



# Soviet Goals and Expectations in the Global Power Arena

National Intelligence Estimate

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SOVIET GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS  
IN THE GLOBAL POWER ARENA

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THIS ESTIMATE IS ISSUED BY THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE.

THE NATIONAL FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE BOARD CONCURS, EXCEPT AS NOTED IN THE TEXT.

*The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of the Estimate:*

The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Treasury, Energy and Defense, and the National Security Agency.

*Also Participating:*

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

The Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy

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

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## PREFACE

This Estimate focuses on Soviet foreign policy and military power and the relation between them. Hence, it seeks to probe the perceptions, expectations, and goals of the secretive Soviet leadership. Its conclusions are necessarily drawn from an evidentiary base that is complex, fragmentary, and imprecise. It seeks to analyze the significance of a wide range of actions and evidence. Inevitably, the role of judgment is high. No two analysts will see eye to eye on the relative emphasis on all points or the full range of issues in every detail.

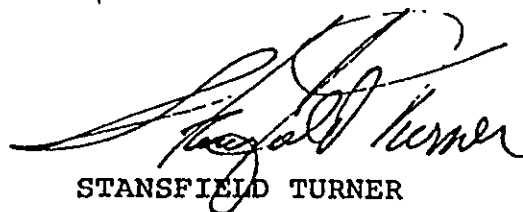
Our objective, however, was not to reach agreement on all these issues, actions, and evidence, but to clarify the basic thrust of Soviet foreign and military policy. This made it essential that the discussions be coherent and integrated and not confused or cluttered by dissenting views on details or by secondary issues.

Accordingly, the participating NFIB agencies agreed to adopt a novel procedure for this Estimate tailored to its unusual character. Successive drafts were written in the office of the National Intelligence Officer for the USSR and Eastern Europe in consultation with analysts from the respective agencies. In a series of meetings, the major themes and key judgments of the drafts were discussed by these experts from the various agencies and by a panel of outside senior reviewers. Thus, the Estimate has taken into account the views and criticisms of the various NFIB agencies, but to a much higher degree than is customary for major intelligence estimates, it bears the stamp of a unified, integrated view. In the interest of promoting a coherent and unified analysis, participating agencies agreed to restrict dissents to matters of substantial differences regarding the main thrust of the Estimate. In the end only one agency felt required to include a formal dissenting view (see the end of the Key Judgments). But several agencies would differ in varying degrees from the Estimate with respect to matters of relative emphasis and some secondary issues. Doubtless, each of them would have expressed some of the formulations somewhat differently.

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Nevertheless, on the main thrust and principal judgments of this Estimate, which is the most comprehensive of its kind executed in recent years, there is broad concurrence in the Intelligence Community. Accordingly, I have authorized its issuance as approved by the National Foreign Intelligence Board.



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## KEY JUDGMENTS

1. Soviet leaders appreciate that military strength is the foundation of the USSR's status as a global superpower, and will remain through the coming decade the key to its prospects in the world arena. They are sensitive to the view of some Westerners that other, nonmilitary factors, particularly international economic ones, may be acquiring a dominant role, and they know that the Soviet Union has little hope in the foreseeable future of becoming truly competitive with the advanced nations of the West in economic, technological, and social-cultural sources of influence and attraction. But they are persuaded by Soviet ideology, Russian history, and by their own life experiences to see political conflict involving the use of force or conducted in its shadow as the motor driving development both within states and in the international system. Their self-interest as well as their beliefs lead them in the conduct of foreign affairs to press global and regional issues of security, in which the weight of their military power can be brought to bear to political advantage.

2. To the extent that comprehensive comparisons are possible, it is clear that the USSR on balance has overcome its past military inferiority in relation to the United States. The Soviets know the USSR still lags in many defense-related technologies. They are envious and apprehensive about the latent technological potential of the US as a military competitor. But they have learned from their long experience of military competition with the United States that powerful domestic political pressures, of a kind to which they are largely immune, reinforce American criteria of military sufficiency, which are different from their own, in inhibiting fuller exploitation by the US of its enormous military potential.

3. The Soviets judge themselves to have a robust equality with the US in central strategic nuclear forces in which numbers and some characteristics, such as missile throw weight, compensate for technological deficiencies in their forces. Most important, the buildup of Soviet forces over the past 15 years has created a situation in which the US could not plausibly attack the USSR without the virtual certainty of massive retaliation.

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4. While the Soviets are aware that the converse is also true, they are conscious of emergent strategic capabilities that could by the early 1980s be perceived to give the USSR marginal advantages in a central strategic conflict-- for example, active and passive defenses, a survivable command and control system, and superior countersilo capabilities. Beyond that time frame, however, they are concerned that US progress in areas such as cruise missiles and advanced ICBMs could work against them should the US successfully exploit its present technological advantages.

5. The regional military balances that most concern the USSR are with Europe and China. In both regions the Soviets are relatively confident that they possess clear military superiority, subject to important qualifications. In Europe, Soviet superiority presupposes successful conduct of a swiftly initiated offensive drive to the west that could, however, be thwarted if it triggered large-scale NATO use of nuclear weapons or if it failed to achieve victory before NATO could bring its larger economic and population resources to bear on the course of the war. In Asia, Soviet military superiority would permit the USSR to defeat Chinese military forces in a wide range of conflict situations. But it could not at the nuclear level assuredly prevent China from striking a limited number of Soviet urban areas; nor would it permit the USSR to invade and occupy central China.

6. The Soviets have made steady progress in building naval capabilities to operate in the world's oceans beyond the coastal defense regions traditionally dominant in their planning. While this effort was driven largely by the pursuit of strategic defensive objectives in the central nuclear competition, it has carried the Soviet Navy to a role of distant area operations where showing the flag in peacetime and a contingent capability to disrupt US naval and maritime operations in the event of hostilities serve Soviet foreign policy interests.

7. Growing military aid efforts have served as the main conveyor of Soviet influence into the Third World. Under permissive conditions, Soviet military assistance and support to proxies have come to be an effective form of bringing Soviet power to bear in distant areas. Recent large-scale support to Cuban expeditionary elements in

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Africa has shown Soviet willingness to press forward, and to explore the limits of the USSR's ability to project military power short of direct combat involvement.

