviour of both the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. Geography simplified the conquest of a divided Russia, but it also simplified the expansion of a unified Russian state.<sup>3</sup> A powerful Russian state could expand in all directions until checked by superior force; a weak Russia invited attack, on occasion, from more than one direction at once.

Through much of her history Russia suffered the constant threat of invasion and the ravages of war as she had no natural

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<sup>1</sup>V. Aspaturian, "The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union," in Rosenau, J.N., Thompson, K.W., and Boyd, G. World Politics (New York: Free Press, 1976), p. 57.

<sup>2</sup>Both symbolically and in real terms, Moscow represents Russia; in close proximity are much of the population and industry.

<sup>3</sup>V. Aspaturian, "Soviet Foreign Policy," in Macridis, R.D., (ed.) Foreign Policy in World Politics (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1976), p. 164.

boundary on the West or, until the 18th and 19th centuries, on the East or South. The past weaknesses of the Russian frontier invited numerous invasions: more than one hundred and fifty foreign invasions during the European Renaissance (13th to the 15th centuries), and ten major wars, with Sweden and Poland in the 17th and 18th centuries, the Napoleonic Wars and the Crimean and Russo-Turk wars, in the 19th century, and, the Russo-Japanese and the two World Wars during the first half of the 20th century.<sup>4</sup>

The first one-third of its entire history the Russians were under the Mongol-Tartar yoke. For century after century Mongols, Swedes, Poles, Lithuanians, French and Germans made devastating incursions into Russia, even to the point of burning the capital, Moscow. The memory of these disasters and national humiliations has been preserved in the great-power instinct of the people, to whom their imperialism seems a strictly defensive phenomenon, not an aggressive one. Hence, whether Russian expansionism has been aggressive or defensive in nature is merely academic. As Aspaturian notes:

In the absence of more obvious geographic obstacles to her enemies, Russia's physical security became irrevocably attached to land space, while her psychological security became inseparable from political centralization.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, the foreign behaviour of both the Tsarist and Soviet administrations has been characterized by military

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<sup>4</sup>M. Schwartz, The Foreign Policy of the U.S.S.R.: Domestic Factors (Riverside: Dickenson Pub. Co., 1975), p. 75.

<sup>5</sup>V. Aspaturian, "Soviet Foreign Policy," p. 164.

intervention and expansion for the defense of perceived Russian interests.

The creation by Stalin of a belt of satellite states in Eastern Europe in the aftermath of the Second World War is very much a part of this tradition, as is the recent Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Anxiety regarding the future of Russian influence in Eastern Europe led Brezhnev in 1968--much as it had Nicholas I in 1831 regarding Poland--to adopt a policy of military intervention.<sup>6</sup>

The Russian historical experience of numerous foreign invasions of their country helped shape the highly centralized character of Tsarist rule. The Russians had traditionally "seen themselves facing a choice of unity under an autocrat or subjugation by a foreign power."<sup>7</sup> Historically, this kind of rule was justified by the fact that there could be no society without the government's complete control of all men and resources. The national character became one of defensive reaction. The whole of Russia's diplomatic history consisted of dealing with unfriendly neighbours. Russia had little experience in friendly relations and her diplomacy was concerned with impressing an adversary with Russian strength and massiveness in size, as Kennan noted, "impressing an adversary with the terrifying strength of Russian power...."<sup>8</sup>

The territorial integrity of Russia's historic borders

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<sup>6</sup>M. Schwartz, The Foreign Policy . . . ., op. cit., p. 164.

<sup>7</sup>C. Black, "The Limitation of Strategic Arms," Part I, p. 6 quoted in M. Schwartz, The Foreign Policy . . . ., op. cit., p. 75.

<sup>8</sup>G. Kennan, Memoirs, p. 560 quoted in M. Schwartz, The Foreign Policy . . . ., op. cit., p. 76.



and the acute sensitivity to the vulnerability of the western border became permanent policy objectives for any Russian-Soviet regime--i.e. Stalin's end-of-World War II regathering of lands campaign. Since 1939, the Soviet Union has annexed four of its former neighbours, seized territory from seven more, and has made territorial demands upon two others;<sup>9</sup> most of this territory was previously lost by a weakened Russia. The post-World War II settlement in the region placed the Soviet Union "in a position which resembled, at least in terms of geography, that which existed between 1721 and 1809."<sup>10</sup>

The international behaviour of the Soviet Union has been consistent with that of its Tsarist predecessors. Russia had a strong imperial tradition; her Tsars created a great empire and aimed it at world conquest. Russia's history between the 15th and 20th centuries is one of enormous expansion. From Tsar to Commissar, the character of Russian expansion has changed little.

Those instruments and rationalization of imperial Russia's expansion, the ethnic argument, Pan Slavism, even the Orthodoxy were all to find their place in the arsenal of Soviet Russia's foreign policy. By 1945, the goal of the Tsar's government had striven for but never achieved was fulfilled by their successors: Eastern Europe was under the full domination of Russia. The ethnic frontiers of Germany were pushed back to where they had been in the Middle Ages. Though committed officially to atheism, Stalin's government repressed the Greek Catholic rite in Eastern Galicia and

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<sup>9</sup> East Prussia, Bessarabia-Bukovina, Moldavia, Finno-Karelia, Southern Sakhalin, the Kuriles, Eastern Poland (Western Ukraine) Carpatho-Ukraine (Ruthenia).

<sup>10</sup> C. Black, "The Pattern of Russian Objectives," in Lederer, I.J. (ed.) Russian Foreign Policy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), p. 8.

extended its efforts on behalf of the Orthodox Church, just as Nicholas I's government had done in the empire's western domains in the 1830s and 1840s. The potential sources of irredentism were removed when all the Ukrainians and Byelorussians were included in the USSR. These factors are eloquent in themselves as evidence of the strong continuity between old and new regimes.<sup>11</sup>

Russian and Soviet territorial expansion has had three objectives as its basis: strategic, economic, and nationalistic. Russia's preoccupation with security could best be handled by reducing or eliminating the political power of neighbouring states through military force, and extending Russia's frontiers to natural barriers such as oceans, deserts, and mountains, or to long stretches of sparsely inhabited borderlands of little geopolitical interest to other major powers.

Economic interests are directly related to security interests and "on no subject has there been more general agreement among Russian and [Soviet] leaders than on the importance of economic strength to national security."<sup>12</sup> Economic interests dictated Russia acquire access to open seas, as an outlet for trade. Peter the Great built St. Petersburg towards this end, and to prevent the domination of the Baltic region by another great power. He accomplished this by: "annexing territories inhabited by non-Russians, by encouraging a policy of neutrality on the part of the states of this region, and by exerting strong pressure on these states when they allied

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<sup>11</sup>A. Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence (New York: Praeger Pub., 1974), p. 12.

<sup>12</sup>C. Black, "The Pattern of Russian Objectives," op. cit., p. 14.

themselves with other great powers."<sup>13</sup> From St. Petersburg, Russia acquired security for its economic interests: it ensured an outlet for trade with the West. The Soviet Union's attack on Finland in November 1939 can be understood in terms of Moscow's continuing security interest in the area to defend against the Nazi threat to Leningrad. Stalin felt it imperative to create greater strength in depth, i.e. to move back the frontier from Leningrad. The end result of this action was Soviet expansion and annexation of a good part of Finland.

Nationalistic interests motivating expansion have used religious, dynastic or nationality claims as the basis for conquests. Tsarist and Soviet regimes have felt a mandate to unify territories considered to be Russian by virtue of reasons cited above. The 14th and 15th centuries saw the grand princes of Moscow determined to unify the territories which had paid tribute to the Tartars. Later, Russian claims on Polish territory were based on the fact that much of the territory was inhabited by Ukrainians or Byelorussians who are close to the Great Russians in religion and language. Russian annexation was facilitated by the fact that "no upper or middle class had as yet arisen to claim a national distinctness."<sup>14</sup>

The important question is whether Soviet expansion has ended, or whether there are still strong incentives for the Soviet leadership to expand and in what directions.

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<sup>13</sup>C. Black, "The Pattern of Russian Objectives," op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>14</sup>A. Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence, op. cit., p. 4.

Soviet preoccupation with regional security has important international ramifications because: "... regional security with respect to bordering states could in effect mean global security, because of the size and diversity of its economic base."<sup>15</sup> We shall turn to some of these considerations shortly and deal in some depth with them in the final chapter.

### Cultural Influences on Russian and Soviet Foreign Policy

Every ancient and deeply rooted self-contained culture, especially if it is spread over a wide part of the earth's surface, constitutes a self-contained world, full of riddles and surprises to Western thinking.

Solzhenitsyn,  
A World Split Apart

Certainly, some of Russia's conquests cannot be explained from an economic, political, strategic or any other reasonable point of view. Some expansion and imperialism can perhaps be understood in terms of how at varying times the Russians seem to have believed in a historical mission. One theory posited Moscow as a third Rome; in this theory Moscow was held to be the successor to Rome and Constantinople. Therefore Moscow became the heir to the imperial tradition of Rome, and the centre of the Christian world.

Perhaps this grandiose conception of Moscow's role in history should be held to account in some degree for the vigor of Ivan's offensives against Tartar

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<sup>15</sup>S.B. Cohen, Geography and Politics in a World Divided (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1975), p. 191.

territories in the East and the Baltic provinces in the West, and also for his matrimonial ambitions, which included a proposal to Queen Elizabeth of England.<sup>16</sup>

Another doctrine held that it was Russia's destiny to liberate all Slavic peoples and create a "federation embracing all the non-German peoples of Eastern and South Eastern Europe up to and including Constantinople."<sup>17</sup>

In the writings of Danilevskii, this ambitious objective was supported by a cyclical theory of history which maintained that Russia was destined to succeed Europe as the eleventh in a series of dominant civilizations of which Egypt was the first.<sup>18</sup>

It is interesting to note that some of the great literary masters the Russians have produced were devout imperialists. Pushkin wrote a militaristic poem about the suppression of the Polish uprising of 1831, and the taking of Warsaw, by Russian troops. Dostoevsky yearned passionately for the conquest of Constantinople; Gogol was fiercely proud in his writing that his country covered such a huge expanse. That expanse was truly gigantic; in the fifteenth century the Duchy of Moscow comprised 15,000 square miles and by the time of the last Tsar, Nicholas II, the empire comprised 8.5 million square miles.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> C. Black, "The Pattern of Russian Objectives," op. cit., p. 24.

<sup>17</sup> C. Black, "The Patterns of Russian Objectives," op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>19</sup> M. Schwartz, The Foreign Policy . . . ., op. cit., p. 73.

Observers such as Friedrich Engels saw Russians as "dreaming of world supremacy"<sup>20</sup> and the French observer of nineteenth-century Russia, the Marquis de Custine stated "an immense ambition ferments in the hearts of the Russian people. That nation, essentially aggressive ... dreams of world domination."<sup>21</sup>

Culturally, Russia developed a distinctive and lasting self-image. Russia developed over the centuries a religious and cultural self-conceit, convinced that its own religious and political arrangements far surpassed all the others.<sup>22</sup>

It was long believed, as Dostoevsky observed, that close relations with the rest of Europe might even exercise a harmful and corrupt influence upon the Russian mind and the Russian idea; that it might distort Orthodoxy itself and lead Russia along the path to perdition.<sup>23</sup>

This cultural self-conceit manifested itself in a belief in a higher spiritual historical mission of the Russian nation.

Predating Peter's reign and going back to the earliest days of Muscovy, there is the notion of the historical mission of the Russian nation as the representative and defender of eastern Christianity as against Catholicism and also (and especially) as against Islam. The concrete expression of this mission was the goal of expelling Turkey from Europe and regaining Constantinople and the straits for Christendom.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> M. Schwartz, The Foreign Policy . . . ., op. cit., p. 73.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>24</sup> A. Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence, op. cit., p. 12.

This self-image of superiority and historical contempt for the anti-Russian or foreign led to Russia's policy of condemning Europe and the West. Also, as Schwartz notes, "this exalted self-image gave rise to glorification of the state and governmental absolutism on the one hand, and a Messianic kind of imperialism on the other."<sup>25</sup>

The Bolsheviks became heirs to the Russian history and cultural legacy; they gave Russia new goals and aspirations but could not avoid the contours of a Russian state and falling heir to the assets and liabilities of its predecessors.<sup>26</sup>

Certainly Marxist-Leninist ideology like any social creed assimilated different ideologies and social movements such as Slavic nationalism and the Russian notion of superior culture. The ideology was consistent with Russian messianic traditions

... [it] reinforced the psychological obsession for security ... provided an ideological rationale for assuming the implacable hostility of the outside world and sanctified Russian expansion with the ethical mission of liberating the downtrodden masses of the world from their oppressors.<sup>27</sup>

The ideology easily lent itself to the assimilation of traditional beliefs, goals, and objectives of Russian foreign behaviour.

The hostile West of the Slavophiles became the hostility of capitalism and imperialism; instead of the parochial messianism of the

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<sup>25</sup> M. Schwartz, The Foreign Policy . . . ., op. cit., p. 78.

<sup>26</sup> V. Aspaturian, "Soviet Foreign Policy," op. cit., p. 165.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

pan-Slav enthusiasts, Marxism provided Russia with a mission of universal transcendence--transforming the outside world into her own image, in fulfillment of her historic destiny and as the only permanent guarantee of absolute security.<sup>28</sup>

Marxist-Leninism purports to be a scientifically determined ongoing process with unavoidable laws--thus its superiority and universal validity. The doctrine of proletarian internationalism declared the potential interest of the Soviet Union in the domestic and foreign affairs of all other nations of the world.

