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THE SINO-NATO CONNECTION: THE KREMLIN'S VIEW.(U)
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# STUDENT RESEARCH REPORT

LTC. ALFRED BIEGEL

THE SINO-SOVIET CONNECTION:
THE KREMLIN'S VIEW

-1979-

GARMISCH, GERMANY

APO NEW YORK 09053

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by

(10) ALFRED BIEGEL, LTC, USA
B. A., ~~City College of~~ New York, 1960
M.A., American University, 1971
M.M.A.S. US Army Command General Staff College, 1976

(11) Apr[redacted]79

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# FOREWORD

This research project represents fulfillment of a student requirement for successful completion of the overseas phase of training of the Department of the Army's Foreign Area Officer Program (Russian).

Only unclassified sources are used in producing the research paper. The opinions, value judgements and conclusions expressed are those of the author and in no way reflect official policy of the United States Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army, the US Army Intelligence and Security Command, or the Russian Institute. The completed paper is not to be reproduced in whole or in part without permission of the Commander, US Army Russian Institute, APO New York 09053.

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## ABSTRACT

During the past several years, the possibility of a Sino-NATO military connection has remained in the background as a recurring theme in the Soviet media. As a result of Western arms and related technology sales to China, this subject has moved to the forefront among the Kremlin's security concerns.

Moscow's decisionmakers perceive Sino-Western political-military links as a threatening "two-front" anti-Soviet military alliance. This antagonistic bloc is visualized as a new form of containment policy directed against the USSR. In the Kremlin's view, Sino-Western collusion is predicated upon the West's desire to enhance the PRC's potential as a counterweight to the USSR. Consequently, China is figuratively envisioned as being the 16th member of NATO.

Western political-military support to Peking is considered by the Kremlin's leaders to be a dangerous trend that will eventually lead to the buildup of China's military-industrial potential, the modernization of its armed forces, and the modification of its defensive strategy.

Significantly, the Sino-NATO connection and the increasing security cooperation among China, Western Europe, Japan and the United States does have important contemporary imperatives. In Moscow's view the Soviet East Asian front is now an area no less vital than the political military front between NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

CONTENTS


| SECTION | PAGE |
|---|---|
| ABSTRACT: | 1 |
| INTRODUCTION: THE CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL SETTING | 3 |
| CONTEMPORARY ROOTS OF THE SINO-NATO CONNECTION | 6 |
| THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK | 8 |
| STRATEGIC IMPETUS FOR SINO-NATO SECURITY TIES | 10 |
| THE MILITARY-TECHNOLOGICAL DIMENSION | 13 |
| SINO-NATO MILITARY TIES: GENERAL ASPECTS | 15 |
| THE SINO-NATO MILITARY CONNECTION | 18 |
| CONCLUSIONS | 25 |
| FOOTNOTES | 29 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 37 |

## INTRODUCTION: THE CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL SETTING

> As for plans to use the Peking regime, which has gained in strength, as an instrument of NATO policy, to channel its belligerent cravings in the direction that suits the West--they are pardon me, nothing more than presumptuous naivete.[1]

The implied existence of a Chinese security relationship with the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), was underscored by no less than Soviet Party Chief Leonid I. Brezhnev during an interview with American reporters in January 1979.

Characterizing possible NATO military assistance such as Western "deliveries of modern weapons, materiel and military technology" to China as "playing with fire,"[2] Brezhnev's pronouncements provide evidence of the Kremlin's anxiety about the possible development of a formidable Sino-NATO security relationship.

The Soviet Party Chief's focus on the long-term implications of a Sino-NATO connection follows similar warnings to various Western European countries, and to the United States in particular. Mr. Brezhnev stressed in a June 1978 speech in Minsk, that attempts to "play the Chinese card" against the USSR was a "shortsighted and dangerous policy." He warned that its NATO architects "acting in unison with Peking's policies...may have occasion to bitterly regret it."[3]

Previously, Moscow's key American watcher, Georgi Arbatov, a senior advisor to the Kremlin's leadership, during an interview with a Western journalist in November 1978, provided insights to likely Soviet reactions toward a possible Sino-NATO security alignment directed against the USSR. Arbatov strongly implied that if the West pursues its relationship with China "beyond a certain point," then there would be no place for detente, perhaps not even for a Soviet-American SALT agreement. Arbatov stated:

> If China becomes some sort of military ally to the West, even an informal ally, but ally also in the military sense, then the whole situation will look different to us. We would have to re-analyze our relationship with the West. If such an axis is built on an anti-Soviet basis then there is no place for detente.[4]

Indeed, the Kremlin views with great alarm any evidence of arms or related military technology transfers from the West to China. Soviet apprehension over a perceived Western willingness to establish such security links with Peking have been stimulated by several significant international developments.

One principal cause of Soviet alarm and anger was occasioned by the final conclusion of the long-term Sino-Japanese treaty on 12 August 1978.[5] This advent reflected a sharp setback for the Soviet Union's diplomacy in Asia. Moscow had long cautioned Tokyo of the "dire consequences" that would follow from the conclusion of a projected peace treaty with the People's Republic of China (PRC) that included an "anti-hegemony" clause. To the Kremlin's chagrin its protests were ignored and the Sino-Japanese treaty contained the offending provision which states:

> Neither party should seek hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region or in any other region and that each is opposed to the efforts by any country or group of countries to establish such hegemony.[6]

From the perspective of the Kremlin, the term "hegemony" is merely a thinly disguised anti-Soviet code word used by its adversaries to refer to Moscow's alleged attempts to achieve global domination. Soviet analysts are well aware that the anti-hegemony provision is a verbatim copy of that contained in the Sino-American Shanghai Communique signed in 1972.[7] Moscow now sees this provision as evidence of the perceived Sino-American-Japanese security partnership being directed against the global interests of the USSR.

Hence, during a period of heightening tension in Southeast Asia caused by the smoldering Sino-Vietnamese border dispute and diverging interests between Hanoi and Peking over the fate of Cambodia, Moscow suddenly unveiled its own diplomatic-strategic counter to China's growing influence in Asia. Following a steady expansion of Soviet support for Vietnam in its war with Cambodia and its growing border friction with China, on 3 November 1978 the Kremlin signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with Vietnam. Calling for "consultation" in the event that either country is attacked or threatened with attack, Article 6 of the treaty implied potential Soviet involvement in the Sino-Vietnamese border dispute.[8]

An even clearer warning to Peking was highlighted several days later by Soviet Defense Minister Dmitri Ustinov as the Kremlin paraded its military might through Red Square in celebration of the 61st anniversary of the 1917 Revolution. Denouncing Peking's leaders for teaming up "with the most reactionary forces of imperialism," Ustinov left little doubt of the growing anti-Chinese thrust of Soviet policy.[9]

On the heels of these swiftly evolving diplomatic events, in December 1978 President Carter suddenly made public America's intent to establish formal diplomatic relations with China on 1 January 1979.[10] This factor signalled the most spectacular setback to the Soviet Union since the new Chinese leadership began to reverse several decades of isolation and challenge Moscow's global policies while seeking to modernize with the aid of the West.