8. The irony of the Soviet military situation overall is that, on one hand, direct comparison between the USSR and its major opponents shows the USSR in increasingly favorable positions, but, on the other hand, Soviet military doctrine and security aspirations continue to present exceedingly heavy demands. Thus, in the strategic nuclear arena, Soviet doctrine posits the real possibility of a central nuclear war and of one side prevailing in such a conflict. This in turn sets to Soviet policy the task of providing effective war-fighting capabilities, beyond those of pure deterrence, that are difficult to attain against a determined opponent. Similarly, unremitting Soviet defense efforts are seen as required for confident superiority over NATO and, in less degree, over China. The military policy of the USSR continues to be influenced by a deeply ingrained tendency to overinsure against perceived foreign threats and to overcompensate for technological deficiencies. But no less than these influences, the ambitious standards of Soviet military doctrine, deriving from tenacious notions of international competition, drive Soviet military efforts and sustain Soviet anxiety about prevailing military balances.

9. The Soviets see their growing military strength in general as providing a favorable backdrop for the conduct of foreign policy. It causes the USSR to be perceived as a natural and legitimate participant in the development of global and regional security arrangements. Soviet leaders ascribe the progress of Moscow's policy of detente since the late 1960s in large measure to the growth of their military power.

10. Where a palpable Soviet military preponderance can be achieved, the Soviets believe that it will, over time, encourage regional actors to seek security arrangements based on Moscow's good will, with attendant political and military concessions, especially as the alternatives of military self-help and countervailing alliances prove less attractive. They view this as a long-term process best promoted by persistent diplomatic efforts and the steady amassing of military strength to alter the security environment gradually while avoiding unwanted crises. But the Soviets know that this process is subject to disruption

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by circumstances they can neither foresee nor be wholly confident they can control. In any crises that may supervene, military power is seen by the Soviets as necessary for defending their interests and for leveraging crisis solutions in directions acceptable to them.

11. Soviet foreign policy has long displayed both conservative and assertive behavior. Soviet leaders themselves see their foreign policy as essentially revolutionary, resting on the expectation of fundamental changes in the international system and within the states that constitute it, and deliberately seeking--though cautiously and intermittently--to help bring these about. Their ideology and their experience in world affairs impart to Soviet leaders a mentality that permits near-term temperance and agile pragmatism to coexist with a deep sense of manifest destiny for Soviet power in the world. It sustains Soviet policy in steady pursuit of systemic shifts in the world through small steps, and guards its fundamental beliefs against demoralization and massive reappraisals in the face of reversals. The Soviets see the sweep of postwar international affairs as broadly confirming their convictions about the march of history. Because their beliefs about the course of world politics have deep cultural roots and stem from an ideology that confers domestic political legitimacy, even profoundly novel or disconcerting developments, such as the appearance of nuclear weapons and the defection of China, have not undermined their governing orthodoxy.

12. On balance, the performance of Soviet foreign policy under their rule is rated by present Soviet leaders as a success, and much of this success is attributed to the cumulative political impact of growing Soviet military power. This judgment is drawn in the light of a previous history of gross inferiority and desperate conditions in which options for assertive foreign policies were seriously constrained. Not only did Soviet policy succeed in averting disastrous possibilities, but it secured acknowledged coequal superpower status with the United States and moved the Soviet Union steadily into new areas at relatively low risk.

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13. Although they expect fluctuations in their fortunes abroad, the Soviets still see basic trends in the world as positive for themselves and negative for the United States. In seeking to capitalize on these trends, however, they are beset by problems of various kinds. In areas where they have actively sought to advance their influence they have suffered a number of setbacks, some of them very costly. Events of recent years in Egypt, Sudan, and Somalia provide examples. Elsewhere, as in Vietnam, Angola, and Ethiopia, they have been more successful. Although not oblivious to the costs and risks incurred by these enterprises, the Soviets see them as the inevitable accompaniment of a forward policy in the Third World.

14. While the Soviets have won recognition as the strongest military power in Europe and a legitimized role in the management of European security, they have not succeeded in winning the full respect for Soviet interests and preferences that they have sought. Some domestic developments in Western Europe, particularly the rising fortunes of Eurocommunism, give new promise of weakening NATO, but at a possible cost of further diminishing Soviet influence over European Communist parties and eventually of contaminating Eastern Europe.

15. To Soviet leaders the strategic meaning of US-Soviet detente is the management of change in world politics in ways that control costs and risks while constraining as little as possible Soviet efforts to exploit fresh opportunities for gain. Such processes as the strategic arms limitation talks (SALT) and US-Soviet cooperation in regional security negotiations allow the superpower competition to be monitored and modulated. On occasion, they offer Soviet leaders opportunities for exerting by diplomatic means influence that might not otherwise be available or require more costly or risky measures to pursue. These processes also oblige Soviet leaders to calibrate their own competitive behavior against the risks of disrupting detente, particularly in areas where core US interests are perceived to be deeply engaged. This concern does not, however, appear to have reduced the USSR's willingness to pursue competitive advantages vigorously in areas such as Africa, where Moscow may perceive US interests to be less deeply engaged or US policy more hamstrung by domestic political constraints.

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16. The Soviets probably expect to continue the military programs they have pursued in the last 10 years, with some marginal shifts in emphasis. They probably expect to improve somewhat on their present strategic relationship with the United States, at least temporarily in the period 1980-85; to keep their overall advantages in relation to China and NATO; and to make steady progress in the kinds of forces and access necessary for projection of their influence in third areas.

17. Soviet international behavior in the 1980s is likely to include a purposeful, cautious exploration of the political implications of the USSR's increased military strength. Soviet policy will continue to be competitive and assertive in most areas of engagement with the West. In crisis situations, the Soviets are likely to be more stalwart in defense of their declared interests than they have been in the past, particularly during the Khrushchev period. They will probably continue to assert the right to experiment with unsettled political-military conditions, as they have recently in Africa, in search of enduring new beachheads of influence.

18. On the whole, such a prognosis, while projecting some increase in the assertiveness of Soviet external behavior, represents a fairly natural evolution of the USSR's foreign policy. The changes from past behavior that are implied are gradual and unbroken, and are rooted in the basic perceptions and values that have long informed Soviet policy. It is therefore essentially a prognosis of continuity, taking into account, however, the greatly enhanced military capabilities and more insistent claims to a global role associated with the USSR's emergence as a superpower.