Like the rulers of Old Muscovy, they tend to see themselves as the bearers of a unique message and the center of a new, higher civilization. Now as in the past Moscow proclaims itself an example to all peoples.<sup>29</sup>

\*                                 \*                                 \*

Traditionally, The Kremlin's masters, whether Tsarist or Soviet, have been expansionary. We have looked at the geographic, historical, and cultural influences on foreign behaviour and have found a marked continuity, i.e. expansion motivated by strategic, economic, and nationalistic objectives, which have characterized the old and new regimes.

What directions and what rationalizations will the Kremlin be likely to adopt in furthering this historical drive of expansion? The leaders of the Kremlin are conscious of the socially useful aspect of a legitimizing rationale for the

<sup>28</sup>V. Aspaturian, "Soviet Foreign Policy," op. cit., p. 165.

<sup>29</sup>M. Schwartz, The Foreign Policy . . . ., op. cit., p. 82.



blatant use of force. In Eastern Europe the Brezhnev doctrine provides the legitimizing cover for the imperial role of the Red Army. Outside of Eastern Europe, on what grounds in the pursuit of which objectives will Soviet imperialism and territorial expansion be rationalized?

Whatever the future territorial claims of the Soviet Union may be, their formal basis is likely to continue to be on nationality lines. Natural features and historic claims become objectives as they coincide with nationality frontiers.<sup>30</sup>

Given the far-ranging borders of the USSR and the many minorities encompassed within, who have strong ethnic ties to peoples in bordering states, the Kremlin has its grounds for territorial expansion. What for previous regimes had been the historical mission of uniting the Slavic peoples, has been expanded to a mandate to unite the peoples of the USSR with their ethnic cousins. The obvious paradox is that expansion on this basis would lead to the territorial expansion of the Soviet Union over much of the World. Marxist-Leninist ideology dictates that most of the governments of the world are not legitimate, therefore once the Soviet Union is strong enough it can rationalize "liberating" peoples unfairly living under imperialist governments.

It is likely that Soviet expansion will occur along the periphery of the USSR.

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<sup>30</sup>S.B. Cohen, Geography and Politics . . . ., op. cit., p. 204.

For a brief period (1723-32), all of the southern shore of the Caspian Sea was held by Russia. Soviet interests have been somewhat more restricted, to date, encouraging separatist movements in Persian Azerbaijan and in Kurdish Iranian areas south and west of Lake Urmia. From such positions, Turkey would be hemmed in on two sides, and northern Iraq would be directly exposed to the Soviet Union.<sup>31</sup>

Soviet territorial expansion in this area under the facade of nationalistic and historical claims, would really be furthering the economic interests of the USSR. From such a position the Soviets would be given a position to exert political pressure of almost undeniable magnitude on the Persian Gulf States. This position would also facilitate a military intervention in the Gulf if the Soviet leaders adopt that option.

Certainly, however, the overriding bases for the Kremlin's imperialism under the old and new regimes have been strategic. Today, age-old fears of the east are represented by China. China easily provides the analogy for the Russian fear of the yellow-skinned men (the Mongols) who ruled her for 300 years. As a reaction to this sense of threat, the Kremlin has increased its aggressiveness toward China, its possible allies, and the nations that border it.

Expansion and military intervention by the Kremlin in the Middle East and against China in the near term is both consistent and probable given our understanding of the motives for traditional Russian and Soviet expansionism. The final chapter will deal with probable Soviet expansionism.

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<sup>31</sup>S.B. Cohen, Geography and Politics . . . ., op. cit., p. 204.

Chapter II: Place of the USSR in the  
International System

Today, there is no question of any significance which can be decided without the Soviet Union or in opposition to it ... Moreover, it is precisely our proposals ... that are the center of political discussions.

A.A. Gromyko  
at the XXIVth Party Congress  
(1971)<sup>1</sup>

With the change in Soviet status (international recognition as a superpower) the traditional dilemma of physical security and the traditional stance of inferiority were altered and erased respectively. However, the crucial element in the modern Soviet perception lies in the degree to which and the way in which traditional habits of mind, policy postures and priorities are modified, if at all, to suit the present-day reality. Certainly, Gromyko's boast at the XXIV Party Congress is grounded in fact; it therefore becomes significant how the Soviet elite views the international system and in particular the nuclear relationship with the U.S.

The Soviet ideological prism reflects an image of the world that is virtually unrecognizable to a non-Communist, yet it is on this image that Soviet foreign policy is based... This image is accepted as the real world by Soviet leaders.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted in Richard Pipes, "Détente: Moscow's View," Soviet Strategy in Europe, ed. R. Pipes (New York: Crane, Russak & Co. Inc., 1976), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>V. Aspaturian in R.C. Macridis, Foreign Policy in World Politics, op. cit., p. 165.

The Communist view of the international system is basically simple. No other regimes have, in principle, any right to exist. The reason why Soviet elites have had to accept the Western Capitalist dominated system, however unwillingly, lies in the reality of the situation--that is, that the Soviet Union has never been strong enough to challenge the world as a whole and has had to "recognize" this state system, much as it has had to recognize the Soviet Union.<sup>3</sup>

### Détente

Opponents of détente with the Soviets argue, that for the Kremlin, détente is a means of avoiding nuclear war, while the Soviet Union goes about pursuing its long-term objectives. Détente then is seen as a framework of relationships within which the USSR "can better pursue an advantageous balance of military power and exploit the most vulnerable areas of discontent and turbulence in the world."<sup>4</sup> Détente in no way therefore precludes Soviet efforts to acquire more and more clients and thereby slowly weaken the United States, until the U.S. is so weakened and isolated that it will accept the position of an ineffectual actor on the world stage.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>As Robert Conquest notes: "... no non-Communist regime is in principle legitimate, and in the long run all must be destroyed ... questions of tactical possibility make the temporary acceptance of non-Communist states a necessary historical compromise." R. Conquest, "Why the Soviet Elite is different from us," in Atlantic Monthly Quarterly, Vol. 16 #1, p. 72.

<sup>4</sup>Robert E. Osgoode, "The East-West Global Equilibrium," The Atlantic Community Quarterly, summer of '79, p. 144.

<sup>5</sup>W.M. Jones, "Soviet Leadership Politics and Leadership Views on the Use of Military Force," Rand, July '79, p. 18.

Détente is also seen to have provided the Soviets with the opportunity of channelling increasing amounts of resources to the armaments sector while yet increasing to some degree resources utilized by the consumer sector. In short, the Soviets have been able to circumvent the strict economic choice of guns at the expense of butter. Détente then is conceded by its opponents in the West to have been a brilliant tactical stroke on the part of the Soviet elite. Western funds and technology served to stabilize the Soviet system and thus, directly or indirectly, boosted the Soviet Union's military potential.<sup>6</sup> On this point it is interesting to recall the famous dialogue between Lenin and Radek.

Lenin: "Comrades don't panic, when things go very hard for us, we will give a rope to the bourgeoisie, and the bourgeoisie will hang itself."

Radek: "Vladimir Ilyich, but where are we going to get enough rope to hang the whole bourgeoisie?"

Lenin: "They'll supply us with it."<sup>7</sup>

Sixty years later, a western observer might well add "Plus ça change, plus c'est la meme chose." The defence-heavy industry complex is the most modern societal sector with a greater concentration of scientific, technological, managerial talent and labor skill than any other sector of the Soviet economy. This was in part made possible by the competition

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<sup>6</sup>In the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, Soviet armed forces had to use some of Moscow's transit buses, while in the case of their recent invasion of Afghanistan, other than air transport they were able to use trucks from a Ford built plant.

<sup>7</sup>Quoted in Carl Gershman "Selling them the Rope," Commentary, April '79, p. 35.

among Western interests in providing credits and technological know-how to a regime with the avowed determination to someday aid and preside in the downfall of the economic and political system of the West.

The rationale by which the West entered a period of relaxed tension and cooperation was based on three goals: (1) to provide an atmosphere which would lead to a slow-down in the arms race; (2) to provide an atmosphere where the Soviet Union would curtail its imperial meddling in the affairs of other states; (3) to provide an atmosphere which would be conducive for the Soviet elite to liberalize the state's repression of dissidents.<sup>8</sup> It was hoped and believed that détente would lead to a freer and better-informed Soviet Union, willing to compromise and liberalize in order to receive awards for meritorious behavior. The reality of the situation has been that Soviet negotiators easily played off Western interests and received credits, and technology for minimal concessions on the part of the Kremlin.

Moscow has had considerable success in dispelling fears in the West that its military build-up is not greater than its legitimate defensive needs. The Kremlin is realistically apprehensive with China on one border and NATO on the other (given the tragic historic experience of numerous foreign invasions, their paranoia is understandable). The Kremlin

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<sup>8</sup>See, D.K. Simes, "Détente, Russian Style," Foreign Policy, No. 32, Fall of '78.

is well aware that arms restraint on the part of the U.S. government has helped enable the USSR to reach parity in strategic nuclear arms and superiority in conventional arms. Certainly, arms limitation talks with the U.S., while perhaps providing some rationality to the arms race, have done little to limit the creation of ever-more numerous weapons for the Soviet armed forces.

... the share absorbed by the defense sector of the Soviet Gross National Product has grown from some 12-13 per cent in 1970 to perhaps as much as 18 per cent in 1980; ... Incidentally, in the same period (1970-79), U.S. defense expenditures as a share of the GNP have declined from 7.5 per cent to 4.6 per cent, and in constant 1972 dollars, from \$85.1 to 65.0 Billion.<sup>9</sup>

While the West can appreciate what it perceives as the defensive motivations for the Soviet arms build-up, it might have realized that:

The Soviet Union cannot conceivably satisfy its ambitions to be immune from foreign threats both real and imagined, without gaining a decisive preponderance over its potential opponents.<sup>10</sup>

While the superpowers reached essential equivalence in the early 1970s the Kremlin has continued to enhance the military capability of the Soviet Union. The single most important factor in this continued arms build-up has been the realization that the Soviet Union's recognition as a super-power rests solely on its military capability. As Simes notes:

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<sup>9</sup>"Soviet Defense Expenditure in the Era of SALT," U.S. Strategic Institute Report 79-1 (Washington, D.C. 1979), pp. 10-11.

<sup>10</sup>D.K. Simes, "Détente, Russian Style," op. cit., p. 49.

Economically, the Soviet Union is no match for the U.S. The international appeal of Soviet-style communism is on the decline. Consequently, to ask the Soviets to refrain from "excessive" military build-up is to ask them to refrain from being a superpower.<sup>11</sup>

The Soviet elite have not been impressed by Western demands that they cease interfering in the affairs of "Third World" states; this is seen as crass hypocrisy. The West has a long history of interference in the affairs of African nations especially. However, there does seem to be a pattern to Soviet adventurism in Africa--namely to exert political and military pressure to deny access to the West of oil from the Persian Gulf and vital mineral resources from South Africa.

It is obvious that Moscow retains the perception of the U.S. as its competitor in a serious struggle of resources and political will; as one analyst noted:

It is particularly disturbing that the USSR is pursuing a strategy apparently designed to deny the U.S. access to such areas as the Persian Gulf, which are crucial to American security ...<sup>12</sup>

The issue of human rights is seen by the Kremlin as having a serious ulterior motive. Moscow perceives it as being in direct contradiction to its interpretation of the spirit of détente; that is, a relaxation of tensions in areas where either side feels its vital interests are in jeopardy. Carter's emphasis on human rights is perceived by the Soviet elite to be

<sup>11</sup>D.K. Simes, "Détente, Russian Style," op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 54.



a challenge to the very survival of the regime and its international prestige. Thus, as Simes notes:

Carter's application of particularly strong language toward the Soviet Union - while some states escaped criticism on human rights for reasons of political expediency - did nothing to enhance the credibility of Washington's moral offensive in the eyes of the Soviet elite.<sup>13</sup>

### A New Cold War

Contention over the human rights crusade of the new Carter administration led to the visible deterioration of relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. Carter vociferously hammered away at the Soviets for their treatment of political dissidents. He punished them by the cancellation of the sale of a high-technology computer and imposed presidential control over future exports of oil technology. These moves infuriated Brezhnev and the Soviet elite, and led them to doubt Carter's commitment to their perception of détente. These doubts were substantiated in the Soviet eyes by subsequent actions of the Carter administration.

The Kremlin watched as the SALT II debate became a vehicle for American hawks to win commitments for increased arms expenditures. The Kremlin's offer of Oct. 7/79 to negotiate new reductions in Europe was ignored, and their threats regarding the deployment of theater missiles in Europe were also ignored. They had to watch as the U.S. moved continually closer to China, finally offering Peking the trade

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<sup>13</sup> D.K. Simes, "Détente, Russian Style," op. cit., p. 57.

terms that Moscow had long coveted and long been denied.

The invasion of Afghanistan, the opponents of détente hope, will prove to be a major watershed in U.S.-Soviet relations. They argue the invasion signified a major change in the Kremlin's perception of the value of "détente." Prior to this invasion it appeared that the Soviet elite was content to use military power as a fulcrum for political influence but not up to the point of risking a confrontation which would seriously shake the foundations of détente. They see the Kremlin with this move indicating they no longer need rewards from the U.S. for suitable behaviour nor do they fear punishment from the U.S.

Western "hawks" believe the invasion indicates that the Kremlin perceives the balance of power as having shifted favourably in Moscow's direction. However, it is by no means self-evident that the invasion of Afghanistan was the start of a carefully planned movement aimed at direct control by the USSR of any Middle Eastern oil producing country, or even at the more limited target of an Indian Ocean port. Many observers interpret it as primarily a defensive move, in two senses: (1) it may have been intended to cut off the Central Asian republics of the USSR from any infection by Islamic nationalism. If the Moslem insurgents had eventually been victorious over a Soviet-backed regime in Afghanistan, this might have given Uzbeks and Tadzhiks in the USSR dangerous ideas; (2) it may have been intended to forestall any possibility of severe damage to the USSR's prestige through a loss of control and influence in Afghanistan.