In a detailed article, entitled "NATO for Asia," published the day after President Carter's announcement of the impending establishment of Chinese-American diplomatic relations, Krasnaya Zvezda raised the specter of US intentions to construct a Sino-Japanese-American alliance in Asia aimed specifically against Soviet interests.[11] Significantly, Moscow's commentators could not ignore the fact that the "Joint Communique on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the US and PRC" highlighted the same anti-hegemony provision that is contained in the Sino-Japanese peace treaty.[12]

After China launched a major border invasion against Vietnam on 17 February 1979, Moscow demanded Peking's immediate withdrawal, warning that "the Soviet Union will honor its obligations" under the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation it had signed with the Vietnamese.[13] Despite a show of force by a flotilla of 13 naval ships in the South China Sea, the conduct of high altitude reconnaissance flights over the Gulf of Tonkin, logistics support by air and sea, coupled with large scale military maneuvers near Mongolia, Moscow's support to Hanoi was primarily limited to rhetoric.[14]

In retrospect, Moscow's cautious approach to the Chinese assault against its Asian ally could be gleaned from the initial Soviet Government Statement. Indirectly referring to the previous defeat of US policies, the statement noted that Vietnam had only recently repelled foreign aggression. While condemning China's "criminal" attack against Vietnam, limited Soviet support to Hanoi could be foreseen when the statement indicated:

> The heroic Vietnamese people who have become victims of a new aggression are capable of standing up for themselves this time as well, all the more so because they have reliable friends.[15]

Despite global denunciation of China for its belligerence, and praise directed toward the Soviet Union for acting with moderation, Peking appears to have enhanced its reputation in South East Asia. By launching a punative invasion against a Soviet ally without suffering retaliation implied by the Soviet-Vietnamese Friendship and Cooperation Treaty, China demonstrated that the Kremlin was primarily a "paper bear".[16]

Undoubtedly, other factors provided more cogent explanations for Moscow's restraint. One such factor concerns Soviet uncertainty over the probable US response. Moscow has accused the United States of working with China against the Kremlin's interests long before Washington normalized relations with Peking. One important Pravda commentary recalled that during his state visit to the US, Chinese Deputy Premier Teng Hsiao-ping openly talked of punishing Hanoi for its invasion of Cambodia. Secretary of Treasury M. Blumenthal's trip to Peking during the period of the Chinese invasion was also indicated as further proof of Sino-American collusion.[17]

Of more direct concern to the Kremlin's decisionmakers, however, is the possibility that recently established diplomatic links with China now

foreshadow a more formidable development of Sino-Western military ties. Although Secretary of State Cyrus Vance announced in November 1978, that the US had "no intent" to sell weapons of any kind to China, he heralded an important reversal of America's long-standing policy of discouraging Western arms sales to China. The Secretary of State stressed that the US would take a neutral position and would no longer veto military sales to Peking by the other member nations of NATO.[18]

The Vance statement was welcomed in Europe where Britain and France were known to be negotiating or contemplating the sale of arms to China. The following month, during a meeting of the NATO Ministerial Council, US Defense Secretary Harold Brown provided further clarification of US policy. He stated that the US would "not interpose objections to our allies selling defensive weapons to China, but weapons that could be considered offensive would have to be very carefully considered and consulted upon."[19]

Further shifts in the Alliance's policy were underscored when Secretary-General Joseph Luns noted that the Western foreign ministers rejected any "NATO guidelines" on arms sales to China, leaving the question open for individual governments.[20]

Despite numerous Soviet admonitions, to include the reported dispatch of letters from Party Chief Brezhnev to various Western countries contemplating the sale of military equipment or related technology to China, Western leaders of four countries meeting in Guadeloupe, in January 1979, refused to rule out the sales of "defensive" weapons to Peking.[21]

The emergence of China's active foreign policy aimed at the possible creation of a formidable global anti-Soviet alignment, coupled with the prospect of Western military cooperation with China, is a major cause for the Kremlin's increasing anxiety. Indeed, Moscow's perception of the growing military relationship between China and NATO is the basic theme of this assessment.

## CONTEMPORARY ROOTS OF THE SINO-NATO CONNECTION

Soviet writers publicly charge that China is one of the strongest defenders of NATO. Peking is most vocal in calling for the strengthening of that Western alliance. During an era of increasing military involvement in the Third World, when Moscow has failed in its attempts to force a Sino-Soviet rapprochement on its terms, China's growing political, economic, and more significantly, military links with the West are a matter of increasingly expressed concern.[22] In this increasing accommodation, the Kremlin envisions the framework of a contemporary "anti-Soviet alliance."

For the past six years, Peking has repeatedly warned US and West European visitors that the major Soviet military threat is directed primarily against NATO and not against China. The significant buildup and

modernization of Soviet strategic and conventional forces along that front is used as evidence for Peking's accusations. The US Ambassador to Yugoslavia, Lawrence S. Eagleburger, recalled that former Chinese Premier Chou En-lai had earned a reputation for being one of the most stalwart defenders of NATO. During meetings with former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, Chou consistently emphasized the need for firm US support to NATO in order to counterbalance the growing Soviet military threat.[23]

China's focus on the Soviet strategic threat to West Europe was reinforced by Dr. John Erickson, a notable British observer of Soviet military affairs.[24] While relating the results of his discussions with various Chinese military representatives in West Europe, Dr. Erickson noted the strategic conception candidly outlined by one high-level Chinese official. This unnamed PRC delegate drew a parallel between the "Von Schliefen Plan" and future Soviet military strategy by stating that in a potential future military conflict between the major powers, the primary Soviet offensive blow would be launched against Western Europe. China, of course would be next. A similar strategy had been expressed six years ago by Chou En-lai during Peking's 10th Party Congress. In his report, Chou focused on the Kremlin's "feint to the East while attacking the West." Peking's fundamental security concern was surfaced when Chou drew a parallel between Western "detente" with Russia and the Munich analogy. "Strategically," Chou noted, "the West has always wanted to urge the Soviet revisionists eastward, so as to divert the peril."[25]

Moscow is fully aware that the "Soviet threat" to both the West and China is still being stressed by the Peking leadership. More recently, an influential Soviet journal reported that Vice-Premier Teng Hsiao-ping spoke about the "inevitability of war" between China and the Soviet Union. Consequently, according to the journal, Teng underscored China's need to align itself with Japan in the East, and for Western Europe and the United States (NATO) to strengthen their efforts and form "an anti-Soviet alliance."[26]

Soviet paranoia concerning collusion between potential enemies is a theme rooted in history. Allied intervention during the civil war period and the signing of the "Anti-Comintern Pact" between Japan and Germany in 1936 serve as historical precedents that underscore Moscow's current apprehensions of a possible "two front" military threat. The Kremlin's fear of a similar potential military link between China and NATO would certainly exacerbate their concerns. Any possible evidence indicating that a Sino-NATO military relationship is being activated, therefore, is an important topic receiving increasing focus in the Soviet media. The prospect of such a relationship was addressed by the Foreign Affairs Editor of Izvestiya. During a weekly round-table discussion of international events with other key Soviet international observers in April 1978, Albert Grigoryants raised Moscow's concerns by stating:

> It was not purely rhetoric that prompted General Haig to call China the 16th member of the North Atlantic Alliance. The links are becoming increasingly close... The matter has long since gone beyond the bounds of

> feelers, studies and examinations. Peking is already acquiring weapons in the West. Its representatives are preparing major deals with leading military concerns in the NATO countries...[27]

It is unlikely that Moscow observers are unaware of the theme reportedly stated eight years ago by the former West German Chancellor Brandt. "China may be far away but one day...we can play the Chinese card..."[28] Obviously, evidence of collusion between potential adversaries of the USSR is unlikely to be ignored by the Kremlin's leadership. Thus, a possible military link between NATO and China is now being seriously assessed by the Kremlin leadership.

The signing of a five-year trade agreement between China and the European Economic Community (EEC) in April 1978, was cited as the "prelude to closer military cooperation against the Soviet bloc." The Kremlin envisions this economic relationship as merely "a kind of bridge" through which "Chinese leaders expect to gain access to NATO military technology and its market of armaments."[29]

Thus, the Kremlin condemns the Chinese-West European economic relationship as simply a smokescreen for its real political-military significance. For in its view, such a link legitimizes an open door to China by the West to permit arms purchases. This trade agreement reportedly signifies Western support for Peking's modernization of its armed forces and modification of its military strategy.

## THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Contrary to Moscow's two-camp ideological view, which underscores the irreconcilability of conflict between Socialism led by the Soviet Union, and Capitalism led by the United States, Peking expounds a theoretical view based on a world consisting of three distinct levels. Peking's "Three World Theory" is perceived by the Kremlin as primarily an "anti-Soviet" strategy.[30]

According to the Chinese view, the first level is the arena preserved by the military superpowers, the United States (Imperialists), and the Soviet Union (Social Imperialists), who are contending against each other for "global hegemony." In reality, emphasize Soviet observers, the United States is mentioned only "symbolically." With the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between Washington and Peking, only the USSR is singled out by the Chinese media as unquestionably the most dangerous superpower.

Evidence of the more favorable military-political status given to Washington by Peking is demonstrated in Soviet assessments of statements made by the Chinese leadership. During Teng Hsiao-ping's interview with the Director General of France's Agency Press in October 1977, he reportedly stressed the need for a "single international front" against "hegemony"--

the code word for the Kremlin. Not only would such an alliance incorporate nations of the "second" and "third" world, but more significantly, the only other superpower of the "first world"--The United States. Thereby, warns one Soviet commentator, repeated expressions by Peking against both superpowers are essentially meaningless. Such expressions are seen as mere camouflage to cloak the formation of a growing political-military accommodation between China and the West directed against the Soviet Union.[31]

Of significance to future relations between Western Europe and China is the favorable ideological status placed on the second level or the "Second Intermediate Zone." This grouping includes Japan, Western Europe and the smaller capitalist nations such as Canada. From the Kremlin's vantage point, Peking's positive theoretical focus on this level legitimizes China's expanding political-military linkages with NATO. The motivations for the PRC's course are underscored when one Soviet observer states:

> Peking leaders have been trying to establish close contacts with the most reactionary militarists and revenge-seeking quarters in Europe, pushing the West European countries into building up NATO's military potential and sharpening contention with the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries.[32]

Finally, the third level -- the Third World is given special status in Chinese pronouncements. It comprises the developing nations of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. As evidenced by Peking's communications media, this world region has long served as the "stake" in the global rivalries between the superpowers. During the past seven years, Peking has viewed the Second Intermediate Zone as sharing the uncomfortable role with the Third World as the focus of superpower contention. Chinese leaders carefully stipulate, however, that the greatest danger emerges from Soviet "expansion" and "aggression."[33] Peking also echoes similar Western concerns over Moscow's intervention and support for Cuba's substantial military involvement in Africa.

Detente from the PRC's vantage point, signifies agreement by the US and the USSR to divide the spoils. Consequently, Kremlin analysts profess to see China's allegedly growing coincidence of interests with members of the NATO alliance, as well as Peking's strong support for the enlargement of the EEC, as a dangerous trend. Moscow perceives Peking's conceptual framework of the "three world theory" as ideological justification for a potential Chinese-West European military relationship. The gap between established theory and practical reality is now becoming narrower. In the Kremlin's view, the Sino-NATO connection, which might spur the development of the PRC's military-industrial potential, is being manipulated by China and the West "as a club to wield against the USSR."[34]

## STRATEGIC IMPETUS FOR SINO-NATO SECURITY TIES

From Moscow's vantage point, a possible Chinese military link with NATO casts an ominous shadow on the strategic horizon. An interview of NATO's Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, General Alexander Haig, by Panorama, an Italian journal, was cited as proof of the growing relationship between these "objective allies." General Haig allegedly declared:

> Of course, I am not going to urge China to join NATO. But in a certain sense it is already to some extent the 16th member of the Atlantic Alliance.[35]

In a speech, in Vladivostok, on 7 April 1978, Brezhnev acknowledged the growing possibility of a "two-front" military threat. During his inspection tour of the Soviet Pacific Fleet, accompanied by Marshal D. F. Ustinov, Minister of Defense, and Admiral S. G. Gorshkov, Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Navy, Brezhnev specified that it was no secret that to the west and east of the USSR's frontiers, there are "forces" interested in elevating the arms race and generating "an atmosphere of fear and hostility."[36] Some Western analysts even raised the possibility that Brezhnev's tour of the Soviet Far Eastern region bordering the PRC was, in part, a fact finding expedition to judge the feasibility of a preemptive strike against China.[37]

The theme of a potential anti-Soviet alliance being concluded on various fronts of the USSR was also implied by Marshal Ustinov two months prior to Brezhnev's visit to the Kremlin's far eastern provinces. During a major address commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Red Army, Ustinov focused on certain "forces" in the West who were attempting to expand existing military blocs and "create new ones" through manipulation of the Soviet threat. The Minister of Defense flatly accused "the Chinese leadership" of collusion with the West and of opposition to Moscow and the tenets of world socialism. More ominously, Ustinov accused the Chinese of striving to create a political-military alliance in the form of a "united front" with the West directed against the Soviet Union.[38]

Essentially, the USSR Defense Minister's apprehensions are similar to numerous assessments which have appeared in the Soviet media since their evident failure to reconcile differences with the post-Mao leadership. Substantially moderating the tone of their propaganda after Mao's death on 9 September 1976, Moscow fervently hoped to reconcile major policy differences with the successor Chinese Government under Hua Kuo-feng. Exchange of polemics between Moscow and Peking has now reached a level of hostility unprecedented even when Mao was in power.

Despite Peking's unrelenting verbal attacks, the USSR continued to explore possible opportunities for a Sino-Soviet rapprochement after Mao's demise. The Kremlin is apparently pessimistic about prospects for achieving an accommodation with China, particularly on its own terms.

Although consistently reiterating its desire to normalize relations with Peking, Moscow now appears resigned to a continuing if not deepening of the Sino-Soviet rift for the indeterminable future.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry rejected a formal Soviet request for normalization of relations in April 1978, expressing "serious concern" about the course of Sino-Soviet relations. The USSR's failure to conclude an agreement on the status quo along the border, to avert "armed clashes," as well as its refusal to "disengage armed forces," were cited as reasons for Peking's action. Chinese rationale for rejection of the Soviet Presidium's formal request is indicated by the following inquiry:

> When you have a million troops deployed on the Sino-Soviet border, how can you expect the Chinese people to believe that you have a genuine and sincere desire to improve relations between our two countries.[39]

Less than two months after the publication of Peking's official reply, and about one month after Brezhnev's tour of the USSR's eastern provinces, a Soviet-inspired border incident was highlighted in the world press. In May 1978, Peking announced that a Soviet helicopter penetrated several kilometers beyond the Ussuri River into Heilungkiang Province. At the same time, a platoon size unit of approximately 30 Soviet soldiers dismounted from 18 military boats and intruded into Chinese territory. This was the most serious reported incident along the Sino-Soviet border since the flare-ups in 1969. While penetrating Chinese territory, this Soviet military element also wounded a number of unarmed Chinese inhabitants.[40] In reply to a firm Chinese protest note, the Kremlin confirmed its responsibility for the incident, and conveyed regrets to China for its unintentional "penetration of Chinese territory for an insignificant distance."[41] Peking quickly rejected Moscow's apology for the incident declaring that "war was inevitable" between both nations.[42]

Significantly, the Military Commission of the Communist Party of China (CPC) subsequently ordered military leaders to intensify training and preparation of the PRC's armed forces.[43] One of the major obstacles to achieving a breakthrough in the border negotiations has been the USSR's refusal to meet a Chinese demand for mutual withdrawal of forces from the border region.