19. Soviet leaders are aware that current trends they now discern in international relations could be disrupted by large discontinuities they can envisage but not predict. Among those that would present major challenges to their interests are: reversion of the US to a "cold war" posture, large-scale Sino-American military cooperation, new wars in the Middle East or Korea threatening Soviet-American military confrontation, and widespread violent upheaval in Eastern Europe. Other abrupt changes could present major new opportunities: Sino-Soviet accommodation, revolutionary regime changes in Saudi Arabia or

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Iran, and defection from the US alliance system of Japan or a major West European state. Soviet leaders probably regard their military investments as both a hedge against possible adverse contingencies and as providing options for exploitation of possible windfalls.

20. Soviet leaders are sensitive to a range of domestic problems that seem likely to become aggravated in the coming decade, but evidently do not now see them as having the potential to raise challenges of a fundamental kind to the conduct of their foreign policy. In Soviet conditions, uncertainty, if not crisis, inevitably attends political succession, which will soon be upon them. Agriculture remains a major drag on the economy, serious energy and manpower problems are looming, and Soviet economic growth has slowed to the point where it probably already lags behind the growth in military spending. Far-reaching solutions to these problems might in the future require important shifts in the pattern of resource allocations and corresponding modifications of Soviet foreign and military policies, but the Soviet leadership as yet shows no signs it is preparing for radical new departures.

21. During the coming decade a substantial renovation of the top Soviet leadership is virtually certain. While the new Soviet leaders will have been promoted from the same political and social milieu as their predecessors, generational differences could affect their outlook in ways important for the future conduct of Soviet foreign and military policies. To a successor leadership, the USSR's superpower status may appear not so much the culmination of prolonged and costly efforts that must above all be consolidated, but as a point of departure from which to exert more pervasive leverage on world affairs. Alternatively, but less likely, younger leaders, lacking the conditioning preoccupation of their elders with the experience of confronting external threats from stronger opponents, may be inclined to give overriding priority to the solution of internal problems which their predecessors allowed to accumulate.

22. In any event, the new leaders, relatively inexperienced in managing the USSR's external affairs, will be impressionable in the early post-Brezhnev years and

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strongly influenced by their perceptions of the opportunities and risks of more venturesome foreign policies, on one hand, and of the costs and benefits of seeking more cooperative relations with the West, on the other. The quality and effectiveness of US international policies, particularly in areas of defense, in alliance cohesion, and in the Third World, are likely to be the principal external factor shaping the perceptions of new Soviet leaders.

*The Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, agrees with the general thrust of this Estimate that the USSR will continue to insist on being treated as a military coequal of the United States and that it will be no easier-- indeed, perhaps more difficult--to deal with in the coming decade. However, he believes this Estimate tends to overemphasize the Soviets' perceptions of their own military power and undervalues political and economic considerations.*

*Specifically, the Director, INR, believes that the Soviets have a less positive, even more ambivalent view of the military balance in Europe and would be less confident of the superiority of the Warsaw Pact's forces over those of NATO than the net judgments of the Estimate suggest. INR believes that, in assessing the balance in Europe, the Soviets are very conservative in their calculations and make a number of assumptions which highlight their own weaknesses and Western strengths; the Soviets have greater fear of Western attack than the Estimate suggests. For these reasons, INR would draw the following implications of Soviet perceptions of the European balance:*

- INR believes that Soviet programs to improve tactical aviation, upgrade armored forces, and enhance tactical nuclear capabilities are intended to remedy what Moscow evidently regards as weaknesses rather than to maintain or enlarge existing advantages. If so, Soviet motives would appear to be more compelling than the text suggests, and Moscow's efforts may be more intense.*

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-- We doubt that the Soviets consider themselves to be in an appreciably better position militarily--and hence possibly more inclined--than they were 15 years ago to link a crisis in a third area to Europe. In terms of strategy, Moscow could easily manage to assemble a much superior force against the Western garrisons in Berlin, just as it could have done in earlier decades; moreover, the Soviet reckoning of the results of escalating such a localized confrontation would not be very different from what it was before. The Soviets would still have to count on the dangers of a major engagement of large ground forces and its potential for escalation to one or another degree of nuclear warfare.

In addition, INR would note that the arms control motives attributed to the Soviets in the Estimate are essentially those which would apply to any participant in arms control negotiations. For example, they reflect a desire to prevent or slow the competition in areas where they are disadvantaged, and the desire to trade minimal restraint on their side for maximum restraint on the other. The Soviets probably see a range of potential benefits--political and economic as well as military--in arms control. At the same time, however, they also realize that there are practical limits to what arms control negotiations can accomplish.

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## DISCUSSION

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. In the 61st year of its existence the USSR is pursuing a foreign policy of global dimensions and, by its own ascription, revolutionary purpose. At the same time, it has accumulated military capabilities that make it the strongest single state of Eurasia and a nuclear superpower on a par with the United States; it continues to acquire even greater military strength. The essential question of this Estimate is how the present leaders of the Soviet Union currently perceive and, in the future, expect these two phenomena to interrelate: How do Soviet leaders assess the value of their multifaceted military power in terms of their international political aspirations and activities? How does this assessment influence their military, foreign policy, and crisis management decisions? What trends or future changes does this assessment foresee? During the next decade, how are their successors likely to view these matters?

2. Attempts to understand the international behavior of the USSR raise these questions for two reasons. Despite fluctuations in its foreign policy priorities and strategic position, the USSR, under a succession of leaders, has persisted in asserting the self-appointed revolutionary role with which it entered on the world scene. That role involves abetting, exploiting, and presiding over processes of systemic change in world politics. The Soviet Union's choice of policy tactics and the constraints on its behavior, however, have been subject to change. On occasion, Soviet leaders have sought to tranquilize crucial and potentially revolutionary, but also potentially very dangerous, conflict arenas, as in Europe. The role and self-image of the USSR as an international actor, however, define the relationship of the USSR to the other major actors of the international system in essentially combative terms. It is symptomatic that the language of politics used by Soviet leaders at home and abroad is the language of struggle, even where the struggle is avowedly for peace.