These considerations could have been enough to outweigh the expected political and economic costs of Western and Third World reaction, especially when relations with the U.S.A. had deteriorated anyway. The possibility that at some later date there would be an opportunity to extend the USSR's influence decisively in the Middle East, may simply have been an added but marginal attraction.

Strategists such as Georgetown's Edward Luttwak, argue that even if the invasion was motivated by defensive concerns on the part of the Kremlin, the ramifications for states in the area and for the West are very serious. Traditionally as the Russian Empire has expanded "new layers of insecurity that must be remedied by further expansion are invariably found."<sup>14</sup>

In strictly military terms, the occupation of Afghanistan has provided the Soviets with bases from which:

... Soviet fighter-bombers could now interdict at will the vital traffic of oil tankers entering and leaving the Gulf;... Soviet land-based aircraft could now neutralize the air-power superiority that the U.S. would otherwise enjoy in the immediate area by virtue of its naval aviation on board the great aircraft carriers.<sup>15</sup>

Therefore, Luttwak argues, whatever the motivation for the invasion of Afghanistan the fait accompli has dealt a serious blow to American strength overall. Any further expansion by

<sup>14</sup>E.N. Luttwak, "After Afghanistan, What?," Commentary, April 1980, p. 43.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

the Soviets into the Indian Ocean area, he believes, will probably originate from Southern Afghanistan across the deserts of Baluchistan. This route is more practical for the Soviets than through their common border with Turkey, Kurdistan, or Iran, since these areas would be populated by 50 million inhabitants. Also, as Luttwak warns, the Soviet Union has increased its powers of political persuasion on the Gulf states merely by its proximity and enhanced capability. He states:

While hatred of the Soviet Union has no doubt increased, so has fear, and great military empires do not ordinarily seek love but rather the anxious respect that fear can best inspire.<sup>16</sup>

It is probable that the Kremlin was confident that the U.S. would not react with an extreme response (to their December '79 invasion of Afghanistan) since in August of 1979 the U.S. administration had failed to get Soviet troops out of a country much closer to the U.S., i.e. Cuba. Mr. Carter and Secretary Vance had stated "the status quo is unacceptable," however two months later President Carter was on national television to say in essence that the status quo was acceptable. The crisis turned out to be a non-crisis, but the damage to the balance of power and perceived U.S. strength of will was considerable.

The Soviets must have noted the lack of unity in the West in the weeks after the initial capture of the U.S. Embassy

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<sup>16</sup>E.N. Luttwak, "After Afghanistan, What?," op. cit., p. 43.

in Iran, and probably felt they could gamble that Afghanistan would not lead to U.S. allies denying the credits and technology they need. The combination of events and the perception of the Carter administration as weak, may have served to convince the Kremlin that the U.S. lacks the resolve to confront the Soviet Union. If this is the case, then the Kremlin's invasion of Afghanistan probably indicates the Soviets intend to capitalize on opportunities to do so. Soviet motives then, behind the invasion, are perhaps not as significant as the fact that the Kremlin sees itself as strong enough to risk jettisoning the framework of détente. It is instructive then to heed the warnings of Aleksander Solzhenitsyn; if his views correspond to those of the men in the Kremlin, then we can better understand why Moscow may feel it can exploit perceived advantages.

... a decline in courage is particularly noticeable among the ruling and intellectual elites, causing an impression of a loss of courage by the entire society... Must one point out that from ancient times a decline in courage has been considered the first symptom of the end?<sup>17</sup>

Solzhenitsyn believes a cult of material well-being has sapped the strength of Americans, that Americans are not prepared to risk their lives to defend themselves or their interests. Therefore he concludes American foreign policy will increasingly become characterized by concessions, accommodations and betrayal.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>A. Solzhenitsyn, A World Split Apart (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1978), p. 11.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

### A Window of Opportunity

Reinforcing the Kremlin's perception of its greater national strength is an emerging confidence in the supremacy of their military forces. It is estimated that in or about 1982,<sup>19</sup> the Soviets will have a first strike capability. The Soviets will be able to destroy most of the land-based missiles, missile submarines and nuclear bombers of the United States in a surprise attack. The surviving components of the U.S. triad, while capable of a counter-attack, will not have the accuracy or time span to destroy the unused missiles of the Russians.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, a scenario can be envisaged where given temperate weather conditions the President could be faced with fatalities as low as five million American deaths.<sup>21</sup> His options will be to surrender, or launch his remaining nuclear weapons, killing several dozen million Russians,<sup>22</sup> and bringing the rest of the Soviet Union's nuclear arsenal down on the cities of the United States, killing up to half the population of the U.S.

If this is so, the Soviets can then reasonably expect the U.S. not to provoke a crisis situation (during this period of Soviet nuclear superiority) which might lead to a nuclear exchange. It is also rational to expect a U.S. president to surrender if the USSR were to launch an attack

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<sup>19</sup> Brent Scowcroft, "A Military Report," Atlantic Community Quarterly, Winter 79-80, p. 411.

<sup>20</sup> Paul H. Nitze, SALT II, The Objectives Vs the Results (Washington: The Committee on the Present Danger, Undated), p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

solely on American strategic forces. Paul Nitze, who helped negotiate the first Strategic Arms Limitations Talks agreement with the Soviets warns:

We do not have to assume that the Soviet Union will actually attack U.S. strategic forces. The point is that they will have the capacity to increase their advantage with a counterforce first strike. After such a first strike, the U.S. would still have a capability for a second strike retaliation against Soviet economic and political targets - in plain words, against their "hostage" cities and industrial centers. If Soviet civil defense failed, we could do "unacceptable damage" to them, but their forces held in reserve would still be greater than ours, and we have no effective civil (or air) defense. Their third-strike potential would make our second strike less credible. It would leave the U.S. with a dangerously inadequate deterrent.<sup>23</sup>

A president could order significant damage to parts of the USSR but he would do so with the knowledge (because the Soviets had taken out his land-based missiles) that the Soviets could hit back much harder, therefore he should surrender.

Soviet strategic preponderance will allow them to make a first strike five years before the MX would give the U.S. similar power. Thus, Moscow has reason to believe that it has a "window of opportunity" extending until the United States restores the balance of power. During this period they will have a strategic opening to pressure the West at geopolitically sensitive spots like the Persian Gulf. The tables

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<sup>23</sup> Committee on the Present Danger, Is America Becoming Number 2?: Current Trends in U.S.-Soviet Military Balance, released on Oct. 5, 1978.

have been turned--in 1962 Krushchev backed down in the Cuban missile crisis when faced with U.S. strategic superiority.

Richard Pipes argues that the Soviets have never accepted the U.S. strategic doctrine in which nuclear weapons exist to deter the use of the other side's arsenal. Pipes notes that Soviet theoretical writings and actual developments of nuclear weapons indicates that the Kremlin sees these weapons as having more than deterrent value. He states:

There exists a high degree of probability that in the event of general war the Soviet Union intends to use a part of its strategic arsenal in a devastating preemptive strike which would make an American retaliatory strike suicidal and possibly inhibit it altogether. The stress on large throw-weight, combined with high accuracies of its I.C.B.M.s is a good indication that the Soviet Union intends to develop a first-strike capability.<sup>24</sup>

The Soviet civil defense program which the leadership has held to be a priority,<sup>25</sup> has given them a unilateral advantage over the U.S. and greatly strengthens the position of the Soviets. The emphasis and effectiveness of the Soviet civil defense program tends to destabilize the deterrent value of U.S. nuclear weapons. Paul Nitze warns:

The U.S. can then no longer hold as significant a proportion of the Soviet population as a hostage to deter a Soviet attack. Concurrently, Soviet industrial vulnerability has been reduced by deliberate policies, apparently adopted largely for military reasons ... In sum, the ability of U.S. nuclear power to destroy without

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<sup>24</sup>R. Pipes, "Soviet Global Strategy," Commentary, April '80, p. 35.

<sup>25</sup>Whether fear of the U.S. or China, is immaterial.



question the bulk of Soviet industry and a large proportion of the Soviet population is by no means as clear as it once was, even if one assumes most of U.S. striking power to be available and directed to this end.<sup>26</sup>

What experts like Eugene Rostow, Richard Pipes, and Paul Nitze, hope to convince the Carter administration is that the Soviets will achieve shortly a "warfighting/warwinning ability"<sup>27</sup> in a nuclear war. This ability "requires the ability to both destroy the enemy's [i.e. the U.S.] means of waging war and to defend oneself from attack."<sup>28</sup>

The Soviet first strike capability rests on its large missiles and its civil defense preparations. The U.S. has given civil defense little emphasis and has nothing comparable to the heavy megatonnage missiles of the Soviets. The Soviets then are not following a doctrine of mutual deterrence and nuclear stalemate, but rather realize that clear nuclear superiority is the ultimate weapon of coercive diplomacy. We might well soon have an answer to Kissinger's often quoted statement: "What in the name of God is strategic superiority? What is the significance of it, politically, militarily, operationally, at these levels of numbers? What do you do with it."<sup>29</sup> The answer is of course the ability to checkmate your opponent "without having to fight either a nuclear or a conventional war."<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Paul H. Nitze, SALT II, The Objectives . . . ., op. cit.

<sup>27</sup> Daniele Gouré and Gordon H. McCormick, "Soviet Strategic Defense: The Neglected Dimension of the U.S.-Soviet Balance," Orbis, Spring '80, p. 105.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>29</sup> Department of State Bulletin (July 29, 1974), p. 215.

<sup>30</sup> E. Rostow, "The Case Against SALT II," Commentary Feb. '79, p. 30.

The U.S. has also made a fundamental mistake regarding "parity" between the superpowers; namely that "parity" once achieved will preclude the use of force by either against the other, as Thomas Larson points out:

... it should be noted that the most even balance of military capabilities cannot possibly rule out the persistence of significant disparities in the amount and kinds of military power that can be applied in various local situations.<sup>31</sup>

The Soviet strategic arms build-up has been matched by its conventional arms build-up in tanks, in naval forces, and in troop transport planes able to deploy its ground troops far afield.<sup>32</sup> The Americans, by allowing the Soviets in most areas of conventional weapons to gain superiority, have given the Kremlin the option of acting militarily in opposition to vital U.S. interests... [This] opens vast doubts about the security of the NATO alliance, whose very foundation is the American nuclear guarantee."<sup>33</sup> The U.S. has relied upon the implicit threat to use strategic nuclear weapons in support of theater forces, but this threat has lost some of its credibility. However if there is doubt where Western Europe and Japan are concerned, this threat has little credibility in

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<sup>31</sup> Thomas B. Larson, Soviet American Rivalry (New York: W.W. Norton & Co. Inc., 1978), p. 216.

<sup>32</sup> "Since 1970, the Soviets have added about 130,000 to their Warsaw Pact forces. There has been a 40% increase in Soviet tanks, and tank divisions have increased by up to 100% in some categories, and over 4,000 armored personnel carriers were added during 1978 alone. It should be noted ... Soviet forces deployed against the People's Republic of China have been increased and improved even more remarkably...The Soviets have given equal attention to their naval capability." Brent Scowcroft, "A Military Report," op. cit., p. 412.

<sup>33</sup> E.N. Luttwak, "After Afghanistan . . . .," op. cit., p. 46.

areas of less significance since:

Theorists whose concept of deterrence is limited to massive retaliation after a Soviet attack would have nothing of interest to say to a president facing conventional defeat in the Persian Gulf or in Western Europe.<sup>34</sup>

The prospect of defeating American interests over much of the globe may become irresistible for the Soviets. Moscow, viewing its "window of opportunity", might "well anticipate the ability to wage World War III successfully."<sup>35</sup> Military leaders inside the Kremlin may convince the political leadership that military victory is possible, and at a relatively low cost. Luttwak argues that the Soviets may well prefer to accomplish through force of arms, what they might feel is impossible without: namely, the reduction of internal difficulties. Thus he warns:

If, by war, the Soviet Union could achieve a permanent enhancement of its position in some decisive map-changing way, all would become easier in the future, even the possibility of reduced military expenditures being imaginable. Alternatively, successful warfare might seize valuable resources for the Soviet state, and then the advantage of such resources might serve to modify the future that now looms so unfavourable.<sup>36</sup>

Western "hawks" worry that the combination of emerging critical problems, military preponderance, and historical track record, will lead the Kremlin to not pass up its opportunity of perhaps

<sup>34</sup> C.S. Gray and K. Payne, "Victory is Possible," Foreign Policy #39, Summer of '80, p. 15.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>36</sup> Luttwak, "After Afghanistan, What?," op. cit., p. 46.

securing the empire.

The continual emphasis on building armed forces which may be able to challenge any combination of possible opponents, while Soviet envoys have talked about peace and disarmament, has given the Soviets a unilateral advantage over the U.S., West Europe, Japan, and China. It is interesting to recall the warning of Sun Tzu, the fourth century B.C. strategist:

When the enemy's envoys speak in humble terms, but he continues his preparations, he will advance.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Sun Tzu, The Art of War (London: Oxford University Press, 1913), p. 119.

### Chapter III: Internal Exigencies

#### The Legitimacy Crisis

When the existence of the Church is threatened, she is released from the commandments of morality. With unity as the end, the use of every means is sanctified, even cunning, treachery, violence, simony, prison, death. For all order is for the sake of the community, and the individual must be sacrificed to the common good.

Dietrich Von Nieheim  
Bishop of Verden:  
De schismate libri  
III A.D. 1411.

From an operational viewpoint the Marxist-Leninist ideology preserved and strengthened the traditions of Russian society and provided an expansionist power's creed which afforded protection to the Soviet state. From its inception, the ideology was well-suited to the totalitarian form of government since it is a future-oriented doctrine which takes pressure off the legitimacy functions of any present government.

