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THE DILEMMA OF SUPERPOWER: SOVIET POLICY AND STRATEGY IN TRANSITION

Roman Kolkowicz

October 1967

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INSTITUTE FOR DEFENSE ANALYSES
INTERNATIONAL AND SOCIAL STUDIES DIVISION

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SUMMARY

The general trend of the Brezhnev-Kosygin foreign policy, in contrast to that of Khrushchev, has been one of pragmatism, circumspection, and moderation. This new policy style has been paralleled by an intensive effort to increase the Soviet military capability and to make the leadership's claims to this capability more credible.

Despite efforts to build up a larger and more credible strategic and conventional military capability, certain militant and conservative elements in the military establishment and in the Party argue that these capabilities are still not adequate both to meet Soviet defense interests and to take advantage of opportunities to exploit them for political and military gains. These dissenting Soviet elements view the regime's policy as being too timid and as playing into the hands of the United States. They argue that the regime's policy is passive and too accommodating and thereby serves as a predictable factor in US aggressive objectives and policies, freeing the United States from tighter constraints in its own conduct, which a more militant Soviet policy would impose.

These dissenting elements, who at times have used a hard "Chinese line" of argument, have caused deep concern among Party leaders. The regime has therefore begun a concerted campaign to denigrate the dissenters' position and to assert its own point of view. However, this internal resistance to Party policies has not been completely eradicated, but only repressed for the time being.

This Paper analyzes some of the significant changes in Soviet military capabilities and political behavior in recent years. The Paper presents the following broad conclusions:

- (1) Soviet political concerns with a potential, sharp destabilization of the present status quo at the superpower level motivate them to avoid any actions which could lead to a new confrontation with the United States.

(2) The Soviet leaders, however, feel less constrained in pursuing low-risk, but potential high-pay-off policies in areas in which US interests are presumed to be minor or ill defined--the "Third Areas," generally, and the Middle East/Mediterranean area, specifically.

(3) These two broad policy directions have generated recent Soviet efforts to build up their strategic and conventional military capabilities, which in turn, reinforce further Soviet commitments to these policies.

This Paper also offers several potential Soviet policy alternatives whose implementation depend, to a large extent, on real or perceived threats to Soviet security interests, and on political opportunities created by shifting international events.

I

INTRODUCTION

Certain Western political analysts have in recent months suggested that Soviet-American relations have undergone a significant transformation--from cold-war hostility to limited political cooperation. These analysts have also suggested that the time is now ripe for the two countries to move toward more fuller cooperation, and eventually, to an entente. The motivation for closer cooperation is found in the mounting fear of nuclear war and nuclear proliferation and in the desire of the superpowers to curtail the arms race and to shift attention and allocations to domestic programs. These analysts point out, however, that among the obstacles to closer Soviet-American cooperation are certain entrenched intra-alliance and domestic interests, as well as a pervasive distrust in each other's motives and intentions.¹

This Paper analyzes one aspect of recent Soviet-American relations--namely, important changes in Soviet political and military policies. It does not directly discuss the sweeping and overly-sanguine assumptions and assertions, referred to above, on current and future Soviet-American relations. Instead, the Paper focuses on the declared and presumed policy objectives and style of the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime and contrasts them with those of Khrushchev; analyzes the declared and presumed objectives, interests, and rationales of those Soviet groups who are opposed to the new regime's policies; analyzes the

1. Marshall D. Shulman, "'Europe' Versus 'Détente'?" Foreign Affairs, XLV, No. 3 (April 1967), pp. 389-402; and, Robert C. Tucker, "United States-Soviet Co-operation: Incentives and Obstacles," The Annals of the American Academy (July 1967), pp. 1-15.

underlying motives and perceptions of the protagonists; and presents conclusions on the likely future trends of these Soviet developments and their implications for US interests.

This analysis is based on extensive Soviet and other sources, which upon examination support the formulation of several hypotheses:

- (1) Many leaders in the Party, the governmental bureaucracies, and the military eventually came to view the style, method, and general direction of Khrushchev's policies as misguided, counterproductive, and dangerous for Soviet national interests.
- (2) Among the central objectives of the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime are the reestablishment of credibility in Soviet political, economic, and military capabilities, and the development of a national policy based on a realistic appraisal of national capabilities.
- (3) The likely motive for this new policy direction came from a reappraisal of the changes in the political and strategic environment of the Soviet Union. Such a reappraisal indicated to the new regime the need to avoid dangerous confrontations with the other major nuclear power, the United States, and the need to stress the vital importance of both the central "regulating mechanism" of deterrence in the relations between the two superpowers and of the continued utility of detente.
- (4) This policy, described by the Soviets as one of "flexibility and firmness," is predicated on an increase in military power, both nuclear and conventional. It applies mainly to areas of vital interest to the two superpowers, without affecting or limiting Soviet probings in the Third Areas, where such US interests are assumed to be less vital and not well defined.
- (5) This policy has met with sharp dissent from groups within the Soviet establishment--broad elements in the officer corps and conservative, militant elements in the Party. The dissenters view the regime's policy as both inappropriate and dangerous, since the West, in particular, and the rest of the world in general, may view it as being passive, fatalistic, and serving the enemies of the Soviet Union. Such a policy, they maintain, erodes morale and ideological zeal, weakens Soviet defenses, and prevents the Soviets from exploiting available targets of opportunity.

Given the secrecy of Soviet political processes and the limited reliability of public Soviet statements, analysis of Soviet policies

and their underlying motivations must remain conjectural. However, within these limits, one can still discern shifts in actual Soviet political and military behavior; in the direction of the publicly articulated policy alternatives; and in Soviet understanding of international developments as they affect Soviet interests.

II

CHANGES IN SOVIET POLICY STYLE AND OBJECTIVES

Political regimes often regard an atmosphere of international tension as the proper political, military, and psychological environment for the achievement of their national objectives. One hears the argument today that the "revolutionary" regime of Communist China deliberately seeks to create such international tension and resists the stabilization of world politics, while other regimes, such as the United States, seek a relaxation of international tensions and the achievement of stable relations with their friends and adversaries. But what about the Soviet Union? Do the Soviet leaders consider a relaxed policy based on détente preferable to a policy based on engineered tension? Under what circumstances might they prefer one to the other?

To be sure, the Soviet leaders do not have a completely free hand in choosing between these alternatives. Such choices are often influenced by major international, and sometimes internal, situations. Moreover, there are risks attached to a radical pursuit of either choice--a tough, blustering policy may cause disproportionate military reaction in the West and may result in the Soviet bluff being called, whereas a highly conciliatory policy may be interpreted in the West and in the Communist world as a sign of Soviet weakness.

The broad sweep of Soviet post-war policy can be divided into three stages: the Stalinist period, which was marked by sustained international tension and by high levels of militancy; the Khrushchevite period, which was characterized by intermittent tension, relaxation, and calculated détente; and the Brezhnev-Kosygin period, which, thus far, has been one of uninterrupted détente. The Khrushchevite period, however, while occasionally given to incidents of high militancy, generally moved in the direction of détente and stable relations with the United States.

This Paper, however, is not a study of the causes and forces which lead to international tension or relaxation; rather, it is a study of two Soviet policy styles (those of the Khrushchev and Brezhnev-Kosygin regimes) which are based on differing approaches to the utility of international tension. This Section briefly reviews the policy style of Khrushchev, examines the changes in policy initiated by the new regime, and outlines the underlying causes of the internal dissent to the new policy style.

A. SOVIET POLICIES UNDER KHRUSHCHEV

The revolutionary changes in military technology, brought about by the introduction of missile-nuclear weapons, have profoundly affected the traditional policies of the major powers. Indeed, events since mid-1950 have effected a noticeable change in Soviet views on war and peace, and have led to a substantial adjustment of major Soviet political doctrines. In 1954, Khrushchev still maintained that, in the event of war, the "imperialists will choke on it and it will end in a catastrophe for the imperialist world."¹ He also viewed the consequences of war in the traditional terms, with the Communists as the victors and the capitalists as the vanquished. However, by 1956, now more firmly in power, Khrushchev began to hedge, declaring that "war is not fatalistically inevitable";² and by 1958, he had reversed his former position and conceded that "A future war ... would cause immeasurable harm to all mankind."³

While recognizing the basic political changes caused by the emergence of missile-nuclear weapons, and moderating accordingly the archaic dictums of Soviet ideology, Khrushchev nevertheless continued to pursue a very vigorous, frequently militant, policy; at the same time, he sought to avoid war or a major confrontation with the United States. While Soviet leaders continued to talk of peaceful coexistence

1. Pravda, June 13, 1954.

2. Speech at the Twentieth Party Congress, reported by TASS, February 14, 1956.

3. Speech at the Budapest Opera House, "Budapest Radio," April 3, 1958.

with the West, the Soviet defense industry began to produce strategic missiles. the Red Army underwent a massive reorganization program intended to increase its firepower and mobility, and the emphasis of Soviet strategic doctrine was shifted from conventional to strategic missile-nuclear forces.

When the U-2 episode unmasked the superficiality of Soviet-American peaceful coexistence, and exposed anew the deep-seated distrust that underlay it, Khrushchev abandoned the role of peace-loving statesman and turned to threatening the world with aggression. At the same time, the Soviets shrewdly exploited the highly publicized Western miscalculations of the number of deployed Soviet ICBM's. They seized upon the so-called "missile gap" as an opportunity to extract political gains, to maintain the initiative in international affairs, and to make negotiations on disarmament less desirable.

However, the "missile gap" was exposed as myth in 1961, and the West began to make more realistic estimates of Soviet strategic capabilities. The United States began to increase its missile production, massively raising Western strategic capabilities, and leaving no doubt as to where the strategic balance of power lay. The Soviet leaders then had to face some hard choices: first, they could deny the revised Western estimates of Soviet strategic capabilities and insist on their nuclear superiority; second, they could engage in a large-scale arms race, trying to keep pace with, or even to outdistance, the West in the production of strategic weapons; third, they could attempt stop-gap measures in order to minimize the growing preponderance of US strategic missile forces; or fourth, they could resign themselves to being an inferior military-strategic power and shift from a hard, militant line to a more conciliatory line in East-West relations.

In retrospect, it seems that Khrushchev, consciously perhaps, embarked on a policy of ascending risks and costs. Because of the limitations of the Soviet economy (his ambitious Seven-Year Plan, aimed at the domestic sector of the economy, was running into difficulties), Khrushchev viewed a full-scale armaments race with the West as the least desirable option, and did not attempt it. (Presumably, he also

understood the futility of such a move; the United States could easily surpass any increment in Soviet strategic capabilities.) For a time, the Soviet leaders experimented with the first and third options. At the Twenty-second Party Congress in the fall of 1961, Marshal Malinovskii still boasted of the powerful might of Soviet missiles; later the Soviets declared that the superior quality of Soviet weapons (i.e., their enormous destructive power) counterbalanced the quantity of US missiles. This was empty boasting. The next Soviet ploy, aimed at achieving some sort of parity in deterrence, was by far the most risky. This effort culminated in the attempt to place offensive missiles in Cuba. When this venture failed, Khrushchev started to pursue the fourth option--a search for détente with the West.