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3. A second major reason for concentrating on how Soviet military power relates to Soviet foreign policy is that military power has become the USSR's principal asset in international affairs. It is surely not the only asset. The sheer weight of the USSR's geopolitical base and its control of the world's second largest economy, coupled with its self-identification as the spearhead of forces destined to transform the international system, would accord it status as a major world actor even were its military capabilities less broadly developed. But in these dimensions of power, the USSR is either not unique or no longer widely respected. As realists, Soviet leaders appreciate that nonmilitary forms of power at their disposal to shape the international environment are comparatively weak. The Soviet economy's rate of growth has been slowing steadily since the 1960s and is approaching that of the advanced capitalist world at a time when Soviet per capita production still lags behind. Outside Eastern Europe, Soviet economic and technological leverage abroad is highly circumstantial, where it exists, and generally rivaled even by that of lesser capitalist states. Bonds of cultural and national affinity with other countries are few, of marginal significance, and, even where once strong and useful, are now sorely frayed by painful experiences.

4. A special source of distress to Soviet leaders is the waning of the USSR's ideological-political magnetism in the world at large. Now Soviet ideologues must grapple with the awkward task of explaining why political currents "objectively" disruptive of capitalist or "neocolonial" societies are vocally anti-Soviet and why states that claim to be Marxist-Leninist do not accept the USSR as a model of development.

5. As the USSR has lagged in economic growth and become a less potent ideological force in the world, its military assets have acquired sharply increased importance. It is primarily the USSR's striking achievement in building military might that accords it superpower status. The Soviet leaders are not, and could hardly be, party to the view that other factors, such as crosscurrents in the evolution of a new world economic system, are acquiring a fundamentally dominant role, are immune to strategic influences, and perforce leave them out of the picture. They are sensitive to

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these factors and about their limited influence on them. But they see them as part of a historically evolving process in which essential motives remain political--how states and interstate systems are organized and who is in charge--and which is driven by conflict involving the use of force or conducted in its shadow.

6. Granted that military power has acquired even greater importance for the Soviet leaders, how, when, and with what consequence is it instrumental in their foreign policy? Any attempt to answer these difficult questions requires reconstructing a complex, imprecise set of precepts, attitudes, perceptions, inclinations, and moods of those leaders. These insights do not spring automatically from the pages of Lenin's writings, or *Pravda*, or *Red Star*. Nor can they be read directly from Soviet actions in foreign and military policy areas. These sources offer only contributions to inference that necessarily relies heavily on collective expertise and experience with regard to the essential character of the Soviet system.

7. Decisions at the intersection of Soviet foreign policy and military power are made by a small, secretive group of men. Their views and deliberations are penetrated with extreme rarity. In contrast to other areas, such as economic policy, or even military doctrine, these views are not surrounded by a reflective or "scientific" body of official public thought that can illuminate the assessments made by insiders. Except for vague, if suggestive, observations by civilian and military academics, the USSR has not disclosed and probably has not developed anything like the elaborate theoretical and historical literature found in the West on the political role of its own military power, on power perceptions, on crisis management, on escalation dynamics, on bargaining with explicit or implicit threat of force, etc. When, from time to time, one observes a certain reflection of such Western concepts in Soviet doctrine or practice, it is usually with a distinctive Soviet style and seems to reflect the logic of the situation more than conscious emulation. Soviet recognition of various scenarios for limited conventional, and perhaps nuclear, conflict is an example of this.

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8. In attempting to deal with the questions of how Soviet military power relates to its foreign policy, we are obliged by the limits of evidence as well as the nature of the problem to grope for a somewhat synthetic representation of views ascribed to a collective leadership, recognizing that different elements of the leadership may see things differently and that actual policy must be adjusted to widely differing conditions. Moreover, a general understanding of Soviet attitudes toward the political value of military power can hardly be a basis for predicting specific Soviet behavior on arms or diplomacy. At most it may provide insight into which classes of behavior to expect and which not to expect over time.

9. An Estimate of this sort requires a brief statement on the role that ideology and ultimate goals play in the behavior of Soviet leaders. Soviet Marxism-Leninism is a sclerotic derivation of a 19th-century theory of social development, a modern civil religion grafted onto particularly receptive elements of Russian political culture, and many other things. It is not a blueprint for world conquest. Nor is it only a remembered phenomenon, long worn away by cynicism, pragmatism, or--as Peking would have it--revisionism. It retains something of its vitality despite the years of erosion. It continues to inform a world view that strongly influences how Soviet leaders think, particularly about matters beyond their immediate operational concern, such as the future of world politics or the balance of power. It inculcates a predisposition to see power relationships as unstable, transitory, and conflict prone, and to take a long view of their development. While the Soviet world view rejects mythic glorification of violence, it expects violence within and among states to occur and accepts it as the midwife of progress. Although endorsing political compromise as a worthy tactical means of averting new threats and consolidating progress already registered, it tends to see progress in terms of the victory of ordained forces over those that must eventually be discarded as reactionary.

10. Equally important, Soviet ideology, even in its presently attenuated form, shapes the political character and operational code of Soviet leaders. It obliges them to justify the authority they exercise by loyalty to its

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precepts and by commitment to a mission of global transformation. And it creates for them standards of appropriate behavior toward the outside world.

11. The life experience of the present generation of Soviet leaders, spanning the emergence of the Soviet state from besieged pariah status to that of a universally acknowledged and globally engaged superpower, reinforces the basic historical optimism of their doctrine. Coupled with the long view fostered by their ideology, that experience also counsels patience, perseverance, and unremitting effort, helping to account for the dogged determination and persistence of Soviet international behavior in the face of a mixed record of advances and reverses.

12. At the same time, their ideology permits, indeed obliges, Soviet leaders to make whatever tactical compromises are required to conduct the struggle in reasonable safety. This mixture of strategic purposefulness and tactical permissiveness frequently licenses ruthlessly flexible policies. It also leaves plenty of room for momentum, drift, ambivalence, and plain indecision, however, precisely because it does not automatically make tough decisions for Soviet leaders.

## II. THE THRUST OF CURRENT SOVIET MILITARY POLICY

### A. Legacy of the Postwar Strategic Effort

13. Acquiring a competitive strategic position vis-a-vis the United States was an uphill struggle for the Soviets. This experience left them with an abiding respect for US technological and industrial capabilities, when mobilized as they were in successive periods of the 1950s and 1960s. This is an enduring legacy. But it would be a mistake to read into Soviet minds from this experience a permanent strategic inferiority complex. Over the long pull they could see themselves improving their relative position in the very gross terms that apply to overall weapons technical competence. Moreover, the Soviets could and did apply their own, often less elegant, solutions to their strategic problems.