The early faith in the imminent transformation of man and the state has disappeared; but the structure of power created in those hopeful early days remains, and has lately grown increasingly repressive and self-serving. A great many nominal communists in the Soviet Union no longer give more than lip-service to their ideology because their leaders no longer act as if they believed in it. The ideology has not

produced what it was expected to produce. After Stalin and the diluted Stalinism of Brezhnev, the Soviet Union has ceased to be a model that many nations would want to imitate.

The system has outlived the hopes that gave birth to it. Indeed, it has grown more rigid as the ideology has faded because it can no longer call on a widespread belief in the ideology to justify its own existence. The KGB, and its cousins, deal with the dissidents; the debate about needed changes remains muffled. Today, the central role of the ideology is its use as a means of internal political and social control. The egalitarian spirit of Marxism has been lost in bureaucratic elitism.

The loss of conviction in the ideology is tantamount to Christianity losing faith in heaven. The Communist Party needs to instill a conviction that utopia is ahead because it is the basis for a legitimacy that would evaporate in the absence of popular will. Building a socialist paradise can excuse the Soviet elite from charges of self-seeking and greed for power and privilege.

An important consequence strategically involved in the loss of legitimacy is the "Soviet imperial position in Eastern Europe and the Brezhnev doctrine of limited sovereignty which safeguards it ideologically."<sup>1</sup> Soviet hegemony over the so-called "fraternal" countries rests on the Red Army,

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<sup>1</sup>S. Bialer, "The Soviet Political Elite and Internal Developments in the U.S.S.R.," in The Soviet Empire: Expansion and Détente, edited by W.E. Griffith (Toronto: Lexington Books, 1976), p. 47.

but the basis for the use of force is the legitimacy of the CPSU as the sole repository of the "truth".

The Soviet Union faces serious difficulties such as: shortages of goods, particularly food; labour surpluses and labour shortages in some areas; deteriorating workplace discipline; alcoholism; pay scale inequalities, shortages of energy and raw materials, and many other increasing difficulties. The prescription would be liberalizing the authoritarian nature of the regime to increase productivity and overcome bureaucratic bottlenecks.

The basic necessity for economic reform - including in part, the establishment of greater economic independence for state enterprises, decentralization of planning and the introduction of elements of a mixed economy - appears incontrovertible. However any such reforms, inevitably affecting the very bases of the totalitarian economic and social structure, are very unlikely at the present time.<sup>2</sup>

The Communist Party cannot allow a liberalization process to occur since greater freedom of expression for all Soviet citizens might allow the germination of secessionist movements which ultimately could split the USSR asunder. Suppose a free political debate were to break out and ramify on such matters as the devolution of decision-making from Moscow, the decollectivisation (partial or total) of agriculture, the toleration of religious beliefs and observance, the burden of defense expenditures, and other areas of dis-

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<sup>2</sup>The Guardian, March 16, 1980, Sakharov, from Exile, Relates his hopes and fears, p. 15.

agreement. Soon there could be strong polarization of attitudes along ethnic lines, with most of the national groups taking the more liberal line most of the time.

What is more, some of the most restive minorities would be ones concentrated in sizeable and well-defined territories; they would be well-placed to secede (which the Soviet Constitution formally allows them to do) were the situation to become ripe. In the meantime they may increasingly orchestrate their several protests, the Central Asiatic Republics and the Ukraine being a natural dais for this purpose. Therefore while the Kremlin cannot afford to liberalize, it faces increasing its problems by not doing so.

The autocratic system of government in which electors mobilize support for the regime's policy and don't legitimize its rule imposes a strange pattern of demands on Soviet foreign policy. It has been theorized that due to the "insecurities of dictatorial power" the party has a vested interest in maintaining an atmosphere of tension internationally.<sup>3</sup> The Politburo is seen to need a climate of permanent emergency to justify its monopoly of power. Amalrik observes:

A regime [with] such an ideology needs internal enemies who are not so much 'class' enemies as national enemies (for instance, Chinese and Jews). Such a nationalistic ideology, although it may prove temporarily useful to the regime, is very dangerous for a country in which those of the Russian nationality constitute less than half the total population.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>M. Schwartz, The Foreign Policy of the U.S.S.R.: Domestic Factors (Riverside: Dickenson Pub. Co., 1975), p. 138.

<sup>4</sup>A. Amalrik, Will the Soviet Union Survive Until 1984?, (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), p. 38.



How serious is this identification crisis of the Communist Party? Amalrik, the Russian historian, has drawn some interesting historical parallels between 1917 and the present:

A cast-ridden and immobile society, a rigid governmental system which openly clashes with the need for economic development, general bureaucratization and the existence of a privileged bureaucratic class, and national animosities within a multinational state in which certain nations enjoy privileged status.<sup>5</sup>

Richard Pipes of Harvard argues that the only mandate the Bolshevik regime does have, is derived from history (the claim that it represents the vanguard of the majestic force of progress whose mission it is to accomplish the final social revolution in human history). Thus, the regime cannot accept the status quo of the international system as permanent since this would be giving up the historical mandate to further the revolution.<sup>6</sup>

- the question of legitimacy would at once crop up. For indeed, who has given the Communist Party of the Soviet Union the right to monopolise the country's political authority as well as its human and material resources.<sup>7</sup>

The legitimacy problem can only be attenuated by an active self-seeking foreign policy behaviour on the part of the Soviet elite. This stance is compatible with the political self-interest of the ruling elite, and the historical drive of Russian expansion.

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<sup>5</sup>A. Amalrik, Will the Soviet Union Survive . . . ., op. cit., p. 43..

<sup>6</sup>Richard Pipes, "Soviet Global Strategy," in Commentary April 1980, p. 32.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

Thus ideology, political survival and economic exigencies reinforce one another impelling Russia toward conquest. Each new territory acquired becomes part of the national "patrimony" and is, sooner or later, incorporated into the homeland. Each demands a "buffer" to protect it from real or imaginary enemies, until it, too, becomes part of the homeland, and in turn, requires its own buffer.<sup>8</sup>

The vindication of the Soviet state becomes expansion of its power, which serves as a deception for the failure of the realization of Bolshevik social programs. Emphasis is placed by party ideologies on the importance of building Communism in the USSR on and influencing the course of the entire development of the world.

The legitimacy problem has overtones which account for much of the seriousness of both the nationalities and economy problems. We shall therefore not end our discussion of this problem here but rather pick it up again where applicable in the next two problem areas to be examined. In the final section we will discuss how this problem will influence trends in the foreign policy of the USSR.

#### The Nationalities Problem

A minority is discontented not because there is no national union but because it does not enjoy the right to use its native language and the discontent will pass of itself ... give it its own schools and all grounds for discontent will disappear.

Stalin<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>R. Pipes, "Soviet Global Strategy," op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>9</sup>Quoted in R. Conquest, Soviet Nationalities Policy in Practice (New York: Praeger Pub., 1967), p. 8.

Many ethnic groups have acquired a persistent grudge against the Soviet regime which, despite Lenin's efforts, has taken over the Tsarist legacy. Things were made worse still in some areas by the Nazi occupation. Either because they were anti-Soviet, or for purely nationalistic motives, large parts of the Ukraine collaborated with the invaders. The warmth with which the German troops were received came as a severe blow to the Russians: it proved that ethnic minorities could become a fifth column. There is the same distrust of the three Baltic republics, the last to be incorporated in the Soviet Union where the resistance to Russian influence is increasingly taking the form of an upsurge in religion.

The situation is complicated even more because of the jealousy between some ethnic minorities and the Russian community. For historical and cultural reasons groups like the Balts, the Georgians, and the Armenians have a higher standard of living than the Russians. They are entitled to exemptions that Moscow refuses Russians. Caucasian peasants, for example, are allowed to get rich supplying the 'Kolkhoz' markets in Moscow and Leningrad.

The focus of the nationality problem for Moscow is now centred in Central Asia, where the nationalities problem is one of demographics:

... a marked dichotomy has existed over about the last two decades between the nationalities of the Eastern USSR, which are characterized by low rates of

growth, and the nationalities of the Caucasus and Central Asia, which have evinced high rates of population increase.<sup>10</sup>

The birthrate is declining in European Russia, contributing to an acute labour shortage. But in Soviet Central Asia, the birthrate of non-Russians is rising. Ethnic tensions and economic dislocation are likely to result. It is not likely that Soviet Asians will migrate to European Russia voluntarily.

This traditional "stay at home" attitude makes it unlikely that the accumulating Moslem surplus will voluntarily disperse through emigration to other parts of the Soviet Union. If they do not emigrate demographic pressures within the region cannot but inflame the ethnic conflict, given the fact that the Moslems are largely rural, the non-Moslem immigrants urban.<sup>11</sup>

Unless Soviet leaders build up non-Russian areas, the industrial economy will run out of workers. If they do invest, the new Central Asian elite which has emerged will be better placed to challenge the ethnic Russians for political control. The Russians are well aware that the Central Asian republics "have the economic and institutional base, the infrastructure and the political elites to assume an independent statehood. Thus the Soviet republics are essentially more viable as independent states than some of the Asian and African

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<sup>10</sup>Ralph S. Clem, "Recent Demographic Trends Among Soviet Nationalities and Their Implications," in Nationalism in the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe: in the era of Brezhnev and Kosygin edited by George W. Simmonds (Detroit: Univ. of Detroit Press, 1977), p. 37.

<sup>11</sup>Theresa Harmstone, "Nationalism in Soviet Central Asia Since 1964," in Nationalism in the U.S.S.R. edited by Simmonds, op. cit., p. 27.

countries."<sup>12</sup> Further,

... the cultural nationalism is already there and its political impact gains momentum with the entry into the political arena of increasingly aggressive and rapidly growing national communist elites. Social and economic pressures are building up fast spurred by the demographic explosion. These will accelerate as Moslem youth overcomes the traditional inertia and starts moving through the system of technical training that begins to open up - into urban and industrial centers and into direct competition with immigrants. The movement has already begun.<sup>13</sup>

The imperialist nature of Russian domination is personified by their concentration in urban areas; they dominate the capital cities. "By way of contrast only one in every four to six Moslems is urbanized."<sup>14</sup> The use of the Russian language "is the primary vehicle of Soviet national integration ... [however] in Central Asia almost three fourths of the native peoples are unfamiliar with the language. In practical terms this means that their social and political mobility, even in their own ethnic areas, is severely restricted."<sup>15</sup> Most analysts feel that the Soviet effort to "Russify" the non-Russian nationalities has failed; "the rate of their national self-assertion exceeds the rate of their assimilation into a common value system."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Harmstone, "Nationalism in Soviet . . . .," op. cit., p. 27.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 277.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 277.

<sup>15</sup>Theresa Harmstone, "The Study of Ethnic Politics in the USSR," in Nationalism in the U.S.S.R. edited by Simmonds, op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

The ascendance of:

Cultural nationalism has serious political overtones. The newly-found national pride and self-respect throws into question the hitherto unchallenged cultural "superiority" of the Russians and their political role as well.<sup>17</sup>

The Soviet elite are faced with defending the status quo by a return to an imperialist state based on Russian nationalism. This is where the legitimacy claim of the C.P.S.U. has no firm foundation. Because "Marxism-Leninism postulates that a class and not a nation is the basis of political unity, the foundation of political integration of a communist state is provided by 'proletarian internationalism' and not by nationalism."<sup>18</sup>

The leadership's earlier hopes that the process of Soviet development over time would wither ethnic nationalism away has not been realized. Indeed, the aggravation of ethnic tensions on nationality lines "threatens the most potent unifying and legitimizing systemic force within Soviet society-- the great power nationalism, which primarily accounts for the political stability of the Soviet state."<sup>19</sup>

The nationality problem accounts for the Soviet elite not being able to decentralize the economy. Because,

The nationality problem and the danger of its intensification, adds another dimension

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<sup>17</sup> Harmstone, "Nationalism in Soviet Asia . . . .," op. cit., p. 286.

<sup>18</sup> Harmstone, "The Study of Ethnic Politics . . . .," op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>19</sup> S. Bialer, "The Soviet Political Elite . . . .," op. cit., p. 44.

to, and greatly complicates, many of the administrative and political dilemmas which the Party faces. Most important in this respect is the superimposition of the ethnic dimension over the Party's dilemma in the field of economic organization. There the need for greater economic effectiveness generates pressure for decentralization, which in turn, however, clashes with the Party's fear that it will lead to loss of political control.<sup>20</sup>

The nationality problem and the fear it generates in Russians, reinforces the traditional internal authoritarianism and centralization of decision making. Where once the enemy was outside, it is now inside the empire and a highly centralized regime is once again necessitated. This fear of non-Russians inside the empire is the major break on the evolution of the Soviet system away from authoritarianism. There is little chance that a major change in leadership inside the C.P.S.U. would differ on this course. Differences can only be of style not substance; the Russians are prisoners of their culture and history.

#### The Islamic Revival

People of Moslem stock live mainly in six southern republics of the Soviet Union: Uzbekistan, Tadzhikistan, Turkmenistan and Kirghizia, which make up Soviet Central Asia, plus the vast steppeland of Kazakhstan and the republic of Azerbaijan. Tartar Moslems also live around Kazan in Central Russia. The Tartars are descended from the Mongol hordes and the Uzbeks from the heirs of Tamurlane.

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<sup>20</sup>S. Bialer, "The Soviet Political Elite . . . .," op. cit., p. 44.

Central Asia was the last area to be conquered by Tsarist Russia, with the final frontiers of empire established only 100 years ago. Thus, Moscow's grip on its Moslem communities could be threatened by the interest the new leaders of Iran are showing in their Moslem brothers across their nation's northern border. There are 40 million Moslems in the two regions of the Soviet Union that flank Iran. They not only share religion with their Iranian neighbours but they also speak Iranian and Turkic languages.