In June 1978, Stansfield Turner, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, indicated that approximately 650,000 Soviet troops were deployed against China, more than are deployed in Eastern Europe. The USSR's "significant buildup against China" was highlighted when US officials noted that Soviet troop levels on the border with China were substantially reinforced from the 400,000 in 1969, a 63 percent increase. In comparison, since 1973, Soviet troop levels in Eastern Europe increased by only 30,000 to a total of 590,000.[44]

The majority of these forces are stationed in East Germany. Although the buildup of Soviet forces facing China has substantially increased since the outbreak of fighting along their common border, the number of

divisions have been stabilized since 1973.[45] About 44 Soviet infantry and armored divisions, including three in Mongolia, are deployed in regions near the Sino-Soviet border. To date, the Soviets have primarily emphasized qualitative equipment improvements and the increasing deployment of tactical nuclear weapons in the region.[46]

In contrast, China has an army of 3.6 million with approximately 70 main force and 33 local force divisions deployed in depth within its northern provinces. Despite its superiority in manpower, the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) is beset with distinct comparative military-technological disadvantages. Its weapons are estimated to be 10-20 years out of date. Peking's lack of a credible offensive capability against the USSR has forced the defensive deployment of its main forces far from the border.[47] Therefore, Peking must give priority to improving its defensive weapons capabilities. When the high-level Chinese Military Commission ordered the PLA to "selectively absorb the useful military experience of other countries,"[48] during a period when a Chinese military delegation was visiting Western European countries to investigate the possibility of purchasing weapons, the opening of a Sino-Western arms link was becoming more evident.

In retrospect, the Kremlin's consistent failure to thin out what the Chinese perceive as offensively deployed forces along their common border remains an intriguing but difficult question. CPSU Central Committee Secretary Boris Ponomarev provided one explanation for the Kremlin's concern. In a speech before a conference of the Socialist International on Disarmament, Ponomarev referred to the Chinese threat when rebuking charges that "the Soviet armed forces are too large to serve defensive purposes only." He stated:

> The authors of such statement ignore the fact that our borders extend over a tremendous length and that there are countries beyond those borders that are far from friendly to the Soviet Union. Do they realize that we must ensure the security of our territory not only in the European but also in the Asian part of our country?[49]

Despite Soviet threat perceptions, border confrontations inspired by the Kremlin can only create the two-front dilemma they most fear. Perpetual border conflict would likely force the PRC to seek the formation of an off-setting alliance structure, or at a minimum, a military link with the West. Thus, it would appear that Moscow could afford a more flexible approach. A move by the Kremlin to meet some of Peking's security concerns might open the way to an easing of tensions between both countries.

Reasons for the continued deployment of the Kremlin's combat forces along the Sino-Soviet border, according to Western speculation, runs the gamut from the existence of a strong military lobby, the probability of a high degree of bureaucratic inflexibility, and a lack of imagination, to the Kremlin's desire to force a Sino-Soviet accommodation on its own terms. In any case, Moscow appears to reject the possibility that their own actions may have significantly contributed to the growing Sino-Western military connection.

## THE MILITARY-TECHNOLOGICAL DIMENSION

Modernization of the PRC's obsolescent military equipment would pose a potential threat to the Kremlin. Despite priority economic goals, one of the principal aims of the Chinese leadership is to upgrade its armed forces. Sharing a contested 6,000 mile border with the USSR, Peking particularly desires to modernize its defensive capabilities. Hence, Moscow is carefully assessing the type and degree of Western military assistance to China.

In the Kremlin's view, Western sale of weapon systems or related military technology to the PRC provides firm evidence of anti-Soviet motivated collusion. In an attempt to deter an extensive military relationship between China and the West, the Kremlin is applying increasing psychological pressure against Peking. Warning the West against any attempt to exploit the Sino-Soviet rift, Moscow portrays the post-Mao leadership as reckless militarists whose war-like policies pose a distinct threat to global detente.[50]

Soviet analysts are well aware of China's significant inferiority in all areas of comparative military capabilities, with the exception of manpower. Acknowledging this factor, one Kremlin observer states:

> Peking's strategies...are not backed up by anything like a solid material basis. China's economy, industry and armed forces are a long way from being highly developed, and there is every indication that this will continue for a long time to come.[51]

Purchase of arms from the West would enable China to more rapidly modernize its military capabilities and would represent a radical departure from Mao's policy of self-reliance. Making a virtue of necessity, Mao believed that men, not weapons, decide the outcome of wars. As a technologically backward country, China cannot afford to maintain military parity with the United States and the Soviet Union. Western sources estimate that the PRC's armed forces, while consisting of approximately four million personnel, are at least several decades behind the superpowers in modernisation.[52]

By concentrating its comparatively scarce resources, China has developed a nuclear deterrent consisting of about 80 TU-16 medium-range bombers and 60-80 intermediate and medium-range ballistic missiles.[53] A significant gap exists between this minimal nuclear capability and its vast manpower resources. The PRC's aircraft, tanks and ships are largely based on Soviet designs of the early 1950's. Its forces lack sophisticated anti-tank and antiaircraft missiles, radar, infrared, laser and other target acquisition system technologies. As a result, Chinese leaders have recently stressed the need to catch up. Science and technology is again being reemphasised. Peking's decisionmakers have recently reinterpreted "self-reliance" to permit the acquisition of foreign technology.[54]



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The Soviet media is carefully scrutinizing Chinese actions to overcome these deficiencies by seeking Western assistance. A decision of the 11th Congress of the CPC made in August 1977, to transform the PRC into a formidable power by the end of the century, is underscored as proof of Peking's future military threat to the Soviet Union. The fact that the largest group in the Central Committee and Political Bureau of the PRC is comprised of high ranking military representatives is cited as further evidence of PLA domination of China's decisionmaking apparatus. Soviet sources also claim that more than "40 percent" of China's national budget is expended for its "militarization."[55] Western estimates are substantially smaller. One authoritative Western source suggests that China expends less than 10 percent of its national budget on defense.[56]

Realizing that the Chinese media continues to highlight the "Soviet threat" as the main reason for the need to modernize its army, the Kremlin expresses acute sensitivity to any sign of Chinese interest in narrowing the weapons gap or modifying its defensive strategy. Close coordination between China and the West could lead to the enhancement of the PRC's military capabilities and result in the modification of China's current "People's War" strategy. Generally, this strategy was based on the Maoist policy of "self-reliance" which heralded Mao's dictum that China's ability to wage war lies in the power of its extensive manpower reserves. For decades this People's War strategy led Chinese military leaders to maintain that their masses of manpower would triumph over any aggressor, no matter how sophisticated his weaponry. As a result, Peking all but ignored advances in weapons technology.

Consequently, the PLA remained dependent upon a strategy that justified equipping its hordes of soldiers with obsolete weaponry, and required China to absorb a potential Soviet "Blitzkrieg" strike. Harassment of the attacker's extended supply lines by Chinese guerrilla forces dispersed in depth would then occur.