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14. Politically, they learned from their years of strategic inferiority that the readiness of the United States to use its military power directly against Soviet interests far from matched what the Soviets tended to believe US power should allow or what characteristic "imperialist aggressiveness" would dictate. Employing various rationalizations to explain this, such as the presence of "progressive forces" or "sober realists" in the West, the Soviets came to the practical conclusion that avoidance of blatant provocation and a deft diplomacy could constrain the competitiveness of the United States in the larger strategic arena. While displayed earlier even in some of Stalin's behavior, this Soviet recognition was most dramatically expressed by Khrushchev in 1956 when he asserted that the revolutionary struggle would go on, but that a new world war could be averted. It also led to the consistent juxtaposition of Soviet military strength and the "peace policy of the USSR" as instruments for preventing nuclear war and extending Soviet influence in the world.

15. Throughout the postwar period, the Soviets have variously experimented with manipulating the image of their military strength by political means. Khrushchev demonstrated the limits and dangers of exaggeration, which, with few exceptions, his successors have forsworn. To some extent post-Khrushchev leaders continue to be insensitive to the prospect that Soviet strategic behavior will be seen as threatening and provocative by the United States. But they have on the whole deliberately avoided provocative claims, preferring rather to encourage a generalized respect for Soviet strength and permitting the observed facts to speak for themselves.

16. Strategic nuclear deterrence has from the beginning been the first objective of Soviet military and foreign policy in that the preferred course of East-West competition in any form did not include a nuclear war. But this objective has not led the Soviets to embrace mutual assured destruction as the doctrinal underpinning of their strategic policy or to design forces optimized for punishing an attacker at the expense of reducing their capabilities for conducting military operations against enemy forces. The legacy of past strategic inferiority, along with ideological, historical, and institutional factors, has helped to

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make forces for the conduct of war--that is, war-fighting capabilities--the central preoccupation of Soviet force designers. This is not simply because they see war-fighting forces as the best deterrent. Soviet determination, within the limits of economic and technological constraints, to deploy forces suitable for waging war successfully appears to result from straightforward reasoning which holds that deterrence may fail and that the responsibility of the state is to be as well prepared as possible for that eventuality. There is some evidence that Khrushchev, after his exaggerated strategic claims were exposed by US intelligence in the early 1960s, may have toyed with minimum deterrence or "pure punishment" concepts, at least as a temporary expedient. If so, his heirs rejected this view. They evidently concluded from the experiences of the Khrushchev era, particularly the Cuban missile crisis, that the level of perceived Soviet strategic power required as the backdrop for an assertive and globally engaged foreign policy could not be provided by a minimum deterrent.

17. Khrushchev claimed a strategic deterrent capability against the United States well before he had a credible basis for doing so. In the 1970s, Soviet leaders have occasionally attempted to reassure the United States that the USSR possesses and seeks no more than deterrent capabilities. Whatever their validity as a reflection of real Soviet thinking, these statements in the prevailing strategic context convey a genuine confidence, not attributable to Khrushchev's earlier claims. When this transition took place is impossible to specify reliably from Soviet public claims, given their varying manipulative purposes. It appears most likely to have occurred in the mid- to late 1960s, when Soviet military planners began to give serious attention to the possibility of extensive *conventional* conflict in Europe. This attention, although partly induced by NATO policy shifts and still influenced by the judgment that nuclear escalation remains highly likely in a central European war, signified the beginnings of a belief that Soviet strategic forces could possibly prevent US resort to nuclear weapons even in the most strained circumstances. It is clear now that Soviet military planners are studying and exercising concepts of limited nuclear war that would involve some ingredients of tacit collaboration to control damage and escalation. But the experience of coming up from behind, along with an ideological image of a perfidious enemy, has made these concepts difficult for the Soviets to embrace.

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18. Doctrines and perceptions can be altered, as the history of Soviet strategic behavior has demonstrated. Institutions are more tenacious. One of the more enduring legacies of the postwar era for the USSR was the development of an elaborate, growing, and relatively stable set of interlocking military, industrial, scientific, and party organs and personnel involved in defense matters. This military-industrial apparatus weighs heavily in the Soviet decision process with regard to resource allocations and military policy itself. On foreign policy issues, such as SALT, it also clearly plays a major role. And it must be counted as a factor in the politics of leadership succession. The cohesiveness and political power of this apparatus does not outweigh the authority of a united party leadership, with which it is, in any case, closely integrated at the highest level. But it is larger and more entrenched today than in the period from the mid-1950s to the early 1960s, when Khrushchev carried through major innovations, such as creating the Strategic Rocket Forces and making large cuts in military manpower. The next succession is likely to lead to a further strengthening of the influence of this apparatus, at least temporarily, until a new leadership consolidates its position.

19. The expansion of military capabilities that the USSR has been conducting since the early 1960s has been (a) costly at a time of reduced economic growth (defense expenditures are estimated to be at least 11 to 13 percent of GNP); (b) steady on the whole, involving an average annual rate of growth in outlays of 4 to 5 percent over the last decade; and (c) comprehensive in that all Soviet military force elements have profited, although in varying degrees, from a policy of "balanced force development."

20. This brief section will offer only the most cursory review of Soviet military programs; these are covered in detail in NIE 11-3/8-77 and in other intelligence publications.\* It will concentrate on attempting to elucidate the purposes

\* See NIE 11-3/8-77, *Soviet Capabilities for Strategic Nuclear Conflict Through the Late 1980s*, 21 February 1978; NIE 4-1-78, *Warsaw Pact Concepts and Capabilities for Going to War in Europe: Implications for NATO Warning of War*, 10 April 1978; NIE 11-10-78, *Soviet Capabilities for Distant Military Operations* (forthcoming); NIE 11-14-78, *Warsaw Pact Forces Opposite NATO* (forthcoming); NIO IIM 76-039J: *Trends in Soviet Military Programs*, October 1976; NIO IIM 77-029J: *Soviet Civil Defense: Objectives, Pace, and Effectiveness*, December 1977; and SR 77-10100, *The Balance of Forces in Central Europe*, August 1977.

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the Soviets ascribe to these programs, and the assessments they make of them; to seek out possible synergistic relationships among them, and to weigh generally the Soviet view of the role of the USSR in war and peace.