The Soviets have gone to great lengths to make the colonial status of the Central Asiatic Republics less evident; some of these efforts have benefited the local populations. Yet Moscow cannot escape the anomaly that, in the contemporary world of sovereign nation-states, Central Asia and the Caucasus remain among the few sizeable areas and populations still ruled by aliens. Not much has been heard from these areas in the past century, but this is probably about to be changed. The Moslems are no longer isolated. Because of a much higher birthrate than the ethnic Europeans, the Moslem population is rising at a phenomenal rate--and could be 100 million by the end of the century.

Khomeini has expressed concern at the fate of the Moslems of Central Asia. By raising the issue of Islam in the Soviet Union, he gives support to Moslems there and brings attention to their cause. Therefore if a stable Islamic government evolves in Iran, it could cause the Soviets a lot of trouble. In any analysis of the invasion of Afghanistan,



the defensive motive on the part of the Soviet elite, should not be underplayed. The Russians are well aware of their position as colonial masters.

Further complicating the nationalities problem is the outside interference, not solely from Islamic interests but also actions on the part of the USSR's rival, the U.S.<sup>21</sup> The Americans are using broadcasts in seven languages by "Voice of America" and "Radio Liberty" to exacerbate this Soviet problem. The Americans see the ethnic groups as vulnerable over time to splitting tactics or, if you wish, to open, friendly, peaceable appeals to the ethnic's 'human rights'. The U.S. hopes to increase the cost to the Kremlin of keeping them in line, and to identify the U.S. as sympathetic to their Islamic longings.

Richard Pipes points out the gravity of the 'Nationality Problem':

... all the evidence available from within the Soviet Union itself and from historic parallels with other countries indicates that nationalism of the minority peoples of the USSR (like that of the Russians themselves) has grown and intensified since 1917. There is a great deal of nationalist frustration in the Soviet Union. Unless the Soviet rulers face up to it and begin the process of decentralization voluntarily, it is likely someday to explode in a most destructive manner.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>The Guardian, Brzezinski Aims to Reach Soviet Moslems, Jan. 20, 1980.

<sup>22</sup>Richard Pipes, "Solving the Nationality Problem" in Man, State and Society in the Soviet Union (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), p. 513.

The Soviet elite faces a problem that can only increase as the unrealized expectations in the economic and political sectors present the non-Russians with the evidence that the Russians have no intention to move from the status quo. Increasingly, the Russians will be forced to fall back on a 'Great Power' posture to provide a legitimizing basis for Russian political control of the empire. This posture will necessarily call for aggressive, belligerent directions in Soviet foreign policy.

#### The Economic Problem

It is as if the Soviet leaders and the people have entered into an unwritten contract by which the former guarantee a minimum revenue for a modicum of work in return for the latter's undertaking not to interfere in politics.

Amalric<sup>23</sup>

After several decades of diminishingly rapid growth, Soviet industry is now running into serious difficulty. Rising raw material costs, impending energy shortages, slower growth in the supply of labour and capital and sluggish productivity are all pointers to a limping industry in the 1980s. In 1979 the Soviet Union realized its lowest peacetime growth rate since the 1930s.

The combination of sluggish industrial growth with a bad harvest, near-stagnant livestock production, and transport and construction

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<sup>23</sup> Jacques Amalric, "The Soviet Union at 60," Atlas World Press Review, Feb. '78, p. 20.

bottlenecks, resulted in an increment of only 1.9 percent in the USSR's official measure of 'national income utilized'. Western-style GNP measures would almost certainly yield a lower figure.<sup>24</sup>

In the 1980s the Soviet Union faces a major problem in trying to meet the pervasive need for change. Its system is simply too rigid for modern economic conditions. In the past growth has been based partially on increased labour productivity. This has tailed off and increased incentives and looser controls might increase productivity, but for ideological reasons, they are unlikely to be adopted. Until recently the Russians had enough men and resources to achieve planned growth, however wastefully. They are in no position to do this anymore as labour in industrial areas is becoming scarce. Given the demands of a modern economy the Soviets need to decentralize the command structure of the economy but for reasons of protecting the legitimacy of the C.P.S.U. this becomes impossible.<sup>25</sup>

Proposed solutions to economic problems--a return to Stalin's model of forced growth, or a massive flow of capital and technology from the West--would have dramatic political consequences. So the Soviet Union's do-nothing policy persists. The probable result will be a decline in Soviet political power and inevitably, difficulties at home or with its satellites as goods become more scarce. Soviet military power

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<sup>24</sup>Quarterly Economic Review of the U.S.S.R." produced by The Economist Intelligence Unit Ltd. (London: Spencer House, 1980), p. 11.

<sup>25</sup>As discussed previously, the hegemony over the non-Russian nationalities could be shattered if a process of liberalization were to gain momentum.

and a return to a strict police state will be necessary to protect the legitimacy of the C.P.S.U. as the decision-making organ of the ruling elite.

An ever-increasing burden on the Soviet economy is the defense industry, it exacts a heavy share of the total resources of the economy. Armaments produced in the USSR represent one-third of all machine products, one-fifth of all metallurgical products, and one-sixth of all chemical products. They consume one-sixth of all energy resources.<sup>26</sup> There is little chance however that the Soviet elite will cut back its armaments production. According to Mr. Donald Green, an American analyst, even if Soviet defense expenditures were frozen at 4 percent a year, the extra growth from the arms freeze would be only 0.1 percent a year. So why bother?<sup>27</sup>

The most important factor, stopping the Soviet elite from cutting back its armaments expenditure, is that it would weaken the Soviet Union's principal claim to being a superpower. It is clear that the Soviet Union in the 1980s will not be able to compete as a world economic power with the U.S., the Common Market, or Japan.

The agriculture sector of the economy is in continually bad shape. The Kremlin has been pumping investment into agriculture (at a rate of 340 billion rouble or 500 billion dollars in the last 15 years)<sup>28</sup> yet it still has to import

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<sup>26</sup> Atlas World Press Review, Feb. 1979.

<sup>27</sup> The Economist, Russia into the 1980s, Dec. 29/79.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

grain. The collective farms are an economic disaster. Much of the nation's farmland lies too far north to be very productive, and large grain crops depend on unusually good weather. As in industry, Soviet farms would also benefit from flexible planning and individual initiative.

The private household plots run by over 40 million families in the USSR still provide around a quarter of the nation's food supply, despite severe restrictions on their size and operation.<sup>29</sup>

Certainly the most critical problem facing the Soviet economy is an energy shortage. The CIA presented to Congress some alarming forecasts. The CIA predicts that production will peak this year or next at about 12 million barrels a day-- and that it could drop by one-third by the mid-'80s.<sup>30</sup>

Quoting from the CIA report:

Optimistically assuming domestic oil production of 10 million barrels a day in '85, net oil imports from the west would reach more than 3 million barrels a day if domestic requirements were fully met and exports to Communist countries were maintained at projected 1980 levels of 1.9 million barrels a day. These imports would cost the Soviets more than \$20 billion at June '79 oil prices and would imply a shift in the trade balance of some \$25 billion in current prices, almost twice Moscow's present earnings on commodity trade with the West .... Oil imports of this magnitude would obviously exhaust Soviet hard currency resources.<sup>31</sup>

The Russian economy needs to find within four years at least two million barrels per day just to match 1980 levels.

<sup>29</sup> "Quarterly Economic Review of the . . . .," op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>30</sup> H.E. Meyer, "Why We Should Worry About The Soviet Energy Crunch," in Fortune, Feb. 25, 1980.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

This would be a very hard task for a rich nation of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development; for the Russians who lack hard currency it is probably impossible. The Western nations are scrambling to assure increased supplies; this further reduced Soviet chances of obtaining needed energy supplies.

The Soviet oil industry is technologically very backward. According to Arthur A. Meyerhoff, a Tulsa-based consultant who specializes in Soviet oil production, the Russians are nearly thirty years behind their American counterparts. Soviet crews need an entire year to drill wells to a depth of 10,000 feet--a job that American crews complete on average in thirty-four days.<sup>32</sup>

There seems little chance that the Soviets will be able to maintain their present oil production. It is estimated that oil production will peak this year or next and then decline.

Soviet supply problems are compounded by problems of logistics; ninety percent of future on-shore supplies lie east of the Ural Mountains in the remote wastes of Siberia and the deserts of Kazakhstan. Yet 80 percent of all Soviet energy is consumed thousands of miles away in the western part of the country. Older Soviet oil fields on the Caspian Sea are near exhaustion, and the most promising newer fields in Western Siberia have already peaked. The Soviets must tap

<sup>32</sup>H.E. Meyer, "Why We Should Worry . . . .," op. cit.

known reserves in more remote areas of Siberia. That will be costly and unpopular with the long-suffering neglected consumer since resources in increasing amounts will be poured into finding fuel and power at the expense of the housing and consumer goods sector'.

Russia has vast potential oil reserves in the Arctic, in Western Siberia, and off-shore, but the exploration of these is at least a decade away. Most of the oil for the 1980s will have to come from existing fields and from new fields in areas already under production.

#### Implications of the Energy Crisis

Serious oil production problems would probably force the Soviet Union to cut exports of its Eastern-bloc allies, which now depend on the USSR for two million barrels per day. That would compel the Eastern bloc to turn to the world market, generating new competition for OPEC supplies. If by the mid-'80s the Soviet Union does find itself obliged to import oil from OPEC nations to keep its COMECON allies supplied--as the CIA predicts--it will face a huge import bill. Even if the Soviet Union charged the East Europeans a good deal more for their oil, and boosted its gas and machinery exports to the West, it would still be landed with a large trade gap. Oil may face Soviet leaders with a choice between economic and political stability in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union's continued ability to import Western grain and technology.

Therefore the energy crisis will have other far-reaching

implications. Reduced Soviet oil exports to Eastern Europe may result in political instability there. A cutback in oil sales to the West will deprive the USSR of the hard currency it desperately needs to pay for sophisticated Western technology.

Most Western analysts are convinced that the Soviet Union simply cannot afford to cut back the one million barrels a day it now exports to the West; much of the nation's hard currency comes from such sales. Rather than lose that cash, which is badly needed for the purchase of food and technology, the Soviet government will probably decide to shortchange energy consumers at home. This will lead to further domestic unrest on the part of the long-suffering Soviet consumer.

"Hawks" in the West draw ominous conclusions from the Soviet short term energy crisis. They see the problems of access and supply as urgent if the Soviet Union [Russian Empire] is to remain stable. Thus, they see Moscow strategists as planning to counterbalance falling domestic oil production with cheap access to foreign oil. The Persian Gulf is seen as the Kremlin's target, the supply route for 30% of America's oil, 65% of Western Europe's, and over 70% of Japan's.<sup>33</sup>

Undoubtedly the Kremlin is well aware of its future oil shortage, and also of the declining production-to-reserves ratio in comparison to its rival, the United States. The U.S. has nearby Mexico and Venezuela, a majority of OPEC states more

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<sup>33</sup>Walter J. Levy, "Oil and the Decline of the West," Foreign Affairs, Winter '79, p. 109.



or less united against communism, and the probability of a breakthrough on tar-sands as the price rises. This all gives the U.S. an edge over a USSR shortage of both hard currency and the high level technology needed to develop new Siberian oil fields locked under the ice thousands of miles from the USSR's big cities.<sup>34</sup>

Hard-liners feel sure that the Soviets must then have a plan to move into the Gulf, while the opportunity presents itself.

Unwilling to run the risks of muddling through with less oil, unable to buy more oil in the open market the Russians may have no choice but to go for the third option - to try to take whatever oil they will need without paying for it.<sup>35</sup>

Can the West stop the Soviets? The Kremlin may well feel it has such a preponderance of conventional and nuclear arms during its "window of opportunity"--1982-1986--that it can afford to take extreme measures to safeguard its perceived interests. "One benefit of being number one is that you need not stand by helplessly while your economy grinds to a halt and your empire disintegrates."<sup>36</sup>

Publicists and experts like Richard Nixon and Edward Luttwak view Soviet moves in Ethiopia, South Yemen, and now Afghanistan, as preparing groundwork for an advance on the oil fields of the Middle East.

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<sup>34</sup> Carter's ban on the export of high technology could backfire.

<sup>35</sup> H.E. Meyer, "Why We Should Worry . . . .", op. cit.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

#### Chapter IV China: The External Threat

You can see in the murky twilight  
The new Mongol warriors with bombs in their quivers  
But if they attack the alarm bells will ring  
And there will be more than enough fighters  
For a new battle of Kuilkovo.

Yevtushenko,  
On the Red Snow of the Ussuri

The Russian thinks and sees China through the prism of Russian culture and history. Russian history is filled with a thousand years of fighting and war with yellow-skinned warriors. He may confuse Mongol with Chinese, but the emotional attitudes fixed in his childhood and reinforced through his adult life have conditioned him to fear the "yellow peril." The passage quoted above from Yevtushenko's chauvinistic poem indicates to the Russian mind the Chinese are the new Mongols, at whose hands the Russians suffered for more than three centuries.