China's army is basically a defensive force which lacks the offensive capabilities and logistic support to project an invasion against the technologically advanced nuclear and conventional forces of the Soviet Union. In contrast to Peking's defensive outlook, Soviet offensive action along their common border is a distinct option. Ever since the Sino-Soviet border clashes along the Ussuri River in March 1969, there has been periodic speculation among Western analysts over possible Kremlin contingency plans to launch a preemptive strike against China.[57]

It is unlikely that Peking will completely abandon its guerrilla strategy. Soviet technological-military superiority is too advanced. The PRC must still depend on its vast resources of manpower to stem a major onslaught by its main adversary. Yet, there are indicators that Peking is considering the modification of its current defensive doctrine. Official support for Mao's concept of using guerrilla war against a well-equipped adversary has been criticized by various high-level Chinese defense agencies. For example, the PRC's National Defense Scientific and Technological Commission recently warned:

> anyone who thinks that in future war it will be possible to use broadswords against guided missiles and other nuclear weapons is taking a foolish and even criminal attitude.[58]

Although China's strategists continue to pay deference to "People's Wars" and underline their emphasis on manpower, realization of the importance of modern weaponry is much more evident. One CPC commentary stipulates that while "man" is still the decisive factor for victory in contemporary warfare -- "man with weapons" in his hands is even more significant.[59] Reportedly, the Chinese have carefully assessed the results of the 1973 Middle East War.[60] Relatively inexpensive antitank and antiaircraft missiles similar to those used in the October War would significantly upgrade Chinese border defenses against technically superior Soviet armor and jet aircraft. In spite of the fact that some models of US and Soviet weapons were obtained from Vietnam and Egypt, Peking lacks the technology to produce comparable models. Purchase or production of large quantities of more advanced Western military hardware, especially long and short-range antitank and antiaircraft missiles could substantially counter Soviet offensive capabilities.

Significantly, availability of more advanced defensive weaponry would enable the PLA to modify its "People's War" strategy and incorporate a more potent form of "forward defense." Soviet forces could be prevented from penetrating deep into the Chinese hinterland and destroying or neutralizing much of the PRC's vital industries. Effectively integrated defense capabilities combining improved weaponry with enhanced command, control and communication capabilities would allow the Chinese to fight a determined blocking action as far forward as defensive terrain permits. Soviet combat forces might then be contained in sparsely populated border areas.

Given the current military-technological disparities between both countries, a credible forward defense is only possible with substantial Western aid. Undoubtedly, international press reports that indicate China has already decided to buy antitank and antiaircraft weapons from Western Europe are highly disturbing to the Kremlin. Moscow believes that the key to an ominous shift in the PRC's defensive strategy lies in the expanding military links between China and NATO.

## SINO-NATO MILITARY TIES: GENERAL ASPECTS

During the past year, Soviet analysts have been carefully assessing Peking's reported intention to purchase arms from selected Western countries. Kremlin observers see the recent exchange of military delegations between China and various NATO countries, as well as Japan, as confirmation of Peking's desire to purchase military equipment and related

technology to serve as models for eventual production in China. Noting Teng Hsiao-ping's statement that China "is now prepared to import weapons," one Soviet commentator pinpoints the Kremlin's obvious concern:

> Under the cloak of anti-Sovietism, the commercial travelers from Peking right now are conducting a methodical search in Western countries for supplies of weapons to modernize their army and are pricing missiles, airplanes, tanks and other weapon systems in NATO countries.[61]

Despite the possibility that a military relationship between respective Western countries and China would likely cause their relations with the Soviet Union to deteriorate, the debate in the West between advocates and opponents of arms sales to China continues. Although military sales remain a most sensitive issue facing NATO, the Soviet press acknowledges increasing signs of Western European competition for what may be a lucrative Chinese arms market.

The Kremlin places little reliance on the Western review panel known as the Coordinating Committee (COCOM) to prevent military sales to China. Consisting of the members of NATO and Japan, COCOM failed to preclude the sale of a Rolls-Royce jet engine plant to the PRC in 1975. As a result of the PRC's reported purchase of antitank weapons from France, and an apparent impending purchase of the Harrier vertical takeoff jet fighter aircraft from Britain, Moscow doubts that COCOM will effectively bar future military sales to China.[62] The Kremlin no longer questions whether or not Peking will purchase arms from the West, but rather to which Western countries Peking will turn for assistance in modernizing their armed forces.

The Kremlin is most apprehensive about the potential of a Sino-American military relationship. Moscow is fully aware that under certain circumstances such a link would not be rejected out of hand. In 1976, when asked about the possibility of US arms sales to China, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger noted that such sales would depend on the circumstances. The imminence of a Soviet threat to America, and even "military pressure on China," were cited by Kissinger as circumstances which would bring about a Sino-American military connection.[63] Since that period, Moscow has frequently accused the Chinese of seeking a military alliance with the United States, and has repeatedly warned Washington against following this course.[64]

In this same light, Kremlin observers were not unaware of the implications that could be drawn from Zbigniew Brzezinski's visit to China in May 1978. After presenting Chinese Foreign Minister Huang Hua with a flag of China carried to the moon aboard the spacecraft America, President Carter's National Security Advisor stated:

> We recognize - and share - China's resolve to resist the efforts of any nation which seeks to establish

> global or regional hegemony....Only those aspiring to dominate others have any reasons to fear further development of US-Chinese relations...[65]

Observing the growing debate concerning the possibility of a Sino-American arms relationship, the Kremlin believes Washington's decision-makers are reserving the option to make direct sales of military items to Peking if Soviet-American relations deteriorate. One Soviet observer notes:

> The Western press writes a great deal about Washington's favorable attitude to the sale to China of weapons and new equipment by West European countries. Despite its public pledge not to sell arms to China, the US administration has approved contracts for the supply of equipment which can be used by Peking for military purposes.[66]

No longer is Western arms aid to China a matter of hypothetical discussion. Apprehensively viewing the PRC's interest in acquiring Western arms and related military technologies, Moscow's media underscore Peking's special interest in advanced Western European helicopters, radar and other electronic equipment, antisubmarine warfare devices, antitank and antiaircraft weaponry, tanks, and military aircraft.

Visits to Britain, France and West Germany by Peking's military and civilian delegations, as well as return trips to China from these same NATO countries and Japan, are carefully assessed.[67]

Except for short-term purchases of antitank and antiaircraft missiles and the Harrier VTOL aircraft, whether the Chinese want to buy arms "off the shelf" or related technology in the long-term as indicated by the purchase of the Rolls-Royce Spey jet engine plant now being constructed in China, is not yet clear.

Four criteria are likely to govern Peking's approach to arms purchases from the West. China will not pay "excessive prices," purchase "obsolete equipment," permit Western advisors to have access to military secrets, or accept anything less than a capability "to fight on even terms with Soviet forces." Knowing that the PRC's state of industrial development is comparatively deficient, Moscow envisions a Chinese policy which calls for purchase of Western prototypes for eventual Chinese reproduction.[68]

While the modernization of its weaponry is of increasing importance, China can do so only as far as its overall economic and industrial growth permits. In the foreseeable future, therefore, Peking's leaders will probably procure a minimum amount of selected weaponry and technology from advanced Western countries in order to upgrade its defensive capabilities. Because of its inferior military capability and limited resources, China's military strategies are restricted. Chinese leaders have now made the decision to modernize the PLA with more advanced weapons. The process



40

of modernization, however, will be gradual and systematic. While maintaining a balance between military modernization and the country's economy, China is taking concrete steps to improve the effectiveness of the PLA. One visible effort is Peking's attempts to procure more modern arms and weapons technology from selected West European countries.