#### B. Strategic Nuclear Forces

21. After more than a decade of quantitative expansion of strategic forces (continuing in a new class of mobile MIRVed IRBMs, the Backfire bomber, and in SLBMs, with corresponding reductions under SALT of older ICBMs), the Soviets are now well into an extensive modernization of existing forces, involving primarily replacements of third-generation with fourth-generation MIRVed ICBMs with improved accuracy, throw weight, flexibility, and survivability. Evidence of R&D being conducted on future strategic systems strongly indicates that Soviet leaders expect this broadly based and vigorous campaign of force improvement to continue well into the 1980s at least.

22. To some extent, the variety of weapon systems involved in this force modernization campaign may be explained by the presence of the large and powerful Soviet military-industrial apparatus. But the character and vigor of these programs are largely a function of military policies and doctrines that trace back to the early 1960s when, having begun to create the technological and industrial base for a competent strategic arsenal, the Soviets determined that the criteria for building such an arsenal had to be military capabilities for waging central nuclear war as successfully as possible. Today the Soviets are either deploying, modernizing, or conducting substantial R&D on all elements of a strategic war-fighting potential:

- Hard-target and other offensive counterforce capabilities.
- Survivable retaliatory forces.
- Defenses against low-level penetrating aerodynamic vehicles.

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- Capabilities for strategic antisubmarine warfare (ASW).
- Antiballistic missile (ABM) capabilities.
- Strategic warning and surveillance.
- Survivable command and control.
- Antisatellite capabilities.
- Civil defenses.

23. Soviet leaders and military planners adhere to the belief that a sensible strategic force posture must attempt to provide for the survival of the society and the regime in a nuclear war by destroying, defending against, or limiting the effects of the enemy's damage-making potential. They appreciate that merely having programs in all the militarily logical areas of activity required by this concept is not enough. They must be effective. And Soviet leaders also know that in many of the areas in which their doctrine requires them to be strong, present and potential Soviet forces are seriously deficient--for example, in low-altitude air defense, ASW, and ABMs. Moreover, over time the United States clearly will have numerous possibilities for negating Soviet war-fighting force improvements achieved at great cost. The dominant characteristic of Soviet strategic force policy and planning is a pervasive willingness to accept this challenge of the military dialectic. At its root has been not so much confidence in the prospects for achieving militarily decisive preponderance, but rather an unwillingness to rely wholly on the obvious alternatives in the long run, namely on maintaining a purely deterrent posture, or ending the strategic competition by arms control agreement. These alternatives may be temporarily imposed by events or temporarily accepted for purposes of controlling the course of competition. But in the long run, they are seen as mortgaging Soviet strategic security and leverage to basically hostile and unreliable enemies. These enemies include not merely the United States, but its allies, a hostile China, and potential nuclear powers.

24. Arms control negotiations and agreements (such as in the SALT and comprehensive test ban arenas) are one means the Soviets use in their efforts to modulate the strategic competition. To them, these vehicles offer the

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possibility of preventing or slowing competition in certain areas for a fixed or indefinite period of time where the Soviets are for the time being disadvantaged and particularly for impeding the translation of US technological advantages into operational military systems. ABM limitations are the foremost example. In areas where competition continues, SALT is also meant by the Soviets to nurture a political process within the United States that constrains American strategic programs and a bargaining relationship in negotiations that trades Soviet restraint (as little as possible) for US restraint (as much as possible). In addition to its political benefits for other aspects of US-Soviet relations, SALT is valued by Soviet leaders for the range of potential strategic services it can perform: from helping the USSR to avoid setbacks in, to limit some costs incurred by, and, at the extreme, to assist the Soviet Union to gain significant advantages in the strategic arms competition. The present Soviet leadership does not believe that SALT can halt the strategic arms competition or cause the US-Soviet strategic relationship to be characterized more by mutual tolerance and stability than by competition.\*

25. The Soviets' views on how a central nuclear war might originate and how it should be conducted, as best we can discern them, are a pragmatic reflection of their prevailing war-fighting doctrine. There is no evidence or reasonable set of inferences that support the notion of their deciding to launch a surprise strategic attack simply because their force balance calculations at some point indicated they could do so and prevail according to some predetermined technical criteria. At the same time, having emerged unscathed from two decades of cold war against a vastly superior US nuclear opponent, in the present radically improved strategic circumstances they now regard the United States as reliably deterred from a bolt-from-the-blue attack. Rather, the Soviets see a situation threatening the outbreak of central nuclear war as emerging potentially out of escalating US efforts to resist or reverse adverse military or political developments initiated or supported by the USSR. In these circumstances, the Soviets

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\* For a dissenting view on paragraph 24 from the Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, see the end of the Key Judgments.

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see any decision to go to nuclear war as being forced on them by accumulating signs that war is coming, clear signs that the United States (or another nuclear enemy) is about to strike, or tactical warning that an attack is under way. Then the task of strategy is to make the best of it: to preempt or launch on warning if possible--or retaliate if necessary--against a range of countermilitary and command, control, and communications facilities in order to disrupt enemy offensive operations; to attack war-supporting facilities, industries, and political centers; and to defend actively and passively against what cannot be destroyed at a distance.

26. Although from a purely military point of view the Soviets see successful preemption as more desirable than riding out an initial attack, they recognize that capabilities to survive and retaliate against a surprise attack are necessary, because decisive warning is not a certainty. They also clearly have long understood the relationship between alertness, survivability, and deterrence, but that relationship does not dominate Soviet strategic thinking as much as it does the American.


27. If the Soviets have explicit concepts for using strategic forces, short of active employment, to influence political and military interactions during crisis or conflicts at lower levels, they are not known to us. It is not the style of the current regime, nor would present Soviet leaders likely feel the need to engage in Khrushchevian rocket rattling during a major international crisis. Since the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, the USSR has never publicly declared alert measures for its strategic forces, and those few undeclared alerts that were taken on subsequent occasions were on a very low key. In applying military pressure to a crisis situation, the present Soviet leadership is likely to follow the pattern hinted (but not clearly displayed) in the Middle East war of 1973: to induce an acceptable crisis resolution by leading with the threat of direct local intervention, leaving implicit the threat of possible strategic escalation if execution of the threat is resisted militarily. Where credible Soviet local intervention capabilities are available, the Soviets would probably prefer to threaten action well below the threshold of strategic warfare in order to make escalatory nuclear counterthreats seem both disproportionate to the provocation offered and--in the face of Soviet strategic power--too risky to employ.