They may be Uzbek, they may be Mongol, or they may be the Han people of China. To the Russian they are all the same. He does not distinguish between the Mongols who ravaged his land 600 years ago and the masses of China whom he believes are standing just beyond the low hills of Asia ready to attack again, silent, secretly, without warning.<sup>1</sup>

How real is this perceived threat to the Soviet Union? Well, in the long run Moscow's power is probably slipping away. When, in a couple of decades, the USSR is faced with a China of comparable military and industrial power sitting on

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<sup>1</sup>Harrison Salisbury, War Between Russia and China (New York: Bantam Books, 1970), p. 18.

its southern frontier, its ability to exert pressure on anybody else in the world will be all but non-existent. The Soviet Union has an abysmally unproductive agriculture, a lot of aging, very inefficient heavy industry, and only a few highly privileged and coddled sectors like defense and space research that can compete with the rest of the world. China, on the other hand, is the mother of all the East Asian cultures. The others--Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, have realized outstanding growth rates, and are collectively the economic success story of the world. A China that can realize 20 years of economic growth approaching the rate of these countries will enable the Chinese to develop armed forces comparable to those of the Soviet Union or in fact, greater.<sup>2</sup>

Will the Chinese, once they have strengthened their armed forces, utilize these forces against the Soviets? The answer could be "yes". Demographic statistics indicate the Chinese population will number close to two billion, early in the next century. The Chinese could very well be confronted with the dilemma of starve or fight. The Chinese have been having a good deal of success with their agricultural effort, but given the vagaries of climate, a couple of bad crops could bring on a crisis situation. The Chinese then would really have no alternative, particularly not when food and food-producing areas lie on their perimeter and when thousands of square miles of those areas once were theirs by right of

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<sup>2</sup>In terms of available military resources which can be brought to bear in a situation; presumably the Kremlin would not strip all of its forces from the West to send to the East.

tribute and subjection. Therefore, on the basis of dire economic circumstances the Chinese could be compelled to expand at the expense of the Soviet Union.

For China to regain its past dominant role in Asia, she must take back certain lands from the USSR. Formerly, the large, lightly populated territories of Siberia and the Soviet maritime provinces were once part of China's sphere of influence. Now, of course, these territories have been incorporated into the Soviet Union, the incorporation of which has made that state China's main rival for the position of dominant actor in Asia.

It is essential for China somehow to eliminate or neutralize this rival if she is to play a dominant role in Asia and the world at large.<sup>3</sup>

Any discussion of China's ability to expand at the expense of the Soviet Union is dependent on China's ability to modernize and achieve a growth rate similar to Japan. Is it realistic to expect China to match the economic growth rate of Japan? Yes, particularly since Japan will provide much of the capital and technology while China has the raw resources and the abundant cheap labour. In August 1978 the Chinese and Japanese took the historic step of signing a peace and friendship treaty, containing a clause which obliquely condemned Soviet hegemony. For China, this is a treaty of immense significance; it creates the prerequisites for coordinating China's vast manpower resources and Japan's

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<sup>3</sup> Andre Amalrik, Will The Soviet Union Survive Until 1984?, op. cit., p. 47.

economic potential. Both countries see this treaty as the basis for huge Japanese investments to modernize and industrialize China.

... the Chinese have actually built Japan into their economic plan. They have taken a calculating look at the Japanese economy, at the desire of Japanese businessmen to trade with China, and at areas of complementarity between Chinese and Japanese economics, and simply regard Japan as part of the plan ... there are other factors of mutual attraction not unlike those which resulted in the E.E.C. The future of North Asia will be one in which China and Japan form the nucleus of the new Asian E.C.<sup>4</sup>

There is little doubt in Soviet minds that Peking hopes its new relationship with Japan will develop into an anti-Soviet military alliance with a re-armed Japan. The Soviet journal International Affairs warns that Chinese leaders' emphasis on "common interests" with Japan is an elaborate strategic plan "for demarcating these countries' spheres of influence in Asia, isolating the USSR blocking and undermining its position in Southeast Asia and Pacific states."<sup>5</sup> The journal notes that Chinese leaders are urging Japanese military circles "to extend the military ties between the two countries' armed forces, assuring Japan of their approval of its line for a military build-up with the U.S.A., thus coming out in support of Japanese militarism."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>S. FitzGerald, "China a Stabilizing Force?," in Atlantic Community Quarterly, Vol. 17 1979, p. 43.

<sup>5</sup>Y. Semyono, "Peking's Policy Constitutes A Military Threat," in International Affairs (Moscow) April '79, p. 71.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

The same Soviet journal in a different article, sees U.S. support for the Sino-Japanese treaty as a U.S. attempt to "tie Peking to the West [and] that the Treaty is in keeping with the present U.S. global strategy of using China and Japan in the interests of American policy in the Far East [i.e., an anti-Soviet alliance in Asia]." <sup>7</sup>

The Soviets may feel that their worries of an anti-Soviet alliance were confirmed by Deng Xiaoping's visit to Japan immediately after his trip to the U.S.A., and Vice-President Mondale's stop-over in Japan on his return from China in August 1979.

Certainly the Soviets take this threat seriously; Dr. Georg Arbatov <sup>8</sup> senior advisor on foreign affairs of an incipient anti-Soviet alliance comprising the U.S., Japan, the People's Republic, and NATO." <sup>9</sup> He further warned "If such an axis is built on an anti-Soviet basis then there is no place for détente, even in a narrow sense." <sup>10</sup>

Chinese territorial claims worry the Soviet leadership for reasons which transcend simply security interests. These claims threaten the legitimacy of Soviet rule over lands once ruled by Russian Tsars. If Peking has no right to rule over the indigenous populations of the disputed territories merely

<sup>7</sup>C. Apalin, "Peking, The West and Détente," in International Affairs (Moscow), Feb. '79, p. 51.

<sup>8</sup>Interview by J. Power with Dr. Georg Arbatov in London Observer, Nov. 12 '78.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

because they were once part of the Chinese empire, on what basis does the USSR retain lands and boundaries which correspond to Imperial Russia? Therefore, Chinese claims and Soviet responses ascerbate the legitimacy problem of the C.P.S.U.

The China problem has further ramifications for the legitimacy problem of the C.P.S.U. As one Russian historian observed:

The need for an ideological underpinning forces the regime to look toward a new ideology, namely, Great Russian nationalism, with its characteristic cult of strength and expansionist ambitions.<sup>11</sup>

China becomes a useful means for providing a plausible and probable enemy for a desired end. In the long run, as Amalrik notes, this reliance on "Great Russian nationalism" is very dangerous in a state where the Russian nationality will constitute less than half the total population.

If war is inevitable as both the Chinese and Soviets profess, is it logical to expect the Russians to wait until the Chinese are considerably stronger? For the present, the USSR enjoys significant all-around military superiority in the Eurasian land mass. The future is uncertain; the Soviet Union could be faced with encirclement by a combination of the United States, a re-armed Japan, a mobilized Western Europe, and a greatly strengthened China. For the Soviet Union not to act to prevent this serious threat from maturing

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<sup>11</sup>A. Amalrik, Will the Soviet Union Survive . . . ., op. cit., p. 38.

would be inconsistent with a remarkably consistent pattern of expansion by Moscow (over the last six centuries) when faced with a grave external threat to the empire.

In a relatively short time-span, when China has augmented its forces to preclude a nuclear attack and strengthened its conventional forces, the Soviets would face a long, protracted military conflict if war were to occur. It is probable that the Soviets would end up having to transfer much of their military forces to the Far East, in which event the USSR's ability to look after its interests in Eastern Europe would be greatly diminished. Amalrik speculates that:

Germany will surely be reunited ... a reunited Germany with a fairly pronounced anti-Soviet orientation will create an entirely new situation in Europe ... several countries at least, such as Hungary and Rumania, will promptly follow their pro-German orientation.<sup>12</sup>

Amalrik further speculates that as the war would progress Russian nationalism would decline while non-Russian nationalism would rise.<sup>13</sup> Eventually a moral weariness with a war waged far away and for no apparent reason, and increasing discontent about the economy, would lead to strong dissatisfaction with the regime on the part of the middle class. In short, the regime could face a revolution similar to that of 1917 in its roots.

Clearly, the Soviet elite has good reason to be concerned, and might feel that the China problem must be taken

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<sup>12</sup>A. Amalrik, Will the Soviet Union Survive . . . ., op. cit., p. 60.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 62.



care of while the Soviet Union has a military preponderance vis a vis China and any alliances China may forge. The Soviet leadership must not allow the USSR to become embroiled in a war with China at a time of its choice.

In the mid-seventies, events occurring along the arc extending from the Horn of Africa to Southeast Asia served to convince the Chinese leadership that the U.S. lacked the national will to check Soviet moves directed toward effecting a change in the global balance of power. Groups in both China and America concurring with this assessment worked towards effecting normalization of relations with the desired end of restraining Moscow. "Each thought the other would add strength to its own international position."<sup>14</sup> Normalization of relations occurred in January of 1979. The strongest U.S. statement of support for the new relationship and its real purpose was delivered by Vice-President Mondale in a speech in Peking on August 27 of 1979. He stated:

Despite the sometimes profound differences between our two systems, we are committed to joining you to advance our many parallel strategies and bilateral interests. Thus, any nation which seeks to weaken or isolate you in world affairs assumes a stance counter to American interests.<sup>15</sup>

There were no doubts in Soviet minds what Mondale meant by common interests. The Soviet Journal International Affairs stated "It is an open secret that these 'interests'

<sup>14</sup>W.R. Kintner, "A Strategic Triangle of 'Two and a Half Powers'," Orbis, Fall of '79, Vol. 23, p. 526.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 528.

stand for joint action against the USSR and its allies."<sup>16</sup>  
It further elaborates that "the Vice-President's declarations to the effect that 'any nation which seeks to weaken or isolate' China were a political overture to Peking of a clearly anti-Soviet nature."<sup>17</sup>

For the Soviets the most ominous aspect of the new relationship between the U.S. and China, is arm sales to the Peoples Republic, which serve to modernize Chinese armed forces. The Soviets see the Carter Administration, while officially against arms sales to China, "abetting its NATO allies signing military deals with the Chinese and allowing them to sell certain types of modern weaponry."<sup>18</sup> Soviet fears in this regard were escalated by U.S. Defense Secretary Harold Brown's visit to China in January of 1980 where he discussed expanding bilateral relations in military and political spheres with high echelon Chinese leaders. Brown promised the Chinese a ground-based station for receiving and processing various information sent by the U.S. Landsat satellite; he also committed the U.S. to help modernize the Chinese Navy, and supply the Chinese with modern computers.<sup>19</sup>  
In the Soviet mind, this trip of Brown's "is yet another

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<sup>16</sup>W. Kuzmin, "China in Washington's Aggressive Policy," International Affairs (Moscow) April 1980, p. 36.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>18</sup>No Author, "Peking's Foreign Policy: Hegemonism and Alliance with Imperialism," International Affairs (Moscow), March 1980, p. 53.

<sup>19</sup>W. Kuzmin, "China in Washington's . . . .," op. cit., p. 37.

indication of the anti-Soviet basis of American Chinese relations."<sup>20</sup>

While the Soviet Union is greatly concerned and annoyed with the new U.S.-China relationship, it has not been an unexpected development. The Soviets have seen China as a de facto ally of the U.S. for several years preceding the normalization of relations between Peking and Washington. To quote an official Soviet source:

The Peking leaders and the NATO bosses, finding increasing common-ground in their hostility to detente ... are drifting towards an alliance in which China would play the unseemly role of NATO's military outpost in the Far East. General Alexander Haig, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, said in December '77 that tension on the Soviet-Chinese border was 'a clear benefit to us in purely military terms.' Later he referred to China as 'NATO's 16th member.'<sup>21</sup>

The Soviets saw this statement as indicative of the de facto nature of China-U.S. relations whether formalized or not on the part of U.S. leaders. The Chinese view of U.S.-China relations previous to normalization was taken by the Soviets to be represented by an interview which Deng Xiaoping gave on May 19, 1978 to UPI in which he "agreed with the opinion of the U.S. Ambassador to Japan, M. Mansfield, that China is 'the Eastern Nato'."<sup>22</sup>

It is very possible that the U.S. in its attempt at using the so-called "China-Card" to preserve stability in the

<sup>20</sup>W. Kuzmin, "China in Washington's . . . .," op. cit., p. 37.

<sup>21</sup>G. Apalin, "Peking, the West, and Detente," op. cit., p. 54.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 54.

International system has not fully considered the ramifications which could result.<sup>23</sup> This ploy could easily backfire. The U.S., agreeing publicly to supply some military equipment (trucks, satellite station, etc.) to China, is bound to strengthen the argument of hard liners inside the Kremlin to move on the China problem."<sup>24</sup> One western correspondent in Moscow came upon very ominous tidings and reported on the possibility of the USSR launching a pre-emptive strike against China.

There are signs that America's decision to help China modernize its military forces has reinforced all the latent fears of Soviet strategic planners about the Chinese threat to the Soviet Union ... There has always been speculation that the Soviet Union might try to move against China before it could become an effective nuclear power. In the view of some Soviet analysts, these arguments have acquired far more urgency now.<sup>25</sup>

What tends to reinforce and substantiate this correspondent's report was an official Soviet journal's ominous warning less than one month afterwards. "An intensified

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<sup>23</sup>In their haste they may have overlooked an old strategic maxim--"What are the intentions of your new partner." See W. Kintner, "A Strategic Triangle . . . .," op. cit., p. 530.

<sup>24</sup>It is believed in many circles (in the West) that the Soviets considered a nuclear strike against certain targets inside China in 1969, but were discouraged partly by U.S. disapproval. The Soviets considered the moment opportune for what might have been from their perspective a "surgical strike", i.e. ending China's potential for waging a future nuclear war against the Soviet Union.