Khrushchev's policies were based on beliefs of "tolerable" actions, on certain assumptions of Western constraints on Soviet initiatives, and on assumptions regarding the desirability and utility of exploiting strategic power for political purposes. Western political analysts generally agree that the basic aspects of Soviet foreign and strategic policies at that time included: an assumption that the United States would be very reluctant to go to war with the Soviet Union, unless, of course, it was dangerously provoked; a belief that the United States had rejected nuclear war as an instrument of policy; a relative disinterest with the activities of smaller countries, which was in part the result of the Soviet's central preoccupation with the United States; and a belief that the balance of world power was shifting to the advantage of the Socialist camp.

Having brought the Soviet Union out of the Stalinist isolation and inertia, Khrushchev launched a vigorous diplomatic campaign carried out by means of nuclear blackmail (in the form of exploitation of overstated strategic capabilities for political gains), by keeping Soviet policy and diplomacy constantly engaged and flexible, and by committing Soviet policy and prestige to situations which were very risky and from which he had to extricate himself under Western pressure or because the West had called his bluff. Khrushchev also

accelerated the erosive forces within the Communist bloc, through his vulgarization of Communist ideology, his tolerance of simplistic economism, and his de-Stalinization campaign, on the one hand, and through his dangerous political-military gambles, on the other. These actions resulted in lessened credibility in Soviet ability and intent to police its own zone of influence.

In sum, Khrushchev's foreign policies were designed to keep the West deterred as a result of asserted Soviet strategic superiority, while retaining and consolidating Soviet gains since World War II. At home, he sought to generate an ambitious economic resurgence which would satisfy rising consumer demands and overcome the perennial weaknesses of the economy. The results of his policies, however, were disappointing--the West tested the credibility of his nuclear diplomacy and clearly showed the world the hollowness of Soviet militancy. Within the Communist bloc, the former satellites pressed for greater freedom and autonomy, and obtained a large measure of both; and China turned from an ally into an enemy. While domestically, his sweeping reforms confused the planners and alienated the bureaucrats and most of the military and Soviet party leaders by undercutting their traditional powers and privileges.⁴ Khrushchev tried to accomplish too much with too little, hoping to fill the gap between capabilities and objectives with a deceitful, verbal overkill. His policy reflected his overcommitment to domestic, intra-bloc, and international objectives; his modus operandi became a hit-and-run process, which tried to accommodate some objectives at one time and others at another time. It was a daring, nerve-racking venture, which failed.

4. For details, see the author's "Die Position der Sowjetarmee vor und nach dem Sturz Chruschtschows (The Position of the Soviet Army Before and After Khrushchev's Ouster)," Osteuropa (October 1966).

B. THE NEW REGIME'S POLICY STYLE

The new regime, headed by Premier Alexei Kosygin and Party Secretary Leonid Brezhnev, was faced with a serious situation brought about by Khrushchev's methods and the substance of his policies. First, the credibility of Soviet military capabilities was severely undermined; such a disbelief was a dangerous precedent which might embolden a potential opponent to challenge the Soviet Union. Second, Khrushchev's erratic and "harebrained" diplomatic behavior not only disturbed international politics and motivated the United States to remain prepared and militant, but it also compromised Soviet policy and international influence. Third, his overcommitment to varied policy objectives often negated planning policies, which were convulsed by massive and sudden "grand designs." To the new regime, the antidote to this malaise of bombast, irresponsible claims, erratic political behavior, and confusing crash planning seemed to be sobriety, pragmatism, and the establishment of credibility through the attainment of conspicuous capabilities to match objectives and declaratory policy.

The new regime's policy formula indeed struck this note: "We are striving to make our diplomacy vigorous and active and at the same time we exhibit flexibility and caution."⁵ It was to be a policy of "opposing aggressive imperialist circles without allowing itself any sabre-rattling or irresponsible talk ... [designed to] soberly assess the situation and to find a precise orientation in it under all circumstances, favorable as well as adverse [and] to weigh, in a sober manner, the possibilities which we have [rather than to] succumb to illusions."⁶ It was to be also a policy based on a "business-like approach" to a new pragmatism where "a mere bookish knowledge of Marxism does not supply the confidence possible for working policy."⁷

5. Leonid Brezhnev, in a speech on foreign policy, published in Pravda, September 30, 1965.

6. Editorial in the Central Committee main organ, Kommunist, No. 12 (August 1965).

7. Ibid.

The problem of credibility, relevant to both external and internal politics, has been a central concern and one repeatedly addressed in recent years. For example, in addressing military leaders in the Kremlin in July 1966, Brezhnev stated:

We are compelled once more to point to our country's military might not for the sake of boasting or to intimidate anybody. We mention it primarily because this is the real state of affairs at the present time. Our superiority with respect to the latest types of military equipment is a fact, comrades, and facts are stubborn things. This topic must also be broached because some generals and even responsible US state figures flying into a passion thoughtlessly and rashly maintain the opposite viewpoint ⁸

A month later another article appeared in Pravda, cautioning that:

Communists, who value confidence of the party and the people, cannot hurl their words to the winds and have no right to promise that which cannot be honored. Our party has levelled sharp criticism against certain features of bragging and against the irresponsible promises that are greatly inconsistent with actual possibilities. Words and promises make it mandatory on one to act on them.⁹

The new regime's policy was, therefore, one of restraint, prudence, and continuing détente, based on a deterrent relation with the United States and on pragmatic, balanced economic planning at home. It could be described as a "speak-softly-while-you-are-getting-a-big-stick" policy. The regime's appraisal of the nature of US strategic deterrence convinced them of the need to avoid (a) provocations that would lead the superior adversary to war, (b) situations that could escalate into a major war, and (c) either-or situations in which the alternatives would be war or severe concessions.

Although the new regime significantly transformed the method and style of Soviet policy, it did retain at least two of Khrushchev's underlying assumptions regarding the political and strategic environment of the Soviet state: that nuclear war would be a catastrophe

8. Leonid Brezhnev, Pravda, July 2, 1966.

9. V. Stepanov, Pravda, August 10, 1966.

for both the East and West and that a policy of détente and nuclear deterrence is essential, since it is the primary mechanism for preventing unprovoked nuclear attacks and for regulating the whole range of US-Soviet relations, thereby leading to prudence and stability. This policy of détente and deterrence, however, is not seen as a constraint on political or military initiatives in areas which are presumed to be of less than vital interest to the other superpowers, as long as they are conducted according to the "rules of the game."

C. DISAGREEMENT OVER THE NEW POLICIES

The new regime found support for its policies among the broad elements of the Soviet populace, the managerial-technocratic circles, the governmental bureaucracies, and the East European allies. However, these policies generated growing alienation and dissent among several important groups in the Soviet Union--the younger, sophisticated professionals in the military; the second generation apparatchiki in the upper echelons of the Party; and the conservative, hard-line elements in the Party and the military. At the center of this disagreement is less a naked power struggle, usual in the palace politics of the Kremlin (although this factor is not to be dismissed completely),¹⁰ but more of a sharp difference in the perception and in the appreciation of the risks and opportunities embodied in future Soviet policies.

10. There was extensive speculation in the West on the presumed relation between prominent Party members like Shelepin, Suslov, and Egorichev and the hard-line elements in the military, with the former goading the latter to denigrate the regime's policies. While there is hardly any evidence available to directly link these groups, and while one is reluctant to employ kremlinological devices to establish such a link, one cannot dismiss the strong likelihood of it, given the long history of clique-politics in the Kremlin and the unstable nature of the governing authority of the Party leadership, which is not grounded in either constitutional or legal provisions for the transfer of power.

The dissenters disagree with the regime on several basic issues. They maintain that a formal rejection of the political utility of nuclear war is dangerous to morale, negates certain central ideological tenets, forces a policy of fatalism and passivism, and undermines both the rationale for allocating larger resources and authority to the defense establishment and the preparedness necessary in the event of an actual nuclear war. They contend that the "capitalist world," far from observing the "rules of the game" of détente and deterrence, arrogantly continues to use its vast power, brags about its strategic superiority, denigrates Soviet capabilities and resolution to use them, and tends to act as the more super of the superpowers. Furthermore, they add, a policy of stability and prudence serves the interests of the capitalists by easing their concern about Soviet intentions and capabilities, and by providing them with a broad margin of initiative to pursue "adventurist" policies in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Finally, they claim that a policy of détente and deterrence erodes the ideological cohesiveness of the Communist world, undermines the revolutionary zeal of the Third Areas, and fosters "embourgeoisment" of Socialist societies.

These differences in policy perceptions, and in basic institutional and personal interests, have seriously affected Soviet politics in the past two years. The conflict underscores a central dilemma of the superpowers--their political leaders seek new policy styles and methods in order to stabilize their relations, while domestic critics find it politically useful to capitalize on such moderate and "weak" policies and to urge instead a sharper and more militant course.

In the Soviet Union, high-ranking military officers appear to be the main public spokesmen for the dissenters; their vital interests would suffer the most in the long run, and their arguments can be couched in the proper "patriotic" and professional terms. They may even be actually concerned with some dire consequences of the regime's policies, to the extent that they are willing to face both a confrontation with the Party leaders and the possible consequences of

such public dissent. Moreover, it is assumed that the military's arguments reflect the views of high-ranking Party members who gave tacit, or even active, support to the military, seeing in the dissent a possible wedge for prying apart the regime.

Although powerful members of the ruling Party elite are believed to have dissented from the regime's new policy direction, this Paper will concentrate on the arguments of the most vocal and powerful dissenters among the military. The regime's new policy style and direction affect most directly the Soviet military establishment, which has traditionally thrived in a milieu of high tension and of militant foreign policy; the military critics show deep concern with the basic assumptions on strategy and deterrence and on the interactions between policy and strategy which underlie the regime's new policy direction; and the military critics have publicly evaluated and addressed a number of sensitive and important policy considerations and, in the process, have enabled Western analysts to obtain a clearer picture of the policy changes in the Soviet state since the ouster of Khrushchev.

The following analysis of policy disagreement between regime spokesmen and their critics in the military is not intended to indicate a "crisis situation" in the Soviet Union, nor is it intended to convey any "sensational" evidence of dramatic Party-military struggles. Its intent, rather, is to describe and to analyze a process of institutional adjustment of interests and views, and in effect, to illuminate some of the processes which underlie policy formulation in the Soviet Union.

III

INTERNAL DISSENT TO NEW POLICY

A. BACKGROUND OF THE CURRENT POLICY DISAGREEMENTS

Sometime in 1959, Khrushchev and the Party Presidium decided to shift Soviet strategic doctrine from its previous, rather ambivalent state to one firmly ground in a policy of nuclear deterrence; the formal promulgation of this policy was made in January 1960.¹ The reasoning underlying the new strategic doctrine and the policies resulting from it was based on the belief of Khrushchev and other Party leaders that a war with the United States was highly unlikely, on the rising needs and demands of the domestic Soviet sector, and on the decreasing utility and burdensome costs of large, standing conventional forces. The new strategic policy provided for a sharp reduction of Soviet conventional "theatre" capabilities; for a significant upgrading of the role, mission, and allocations of strategic missile forces; and for a shift of the burden for the conventional "theatre" capabilities from the truncated Soviet conventional forces to the East European armed forces of the now revitalized Warsaw Treaty Organization, which remained firmly under Soviet control.