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28. The Soviets place varying degrees of credence in the ability of their strategic power to deter escalation of conflict to the strategic level. Thus, local conventional conflicts, conventional conflict in Europe, and even some limited exchanges of tactical nuclear weapons between superpower forces appear to have some plausibility in Soviet planning, which can be gleaned from both writings and exercises. But Soviet thinking on escalation control, especially at the higher levels of violence, is ambivalent and still heavily weighted toward the view that escalation of superpower military conflict is highly likely.

29. Soviet military doctrine presents a notable contradiction that makes it difficult to understand what Soviet thinking on nuclear crisis management might involve at the threshold of strategic conflict. If strategic conflict were to approach observably in a period of rising tension affording political-strategic warning, not only Soviet but Western forces would be alerted and generated. This would markedly lower the advantages to the Soviet side of preemption, seizure of the tactical initiative, deception, and other classical military maneuvers that are highly touted in Soviet strategic theory. In a real crisis, it is likely that Soviet decisionmakers would behave with the greatest of caution in handling and threatening the use of their strategic weapons.



30. The Soviets perceive their strategic power as playing a variety of political roles in the current environment. It is the basis for their status as a superpower and therefore gains for them the right to participate in the management of major regional and global security issues, as well as claims on the careful attention of the United States in bilateral dealings. Soviet leaders are notably irritated when they sense any depreciation of these claims on the grounds that their power is really not that great or all that relevant. But they seem, on the whole, fairly confident that it cannot be ignored. They see their strategic power as having forced the United States and its allies to see the need for broad cooperation with the USSR in security matters, thereby opening the way to detente and making their

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"peace policy" workable. Like Khrushchev, but for different and better strategic reasons, they claim that Soviet strategic power contributes broadly to the prevention or spoiling of imperialist intervention against struggling nationalist and progressive movements. It is not evident that the Soviets take special pains to project their strategic power image to specific regional audiences. They appear willing to rely on a generalized image of Soviet strength that originates with official American assessments and circulates throughout the non-Communist world.

31. The Soviets are well advanced on the strategic deployments laid down in their 1976-80 five-year defense plan and have begun to define plans for the following half decade. We expect they will continue to pursue a more capable strategic force through greater numbers of weapons, higher weapons accuracy and reliability, enhanced survivability, and more proficient command and control. In this period the Soviets will for the first time acquire significant land-mobile strategic missile forces--IRBMs and, depending on SALT constraints, possibly ICBMs. A large new ballistic missile submarine is expected, and possibly a new heavy bomber as well. Undoubtedly the Soviets will give major attention to improving their air defenses against low-altitude penetrators, especially against cruise missiles and their launch platforms; they will continue to invest heavily in R&D on ballistic missile and antisubmarine warfare technology.

32. Soviet strategic force policy is designed to improve the USSR's capabilities for strategic nuclear conflict according to the demanding criteria of Soviet doctrine. It is a policy configured for a spectrum of possible future strategic relationships with the United States first of all, and also with US allies and China. Soviet strategic policy should not be thought of as a single-minded pursuit of a specified fixed balance by a given time in the proximate future. The Soviets know that under the best of circumstances the future is too uncertain for that. Their policy is designed to produce high confidence that the United States could not deprive the USSR of the general status of parity or equality it now enjoys, to provide a reasonable prospect of improving on that condition in ways that could offer political benefits not readily defined, and to offer some possibility that familiar as well as more radical technologies could impart to the USSR a decisive war-fighting advantage in an

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indeterminate future. Force improvement programs that stick to the war-fighting track of doctrine and present a spectrum of favorable possibilities distinctly more likely than unfavorable ones are in accord with established Soviet policy and practice.

### C. Forces for the European Theater\*

33. It has long been Soviet policy to acquire and retain in Central Europe a preponderance of ground and tactical air forces for theater warfare. Particularly since the mid-1960s, this policy has occasioned the expansion and modernization of conventional, theater nuclear, and peripheral strategic strike forces. In support of this effort, the Soviets have also enhanced the capabilities of the general purpose naval forces assigned to their three European fleet areas. The Soviets originally sought and largely achieved quantitative superiority over NATO and have now achieved qualitative competitiveness in most major weapon systems. Part of the force improvements seen since the mid-1960s can be attributed to efforts designed to correct deficiencies that were permitted to develop during the Khrushchev years. The need to place large forces opposite China added to the total cost of these efforts. Control of Eastern Europe continued to be a major concern of Soviet political and military leaders, but the sizing and mix of Soviet forces oriented toward Europe have been governed by the pursuit of an offensive, war-winning dominance in the theater.

34. The Soviets now probably believe that their military forces in Europe provide them with a "winning combination" in the special sense of having a better-than-even chance (1) of winning a decisive victory over NATO on German territory in a short conventional war in which they seized the initiative early, and (2) of prevailing--however more ambiguously because more destructively--if a conventional war in Europe were to lead to the widespread

\* For a dissenting view on this discussion of Soviet forces for the European theater, see the comments by the Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, at the end of the Key Judgments.

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use of nuclear weapons yet not involve massive attacks on Soviet territory. This is a kind of theater superiority, and, judged by the economic costs incurred in its pursuit, it is valued as such by the Soviets. It is highly qualified, however, by the grave risks of nuclear escalation and by the possible danger of becoming bogged down in a prolonged war of attrition.

35. It is these considerations that produce an evident ambivalence in Soviet assessments of the European balance. The Soviets perceive their superiority and display little fear that NATO could at the outset of war unleash a successful offensive against the Pact. Yet they understand that their preferred formula for victory is complicated and highly scenario-dependent, and they worry constantly about improving their posture. They look to redundant theater and peripheral strike nuclear forces to deter, and if necessary to preempt or counter, nuclear escalation. They give great attention in their exercises to rapidly assuming the offensive.

36. The Soviets are vocally apprehensive that improvements in NATO's capabilities in tactical air forces, antitank weapons, enhanced radiation weapons, readiness, and disposition could blunt Soviet advantages in the region. But they appear determined to match and counter any such improvements and if possible to enlarge their margin of advantage.

37. The Soviet force posture in Europe is based on the political judgment that war could occur, and on the military judgment that, if it did, they should be prepared to achieve a quick victory. Were such a victory denied them, they would have to conduct military operations with an uncertainly reliable rear in Eastern Europe. Moreover, if NATO's mobilization base remained intact, NATO's superior strength in population and industry might eventually grind down Soviet forces in a protracted conflict or force the decision on nuclear escalation onto the Soviet side.