## THE SINO-NATO MILITARY CONNECTION

The need for an effective Sino-NATO military link in the future was raised by General Alexander Haig, who commands all US and NATO forces in Europe. During a public address, which could hardly be ignored by the Kremlin, General Haig urged the West to prove itself a reliable partner to China in "arms sales" and on "political issues" to keep China as a strategic counterbalance to the Soviet Union.[69]

Renewing his warnings of a steady trend toward Soviet military superiority over the United States, he warned that the West must become a reliable security partner to China. General Haig stated:

> As we debate issues such as the provision of arms (to China)...and Soviet imperialistic activities, we must clearly understand that this (Chinese) regime will be able to absorb just so many disappointments from the West.[70]

Indeed, Moscow's leadership is well aware that the NATO Alliance offers a potent arms channel to China, particularly when Washington provides de facto support for such a link. Today, the Kremlin believes that West Germany, France and Britain are the key West European arms sources now being examined by Peking's decisionmakers.[71]

To pay for the import of military equipment and related technology, Soviet commentators indicate that the Chinese will attempt to increase their oil sales to Western countries.[72] Although the quality of China's oil is poorer in quality than good Arabian light crude, the growing world demand for oil may overcome this handicap. Apparently, Chinese oil contains a fairly large amount of parafin which may damage oil pipelines. It is waxy at normal temperatures, is a solid, is high in nitrogen and has a smaller percentage of light petroleum products such as gasoline and fuel oil.[73]

### Federal Republic of Germany (FRG)

Evidence of a West German military link with China, in Soviet eyes, would be most provocative. Special attention, therefore, is given to any evidence of such a potential relationship. One Soviet journalist assessing the possibility of such a connection in Literaturnaya Gazeta raises the

theme of the formation of a new "anti-Comintern Pact" by stating:

> Can the idea of a secret military treaty between West German revanchists and Chinese Maoists be taken seriously? Is it a figment of sensation-seeking journalists' imagination, or something real?[74]

For the Russian readers of this Soviet newspaper the answer is remarkably clear as the author emphasizes:

> Well, it is not a figment of the imagination at all. In both Bonn and Peking are people who think that this kind of agreement is a very important matter. Moreover, these plans aren't kept secret any longer...[75]

This journalist subsequently provided a detailed account of the visit to China by Manfred Worner, Chief of the Bundestag's Military Affairs Committee, and a group of retired West German generals who were formerly associated with NATO. Accompanied by high-ranking officers of the Chinese General Staff, this group toured selected areas along the Sino-Soviet border. Significantly, Johannes Steinhoff, the former Chairman of NATO's Military Committee, was permitted to tour the PRC's nuclear test centers in Sinkiang, an area usually placed off-limits to foreigners. China's forward defense strategy was one of the various military issues discussed. Additionally, these former West German military personnel were allowed to inspect tank and airforce units, as well as underground defense installations.[76]

In October 1976, West German Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher also visited Peking. Accompanied by over 100 industrial leaders, the FRG Foreign Minister was repeatedly told of China's desire to unite with all forces against "hegemonism." In March 1978, Vice Premier Teng Hsiao-ping met with Friedrich Zimmerman, Chairman of the Christian Socialist Union during a Chinese national science conference. Teng underscored the following mutual goal:

> We hope that there is a powerful Europe. Far-sighted European statesmen hope that China will become powerful.[77]

Significantly, the FRG is China's largest trading partner in Western Europe. Soon after signing the five year trade agreement with the EEC on 3 April 1978, China's Foreign Trade Minister Li Chiang visited West Germany. This was the first cabinet-level visit to Bonn by Peking. German exports to China in 1977 accounted for US $1.15 billion, over half the total EEC trade. In 1974 total volume of Sino-FRG trade reached US $769 million, in 1975 US $885 million, 1976 US $1.08 billion. Total trade volume in 1978 is expected to be approximately US $825 million. German exports to China primarily consist of industrial and manufactured goods, to include steel pipe, chemicals and electronics. A steel mill is being

constructed in Wuhan.[78] Negotiations have already begun for future industrial projects worth $25 billion. German industrial consortiums hope to build one of the largest steel plants in Hopei Province for $14 billion.[79]

Although the West Germans have imposed self-restraints on the exports of weapons to "trouble areas," this policy could be modified. Chinese representatives have expressed interest in increasing their purchases of technology from the FRG. During one visit to West Germany, members of a touring PLA volleyball team were permitted to inspect Leopard tanks.[80] The Soviet media underlines special Chinese interest in BO-105 helicopters, which are equipped with antitank missiles. Kremlin sources also indicated that models of the latest aircraft built by Ludwig Bolkow, one of the heads of the Messerschmitt-Bolkow-Blohm Aircraft Conglomerate who had visited China, were on display at the West German technical exhibit in China.[81] One Western correspondent subsequently noted that "four Messerschmidt helicopters, a type used for servicing off-shore oil rigs, were purchased by the PRC, with options taken for the purchase of 16 more.[82]

A communication satellite sharing agreement was concluded by China with both West Germany and France in April 1978. This was reportedly the first joint technological research project that China has concluded with Western countries.[83] Joint development projects with third countries offer West Germany a means to mitigate its participation in politically sensitive military research and development agreements.

Since direct arms sales to China would be the focus of immediate Soviet alarm and condemnation, the West Germans are likely to reject such an approach. The ban on arms deliveries to China, however, can be circumvented. Weapons and related military technologies such as inertial guidance platforms, range finders and advanced weaponry developed in cooperation with a third country could be sold without limitation, particularly if the partner is held to be the primary developer.

France, for example is neither integrated into the NATO military command, nor fully bound by COCOM's restrictions on military sales. Despite the Bonn Government's concerns, German industrialists are likely to exploit this loophole. In fact, the Soviets are well aware that China is about to sign the first contract with French firms for the purchase of 15,000 antitank and antiaircraft, MILAN, HOT and CROTALE missiles.[84] Except for the latter, these missiles were jointly developed by France and West Germany. Bonn and Paris have also agreed that neither country will prevent the export of weapons "jointly developed" to third countries.[85]

West German sensitivity to Soviet political concerns was reportedly evident during the Guadeloupe Conference in January 1979. Apparently concerned about the potential Soviet reaction and its possible implications for Western Europe, Chancellor Schmidt cautioned his allies about the danger of granting too many of China's requests for military technology and equipment.[86]

Consequently, West German concern about potential Soviet reactions, coupled with the possible threat to its own extensive development of economic ties with the Eastern Bloc countries, precludes large-scale arms sales or direct Sino-West German security ties. A mutual arms or security relationship between Bonn and Peking would likely be conducted with a great deal of circumspection and caution. Rather than a direct arms channel to China, possible future military arms or related technology transfers are likely to be indirect.

France

France's privileged relationship with China is also a topic of heightening Kremlin interest. During the past year, Chinese military delegation attendance at air and ground maneuvers in France, informal inquiries concerning possible purchase or licensed manufacture of Mirage, Jaguar, Transvall and Alpha-Jet aircraft have been noted in the Soviet media.[87]

Of special concern also is Chinese interest in French conventional and nuclear power generators, heavy transportation equipment, chemical processing plants, highly sophisticated electronic detection equipment, antitank missiles, military transport planes and helicopters. In May 1978, one Tass commentator acknowledged that Peking had already concluded the purchase of French "antitank missiles and related technology for their manufacture."[88] Western sources also noted the conclusion of this Sino-French arms sale agreement.[89]

France is the world's third largest arms seller after the US and the Soviet Union. In addition to the conclusion of Sino-French arms contracts for a reported $350 million worth of antiaircraft and antitank missiles, the Chinese had already purchased about 30 French helicopters. Reportedly, Chinese officials have staggered the French Defense Ministry by privately confirming that they want to buy as many as 1,000 Mirage supersonic fighter aircraft at a minimum cost of more than $5 billion. However, since this weapon system could hardly be classified as "defensive," the French are reluctant to provoke Soviet ire by providing such strategic arms to Peking. Other French officials are concerned that China simply lacks the resources to pay the bill.[90]

Significantly, Sino-French negotiations have been under way for the delivery of two 900-megawatt nuclear reactors built by a French firm under license from the US multinational corporation, Westinghouse Electric, the world's largest supplier of atomic power. The US tentatively has agreed to allow France to sell the US-designed nuclear power plant to China if the French obtain guarantees from Peking that the technology will be used for peaceful purposes and not for the development of nuclear weaponry.[91]

Closer political-military ties were signalled by the first visit of a West European naval vessel to the PRC during the post-war period, when the crew of a French destroyer was welcomed in Shanghai.[92] This advent took place in April 1978, four months after French Premier, Raymond Barre's

six day visit to China to discuss the Sino-French trade relationship. Trade between both countries had dropped from US $443 million in 1976 to less than half of that figure in 1977. In 1975 the ratio of exports was 200 percent in France's favor, reversing to China's advantage by 45 percent in 1977.[93] Concerned about the decline in their share of the Chinese market, the French concluded a long-term agreement with Peking in December 1978 for a potential $13.6 billion worth of trade through 1985.[94]

France is likely to continue to be one of the major Western European military arms and related technology channels to China. Peking shows particular interest in the French diplomatic-military policy toward Africa. France's so called "New Africa Policy," which emphasizes diplomatic and military assistance to counter the expansion of Soviet influence in Africa, is supported by Peking. During the past few years, both countries have provided support to the Government of Zaire against Soviet-backed rebel forces.