The new strategic policy stunned the Soviet military establishment. Not only was this establishment to be truncated and a quarter of a million officers summarily dismissed to an unpromising civilian environment, but more importantly, the new policy, as the military saw it, put all Soviet strategic eggs into one basket--the demands of a world nuclear war. Only limited capabilities would be available to deal with lesser conflicts. Moreover, while Soviet strategic

1. Reported in Pravda, January 14, 1960.

doctrine was becoming increasingly rigid along these lines, the United States was developing a range of forces, weapons systems, and doctrines capable of dealing with various levels of hostilities and of retaining an important flexibility of response.

By 1961, the array of dissenting opinions within the military gave way to several crystallized positions, which reflected both the specific interests of their adherents and the realignments caused by the shock of the new doctrine. Each group had its spokesmen:

(1) The "loyalists" among the military were spokesmen for the Party leadership; they accepted the new doctrine and policies and actively championed them by denigrating the opposition as "old fogeys" who had not learned the lessons of the nuclear age and who made a fetish of command experience and orthodoxy. The loyalists' credo was that nuclear war will be radically different from any previous war, consequently old military doctrines and processes are obsolete. Believing that nuclear war had ceased to be politically and militarily meaningful, they placed strong faith in deterrence policies and asserted that political wisdom rather than military expertise should be given the decisive role in prewar and wartime processes. They also maintained that resources allocated by the Party to the defense establishment were quite adequate to its needs.²

(2) The "professionals" among the military were spokesmen for the large majority of the officers and the community of strategists; they accepted the premises of the new doctrine, but strongly rejected those of its implications which negatively affected both their special interests and the larger security interests of the state. While agreeing with the loyalists that a new war will be radically different from any preceding one, because of its speed and destructiveness, they did not agree with them on issues regarding the size, role, mission, and effectiveness of the conventional forces. They therefore maintained, in a protracted argument which is now commonplace in Soviet military literature, that mass armies are still necessary in a nuclear war; that

2. The "loyalists" included Marshals Biriuzov, Eremenko, Moskalenko, and Sudets and General S. Kozlov, along with numerous other officers.

overreliance on mechanisms and policies for preventing war, such as nuclear deterrence, is dangerous, since it does not prepare the country adequately for fighting a war; that the needs of the defense establishment must be given priority in national planning, subordinating domestic economic objectives to defense needs, which require larger allocations of resources than are now being received; and that in matters concerning the complexities of modern war, the military experts are, in the final analysis, more competent to make judgments than "political dilettantes."³

(3) The "centrists" among the military were spokesmen for a group of high-ranking officers who sought to conciliate both strategic schools (which involved most members of the High Command) while arguing the need for a more balanced strategic doctrine. The "centrists" failure to adhere faithfully to Khrushchev's position alienated them from his good graces.⁴

While the advocates of the politically safe, loyalist views pressed their case with sharpness and self-assurance, the advocates of the less popular views continued a rear-guard action from a position of political disadvantage. Their dissent reached its zenith sometime after the Cuban Missile Crisis when Khrushchev, through a variety of measures, managed to shift the burden of that fiasco from his shoulders to the military and to re-establish his firm authority in the defense community.⁵ Subsequently, Marshal Zakharov was removed from his post as Chief of the General Staff, Malinovskii's authority as Minister of Defense was undermined by a strengthening of the political controls in the central administrations of the Ministry and the Military Councils, the fervent "loyalist" Marshal Biriuzov was promoted to Chief of the General Staff, and the military's freedom to voice publicly its opposition to policy was curtailed.

3. The "professionals" included Marshals Zakharov and Rotmistrov and numerous other generals and colonels.

4. The "centrists" included Marshals Malinovskii, Grechko, Krylov, Iakubovskii, and Sokolovskii and numerous generals.

5. See Kolkowicz, Conflicts in Soviet Party-Military Relations: 1962-1963, RAND Corporation, RM-3760 (Santa Monica, August 1963).

Having reasserted his authority, Khrushchev seems to have granted the military minor concessions, mainly as a token acknowledgment of some of their grievances. However, the military community continued to smart from having to shoulder the burden of responsibility for the Cuban fiasco, from having its authority and allocations curtailed, while the domestic sector was given overriding priority in national planning activities, and from Khrushchev's power-plays in the Ministry of Defense. While the "professionals," and to some extent the "centrists," were forced to remain silent, the "loyalists," led by Chief of Staff Marshal Biriuzov, continued to dominate the military scene and to reiterate forcefully the basic principles of Khrushchev's strategic policy.

B. REGIME VERSUS DISSENTERS: A CLASH OF VALUES, INTERESTS, AND PERCEPTIONS

There is little doubt that members of the Soviet military played an important role in the plot to oust Khrushchev, and that they expected some payoff for their tacit or active role in the palace coup.⁶ The dissenters in the military undoubtedly anticipated significant accommodations from the new regime. Indeed, one of the regime's initial acts was to reinstate Marshal Zakharov as Chief of the General Staff, succeeding the "loyalist" Biriuzov, who died in an airplane accident. The regime made several other gestures which were intended to appease the military. They acceded to demands that a more judicious historical role be given the military in Party-sponsored writings on World War II; they forced past critics of the military to recant; and they "rehabilitated" such war heroes as Marshal Zhukov, who had suffered disgrace under Khrushchev.⁷

6. See Kolkowicz, "Military and the Ouster of Khrushchev," Soviet Military and the Communist Party (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967).

7. Ibid., pp. 214-219.

These concessions, however, failed fully to satisfy the military. Undoubtedly, the continued dissatisfaction was caused by concern over the Party's moderate and conciliatory foreign policy, by the subordination of strategy to Party initiative and control, by the inadequacy of allocations to the defense sector, and by the predominance of economic pragmatism in the Party's planning policies.

For several months after Khrushchev's ouster, the military refrained from public criticism of the new regime, tolerating for a time the policy statements which sought to establish the principle of continuity and stability in Soviet politics and which emphasized the predominance of domestic programs in Soviet planning policy. Brezhnev's remarks were typical of many Party statements of that period:

The national economy must develop harmoniously, it must serve the interests of achieving the highest productivity of social labor and constant rise in the people's living standards. The development of heavy industry must be subordinated to the requirements of constant technical re-equipment of the whole economy ⁸

Brezhnev also reiterated the theme that "the Soviet people eagerly desire the relaxation of international tension, that the relaxation that has begun may continue, and that solutions be found for the fundamental international problems."⁹

1. The Dissenters Assert Their Views

In February 1965, however, the military spokesmen began to restate their position and to assert publicly a more forceful role. Significantly, the opening shot in the military's campaign was fired by the newly reinstated Chief of the General Staff, Marshal Zakharov. In a vitriolic broadside, the Marshal not only sought to settle the military's score with the deposed Khrushchev, but more importantly, he set forth the military's position: "Subjectivism [i.e., arbitrary interference by inexperienced political leaders into professional

8. Speech on the occasion of the 47th anniversary of the October Revolution, Pravda, November 7, 1964.

9. Ibid.

affairs] is dangerous in any activity, it is particularly dangerous in military affairs where the problems of the country's defense ... are being solved; ... it is the sacred duty of the military cadres to protect these military sciences from everything which detracts from their authority; and ... any subjective approach to military problems, harebrained plans, and superficiality can be very expensive and can cause irreparable damage."¹⁰

Zakharov cited Lenin, several weeks later, to bolster his arguments for larger allocations to the defense industries and the armed forces:

... the Soviet people have in the past not for a moment failed to carry out V. I. Lenin's legacy: always to be on the alert, cherishing the defense capabilities of our country and our Red Army as the apple of our eye.¹¹

He also employed historical analogy to make the case for "powerful heavy industry--the foundation of foundations of the whole socialist economy and the firm defense capabilities of our country."¹²

In March, another prominent military leader, Marshal Sokolovskii, continued the argument against dangerous intervention by inexperienced Party leaders in matters of defense.¹³ His objective was to emphasize the need both for a more prominent military voice in matters of defense policy and for greater authority for the military in developing strategy and military doctrine. Sokolovskii asserted that massive armies were still needed in nuclear war, that doctrines and preparations for limited wars had become widely evident in the West, and that the likelihood of surprise attack had increased in recent years.

10. Krasnaia zvezda, February 4, 1965.

11. Krasnaia zvezda, February 23, 1965.

12. Ibid.

13. Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal, No. 3 (March 1965). Sokolovskii has gained widespread acclaim in connection with his book, Voennaia strategiya (Military Strategy), (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1962), which became accepted as the most authoritative and definitive treatment of Soviet strategic doctrine.

The discussion of allocations for defense reflected sharp disagreement among the members of the Politburo (Presidium). One group (including Podgorny, Polianskii, and Kirilenko) favored a continued priority for resource allocations for internal economic development. Another group (including Suslov and Shelepin) sided more emphatically with the military's insistence on further strengthening of the Soviet defense establishment.

Thus, in May 1965, Podgorny stated that "priority development of heavy industry and strengthening of defense"¹⁴ were not realistic, since they would restrict consumer welfare and cause serious material sacrifices by the population. In contrast, Suslov asserted that, in view of the deteriorating world situation, the Soviet Union must make "material sacrifices" and must ensure that the Soviet defense establishment is maintained at the "highest levels."¹⁵ And Shelepin warned that:

... the Soviet Union has no right to ignore the constantly threatening danger of a new military attack by the predatory imperialists and that, accordingly, the Soviet government is devoting untiring attention to the further strengthening of the country's defense capabilities.¹⁶

In July, when he addressed an audience of officers in the Kremlin, Brezhnev clearly sought to ease the military's concerns:¹⁷

In view of the dangerous intrigues by the enemies of peace, our concern for further strengthening our defense and consolidating the security of the entire socialist comity acquires paramount importance. History has taught us that the stronger our army is,

14. Pravda, May 22, 1965.

15. Pravda, June 5, 1965. For detailed treatment of these discussions, see T. W. Wolfe, The Soviet Military Scene: Institutional and Defense Policy Considerations, RAND Corporation, RM-4913 (Santa Monica, July 1966).

16. Pravda, July 25, 1965.

17. "Radio Moscow," July 3, 1965.

the more watchful we are, the stronger the peace on our frontiers and earth. We have learned that well.

He further sought to assure the military that a policy of détente and deterrence in no way affects the demands and needs of the military; however, he cautioned that such a buildup of defense capabilities must proceed carefully:

Our devotion to the cause of peace in no way affects our country's defense. In fact it is indicative of our very attentive and solicitous attitude toward the country's defense ... [but] preparation for defense does not require sudden burst of activity nor a war cry, but long, intensive, tenacious and disciplined work on a mass scale.

And finally, Brezhnev hinted that an ABM capability was considered as a new weapon system in the Soviet defense schema: "We have achieved important successes in creating anti-missile defenses, and it has been possible recently to make important steps which sharply increase their effectiveness."