<sup>25</sup>Hella Pick, "Options for the Kremlin in West and East," in the Guardian, Feb. 10/80.

struggle against the plots being hatched by the Peking leaders, imperialist reactionaries and militaristic circles in the West is naturally becoming particularly urgent."<sup>26</sup>

A Soviet move at dealing with the China problem is dependent on Soviet estimates of how quickly China can field modern armed forces. This timetable is bound to be accelerated by any U.S. military aid to China of a substantive nature. Also, recent Soviet successes in Ethiopia and Afghanistan may create an atmosphere of optimism and confidence on the part of Soviet leaders regarding the ability of their armed forces. It is possible that Soviet military leaders may be able to convince the leaders of the Kremlin that the armed forces of the USSR could with a quick move against China "shatter an incipient US-PRC-JAP-NATO encirclement before it is too late."<sup>27</sup>

China has actively and stridently been warning the U.S. and its allies of what it perceives as Soviet strategic goals--namely, the annexation of Middle Eastern oil and neutralization of Western Europe. The Chinese feel the Soviets are encircling China by putting pressure on Pakistan and India, allying with Vietnam and dominating North Korea.<sup>28</sup> The Chinese fear that once the Soviets remove or diminish the threat of a Western front they will feel secure in moving against China. Vice-Premiere Deng Xiaoping warned "if we really want

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<sup>26</sup>No Author, "Peking's Foreign . . . .," op. cit., p. 55.

<sup>27</sup>W. Kintner, "A Strategic Triangle . . . .," op. cit. p. 525.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 525.

to be able to place curbs on the Polar Bear, the only realistic thing for us to do is unite."<sup>29</sup> To that end the Chinese are doing their best to draw the U.S. into a firm commitment to aid China in what they see as an inevitable war with the USSR. To achieve this end the Chinese could seek to provide the Soviets with an excuse for an attack which would cause severe destruction in China and possibly the loss of much Chinese territory. Why would the Chinese pursue such a drastic course? They are concerned with the long-term danger from the Soviet Union so they might seek to implement an old Chinese strategic maxim:

The classical military planner who has read Sun Tzu knows that any action forcing an adversary to undertake a plan of action prematurely constitutes a sound strategic move.<sup>30</sup>

The Chinese further realize that a Soviet move against China will tilt the balance of power significantly with détente being shattered and probable Western mobilization.<sup>31</sup> The Chinese are confident that in the long run they will beat the Soviets because of their greatest strength: manpower.

The Chinese know that the Soviets are weakest where they are strongest - in manpower. If the Chinese have sufficient time to mobilize and arm that strength, they will one day be able to deal with the Soviet threat. Hence, they are willing to accept a serious, but not mortal, defeat now in order to gain a future victory.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Time Magazine, Feb. 5, 1979.

<sup>30</sup> W. Kintner, "A Strategic Triangle . . . .," op. cit., p. 532.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 533.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 533.

The Chinese by provoking and drawing a Soviet armed response, will achieve two goals: (1) a mobilized West; (2) drawing the USSR into a long-range protracted war before it is able to neutralize its Western front. The Chinese could hope to institute the collapse of the Soviet regime along the lines depicted in Amalrik's scenario. The Soviets would not be in a position of moving most of their forces from Eastern Europe to the Far East and time will work against the Soviets in a long protracted war with a China being armed by the U.S. In effect, China could achieve a posture similar to that which they could realize in twenty years time, but which they feel the Soviets will move to prevent at a time of their choosing. The Chinese strategy then is to prevent the Soviets achieving certain goals in the West, thereby giving the Chinese the strategic ability to fight a long war with the USSR aiming not at a decisive military victory but of effecting the collapse of the regime or at least a retreat by the Soviets geographically from much of Asia.

The Soviets are well aware of what the Chinese leaders intend. The future in fact may become a race between these two states, and which will realize its strategic goals first.

The above analysis leads to the conclusion that the Kremlin is not likely to pass up the chance presented by the Soviet "window of opportunity". Indeed, if hardliners can convince more moderate elements that their position is as strong as it appears, and that there is little chance of any significant U.S. response, then the world perhaps can expect to see imminently

a war between the Communist giants. During their "window of opportunity" the Soviets will have uncontested all-around military superiority in Eurasia; they could act during this opportune time to avert fighting the long protracted war that they may feel China has planned for them in the future. Another concern is that if they do have intentions of making a "grab" for Middle Eastern oil supplies, China could emerge as their dreaded second front. Also, if Moscow can neutralize China, it would achieve a period of grace to deal with internal problems without the extreme external threat that China poses. The Soviet elite might act to avert a long war in which its own internal problems could bring about its collapse. Western disunity in the face of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the U.S. hostage-taking incident in Tehran, may serve to convince the Soviets that the process of politically dominating and effectively neutralizing Western Europe is well in progress and that China can be taken care of with a minimum of Western response.



## Chapter V: Conclusion

Do not confuse securit  the feeling of having nothing to fear, and suret  - the state of having nothing to fear.

Larousse

We have tried to demonstrate that the combination of long run national pessimism plus short term military optimism adds up to the possibility of probable Soviet military expansionism in the 1980s; given the parameters of this "window of opportunity" Soviet expansionism could be projected to occur before 1986. From the outset of this paper we have held that Soviet foreign behaviour increasingly will be a reaction to perceived exigencies which threaten the continuation of what is in fact a Russian empire.

The leadership of this empire, we see as:

Groups seeking self-preservation ...  
driven to a foreign policy conflict ...  
in order to defend themselves against  
the onslaught of domestic rather than  
foreign enemies ...<sup>1</sup>

Even our examination of China does not indicate that China will be a significant threat without the combination of internal problems inside the Soviet Union. The nature of the regime, a totalitarian system and the noted propensity of such regimes to use international crises to divert attention from internal

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<sup>1</sup>E.B. Haas and A.S. Whiting, Dynamics of International Relations (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956), p. 62.

problems,<sup>2</sup> serves to reinforce our argument that Soviet expansion in the short term is possible and perhaps probable.

We have also noted that for the Soviet Union now not to seek actively the attenuation of problems (present and future), would be a departure in foreign behaviour which has been remarkably consistent whether Tsarist or Soviet. Indeed the combination of lateral pressures and military superiority has provided circumstances which are highly conducive to the traditional, historical drive of Moscow's expansionism.

The Soviet leadership perhaps could reasonably expect to achieve certain goals during this "window": firstly, the amelioration of critical problems not yet of a crisis proportion, but which can be projected to be so when the "window" is closing; and secondly, the prospect of defeating U.S. interests over much of the globe (this might become almost irresistible for some groups inside the Kremlin).

We now turn our examination to Soviet strategy as evinced by Soviet moves in the Middle East, Africa, and elsewhere. Certain probable targets, some being assailed at present, and others likely shortly, will be examined and projections based on these trends will be presented in the form of scenarios focused on the Middle East and China. Given our level of analysis these scenarios will be consistent with the traditional motives for expansion by the Kremlin.

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<sup>2</sup>B. Farrell, "Foreign Politics of Open and Closed Political Societies" in Approaches to Comparative and International Politics, ed. B. Farrell (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1966), p. 185.

Soviet Global Strategy

Lenin once declared: "The conquest of Europe will take place through Africa;" anyone examining Soviet successes in Africa will note the consistency of Soviet foreign policy with Lenin's observation sixty years ago. Indeed, Soviet foreign policy in much of the third world indicates that the present masters inside the Kremlin share Lenin's belief. The first formal articulation of Soviet intentions was spelled out at the Congress of Oriental Nations held at Baku in 1920 under the aegis of the USSR, where the USSR defined its intentions to deprive the West of its raw material sources, thus paralyzing it. Since Baku, the West has, in fact, become even more dependent in terms of oil and raw materials on external resources which appears consistent with Lenin's blueprint for crippling it.

For the Soviets to realize a shift in their favour of the "correlation of forces" they have to interdict the resources enroute from Africa and Asia to the West; to do so at the source is less dangerous than provoking a military confrontation. The Soviet leaders in the present are as concerned with the "correlation of forces" as Lenin was. This "correlation of forces" may most clearly be explained as consisting of,

... not only those factors which in Western terminology are included in the concept of 'balance of power' but also economic capabilities, social stability, and public opinion, i.e., elements that, although not military in the strict sense of the word, nevertheless have considerable bearing on a nation's ability to wage war.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>R. Pipes, "Soviet Global Strategy," in Commentary April '80, p. 32.

Stalin expanded on Lenin's plan to alter the "correlation of forces" radically in 1921 when he stated:

If Europe and America may be called the front, the non-sovereign nations and colonies, with their raw materials, fuel, food, and vast stores of human material, should be regarded as the rear, the reserve of imperialism. In order to win a war one must not only triumph at the front but also revolutionize the enemy's rear, his reserves.<sup>4</sup>

Nixon, in The Real War, warns that the present Soviet leadership continues to implement the strategy of Lenin and Stalin. He recounts that Soviet President Brezhnev confided to Siad Barre, the President of Somalia (at the time an important ally in Africa) "our aim is to gain control of the two great treasure houses on which the west depends - the energy treasure house of the Persian Gulf and the mineral treasure house of central and southern Africa."<sup>5</sup>

Nixon points out that we are in a period in which the Soviets are fighting us (and winning) in a massive global Third World War, where the U.S. is the chief rival opposing Soviet world hegemony. Western Europe and Japan are intermediate targets; the war is being fought presently in areas of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, also Latin America. The Soviets are risking little but gaining key strategic advantages.

Richard Pipes notes that the Kremlin needs to reduce

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<sup>4</sup>Richard Nixon, The Real War (New York: Warner Books, 1980), p. 23.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

America in the same way Rome had to eliminate Carthage<sup>6</sup> to be in an unrivalled position in the international system of that time. Because of the U.S. strategic arsenal, a direct assault is not as preferable as an indirect assault on the power of the U.S.. The Soviet aim is to,

... detach Europe and Japan from the U.S. and pull them into the Soviet orbit: the addition of Western Europe's and Japan's industrial capabilities to those of the Soviet bloc would alter immediately and in a most dramatic manner the global correlation of forces in the latter's favour.<sup>7</sup>

Pipes uses another analogy to demonstrate the Soviet strategic plan: he compares the manner in which medieval castles were blockaded, prior to the introduction of gunpowder, to the Soviet "systematic effort to cut off the flow of reinforcements and supplies"<sup>8</sup> to Western Europe and Japan. The Soviet strategy being to eventually interdict the "reinforcements of manpower and materials from the U.S., and supplies in the form of fuel and metals from the Middle East and South Africa."<sup>9</sup> The massive Soviet build-up of a blue water capability navy can be understood in terms of the strategic aims of the Kremlin.

Nine-tenths of U.S. war supplies to the European fronts would have to travel by sea, so that serious Soviet threat to the North Atlantic sea lanes would be bound to have significant repercussions on the progress of European operations.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>R. Pipes, "Soviet Global Strategy," op. cit., p. 36.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

Nixon observes that "if the USSR continues to succeed in its penetration of Africa, it will have come a long way in its larger strategy of encircling the world 'city' - of cutting off the industrialized West from the resources without which it cannot survive."<sup>11</sup>

The Kremlin may feel its highest priority target to be the Persian Gulf for two good reasons: (1) the desirability acquiring inexpensive oil (2) the potential denial of the region's oil to Japan and Western Europe would enable the Soviets to neutralize the allies of the U.S., thereby isolating the U.S.

Directed toward these ends, the Kremlin has been positioning Soviet forces at principal choke points through which Gulf oil is transported to Japan and Europe. From its new access to naval bases in Viet Nam, the Soviets are in position to reach the Straits of Malacca, the major route for oil enroute to Japan. Soviet bases in South Yemen and Ethiopia are in place to interdict the Straits of Bab el Mandel which guard the entrance to the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. The recent invasion of Afghanistan brought Soviet forces a hundred percent closer (550 kilometers compared to 1100) to the crucial Straits of Hormuz.

Political control over the Gulf region by the Soviets would represent a massive shift in the "correlation of forces." Soviet political control over the Gulf would result in severe political and economic pressures being brought to bear on the

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<sup>11</sup>R. Nixon, The Real War, op. cit., p. 24.

U.S.'s allies: Japan, Britain, the European Community nations, resulting probably in their loosening their ties to NATO.

Africa is of almost equal importance if not in the short term certainly in the long run plans of the Kremlin for bringing down the Capitalist system. From their successes in Angola and Mozambique, represented by friendship treaties, they threaten "the whole of what Brezhnev so covetously referred to as the 'mineral treasure house of central and southern Africa'... Just as the Soviets had their eyes on the oil of Arabia when they moved into Somalia and then Ethiopia, they had their eyes on these mineral resources when they moved into Angola and Mozambique."<sup>12</sup>

Japan and Europe are dependent on minerals such as chrome, platinum, vanadium, and manganese from Zimbabwe, and southern Africa, including Namibia and the Union of South Africa. Soviet support of liberation groups in these countries is directed certainly towards interrupting at some point these resources so vital to the West.

The U.S. itself, while not crucially dependent on oil supplies from the Gulf, is heavily dependent on minerals from southern Africa. Chromium is a key resource for U.S. defense industries. The U.S. has to import more than 90% of this mineral; the biggest exporter to the U.S. of chrome is South Africa, which has 96% of the worlds known reserves together with Zimbabwe.<sup>13</sup> The USSR would enhance its position vis a vis the global "correlation of forces" just by cutting off this

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<sup>12</sup>Richard Nixon, The Real War, op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

resource permanently to the U.S.

### Tactics

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan is a good indication that the long term strategy of shifting in their favour the "correlation of forces" takes precedence over grain supplies, advanced technology and cheap credit from the West, which alleviates the inefficiencies of the Soviet economic system. For the masters of the Kremlin to pull off the plan formalized at Baku in 1920 they must act while the balance of forces is most favourable to them. The invasion of Afghanistan puts them that much closer to a position from which they can cripple the economies of Japan and West Europe and weaken that of the U.S.: by interrupting the flow of oil supplies from the Middle East.

The Soviets have removed Afghanistan as a "buffer" state between Soviet armed forces and the West's vital oil lanes. The takeover of Afghanistan places the USSR one country closer to achieving a long sought goal--a warm water port on the Arabian Sea. From such a port the Soviets could exert almost irresistible political coercion over the nations of the Gulf, and if the occasion warrants, military interdiction of the flow of oil.