Great Britain

Less than one year after the leader of the British Conservative Party, Margaret Thatcher, expressed "common" Sino-British security concerns during her trip to Peking, a Chinese trade delegation toured various British industrial and technological establishments. That tour in November-December 1976, represented the first trade visit by China in five years. Former Conservative Party leader, Edward Heath, paying his third visit to Peking one month before the arrival of the Chinese trade delegation to the UK, met with Mao's successor Huo Kuo-feng.[95]

Britain's decisionmakers have long been concerned about their relative trade position with China. The United Kingdom's trade with the PRC has been substantially less competitive than either the FRG's or France's dealings with China. For example, in 1975 Sino-British total trade was US $306 and in 1976 US $275, figures which reflect one-third and one-quarter of Sino-German trade for each respective year.[96]

Demonstrating concern over the stiff competition by West Germany and France for trade with China, London's spokesman, Lord Peart, stressed Britain's intention to develop trade with Peking. In April 1978, Lord Peart emphasized that "inevitably a part of that trade will be defense materiel."[97] The following month, in response to questions raised in the British Parliament about the Government's policy on arms exports to China, Britain's chief of Defense Staff, Sir Neil Cameron, visited Peking.

Sir Neil's visit in May 1978, represented the first time that a military official of a NATO country publicly expressed the need for a military link between London and Peking. This British Air Marshall was the most senior active duty officer from a NATO country to visit Peking since the establishment of diplomatic relations with China. There was hardly any question of Sir Neil's preference for a Sino-British alignment against

the Soviet Union. During a speech to the PLA's 6th Tank Division guarding Peking, Sir Neil said:

> Our countries are coming more together. This must be good because we have an enemy at our door whose capital city is Moscow.[98]

The British defense official warned his Chinese audience about the growing strength of Soviet armored forces. He emphasized the need for sharing common technologies to counter, if necessary, the Kremlin's growing military threat. One Western assessment implied that economic as well as strategic considerations had played an important role in Sir Neil's visit to Peking. His offer to share tank technology is of current significance. Apart from the Harrier aircraft, the moderizing Chinese army urgently requires new tanks. As the British defense chief stipulated, both NATO and China face an overwhelming preponderance of Soviet armor.

The Chinese are considerably deficient in tank technology. Like so much of their military hardware, the Chinese main battle tank is a 20-year-old copy of the Soviet T-54, supplied before Peking's break with Moscow. PLA tank armament lacks sufficient range, gun stablizers, infra-red sensors, and laser rangefinders.[85]

Without improved tanks China will be unable to develop effective mobile armored capabilities to halt a potential Soviet blitzkrieg thrust across their border. In the sphere of tank tactics and technology, Britain could substantially enhance the development of any future tank China could build. London might look favorably on sharing its advanced tank technology with Peking. As far as possible constraints raised by other NATO allies about selling such capabilities, the Sino-British Rolls-Royce Spey engine deal has already set a precedent.

Moscow's quick response to Air Marshall Cameron's remarks made in Peking was predictably angry and sharp. Moscow denounced Cameron's call for NATO to unite with China in opposing the mythical Soviet threat. Britain's ambassador in Moscow was even summoned to explain the motivations behind Sir Neil's comments. Little surprise was registered by the Kremlin when the British Government failed to completely disassociate itself from General Cameron's remarks.[100]

Although the left wing of Britain's ruling Labor Party did protest, the Economist, a widely read British weekly, supported Sir Neil's statements. As long as there is hope of "real detente" between Russia and the West, stressed the article, cooperation in defense matters with China would be restrained. Yet, restraint did not mean "a permanent bar." Exploratory exchanges, like Sir Neil Cameron's journey, continued the British assessment, as well as visits to Britain and France by Chinese military delegations were "clearly valuable." Rationale for a continued Sino-Western defense relationship could hardly be misunderstood by the Kremlin when the Economist warned:

> Until the Soviet Union's own actions cease to impose heavy defense burdens on both Westerners and Chinese, it will have to face the possibility of them trying out ways of helping each other bear those burdens.[101]

Despite Soviet attempts to pressure Britain to withdraw its proposed sale of Harrier VTOL jets to China, Prime Minister James Callaghan announced in Guadeloupe that his government intends to conclude such a sale to Peking as part of a larger package of industrial trade.

Apparently, London does not desire to limit its China trade to military hardware while its Western competitors focus on large scale nonmilitary industrial trade with Peking. Hence, Britain has joined the competition for entry into the Chinese trade market. Agreements negotiated between London and Peking in November 1978 are expected to provide for $10 billion in trade between both countries by 1985.[102]

Accordingly, Kremlin sources acknowledge that their warnings to London, that sale of arms to China would complicate Anglo-Soviet relations and have a "deleterious" effect on the policy of detente, will have minimal impact. Soviet observers indicate that a contract for about 100 Harriers, worth approximately $2 billion, is to be signed in February 1979, during Secretary of State for Industry Eric Varley's visit to Peking. Dismissing British justification that the Harrier aircraft are primarily "defensive" weapon systems, one Soviet correspondent states, "London knows perfectly well that Peking intends to station these planes in the immediate vicinity of the Soviet frontier."[103]

Kremlin observers believe that if the United Kingdom (UK) would sell the Chinese the Rolls-Royce Spey engine, despite their previous diplomatic attempts to halt that sale, it is only a matter of time before the leak in the military sales dike becomes a flood.[104] Possible Chinese purchase of Britain's "Harrier" aircraft has been the subject of debate since 1972. Soviet observers stress, however, that the "stormy internal debate" over Chinese purchase of this vertical take-off jet aircraft does not revolve around whether the UK is constrained by the political sensitivity of this deal. Rather, the main constraint relates to the number of aircraft that China is likely to purchase.[105]

Evidence of a NATO-Chinese military connection would certainly be labeled by Moscow as a provocative move that would impede the progress of detente. Yet, such a likelihood reflects a logical option that must be taken into account, particularly, if both China and the West perceive a growing military threat arising from the Kremlin's international actions.

## CONCLUSIONS

The possibility of a growing Sino-NATO military connection has now become a significant aspect of the Kremlin's security dilemma. The ancient adage that defines a friend as the enemy of an enemy has not lost its validity. A viable NATO-Chinese military connection could be predicated on evidence of a continual buildup of Soviet offensive capabilities along the NATO front, or along the Sino-Soviet border.

Moscow's observers are well aware of Peking's motivations to establish defensive ties with the West. Lagging dangerously behind their main antagonist in military capabilities and related technology. China is determined to strengthen its defensive deterrent. Existence of a perceived defense gap and the desire to secure an equilibrium of forces underlie the trend toward growing Sino-Western military ties.

Moscow now perceives the formation of increasing political-military links between China and selected NATO countries as the framework of a threatening "two front" anti-Soviet military bloc. China's collusion with the West is seen by the Kremlin as motivated primarily by Peking's need to compensate for its current military and economic weakness.