2. Policy Debate by Proxy

Far from being persuaded, the military intensified its public criticism of the regime's defense policies. While earlier arguments clearly represented the military's institutional interests, and while they sought to put the Party leadership on notice, they refrained from dealing with the more profound and sensitive issues. These issues were subsequently raised by several colonels whose demands for more resources and a more active role in shaping defense policy were, in part, unprecedented in their sharpness and directness and in their scathing public questioning of vital and basic Party axioms. There is good reason to believe that the colonels enjoyed tacit or direct support among ranking-members of the High Command, who found it politic to remain silent and to watch the developments. This, therefore, was to become a policy discussion by proxy, with the colonels serving as spokesmen for the generals and marshals.

The most sweeping and militant indictments of defense policy were published in September 1965, by Lt. Col. Ye Rybkin.¹⁸ Although many other critical articles and editorials were published, it is useful to examine Rybkin's article in detail, since it seems to have served as the model for the others.

In the article, Colonel Rybkin sought to negate the distinction between nuclear war and wars of the past, and thereby undermine the Party's argument that the revolutionary new characteristics of nuclear war make it mandatory for political leaders to assume both political and strategic direction of the defense establishment during peace and war. He rejected any unilateral Soviet acquiescence to the idea that nuclear war has lost its political and military utility and rationality, and thereby rejected the Party's position that a minimum-deterrence policy is adequate to its defense needs and makes demands for large, all-purpose armed forces meaningless. Also, he severely questioned the Soviet Party leaders' assumptions about the moderation of many Western leaders by pointing at dangerous, "adventuristic" Western intervention policies and by asserting that such an assumption is meaningless anyway, since the threat of a nuclear war by accident has grown immeasurably. Finally, he rejected ideologically based, soothing political formulas which maintain that the innate social and spiritual strength of the Communist countries assures their superiority over the decadent West and is to be looked upon as a "weapon."

18. "On the Essence of a Nuclear-Missile War," Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil, No. 17 (September 1965), pp. 50-56. This author extensively analyzed this article in the winter of 1965-66, stressing its importance and the unprecedented sharpness of its challenge to Party policies. See Kolkowicz, The Red Hawks on the Rationality of Nuclear War, RAND Corporation, RM-4899, (Santa Monica, March 1966). Interestingly, this article by Rybkin subsequently received widespread attention in the Soviet Union in 1966 and 1967, and forced the Party to condemn it publicly on several occasions, treating it as the most repugnant form of criticism of Party policies.

Rybkin refuted the ideas of the most prominent Soviet strategic thinker, General Talenskii, who had supported both regimes' policies of rejecting nuclear war as madness. In May 1965, Talenskii had written:

In our time there is no more dangerous illusion than the idea that thermonuclear war can still serve as an instrument of politics, that it is possible to achieve political aims through the use of nuclear weapons and at the same time survive, and that it is possible to find acceptable forms of nuclear war.¹⁹

Rybkin cited Talenskii and then attacked him for spreading such dangerously fatalistic doctrines: "An a priori rejection of the possibility of victory is harmful because it leads to moral disarmament, to a disbelief in victory, and to fatalism and passivity. It is necessary to wage a struggle against such views and attitudes."²⁰

After establishing that all Westerners (from the "aggressive imperialist circles" to the "moderates," the "reactionary-utopian pacifists," and all other contemptible "peace yearners") seek to

19. "Reflecting on the Last War," Mezhdunarodnaia zhizn', No. 5 (May 1965), p. 23.

20. Notice the striking similarity between Rybkin's arguments and the typical Chinese statements which follow:

War is a continuation of politics. ... The modern revisionists, Khrushchev and his like, who are scared out of their wits by the US imperialists' policy of nuclear blackmail ... extensively promote the view that atomic warfare has changed the nature of war (Xuang-ming jih-pao, August 27, 1965).

Or another Chinese line:

In the opinion of Soviet leaders the emergence of nuclear weapons has changed everything. ... [They mean] that after the emergence of nuclear weapons war is no longer a continuation of politics, there is no longer any difference between just and unjust wars This is the philosophy of willing slaves. (An official Chinese statement, "Peking Radio," in English, August 31, 1963).

"lull the vigilance" of the Communist world, Rybkin questioned the viability of nuclear deterrence, because:

... as a result of the appearance of systems that automatically trigger missile equipment, and in view of the continuing adventuristic actions of the imperialists, the danger of an "automatic" outbreak of war has increased

Rejecting the fatalistic views regarding nuclear war, Rybkin maintained that a quick victory can be obtained in a nuclear war, once the "power relationship" is favorable (i.e., when superiority is actually achieved over the adversary),²¹ and that it would not necessarily cause intolerable damage to one's society. We seemed to be arguing for a massive development program in both offensive and defensive nuclear weapons, maintaining that there are "opportunities to create and develop new means of conducting wars that are capable of reliably countering an enemy's nuclear blows."

Rybkin's position was supported by Colonel Sidel'nikov, another well-known military strategist, who invoked Lenin in demanding larger allocations for defense, strategic superiority over the adversary, and the preparation of such capabilities and reserves in peacetime, rather than frantic attempts to secure them in the course of war:

V.I. Lenin said ... even the very best army, one most loyal to the cause of the revolution, will be immediately routed by the enemy unless satisfactorily armed, supplied with provisions and trained ²²

21. The argument for strategic superiority has recently appeared in numerous Soviet military writings. The most incisive argument was made by V. Bondarenko, "Military-Technological Superiority--A Most Important Factor in the Reliable Defense of the Country," Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil, No. 17 (September 1966). For an analysis of this article, see Benjamin Lambeth, The Argument for Superiority: A New Voice in the Soviet Strategic Debates, Economic and Political Studies Division, Institute for Defense Analyses, Internal Note N-419 (R) (Arlington, Va., 1967).

22. Krasnaia zvezda, September 22, 1965.

Sidel'nikov also addressed the problem of nuclear deterrence, and indicated the fallacy of overreliance on such a policy:

One must not ignore the occasionally arising opinion of roughly the following nature: 'A world thermo-nuclear war can actually be prevented; all the peoples and all progressive forces of the earth oppose it. If so, is it necessary to maintain large armies and spend large amounts on the maintenance of armed forces?' One who reasons in this manner obviously has in mind only the possibility of preventing war and forgets or fails to observe another thing--the presence of a serious danger of a world war. The imperialist countries are stepping up the armament race, increasing their armies, and strengthening their aggressive military blocs.²³

The continuing pressure of the military in the fall and winter of 1965-1966 was aimed at the Twenty-third Party Congress, which was to be convened in February 1966. This most important Party event, which largely determines national policy and the power positions of the various Party factions, was to be the first held since Khrushchev's ouster. It was essential on this occasion that the military convince the Party leaders of their determination, of the reasonableness of their demands, and of the urgency in international affairs which required "material sacrifices" by the Soviet people.

The military continued to emphasize the "economic base of the defense capabilities," which determines the "essence of a policy and the actual essence of war,"²⁴ asserting that "the nature of a war and its success depends more than anything else on the domestic conditions of that country."²⁵ They rejected the views of bourgeois theorists, who "are glorifying the cult of the bomb, who are trying to prove that modern war has ceased to be a continuation of politics and its instrument," and who are describing such a war as "a threat to physical survival of nations and states."²⁶ Instead, they advocate

23. Ibid.

24. Colonel P. Trifonenko, Krasnaia zvezda, November 26, 1965.

25. Colonels Rybnikov and Babakov, Krasnaia zvezda, December 7, 1965.

26. Ibid.

the "important significance in the correct understanding by our cadres of the possibilities of conducting a victorious nuclear missile war ... and [of the possibilities] for an active struggle for the creation of definite capabilities for achieving victory," which necessitates the "overcoming of passive dispositions or views of certain people which border on fatalism."²⁷

The military's campaign was intensified in January. Colonel Sidel'nikov warned "That the policy and actions of the imperialists are intensifying the danger of a new world war is an indisputable truth."²⁸ Lest the point be lost on Soviet military and political audiences used to Party manipulations of weapons or equipment models for deluding Western observers, he pointedly added that "the colossal military might of imperialism has not been created to 'score a victory' over observers at military parades."²⁹ The critics did not pull their punches: "In a possible missile-nuclear war, economics will determine its course and outcome first of all and mostly by what it gives and is able to give for defense purposes before war begins, in peacetime."³⁰ However, lest such economic determinism be interpreted as minimizing the role of the military leadership, it is explained that "one understands very well that superiority of military power over the enemy does not of itself ensure victory. It gives only favorable possibilities for achieving objectives by means of effective use of military power"³¹

There was no let up in the argument for strategic superiority over the adversary. Colonel Grudinin stated that "The present day level of science and production, the superiority of one country in

27. Lt. Colonel Telyatnikov, Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil, No. 24 (December 1965).

28. Colonel I. Sidel'nikov, Krasnaia zvezda, January 28, 1966.

29. Ibid.

30. Colonel P. Trifonenko, Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil, No. 1 (January 1966).

31. Ibid.

quantity and quality of new weapons can place the opposing side in an incomparably more serious situation than was the case in the past ... because of this, winning and maintaining technical superiority over any probable enemy, while there is still peace, is today of decisive importance." Consequently, "he who does not learn to defeat his enemy in peacetime is doomed to defeat in war."³²

3. Special-Interest Groups Within the Military

The arguments and demands voiced by the military fall into two categories--those which reflect a general military interest in larger allocations and authority for the total military establishment, and those which reflect specific attitudes and interests of various groups within the military. The public discussions of defense policies, as outlined in the preceding section, represented, for the most part, the interests of the total military establishment, while the discussions which follow reflect inter-service bias among the several components of the armed forces.

One special-interest group argued for increased conventional forces, coupled with an acceptance of the Party's position regarding the viability of nuclear deterrence:

The Soviet Armed Forces must be ready to guarantee destruction of the enemy not only when nuclear weapons are used, but also when only conventional weapons are used.³³

The proponents of this view stressed the need for "harmonious development and improvement based on the newest weapons and equipment of the Air Defense Forces of the Country, the Ground Forces, the Air Forces and the Navy," since, in the event of war, "victory will be brought about by the combined efforts of all services of the Armed Forces."³⁴

32. Colonel I. Grudinin, Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil, No. 3 (February 1966).

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

Another argument reflected a bias toward offensive strategy and weapons systems. In his book, Military Strategy, Marshal Sokolovskii rejected the traditional Soviet adherence to strategic defense:

The adoption of the strategic defensive as a basic form of strategic operations in modern warfare means the adoption of a defensive strategy as a whole: in essence, the translation of the situation at the beginning of the Great Patriotic War into present-day conditions.³⁵

This attitude was stated more forcefully by Col. Krupnov in January 1966: "... in modern war in which most modern means of attack are used, only the attack is used, and only the attack can achieve the routing of the enemy and victory over him" While admitting that "even in such a war defense is indispensable," he maintained that presently "it is a different matter" because the "very nature of both attack and defense has now essentially changed and ... [because] a trend has become noticeable which combines these two types of combat operations." Showing his bias toward offensive strategy and weapons, he went on to say that "a strategic missile strike, for example, combines the functions of attack and defense simultaneously."³⁶

A third type of argument reflected strong support for a strategic defensive capability. However, supporters of this view took great care to assure other strategists, who abhor the notion of reverting to a defensive strategic posture, that the argument for a strategic defensive capability does not mean a transformation of Soviet strategy as a whole from an offensive to a defensive posture. The most concise argument for this type of defense posture was made public earlier this year:

... Soviet military doctrine does not discard all accounts and possibilities of defense. In this respect it can be emphasized that we recognize not passive defense but active defense built on a new technical base, a defense called into being by the appearance of contemporary means of conducting war

35. Sokolovskii, op. cit., p. 403.

36. Krasnaia zvezda, January 7, 1966.

and directed primarily against the enemy's means of nuclear attack. Such defense acquires an extraordinary importance and strategic significance. But this cannot be confused with or identified as an offensive strategy.³⁷

C. TACTICS OF PERSUASION: SELECTED ACCOMMODATION

This diffusion of the military's position vis-a-vis the regime undoubtedly helped the regime to assert its position and to deal with the military in a selective, arbitrary manner. The proceedings at the Twenty-third Party Congress, and subsequent developments, indeed support such an assumption and lend credibility to speculations that a compromise was struck between the proponents of intensified domestic allocations and the proponents of increased allocations to the defense sector. It is also speculated that this compromise failed to satisfy the more militant elements in the armed forces, although it did satisfy some important members of the High Command, who then closed ranks with the Party leadership.