Former President Nixon warns that the invasion was part of a pattern:

It is a pattern of ceaseless building by the Soviets toward a position of overwhelming military force, while using subversion and proxy troops, and now even its own, to take over one country after another, until they are in a position to conquer or Finlandize the world.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>R. Nixon, The Real War, op. cit., p. 12.



It is interesting to note that many of the Soviet invasion troops in Afghanistan are on the Western border facing Iran, "far from the counter-insurgency operations in the North, East and central regions. The biggest military airbase in Afghanistan has been established at Shindand (near the border with Iran) where four strike air squadrons and some 60 MI-60 transport helicopters are based."<sup>15</sup> Soviet expansion at Iran's expense, given its weakened armed forces and the dubious nature of a U.S. response, can be seen as a real probability. The Soviet Union has been quick to present nationalities claims as a pretext for expansion, in the recent past. Certainly "there are still large numbers of Azerbaidzhanis and other national minorities under Tehran rule who could form the basis for demands to extend the Soviet frontier, despite Lenin's repudiation of Tsarist conquests."<sup>16</sup>

Perhaps the more likely basis of any Soviet military intervention in Iran by the Soviet Union could be the invocation of the 1921 Friendship Treaty. The Soviet Union has invoked article 6, which provides for Soviet military intervention, before in Iran (i.e., the partial occupation of Iran in 1941), and "any third party threatening the independence of Iran and the security of the USSR,"<sup>17</sup> justifies Soviet action.

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<sup>15</sup>"Moscow Exploits Iran Crisis," in Soviet Analyst Vol. 9 #8, April 16 '80, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

It is easy to imagine several plausible scenarios whereby the USSR could invoke this clause, thereby legitimizing Soviet expansion at the expense of Iran. Two in particular are: (1) a U.S. military action against Iran in connection with the hostages; (2) an attack on Iran by Iraq (with the approval and support of the USSR). In either eventuality the Soviets have positioned themselves to intercede "56,000 Soviet combat troops backed up with 850 tanks and 1,660 armored personnel carriers now reported on Afghanistan's western border"<sup>18</sup> facing Iran.

It is likely that the lack of a concerted Western response over their invasion of Afghanistan is serving to support the advocacy by hardliners in the Kremlin that the time is ripe for the "liberation" of Iran from external aggression. Russian regimes, whether Tsarist or Soviet, are not noted for their propensity to let opportune occasions for expansion to elude them.

Soviet intentions regarding Saudi Arabia are no secret to the Saudis. As Nixon warns:

Saudi Arabia is threatened: The Horn of Africa forms a claw with its pincers around the Arabian peninsula; the Ethiopian highlands look down menacingly on the desert sands of Saudi Arabia, just across the Red Sea.<sup>19</sup>

Soviet moves in both the Horn and in South Yemen have convinced the Saudis that Soviet intentions are to exert

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<sup>18</sup>"Moscow Exploits Iran Crisis," op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>19</sup>R. Nixon, The Real War, op. cit., p. 27.

political pressure on the kingdom, with the goal of transforming the kingdom into a people's republic, with a pro-Soviet orientation. The crisis in short term Soviet energy production makes Saudi oil a very attractive prize. What the Saudis and Western nations dependent on Saudi oil fear is a Soviet-backed coup, resulting in the kingdom and its resources joining the Soviet led East European economic system.

The Saudis have resisted normalizing relations with the USSR with this real fear in their minds, however, apparent Western weakness in the face of Soviet successes in South Yemen and the Horn, could lead to the Saudis being forced to normalize their relations with the Kremlin. Such a course would be embarked on with the hope of thwarting an immediate threat from the Soviet Union. Such a change in Saudi foreign policy, induced by Soviet adventurism in the region, would strike a hard tactical blow at the West.

Africa has seen the Soviets make gains at the expense of the West, virtually unopposed. Angola alone was a significant chess piece taken from the West in the global game of chess. The Soviets have access now to the vast mineral resources, the oil of Cabinda, but equally important are in a position to cut off these resources to the West. From naval and air bases in Angola, the Soviets can patrol the southern Atlantic, cutting off supplies of oil and minerals at will, bound for Europe.

Africa offers still more attractive targets for the Soviets, particularly Nigeria (oil), South Africa (gold,

uranium, rare metals), and Zaire (cobalt, manganese, copper).<sup>20</sup>

The Soviets, through their facilities already in place, have a tactical advantage over the U.S. in terms of further intervention at the expense of the U.S. and its allies. "The combined effects of regional changes, the Soviet Union's own growth in military capacity for regional intervention, and the U.S. post-Viet Nam wariness about military responses and intervention make Soviet interventions easier."<sup>21</sup>

Given these developments, the Soviet plan formulated at Baku in 1920 appears to be near completion. The Soviet Union would be in a position to control practically the whole of Black Africa, in the event of a war with the West; this is a significant tactical advantage. The Soviets could reasonably hope to be able to choke the West into submission by denying the oil and resources needed to wage war. As one observer noted ominously:

Every 20 minutes 50,000 tons of oil is shipped along the Cape route. Is the USSR to achieve definitive control of this route vital to the West?<sup>22</sup>

The importance of Africa cannot be underestimated, if "the Soviets one day were to control it and her inexhaustible mineral resources, they would be unquestionably masters of the

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<sup>20</sup>H. Bienen, "Perspectives on Soviet Intervention in Africa," Political Science Quarterly, p. 39.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>22</sup>A. Coste-Floret, "The Great Design of the U.S.S.R. in Africa," in Atlantic Community Quarterly, p. 275.

world economy, while at the same time it would be easy for them to cut Western lines of communication."<sup>23</sup>

Soviet moves in Africa represent the battles being fought by the USSR against the U.S. for hegemony over Europe-- a war that has seen the USSR acquire tactical advantages virtually unopposed by its rival, the U.S.

### Possible Scenarios

#### (I) Middle East

Given that the Kremlin is aware that it need not invade militarily Western Europe to gain control over it, a war between NATO and Warsaw Pact forces is not likely in the 1980s (indeed if it ever was). The Soviets merely have to acquire control over the Persian Gulf to control Western Europe. To that end, it is probable that the Kremlin has a plan which would provide for the acquisition of free oil and secondly, the political gains to be had from such a move, i.e. military intervention in the Gulf.

A quick move through Northern Iran to an occupation of Iranian oil fields, and possibly other Persian Gulf fields, including those of Iraq, would give the Soviet Union the leverage to put heavy political pressure on Western Europe and Japan. This move by the Soviets could easily be the result of several opportunities (some already discussed) but one is increasingly probable--that of the death of Khomeini producing a collapse of authority in Iran. The Soviets, of course, would be invited

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<sup>23</sup>A. Coste-Floret, "The Great Design of the U.S.S.R. in Africa," op. cit., p. 275.

in by any of several sources inside Iran, similar to the request by Amin in Afghanistan for Soviet help. The U.S. would not be in a position to threaten to escalate the conflict by using nuclear forces with any great deal of confidence. The U.S., while it is strategically vulnerable to a first strike, cannot afford to see the conflict escalate to the brink. The use of American paratroopers would be futile without the support of armour. The Soviets, by threatening to interdict oil supplies to West Europe and Japan, can reasonably expect these nations to stay out of the limited war which could ensue between the USSR and the U.S.

The USSR might avoid occupying Saudi Arabia, thereby leaving the U.S. the facesaving gesture of occupying it under the rationale of preventing further Soviet advancement.

The Soviets would then have achieved significant results in terms of self-aggrandizement at the expense of the U.S.-- such as: (1) the breakup of NATO; (2) the isolation of the U.S. to North America; (3) securing Soviet Western borders in the event of a war in the east with China; (4) the means to exert political changes in West Europe and Japan, such as moving Communist party members into cabinet decision making, the eventual result being the transformation of these nations into 'Peoples' Republics'; (5) time and resources to overcome economic dislocations inside the Soviet Union; (6) probable long term security and stability for their empire.

## II China

A move by the Kremlin against China is probably heavily dependent on the success of the first scenario, at least in some similar manner. The possibility exists that China could induce a Soviet attack before Moscow is able to secure its western border, but in lieu of that the following scenario is possible.

The Kremlin worried that China for any of several reasons might provoke a war in the future; a Kremlin well aware that Japanese and Western help hastens the day when the Chinese could fight such a war on comparable terms--will decide to act against China while the "correlation of forces" is in its favour.. The Kremlin moves to take care of China before a real alliance can emerge between an alarmed West, a fearful Japan, and a hostile China. If the Soviets were to pull off the partial neutralization of West Europe and Japan, they could probably enhance this process by the reduction of China.

The Kremlin acting during its "window of opportunity" may not hesitate to use a preemptive nuclear strike on China, followed by the "balkanization" of China. The Soviets, with quick armored thrusts, could "liberate" Sinkiang, Manchuria, inner Mongolia, perhaps Tibet. The rest of China would then be offset by client regimes of the USSR.

The reduction of China would provide the period of grace the Kremlin needs to deal with its internal problems; without this period of grace, the regime could collapse internally, given a long war with China and the West.

We present these scenarios not as an exercise in crystal ball gazing, but rather to point out that such possibilities are actual options available to the Kremlin during its transitory advantage over the United States.

### Summary

The conclusions we must draw from our analysis are truly alarming. The arguments of Nixon, Pipes, Luttwak, Nitze, and Rostow which we sought to strengthen and support by incorporating them with an examination of "lateral pressures" indicates that the true gravity of the situation, for the West, is even more dangerous than any of these publicists singularly points out. Indeed, we see the probability that the Kremlin will act on the same basis as it does in General Hackett's scenario for the 3rd World War, where short term military optimism and long term national pessimism leads the Soviet leadership to war. We disagree however with his venue; Soviet military expansion is more likely to occur in the Middle East and Far East where the risks will be less and the results about the same. In short, we see the Soviet elite embarking on a plan which could lead it to eventual world hegemony, and the maintenance of the Russian empire in the face of the most potent ideology of the 20th century, "nationalism".



## Appendix

We would like to sketch briefly Choucrist's and North's argument<sup>1</sup> of how lateral pressures lead to conflict in foreign policy behaviour, in order to see if our historical analysis of what we feel to be increasing lateral pressures corresponds to their model, thus perhaps serving to support our analysis of probable trends in Soviet foreign behaviour in the '80s.

In their model they argue that leaders operate to minimize shortages such as resources needed, gaps between expectations and realizations when climbing productivity tapers off, and the gap between the resource or growth rate of one's own country and that of a competitor. Further, they point out that the combination of a growing population and developing technology will place rapidly increasing demands upon the nation's resources, which will result in internally-generated pressures. The more this pressure increases, the more likely leaders will seek to extend national activities beyond the country's borders. When a state intersects with another of similar high capability in extending their national interests, there is a strong probability that the competition will assume military dimensions. They see major wars emerging through a two-step process: internally generated pressures, and, secondly, reciprocal comparison. Therefore the internal demands of the

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<sup>1</sup>N. Choucrist, and R. North, "Dynamics of International Conflict," in R. Tanter and R. Ullman (eds.) Theory and Policy in International Relations (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1972).

society combine multiplicatively to produce what are termed "lateral pressures." They see leaders pressured to undertake activities increasingly removed from the original boundaries of the society, and that empires with high lateral pressures will tend to extend their influence in search of raw materials. The greater the lateral pressures generated within this state or empire, the greater the tendency will be to push its interests into territories and states with lower levels of capability. They see the desire to protect national interests in far-off areas leading to wars against low-capability societies. When two states of high capabilities and high lateral pressure tendencies extend their interests and psychopolitical borders outward, there is a strong probability that sooner or later the opposing perimeters of interest will intersect at one or more points. They argue, there is often the feeling on the part of the aspiring, but still weaker power, that it is being "encircled" by rivals. When this happens, they see the competition becoming more serious. They see the competition leading to non-violent conflict, or to an arms race, which increases the chances of war. Choucri and North posit a continuum from one set of dynamics to another (separated by break points): expansion to competition to crisis to war.<sup>2</sup>

In our analysis we find that lateral pressure is exerted on the Soviet elite with respect to the "Legitimacy Problem" because the CPSU has no mandate to govern unless it can

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<sup>2</sup>N. Choucri and R.C. North, "Dynamics of International Conflict," op. cit.

continue to pass itself off as the vanguard of the revolution. Further, that it must carry the conflict and struggle to other states with the appearance of winning. We therefore find the regime must continue to create an atmosphere of tension internationally. The Soviet elite must maintain this posture in order to have a basis for its de facto role of imperial master in Eastern Europe and of the non-Russian nationalities inside the Soviet Union. Under increasing pressure the Soviet elite are forced to seek external expansionism, the historic course of Tsarist governments seeking to secure the empire. Thus the Soviet elite are under lateral pressure to create

... a world from which private property in the means of production has been banished and the constituent states are, with minor variation, copies of the Soviet state. It is only in a world so fashioned that the elite ruling Soviet Russia would feel secure and comfortable.<sup>3</sup>

Economic factors leading to lateral pressures are caused by two factors, primarily (1) a scarcity of energy resources in the 1980s and (2) the inability to liberalize the system.

The Choucri-North model appears to be applicable to the Soviet Union heading into the 1980s. Its leaders are confronted with a gap in available resources (i.e. their short term energy crisis) to its real rival the United States and its interests are intersecting with those of China in Asia. The competition between the Communist giants could easily assume

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<sup>3</sup>Richard Pipes, "Soviet Global Strategy," in Commentary, April 1980, p. 33.

military dimensions. It is possible that the Soviet elite will move to a war with China based both on internally generated pressures, and on a reciprocal comparison of what China will be in the future.

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