The anti-Soviet policies of the post-Mao leadership is reflected by the PRC's overt support for Western foreign policy initiatives throughout the globe. Peking's condemnation of the USSR's use of Cuban proxies in Africa and the Middle East, as well as China's major border offensive against Vietnam, the key Soviet ally in Asia, has incurred Moscow's wrath.

Indeed, the most spectacular Soviet policy failure has been its inability to come to an agreement with China. No longer can the Kremlin be optimistic about a future Sino-Soviet rapprochement on its exclusive terms. China's westward shift is viewed by Moscow as the continuation of Peking's uncompromising adversary relationship with the USSR not only in Asia, but throughout the world.

China's expanding political-military links with Western Europe, is seen by Moscow's leaders as a primary means to exploit the science and technology of the West in order to modernize the PRC's military capabilities. Peking's invitations to the most anti-Soviet European and American politicians to visit China, as well as its enthusiastic support of both NATO and the EEC, are seen by the Kremlin as merely part of the PRC's strategy to involve Europe and the United States in a military-political confrontation with the USSR.

Moscow's observers see three main trends developing as a result of Sino-Western collusion. First, Peking's leaders are allegedly attempting to forge a new form of international containment policy against the USSR with the cooperation of certain anti-Soviet factions in the West. Spearheading a drive against world socialism, this antagonistic bloc includes China, Japan, the United States and Western Europe. Teng Hsiao-ping's

statements and actions are often cited by Soviet observers as evidence of Peking's desire to form a united front against the USSR, and its attempts to undermine detente by warning against Western appeasement of the Soviet Union.

Secondly, Peking's leaders are allegedly hoping to obtain Western support in fulfilling the PRC's "Four Modernizations Plan." This plan calls for the rapid development of China's agriculture, industry, science and technology as well as its military defense. Cooperation with the West indicates, at least for the time being, that Peking has decided that it can gain more from the West than from the Soviet Union. The Sino-Soviet split has long shut the door to substantial aid from the Kremlin. By increasing trade and obtaining technology from the West, Peking could enhance its potential to bridge the gap between its long-term capabilities and current ambitions.

Finally, Moscow views the PRC's westward orientation as stimulated by the need to obtain NATO's assistance in building up its military-industrial potential, modernizing its army, and modifying its "Peoples War" strategy.

Hence, China's plans to import military hardware and advanced weaponry from the West to modernize its defenses, combined with the favorable response by several NATO countries, has warranted condemnation by the Kremlin's leadership. Sino-NATO contacts in the military field, especially the establishment of an arms channel and military technology transfer relationship, is regarded by Moscow as a dangerous trend that will eventually result in the militarization of China.

Sino-Western cooperation allegedly appeals to factions in the West who envision the dual benefits of economic penetration into the Chinese market and the strengthening of the PRC's potential as a counterweight to the USSR. China's strong support for the EEC and its signing of the five year trade agreement with the Common Market in April 1978 is seen in that light. Moscow's observers note that Western restrictions on the delivery of arms and related technology to China were actually lifted after that period. Consequently, a viable Sino-NATO military connection with de facto backing by the United States is forcing the Kremlin to focus its attention to its vital long-term "two-front" geopolitical vulnerabilities.

Analysis of the Soviet media indicates the following Kremlin perceptions of the growing Sino-NATO military connection. Moscow's observers believe that China's shift toward the West is motivated by anti-Soviet goals which include:

-Weakening the relative power of the Soviet Union and its leadership role in the socialist bloc.

-Increasing the level of tension between NATO and the Warsaw Pact to justify increasing arms expenditures and to divert the USSR's attention from the Sino-Soviet border by encouraging the enhancement of NATO's military potential.

-Supporting the consolidation of West European unity, politically, economically and militarily to confront the Soviet Union.

-Undermining Moscow's attempts to promote detente, reduction of armaments and other proposals to reduce tensions in Europe, i.e. MBFR, and the Helsinki Agreements.

-Creating a "two-front" threat against the Soviet Union by means of a formidable anti-Soviet alliance structure consisting of the US, Japan, China, and Western Europe. This new form of containment policy would enhance the PRC's ability to pursue its own expansionist goals in Asia.

-Seeking to gain access to Western arms and related technology in order to modernize its armed forces and modify its military strategy.

China is now visualized by the Kremlin as figuratively the 16th member of NATO. Western European arms sales to the PRC, coupled with the refusal of the United States to halt the flow of arms and related technologies to China is seen as evidence of the newly developing framework of a more contemporary anti-Comintern Pact. Peking's candid designation of the USSR as its primary enemy and its repeated calls for the creation of an international alliance against "social imperialism" reflects a trend that is detrimental to Moscow's long-term security interests. Therefore, the Kremlin is carefully assessing their preventive options.

Given the PRC's declared goal to become a major power by the end of the 20th century, Peking's potential military threat could be substantially magnified. While arms purchases from various NATO countries would not transform China's army overnight into a credible military force capable of confronting the more potent and technologically advanced Soviet military juggernaut, NATO's arsenals could substantially assist the PRC in meeting its long-term defense goals.

Failing to reconcile policy differences with the post-Mao leadership, the Kremlin appears resigned to a continuing, if not deepening of the Sino-Soviet rift for the indeterminable future. Flexing its military muscle along the disputed Asian frontiers through high-level visits, military support to its Vietnamese proxy and by the possible initiation of border incidents along the Sino-Soviet or Sino-Vietnamese frontiers, Moscow seems to be signalling its sharpening dismay. While warning the West against manipulating the deep-seated Sino-Soviet dispute to the detriment of the USSR, Moscow is applying increasing psychological pressure against Peking.

Significantly, the growing Sino-NATO military connection does have important contemporary imperatives. In Moscow's view, the Soviet East

Asian front is now an area no less vital than the political-military front between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Soviet strategists realize that an effective Sino-NATO military relationship could result in the following:

-Reducing the probability of a Sino-Soviet rapprochement on Moscow's terms.

-Deterring the Kremlin from initiating major coersive action against China.

-Increasing the USSR's "two-front" dilemma, while enhancing Sino-Western security interests.

-Establishing a greater degree of global strategic equilibrium by counterbalancing Moscow's political-military options in Western Europe, the Middle East, Africa and other regions in the Third World, particularly to secure the West's vital oil reserves in the Persian Gulf.

By increasing its military capabilities beyond that required for defensive purposes and by intervening with proxy forces in Africa and other Third World regions, Moscow has obscured the meaning of detente. By threatening the PRC in an attempt to force a Sino-Soviet rapprochement on its own terms, the Kremlin is causing the formation of the coalition framework that it most fears. Eventually, the degree of actual Sino-NATO military collaboration will primarily depend upon their mutual perception of the Soviet threat. This factor underlies the basic rationale for their mutual security connection.

## FOOTNOTES

[1]"An Interview with Brezhnev", Time, 22 January 1979, p. 18; and "Answers of Comrade L. I. Brezhnev: To Questions of American Journal 'Time'," Krasnaya Zvezda, 16 January 1979, p. 1.

[2]Ibid.

[3]L. I. Brezhnev, "Your Exploit is Immortal Minsk!" Pravda, 26 June 1978, pp. 1-2.

[4]Jonathan Power, "Moscow's No. 1 American-Watcher Keeps Wary Eye on US-China Ties," International Herald Tribune, 11-12 November 1978, p. 6.

[5]"Documentation: Sino-Japanese Relations, Treaty of Peace and Friendship, 12 August 1978, Survival, Vol. XX No. 6, Nov/Dec 1978, p. 263.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Appendix G. Joint Communique, 28 February 1972, T. Hsiao (Ed), Sino-American Detente and its Policy Implications (Praeger Publishers, New York, 1974), p. 298.

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