By reconstructing events of the past two years, one can venture the hypothesis that the compromise included plans to: proceed with an accelerated program for producing offensive strategic weapons (ICBM's); accelerate a limited ABM program; continue the present levels of conventional forces, while improving equipment and weapons; retain tight control within the Politburo leadership over the strategic missile forces; continue the policy of nuclear deterrence, détente, and stable relations with the United States; reject any crash-program proposals for across-the-board expansion of military capabilities; and maintain wide authority in managing the affairs of the defense establishment. This hypothesis will be implicitly examined in the remainder of this section.

Of course, the introduction of a deployed ABM capability raised the question of possible destabilization of strategic relations with the United States, and there was undoubtedly much soul searching

37. Lt. General I. Zaviyalov, "On Soviet Military Doctrine," Krasnaia zvezda, March 30, 1967.

before such a decision was made. However, Soviet statements on the purely defensive nature of these weapons sounded persuasive enough in their own terms, and it is likely that many people did not consider this measure to be an unbalancing factor.

In the months after the Congress (spring 1966), there was a noticeable abatement of the middle-rank military vituperation and anti-Party assertiveness, while a number of high-ranking military leaders began to review publicly the achievements of the Congress and to raise some basic questions on the relation of political and military authority in defense planning. What emerges from these public writings is a profound concern with the provisions in the final version of the Five-Year Plan for resource allocations to defense industries and to the armed forces, and an apprehension over the Party leaders' intentions to control all major decision making in the defense establishment.³⁸

Several weeks after the Congress, the Chief of the General Staff, Marshal Zakharov, reviewed the results of the proceedings in a "Report to the Armed Forces Concerning the Work of the 23rd Party Congress."³⁹ Zakharov stated that the "Congress reviewed and approved the Directives for the Five-Year Plan for Development of the Economy of the USSR for 1966-1970." He asserted that the "principal economic task of the Five-Year Plan ... amounts to providing for great further growth in industry and high stable tempos of development: in agriculture, in technology, and in science for the purposes of "achieving a significant rise in the living standards of the people and a more complete satisfaction of the material and cultural demands of all Soviet people." He further asserted that "an important aspect of

38. Indeed, their concerns seem to reflect some internal disagreement on these issues among the Party leadership, because as of this writing, more than a year later, the Five-Year Plan has not yet been made public; moreover, the Party has in recent months firmly asserted its authority in the defense establishment.

39. Tekhnika i vooruzhenie, No. 4 (Moscow, 1966).

the new Five-Year Plan is the fundamental drawing-close together of the rates of growth in the output of means of production (Group 'A') and consumer goods (Group 'B') ... which will make it possible to direct increasingly greater resources toward the development of branches of industry which produce consumer goods."⁴⁰

Next, Zakharov dwelled at length on the importance of heavy industry to the defense capabilities of the country, emphasizing that only proper and adequate resource allocations to defense needs assure survivability and victory in war. He sought to assure his readers that the ever-expanding Soviet economy and modernization of means of production would make it possible to allocate necessary resources to defense needs in the future.

Zakharov's report seems to have sought a "balanced" approach and a reassuring note, as far as the military's interests were concerned; however, it also contained a note of apprehension, undoubtedly created by the overriding emphasis on domestic objectives in the Congress proceedings and in the Five-Year Plan. Essentially, the Marshal was inclined to wait and see if the Party leaders would live up to their commitments to the military.

The military's apprehension about the regime's intentions and policies was reflected in a more direct and persuasive way by Marshal Sokolovskii. The Marshal was aware of the Party leaders' sensitivity to public questioning of their ability and "legitimacy" to exercise

40. Marshal Zakharov's unspecific references to the ratio of consumer vs heavy industry allocations (Groups "B" and "A") were clarified somewhat about a year later, in an article in Krasnaia zvezda of July 14, 1967. The author, economist P. Sokolov, cited statistics on the changes in the rate of growth of means of production and consumer goods:

Percent rate of growth of Group "A" during 1961-1965:	58
Group "B" during 1961-1965:	36
Group "A" during 1966-1970:	49-52
Group "B" during 1966-1970:	43-46

While these changes in the rate of growth will not seriously affect the absolute and actual ratio of investments and production of both groups in the next Five-Year Plan, they nevertheless indicate the regime's desire to shift planning emphasis from Group "A" to "B."

full authority over such vital functions as strategic planning and direct control of strategic forces. Nevertheless, he questioned the wisdom of a political monopoly over decisive strategic functions that allowed only minor participating authority of military experts.⁴¹

Sokolovskii maintained that "the most important task of strategy is strategic planning" and that "the experience of history teaches that the successful conduct of military operations, particularly in the initial period, depends to a considerable degree upon the art of strategic planning." In order to indicate clearly his misgivings over the usurpation of this central function by Party leaders, a function which demands the highest expertise and professional training, the Marshal pointed to the major Western states, emphasizing the fact that this central strategic planning function is retained there by military experts: "It is well known that great importance attaches to questions of strategic planning within the imperialist countries." The article stressed that in the United States, strategic planning is conducted by the National Security Council, under the nominal leadership of the President, but

the direct leadership over the National Security Council is exercised by a committee of the chief of staff; this body carries out planning for the utilization of strategic nuclear forces in a world nuclear war, conventional forces in nuclear and local wars, and also coordinates the plans of military blocs in various theatres.

Sokolovskii also pointed out that strategic planning in NATO, and in West Germany, is in the hands of military officers. He reiterated the fact that the "planning of military operations has now become a very complicated task" and includes such vital functions as decisions on "the composition of the armed forces for peacetime and especially

41. The article was co-authored by Sokolovskii and Major General Cherednichenko, in Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil, No. 7 (April 1966). This issue was broached recently by Defense Minister Grechko in an article in Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil (No. 20, 1967) in which he referred to the need for a supreme commanding organ in wartime. Some analysts have interpreted his statements as a political move in support of Brezhnev's desire to obtain the title and functions of Supreme Commander, which were held by Stalin and Khrushchev.

for wartime" and on the establishment of proper proportions of necessary reserves for the various branches of the armed forces and for various strategic objectives.

While Zakharov and Sokolovskii continued to be concerned with the regime's intentions and policies, others in the military seem to have been swayed enough to fall into line. Notable among the latter were the ailing Defense Minister Malinovskii and the man who would succeed him, Marshal Grechko. After the Congress, Grechko asserted that "at present our country's defense capabilities are at a level which allows the Soviet people to pursue calmly their daily activities."⁴² Presumably, the defection of some prominent members of the High Command was achieved as a result of intensive personal politics and accommodations to career interests; whatever the reason, the regime felt its position strengthened enough to pursue a firmer policy toward the military. Gradually other military leaders began to shift their public views.⁴³ However, the political leaders still refrained from pressing their position too hard, seeking instead to assure the military of the Party's concern for its views and interests. This attitude was reflected in Brezhnev's address to assembled officers in the Kremlin in July⁴⁴ in which he sought to put the military at ease, while showing irritation with the continuing Western underestimation of growing Soviet military capabilities.

The military establishment also began to reverse its critical attitude toward the Party's defense policies, and falling into step with the Party's declaratory policy, reprimanded the more outspoken critics in its midst.⁴⁵

42. Krasnaia zvezda, February 23, 1966.

43. General of the Army V. Ivanov, Major General A. Ovsiannikov, and Colonel M. Galkin, Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil, No. 12 (1966).

44. Pravda, July 2, 1966.

45. In an interesting footnote to the affair, Lt. Colonel Rybkin, the sharp critic of sacred Party axioms, and a strong advocate of the "Chinese line," was demoted in rank after he had been promoted to full colonelcy. He was also publicly rebuked for his "erroneous" views.

In November, the military dissenters were lectured by the respected General Lomov on the reasons for Party supremacy in the defense establishment and on the need to submit to its policies:

If one answers the question of why the leadership of the CPSU stands out as the basis of construction of the Soviet Armed Forces, one can say with full justification: because it is through this very leadership that there flows into our army and navy the might of the socialist economy It holds in its hands all the levers of policy in the state and ... determines the task for strengthening the defense of our country.⁴⁶

The Central Committee Plenum, which met in secrecy in Moscow on December 12 and 13, did not make public its proceedings, but subsequent editorial comments in Soviet papers lead one to believe that it dealt with the acute problem of the Five-Year Plan and allocations to the defense establishment. The Plenum also seems to have reaffirmed the Brezhnev-Kosygin policy of "firmness of principle and at the same time the flexibility of line of the CPSU Central Committee which gives our policy the opportunity to take into account all new occurrences in international development and to adapt quickly and wisely to the demands of life."⁴⁷ On the crucial question of allocations, there still seems to have been some profound disagreement, and as a result, the Plan has not yet been made public. The Plenum, however, seems to have achieved a new modus vivendi with the High Command, and forcefully asserted the Party's position in the defense establishment.

D. THE REGIME ASSERTS ITS AUTHORITY

The Party's "get tough" policy toward the military was motivated by several vital concerns. First, the military's public criticism of state policy created an undesired, dissonant voice, which could

46. Colonel General N. Lomov, Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil, No. 22 (November 1966).

47. Pravda editorial, December 15, 1966.

have raised questions about the regime's control and management of its affairs. Second, the possible effects in the West of such derogation of the regime's policy line could undermine the Party leaders' efforts to seek reasonable stability in superpower relations. Third, the military's search for a larger voice in defense policy, and its striking self-assertiveness, was a threatening precedent which had to be negated. The Party leaders undoubtedly feared that the "irresponsible" militancy of the officers, coupled with criticism of the inadequacy of Soviet defenses, might provoke further Western disbelief in Soviet claims to military progress and, at the same time, evoke concern over likely adventuristic moves by the Soviet military.

The Party's response to the military's criticisms ranged over very important and sensitive issues, such as the supremacy of the Party in all military affairs, the need for submission to such Party direction, the misconceptions by the military of the strategic-political underpinnings of Soviet policy, and the dangers of leaving strategic planning and authority solely in military hands.⁴⁸ The regime's ability to implement the new policy toward the military was strengthened by certain related international developments involving Western concerns with Soviet deployment of ABM weapons (see page 41 for a discussion of this point.)

In January 1967, after Brezhnev had delineated the new Party line at the December Plenum of the Central Committee, a Party spokesman criticized the officers, at great length, for their misguided militancy and for misunderstanding the complexities of nuclear war.⁴⁹

48. It is relevant to recall here another recent incident of Party-military disagreement on the conduct of foreign policy. In the aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Party had to contend with military dissatisfaction with its handling of that affair. The Party, at the time had to resort to public condemnation of such dangerous military attitudes and views as "...our diplomacy sometimes very effectively spoils the results of military victories." The Party's answer was to reaffirm "the decisive role of the Party and its Central Committee in matters connected with the conduct of war," and to invoke Lenin in asserting its case: "Our diplomacy is subordinated to the Central Committee and will never spoil our victories." (Interview with Marshal Chuikov, Krasnaia zvezda, November 17, 1962).

49. Major General V. Zemskov, Krasnaia zvezda, January 5, 1967.

Major General Zemskov admonished the officers that the "Communist Party ... directs all matters concerning the military organization in our country and all matters concerning the development of the armed forces. ... Attempts to divorce politics from war and to prove that in a modern war the political leadership has possibly lost its role have been decisively refuted by logic ... the time is long past when a general could direct his troops while standing on a hill." Furthermore, he continued, "Marxists-Leninists do not assign the roles of generals absolute importance ... [and, now quoting from Engels,] the influence of brilliant generals was even at best limited to adapting the method of warfare to new weapons and new forms of combat."

The General then lectured the officers on the specific reasons for political supremacy in all matters of defense. First, since a world war would "constitute a decisive clash of two diametrically opposed systems, [it will be of vital importance] to determine the political objectives of the war [which] is impossible without political leadership." Second, "a missile-nuclear war will be a war of coalitions. Complex tasks concerning the establishment of correct mutual relations, both with allies and with neutral countries, will emerge before each of the contending sides. It is absolutely obvious that the solution of these tasks falls completely within the competence of political leaders." And finally, "because of their destructive properties, modern weapons are such that the political leadership cannot let them escape its control."

Next, the military was taken to task for its claim that the Party had "usurped" control over the strategic forces, planning functions, and command authority. It will be recalled that Marshal Sokolovskii had criticized the Party leadership in 1965 for having usurped such authority in World War II and for having brought Soviet defenses to near collapse in the process.⁵⁰ This accusation was rejected, and the General once more asserted that the "need for a single political and military leadership was established and proved by past experience. The development trend in this sphere is now such that the role of the political leadership in war is growing continuously."

50. The article was co-authored by Sokolovskii and Major General Cherednichenko, in Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil, No. 7 (April 1966).

Marshal Sokolovskii had tried to make his case for greater military authority in strategic planning and control functions by pointing to the asserted, wide-ranging strategic authority enjoyed by US, French, and West Germany military professions. Zemskov refuted this argument by asserting that just the opposite was true:

In the United States, for example, the National Security Council, headed by the President, is such a supreme governmental military-political organ. So also is the defense committee, headed by the President of France, the defense committee under the chairmanship of the Chancellor in the German Federal Republic, and so forth.

Finally, Zemskov exhorted the officer corps to purge itself of dangerous ideas and to return to its usual submission to Party-political direction of its affairs. The principle of collective decision making and individual responsibility, a throwback to the days of firm political control over the military, was advocated as a guideline for the military.

In late January, a prominent editorial in Krasnaia zvezda⁵¹ reflected the Party's concern over the dangers inherent in the militant "Chinese line"⁵² arguments of some of the Soviet military, which urged against moderation and "atomic fetishism." The editorial took issue directly with the notorious militancy of Rybkin's article of September 1965.⁵³ After stating that "comrade Rybkin has been guilty of a few inaccuracies," the editorial went on to assure the

51. "Theory, Politics, Ideology: On the Essence of War," Krasnaia zvezda, January 24, 1967.

52. The "Chinese line" pressures from the Soviet military on the Party should not be underestimated. The Party is very sensitive to this issue, and has recently linked, by implication, Soviet advocates of a militant line with Mao's position:

Mao's strategists-propagandists are bluffing that the essence of war has not changed, that its essence cannot be altered by any scientific technological progress. Thus these petty bourgeois adventurers proclaim that war is a political tool. ... Such a thesis, whether based on the arguments of Mao's mouthpieces or on scientific technological progress, is beyond comprehension. ("Radio Moscow," July 23, 1967).

53. Lt. Colonel Ye Rybkin, op. cit.

readers that Rybkin's "independent approach toward the question of the essence of war" should not be regarded as "the last word in the domain of theory." The article rejected the militants argument that a massive Soviet arms program was needed as preparation for an irrational or premeditated attack from the West, and lectured them for their overly pessimistic view of Soviet defense capabilities. The dissidents were told that their position of militancy was ill advised, because "though the imperialists are weakened, they are far from being a 'paper tiger'--our enemy is still very powerful."

It would seem that many members of the military were still unpersuaded and they may have been counting on their supporters in the Politburo and Central Committee to press their case. In return, the Party leaders may have warned the military that the new Defense Minister, who would be replacing the dying Malinovskii, would be a civilian--an unacceptable situation from the military point of view.

Sometime in early April, a solution to the conflict was apparently reached. It probably took the form of a compromise along the following lines: the High Command would not have to put up with a civilian Defense Minister; there would be a continuity of the High Command establishment without any reprimands or replacements,⁵⁴ and the military demands for more adequate allocations would be partially accommodated, while Party authority in the military would be reinforced. (An additional accommodating factor might have been the Party's promise to persuade the East Europeans to accept a Soviet Marshal as the Commander in Chief of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, to replace Marshal Grechko, who was to be the new Minister of Defense.)

This compromise formula was most likely worked out in the Extraordinary Meeting of the Central Committee,⁵⁵ which was attended by the following leaders of the Party, the Government, and the military: General Secretary of the Party, Brezhnev; Chairman of the Council of

54. It should be noted that the ranking members of the High Command, almost without exception, come from the so-called Stalingrad Group, and that they have dominated the military establishment since the middle 1950's. For details see, "The Rise of the Stalingrad Group," The Soviet Military and the Communist Party, op. cit.

55. A brief announcement on this extraordinary meeting was made over "Radio Moscow," April 4, 1967.

Ministers, Kosygin; "president" of the Soviet Union, Podgorny; the commanders of military districts, force groups, and zones; the deputies of the Ministry of Defense; the head of the Main Political Administration; and members of military councils of various services. Brezhnev's address to this session was not published, and subsequent sparse editorial comments would indicate that the regime's views on "firmly and consistently promoting a peace-loving foreign policy," while showing "constant concern for the strengthening of the defensive might of the Soviet state" have prevailed. The compromise formula was reflected in "expressed confidence" in the military's loyalty, and presumably enabled the moderates in the regime to deal with the Party militants in the Central Committee and in the Politburo.⁵⁶

Several developments following the extraordinary session of April 4, support the preceding assumptions. On April 6, Red Star carried a lengthy editorial which forcefully asserted the Party's supremacy in all aspects of the defense establishment. The editorial asked: "Why does the leading role of the CPSU in military construction and in the USSR Armed Forces increase in the present stage of social development ... ?" The answer was given that the growing complexity of problems of war and peace leads to an intimate interrelation between policy, strategy, economy, and technology, which "increases even more the role and responsibility of the CPSU," because only the Party leaders are able to coordinate properly and utilize all these aspects of state activities, including strategy:

The following conclusion can be made from all that was said before: the growth of the party's leading role in the military organization, in the armed forces, and in the life of Soviet society as a whole, constitutes a

56. There seems to be some connection between the, at least temporary, political defeat of Shelepin and his alleged cronies, such as Semichastnii and the TASS director, and the regime's "persuasion" of the militants in the military establishment. While this connection cannot be firmly established, there is no doubt that Shelepin, et al, have strongly supported the militants' views.

legitimate objective process conditioned by the revolution in military affairs, by the present international situation, and by the complication and expansion of the scope and tasks related to strengthening the country's military power

One week after the extraordinary Central Committee session, Marshal Grechko was formally appointed as Minister of Defense to replace Malinovskii, ending widespread speculations on the possibility of a "McNamara-type" civilian becoming the boss of the Soviet defense establishment.⁵⁷ Grechko's deputies have also been revealed to be members of the "inner establishment" from the Stalingrad Group, assuring, at least for the time being, continuity in the High Command, and indicating both a strong community of interests among the older generation in the Party and in the military and a "generational gap" between the marshals and their younger, more militant colleagues.

E. A MODUS VIVENDI

The analysis of the conflicts of interests among Soviet militants and moderates and the noticeable abatement of their public disagreements has taken on sharper relevance in the light of recent developments in ABM policies in the East and the West. The Soviet Union has begun to deploy a "thin" ABM system, and the United States has only recently (after this paper was drafted) decided to proceed with a similar deployment. Moreover, there is agreement in the West that the Soviets are developing a growing offensive strategic capability.

Several questions are relevant in this context: What were the likely motivations for the Soviet decision to proceed with a relatively costly, new defensive weapons system which adds little to Soviet security vis-a-vis the United States? Why did the militants openly continue their opposition to the regime when plans for such strategic programs must have been underway for at least two years?

57. "No McNamarsky Yet," The Economist, April 8, 1967; "Speculations That a Civilian May Become a Defense Minister," The New York Times, April 7, 1967; "Civilian Rumored for Soviet Defense Minister," The Washington Post, April 5, 1967. These speculations pointed at Party Secretary D. Ustinov as the likely candidate for the post.

A brief analysis of the broader implications of the decisions to proceed with the ABM programs is useful before attempting to answer these questions. First, neither the Soviet nor the US ABM systems will provide clear-cut advantages to either nation's strategic capabilities, because as Secretary McNamara states, "We do not possess first-strike capability against the Soviet Union for precisely the same reason that they do not possess it against us ... we have both built up our 'second-strike capability' to the point that a first-strike capability on either side has become unattainable." Second, neither the Soviet nor the US ABM system will provide an objectively greater measure of security, because "the Soviet anti-ballistic missile system ... does not impose any threat to our ability to penetrate and inflict massive and unacceptable damage on the Soviet Union," and because "neither the Soviet Union nor the United States can attack the other without being destroyed in retaliation."⁵⁸ Third, the ABM systems are likely to be very costly, and there is no assurance that they will remain at the relatively modest and tolerable "thin" level, for "There is a kind of mad momentum intrinsic to the development of all nuclear weaponry. If a weapon system works--and works well--there is strong pressure from many directions to procure and deploy the weapon out of all proportion to the prudent level required."⁵⁹

Despite these caveats, which apply equally to the East and to the West, the decisions to proceed with deployments were made. The US decision was in the nature of an "action-reaction" to Soviet initiatives. But why did the Soviets decide to deploy an ABM system, presumably in the full knowledge of the unlikely US counter-action to it.

The decision to proceed with an ABM system is built into the strategic calculations of the superpowers. First, having effectively cancelled out each other's first-strike capabilities, and having

58. Speech by Secretary of Defense McNamara in San Francisco, The Washington Post, September 19, 1967.

59. Ibid.

drawn some basic lessons about the "suicidal" nature of nuclear war, the superpowers' basic strategic-political concern is to prevent other powers from disturbing this state of deterrence. The growing concern with nuclear proliferation motivates the superpowers to seek measures which protect them against nuclear blackmail by second-rank powers that possess the means to damage but not to obliterate. Foremost among such likely second-rank powers is China, and, since in the nuclear-war calculus the superpowers tend to adopt the most conservative or pessimistic possibility, they must plan for an eventuality in which China in the 1970's possesses a limited nuclear capability useful for blackmail or retaliatory measures.

Second, given the sizable factor of uncertainty in strategic calculations, the Soviet leaders may have speculated on US reluctance to respond to their initiative in ABM programs, while relying on an "assured destruction capability" in offensive strategic forces. Having followed the reluctance of some ranking US defense personalities to proceed with ABM systems in the past, the Soviets may have concluded that such a position would prevail even in the event of token deployment of Soviet ABM weapons. In such an unlikely eventuality, i.e., US reliance on offensive strategic forces adequate to deter the Soviets, the latter might have gained certain symbolic and, under some circumstances, actual advantages. A symbolic advantage would be found in their superiority in one major strategic weapons system, while and an actual advantage would exist against likely third-power nuclear ventures or blackmail. An actual advantage would also exist in the speculative situation in which the United States and China exchange major nuclear salvos in the 1970's, leaving the United States substantially denuded of its first-strike capabilities and prone to Soviet political blackmail.

However, while this rationale for an ABM program may be persuasive, there still remains the question of why the Soviets were willing to invest a sizable amount of limited resources in return for some distant and uncertain objectives. In other words, given the strong internal pressures for economizing on defense allocations, and given the broadly announced Party objectives to increase investments

in consumer goods and services, we have to assume that some overriding pressures were operable in recent years which led the Party leadership to initiate such costly ABM programs. Such pressures came predominantly from the military community. Some of the military spokesmen argued in terms of the need for "technological-strategic superiority,"⁶⁰ while others maintained that "such defenses acquire an extraordinary importance and strategic significance,"⁶¹ and still others saw in a Soviet ABM deployment "a new nightmare for US imperialists."⁶² The military's pressure for such a program was motivated by the following objectives:

(1) They wanted to counter moderate Party views which maintained that current Soviet strategic capabilities were adequate to deny the United States a first-strike capability and therefore provided a minimum-deterrence factor to Soviet security needs. By denigrating such views as "defeatist" and as falling into a trap laid by the West, the militants sought to convey a sense of urgency and dissatisfaction with the minimum-deterrence posture, seeking to pressure the Party leadership into loosening the purse strings for defense purposes.

(2) They sought a solution to the problem of nuclear proliferation, which is a major concern of the Soviet leaders. Given the regime's predilection toward détente and the deterrence mechanism, the military could argue that increments in strategic weapons systems, both offensive and defensive, do not essentially change the central strategic relations between the Soviet Union and the United States, while they do substantially increase the "insurance factor" against third-power nuclear ventures, both in the military and political sense. They took the position that by raising the "ante" for entrance into the new nuclear club, the superpowers would regain an element of control and influence in the international arena, making massive disturbances by secondary powers less likely.

(3) They wanted to advance their view that an increment in offensive and defensive strategic weapons systems does not interfere with attempts to seek

60. Bondarenko, op. cit.

61. Lt. General Zavialov, Krasnaia zvezda, March 30, 1967.

62. Lt. General K. Dobrev, Rabotnichesko Delo, April 10, 1967.

anti-proliferation agreements and may actually provide some stronger incentives among both the large and small powers to seek such an agreement. The reasoning underlying this view is that while in the past even token nuclear capabilities by smaller powers possessed a certain "blackmail" quality, becoming thereby politically useful, the deployment of an ABM system adequate to deal with such lesser nuclear threats has minimized the incentive for secondary powers to proceed with such nuclear programs.

The initial public Soviet reactions to the US decision to proceed with an ABM program have been noticeably moderate. An article in Pravda claimed, in the usual propaganda terminology, that the decision in favor of a US ABM program represents a "tremendous and essentially useless escalation of expenditure in money and resources for armaments" brought about mainly by internal political pressure "by the 'hawks' of the Pentagon and the arms manufacturers," resulting in the fact that "Johnson threw 5 billion dollars worth of fish to the cats."⁶³ Another article said "that the United States will not hamper the success of the Geneva talks and the debate in the General Assembly" on the issues of anti-proliferation agreements.⁶⁴ The latter view, however, was qualified in several instances by some propaganda inspired hand-wringing about the arms-race aspects of the US ABM system.

The Soviet decision to accelerate the production of offensive strategic weapons and the deployment of an ABM system was presumably made several years ago, toward the end of Khrushchev's regime. However, the fact that the current regime has continued this program in the face of strong resistance from within the Party and managerial groups, supports the views that some of the military's counsels have prevailed, that the Party leaders were persuaded of the dangers of nuclear proliferation, in general, and of China's future nuclear role, in particular, and that the current regime views the need to balance its central relations with the United States as a fundamental objective of its policy.

63. Pravda, September 24, 1967.

64. Izvestiia, October 4, 1967.

The fact that the Soviet militants have now ceased to criticize and oppose the regime's defense policies may be indicative of a modus vivendi established between them and the regime, whose terms would be the continued deployment of a "thin" ABM capability, rather than a "thick" and costly system; an increase in offensive strategic weapons, but not enough to match or surpass the US capabilities; and a balanced defense budget, with limited increments rather than a massive reordering of national priorities. Although the militants have obtained some concessions from the regime, they will still continue to view such a modus vivendi as temporary because they have yet to realize a number of their major objectives, e.g., a larger role in strategic planning and control authority and a stronger sense of autonomy within the High Command and in the officer corps. Also, the militants still consider the regime's policy of prudence, pragmatism, and balances as detrimental to Soviet national interests, in general, and to the Soviet defense community, in particular. These problems will undoubtedly come to plague the Party in the future.

IV

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR US POLICY

Two principal conclusions emanate from the preceding analysis of changes in Soviet policy method and objectives and of the nature of the dissent to these policies:

- (1) The regime's attempt to adapt its policies to the political and strategic realities of the mid-1960's reflects a reappraisal of the opportunities and risks facing major powers in a destabilizing international environment.
- (2) The resistance of certain powerful groups in the Soviet Union to the regime's policies underscores the dilemma of the leadership of superpowers.

The dilemma of superpower can be described as an attempt by political leaders to stabilize relations at the center of the international arena, where vital US-Soviet interests are involved, while at the same time retaining a broad freedom to exercise policy initiatives in the peripheral areas where interests are assumed to be less vital or less clearly defined. The urgent motivation for such stabilization of superpower relations is derived from an appreciation of a rapidly destabilizing international situation, where old rules of political behavior are giving way to "irrational" pressures of nationalism and parochialism, a tendency which is assumed to be dangerous in the context of nuclear proliferation and erosion of existing alliance systems. The political leaders of the two superpowers have come to appreciate the diminishing utility of vast strategic nuclear arsenals, while at the same time being unable and unwilling to limit the size and scope of their vast strategic capabilities.

A. SOVIET POLICY OBJECTIVES

The need for moderation and prudence in the political and military actions of both the Soviet Union and the United States seems imperative to those political leaders in the Soviet Union who are in a position to be informed by this larger, global appreciation of the changing realities in the international arena, and who therefore advocate a careful orchestration of objectives and means. The views of most of the Soviet dissenters, however, reflect a more parochial orientation and a frustration which reject political rationales for prudence, moderation, and self-denial.

The central concern of the regime's policy at present is the difficult balancing of several conflicting interests in order to persuade both foe and friend of the reasonableness of Soviet policy without seeming to "appease" the enemy or unnecessarily provoke him. The new policy is based on several objectives: first, to close the gap between Soviet capabilities and Soviet objectives--in other words to make Soviet capabilities and claims to them credible; secondly, to convince several critical audiences of the necessity and soundness of this approach.

The regime needs to convince several audiences: The United States must be convinced of the credibility and adequacy of both Soviet strategic capabilities and Soviet declaratory policy regarding détente, deterrence, and the avoidance of nuclear war. The Soviet military and the conservative Party elements must be convinced of the regime's firm resolve to create real and effective capabilities clearly adequate for the defense of the country and the Socialist camp. This audience must also be convinced that while economic restraint and political prudence are necessary, the regime is not about to succumb to capitalist ploys which would lull it into a false sense of security. The Soviet managerial-bureaucratic circles must be convinced that the needs of the defense establishment will not undermine necessary resource allocations for industry, agriculture, and consumer goods and services. The East European allies must be convinced that moderate policies will continue and that the militants are not about to dominate Soviet policy.

Of these "audiences," the least amenable is the militant group, whose position is based on a unique and narrow set of perceptions. The militants argue that while strategic power cannot be used directly without serious consequences, its political utility has not waned because the Western adversary's overriding policy motive is still avoidance of nuclear war at any possible cost and because, in their view, the US resolve to go the limit in a crisis situation is doubtful (a clash of views which undoubtedly divided Khrushchev and military circles during the Cuban Missile Crisis). They further maintain that it is unwise to accede to "rules of the game" imposed by an adversary from his position of strength. They aver that since the central US aim is to stabilize relations and deter the Soviet Union in order to pursue aggressive policies elsewhere, and since fear of nuclear war presumably is an overriding concern in the West, the unduly constraining tenets of deterrence theory must be rejected. The United States, they contend, must be kept uncertain about Soviet intent, the limits of Soviet actions, and Soviet perceptions of the "rules of the game." The militants stress the need for achieving Soviet strategic superiority, a condition which would make it even easier for them to loosen the constraints of present deterrent relations. They would argue, in other words, that there is still political utility in strategic capabilities, especially if they should become more "adequate."

In sum, the regime advocates a policy of moderation, based on perceptions of dangers created by destabilizing relations with the United States. The dissidents, on the other hand, argue that a manifest policy of caution and prudence only reinforces Western aggressiveness, makes Soviet moves more predictable in Western political calculations, and erodes Soviet morale, resolution, and ability to come to terms with the strong likelihood of nuclear war, given the limited viability and instability of the "regulating mechanism" of deterrence.

The militants view the current international situation as ripe for probing US "tolerance" of Soviet initiatives, a "tolerance" they

assume to be broad and flexible; they advocate measures which are designed to build up Soviet military capabilities massively in a shorter span of time than the regime is willing to accept. The militants are also concerned over the strong civilian, political controls of the most important elements in Soviet military instrumentalities, e.g., the strategic planning functions and the command of the Strategic Missile Forces. They maintain that the Soviet economy can and must be redirected to increase massively both strategic and conventional capabilities; they view the deteriorating relations with China as an added burden on Soviet defense capabilities and an undesirable situation brought about by imprudent policies. They resent attempts by the Party leaders to paper over substantial reductions of Soviet conventional forces by emphasizing the growing role of the revived Warsaw Pact (which is viewed by many Soviet military mainly as a politically motivated institution, rather than as a viable military instrument).

It should be noted, however, that the militants are not, by and large, irrational or irresponsible men. Rather, they see the possibilities of Soviet economy and technology as adequate to support programs aimed at redressing the strategic imbalance between the Soviet Union and the United States. They strongly urge such a balancing of roles, claiming that in the past they had to tolerate "harebrained" political leaders who dragged them into dangerous political-military situations, who backed down under US pressure in a humiliating way while blaming the military for the failure, and who, most of all, grudgingly allocated inadequate resources for defense needs while pursuing a superpower policy.

B. POLICY OPTIONS

What can be said about the likely trends in the development of Soviet policy as they affect US interests? One can only speculate here, but it is not unreasonable to project certain Soviet policy options, which will be influenced by internal Soviet political developments, actions of the United States and other Western powers,

Soviet relations with China and East European allies, and potential scientific and technological developments.

Alternative I: Realism, Pragmatism, Gradualism. The present regime in the Soviet Union subscribes to this policy, and unless the international situation is subjected to dramatic changes which might involve vital Soviet interests or commitments, the following trend seems likely:

(1) The Soviet leaders will continue to view the need for stabilizing their central relations with the United States as a principal objective, since they view the minimum level of international stability as deriving from stable relations between the superpowers. They may therefore continue to rely strongly on the mechanism of deterrence, which in their view is not unbalanced by gradual increments in their offensive and defensive strategic capabilities. They may also continue to adhere to a policy of détente since it serves their central policy objectives.

(2) In strategic relations with the United States, the Soviets will continue to resist any arrangements to "freeze" strategic weapons, both offensive and defensive, at least until they have achieved a satisfactory ratio of parity or a satisfactory posture based on a mix of strategic weapons. They would, however, be strongly disposed to seek anti-proliferation agreements.

(3) While the Soviet leaders will continue to search for stability and prudence in their relations with the United States and will refrain from "testing" the limits of US tolerance of their actions, they will also be likely to feel less constrained in undertaking bold policy initiatives in areas of presumed low US interest. In such a situation, the Soviet leaders may continue probing for opportunities and weak spots, using Soviet-supported proxies rather than becoming directly involved. Areas of greatest promise to Soviet policy lie in the peripheries--Asia and Africa. Latin America seems less likely to fall into this category, while Europe remains a status quo area for Soviet policy.

Such a policy trend would enable the Soviet leadership to exercise tight policy management and to proceed with the vital task of gradually increasing its military capabilities without affecting

allocation policies to the domestic sector. It would be a policy of firmness with flexibility. Such a policy would also enhance the role of "conventional" forces, weapons, and equipment, endowing these with a larger operational and political role, while the increasing strategic weapons systems and forces would continue to serve as an inert balancer of the strategic capabilities of the United States, China, and possibly other potential adversaries.

Alternative II: Militance Abroad and at Home. While the militant, dissident elements in the Soviet Union have recently suffered setbacks, under certain circumstances they could conceivably gain ascendance and shift policy in a more militant direction. Short of a coup d'etat, which is not very likely, this ascendance could result from individual changes or a constellation of events, such as: a sharply increased US commitment to current or new areas of conflicting interests (Vietnam and the Middle East, among others); profound changes in the political and military postures in such sensitive areas as West Germany or, for that matter, Eastern Europe; or a Sino-Soviet rapprochement. Such developments, separately or collectively, would improve the position of the militants and at the same time demonstrate the fallacy of the moderate's policy and its underlying assumptions. In such an eventuality one might expect the following policy trend:

(1) There would be a significant readjustment of resource allocation policies, which would enable the defense establishment to accumulate large quantities of strategic and conventional weapons and forces in a relatively short time, as well as to allocate necessary resources to new weapons systems and military technologies in the search for strategic superiority plus "technological surprise," a favorite theme in Soviet strategic discussions.

(2) A lessened flexibility in Soviet policy would ensue, paralleled by dangerous militancy based on the might of arms and on assumptions about Western unwillingness to "go the limit." The militants would be more disposed to undertake larger commitments to "wars of national liberation" than the past and current regimes. Since the militants view US involvement in the underdeveloped areas as evidence of capitalist arrogance, they would therefore feel less restrained in following suit.

(3) There would also be a firm attempt to reestablish Soviet influence and controls in Eastern Europe with possible larger military commitments to that area.

Alternative III: Accommodation at the Superpower Level. Such a trend is assumed to occur in the event of a clear threat of widespread nuclear proliferation, of seriously deteriorating relations with China, or of a dangerously deteriorating international situation brought about by third parties. Such developments would raise serious questions among the Soviet leaders, both the moderate and militant sectors, about their ability to retain control of events and about the continued viability of the central regulating mechanism of deterrence. In such an event, the Soviet leaders might be willing to:

- (1) seek bilateral measures with the United States intended to stabilize the international situation and to regain control of developments,
- (2) seriously consider arms control and disarmament agreements, and
- (3) possibly offer the United States support in dealing with outstanding troublesome commitments.

C. IMPLICATIONS FOR US POLICY

How would these policy trends affect US interests, and what actions and policies might the United States consider which would serve its interests? To attempt an answer to these questions, it is necessary first to distinguish between what is "influenceable" or manipulable in Soviet policies and what is not. Secondly, we must appreciate which aspects of Soviet policies do not seem to be against US interests and which are detrimental.

Two important aspects of Soviet policy which will not be "influenced" by US actions are: a quest for high levels of security based on indigenous capabilities and a desire to retain the gains of the last fifty years, both in the political and ideological sense (retention of influence and control in East Europe, retention of influence in the World Communist movement, and retention of the long-range commitments to world-revolutionary objectives).

On the other hand, Soviet policy would be amenable to assurances of US appreciation of vital Soviet interests concerning national security, the Soviet role and authority in East Europe, and internal socio-political autonomy. Further areas of influence are in Soviet perceptions of what the United States would view as "intolerable" action by the Soviet Union or its proxies.

The continuation of the policies described under Alternatives I and III seems, in the long range, to be in the interests of the United States: these policies indicate a willingness to impose restraint and moderation on Soviet objectives and policy so as not to collide with presumed vital US interests; they are based on a continuation of détente and deterrence trends, on a rising concern with nuclear proliferation, and on a trend towards a pragmatic society, in which standards of living and consumer values receive reasonable attention.

The quest for security, the need to retain control and influence over international events, and the desire to continue exploitation of policy opportunities in "tolerable" and non-vital areas are the hallmarks of Soviet policy. The first two broad areas of interest are, generally speaking, similar to those of the United States. Of course, the individual perceptions of these interests differ widely and present sources of potential conflict; for example, a "thin" ABM system in the Soviet Union and the United States seems a tolerable state of affairs to both protagonists. However, a rapid US buildup of a "thick" ABM capability would present Soviet leaders with a serious problem in terms of allocation conflicts and, more importantly, in terms of a perceived higher threat to their security interests.

Continued Soviet explorations in Third Areas and in areas of low US interest must be expected, since the Soviets view such initiatives as manageable and promising. As long as the United States is heavily committed to ongoing conflicts in South East Asia, and as long as the Soviets continue to view internal US opposition to such distant commitments as a growing and significant restriction on potential US willingness to undertake future commitments to remote and non-vital US interests, and given the militants' pressure for Soviet

initiatives, the regime will continue to probe the peripheral areas that are ripe for Soviet "pressure-vent" activities. On the other hand, Soviet concerns with the threat of nuclear proliferation are serious and genuine, and these concerns act as a brake to potential adventurist gambles in various areas of the world.

The United States faces, therefore, two alternatives within this challenge of Soviet policy: either define the present global status quo as the base point and reject any major change as unacceptable and as involving vital interests, or maintain a willingness to decide on a case-by-case basis whether or not to "tolerate" Soviet initiatives in the Third Areas. The former alternative would undoubtedly lead to a growing intensification of US-Soviet relations as the internal Soviet frustrations and pressures are "contained" by a firm American global posture; the latter alternative would allow the Soviets to maneuver for political gains in those areas which would not affect significantly the central US-Soviet relations and interests.

On balance, the two superpowers share sufficient basic common interests the safeguarding of which requires continued prudence and moderation in future policy initiatives. It is vital, therefore, that this basis for political restraint be furthered and not ruptured. A continued Soviet policy of moderation is likely to displease radical elements on the left and right. A major failure of this policy, either by a profound change in the strategic and political environment of the Soviet Union or by a significant tightening of available resources, would lead to a political crisis. The burden of superpower policy is the need to orchestrate a whole range of domestic, intra-alliance, and international commitments and initiatives; the problem with such a policy is that a major failing of any one of these commitments tends to affect all of them. Since the leadership of a superpower state is prone to parochial and divergent claims on resources, roles, and priorities, it must seek a policy of balances--the lowest common denominator which affords a workable arrangement among its commitments. The Soviet leaders are no less prone to these pressures and must therefore seek to continue a

tenuous game of balances or to cut some of their commitments in order to maintain a manageable and viable foreign policy.

UNCLASSIFIED

Security Classification		
DOCUMENT CONTROL DATA - R & D		
(Security classification of title, body of abstract and indexing annotation must be entered when the overall report is classified)		
1. ORIGINATING ACTIVITY (Corporate author) INSTITUTE FOR DEFENSE ANALYSES INTERNATIONAL AND SOCIAL STUDIES DIVISION		2a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED
		2b. GROUP
3. REPORT TITLE THE DILEMMA OF SUPERPOWER: SOVIET POLICY AND STRATEGY IN TRANSITION		
4. DESCRIPTIVE NOTES (Type of report and inclusive dates)		
5. AUTHOR(S) (First name, middle initial, last name) Roman Kolkowicz		
6. REPORT DATE October 1967	7a. TOTAL NO. OF PAGES 62	7b. NO. OF REFS 56
8a. CONTRACT OR GRANT NO. DAHC 15 67C 0013	8b. ORIGINATOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) RESEARCH PAPER F 383	
c. d.	9a. OTHER REPORT NO(S) (Any other numbers that may be assigned this report)	
10. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT This document has been approved for public release and sale; its distribution is unlimited.		
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES		12. SPONSORING MILITARY ACTIVITY OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, INTER- NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS
13. ABSTRACT This Paper analyzes some of the significant changes in Soviet military capabilities and political behavior in recent years. The Paper presents the following broad conclusions: (1) Soviet political concerns with a potential, sharp destabilization of the present status quo at the superpower level motivate them to avoid any actions which could lead to a new confrontation with the United States. (2) The Soviet leaders, however, feel less constrained in pursuing low-risk, but potential high-pay-off policies in areas in which US interests are presumed to be minor or ill defined--the "Third Areas," generally, and the Middle East/Mediterranean area, specifically. (3) These two broad policy directions have generated recent Soviet efforts to build up their strategic and conventional military capabilities, which in turn, reinforce further Soviet commitments to these policies. This Paper also offers several potential Soviet policy alternatives whose implementation depend, to a large extent, on real or perceived threats to Soviet security interests, and on political opportunities created by shifting international events.		

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