38. Even apart from the danger of the outbreak of war, the Soviets would probably not regard a purely defensive military posture in Europe as having sufficient political weight in peacetime. Their image of preponderant military strength on the continent gives them a weighty role in European security affairs, and, over time, makes that

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role seem natural to all involved. The Soviets probably see their offensive power in Europe as a necessary deterrent against intolerable political and military developments that might impact on Soviet interests or alter the balance of power in Europe and give rise to new dangers to Soviet security. At the same time, however, they wish to appear strong without appearing threatening, lest NATO's potential strength be marshaled. So long as Soviet leaders perceive NATO, and West Germany in particular, as capable of being galvanized, this objective inhibits them from engaging in tactics of direct military pressure and confrontation against NATO in pursuit of marginal or temporary advantages.

39. A major East-West military crisis has not occurred in Europe since the early 1960s, notwithstanding some anxiety at the time of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Thus, the political and military implications of the more favorable force balance that the USSR has created in Europe in the past decade have not been tested under conditions of severe stress. How the Soviets perceived and exploited those implications would no doubt depend heavily on the location and political content of events that caused a European crisis. Caution about provoking or intensifying an East-West military confrontation would probably continue to characterize Soviet behavior, although, once committed, Soviet leaders may be less willing than in the past to retreat from contested positions.

40. Nevertheless, the chosen posture and operational doctrine of the Warsaw Pact would create a serious dilemma for Soviet leaders in managing a crisis in which they felt the need to threaten offensive action or perceived that war was somehow likely to occur. As in the case of their strategic doctrine, their seizing the initiative effectively is favored by the opponent's not being in a high state of readiness. Yet NATO would be given warning by a mounting political-military crisis, especially if the Soviets were threatening offensive action as a means of leverage to resolve it favorably. The prospect of a wasting military advantage alone would probably not be sufficient to overcome the Soviet leadership's propensity to behave with great caution and restraint, especially in a European crisis. But in combination with a weighty Soviet political interest that might not be secured without military action, the present Soviet military posture in Europe could generate powerful pressures to seize the initiative and undertake rapid offensive action.

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41. Whether or how Soviet leaders think about the potential problem of crisis management arising from their military doctrine and force posture in Europe is not clear. For the present it appears likely that they will maintain the policies of the past decade, continuously modernizing their own and their allies' forces to keep, and if possible to add to, the advantages designed to yield a victory in a quick offensive conflict. NATO's planned force improvements, if implemented, will make this a more difficult task, never susceptible to fully satisfactory accomplishment; but neither NATO military improvements of the kind now programmed nor force reduction formulas of the kind that have been advanced by the West are in themselves likely to dissuade Soviet leaders from pursuing their present military policies in Europe. Even if pressed by demographic and economic factors to consider cutbacks in military manpower levels, the Soviets will probably remain highly conservative in their calculations of what they might give up in force reductions. While demographic and economic factors may constrain the total size of Soviet forces on a national basis, it seems unlikely that the pinch would be so severe as to compel the Soviets to want to cut their forces in the NATO center region.

#### D. Forces Against China

42. During the last dozen years the Soviets have increased their Far Eastern forces to more than 40 divisions, together with appropriate tactical air and air defense elements. They have augmented air and missile nuclear strike capabilities targeted against US forces in the Far East, and have deployed some ICBMs which are targetable against China as well as the United States. The increased targeting flexibility of ICBMs and SLBMs makes them available for employment against China. In addition, new peripheral strike systems, such as the SS-20 mobile IRBM, are being added to the forces opposite China.


43. Soviet military policy against China may be characterized as one of containment with a variety of limited objective offensive options. As distinguished from Soviet

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deployments in Europe, those against China incorporate fixed fortifications for defense. The Soviets clearly have sought a capability at all key points along the lengthy Sino-Mongolian-Soviet border to halt and punish local Chinese incursions and to discourage the concentration of Chinese forces near Soviet borders. They have constructed formidable regional defenses in the Maritime Province (Primorskiy Kray) against major Chinese ground attacks, and they have the capability to launch major regional offensives against Manchuria, Sinkiang, and the Peking area. In a large-scale land war, the Soviets might attempt to occupy major regions adjacent to the border, but would almost certainly not attempt to occupy central China. In a major war that went badly, the Soviets would be hard pressed to initiate the use of tactical nuclear weapons, especially in support of their ground forces; in that case, they would also be inclined simultaneously to launch preemptive attacks against the modest Chinese nuclear strike forces, and would consider the option of destroying major elements of China's industrial base.

44. Numerous statements have been made by informed Soviets that attest to a belief that China possesses a small but significant nuclear deterrent. How Soviet leaders perceive the military capabilities conferred by China's nuclear forces is somewhat uncertain.



Nevertheless, the Soviets are probably close enough to a damage-denying capability against China by means of a carefully executed attack on China's nuclear sites, to have strong incentives to launch such an attack in a major conflict, especially one that was not going well for the USSR.

45. The Soviets seem convinced that their powerful military position versus the Chinese is essential to prevent major trouble on the border and to inhibit anti-Soviet actions by China in other regions of Sino-Soviet rivalry.

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A less formidable Soviet posture would probably not, in Soviet eyes, lead to more congenial Chinese behavior, but would rather feed Chinese political ambitions and military pretensions. In any renewed test of will and strength on the border, the Soviets would undoubtedly react vigorously to a perceived military challenge. They would probably be very careful, however, about mounting threats against China in the absence of open provocation. This is because they appear to lack assurance that they understand Chinese motivation and attribute to the Chinese a propensity to react forcefully, even from a sense of weakness and vulnerability.

46. The present course of the Soviet leadership appears to be to retain indefinitely the clear preponderance of military capability the USSR enjoys over China by continuing steadily to modernize the forces deployed in the Far East.

#### E. Military Instruments for Distant Power Projection

47. The military reach of Stalin's Soviet Union was limited to its Eurasian periphery. This began to change meaningfully around a decade after World War II, which had undermined long-established colonial empires. Khrushchev, with characteristic overconfidence, trusted to a largely spontaneous political process to swing the "national liberation movement" of the Third World toward the Soviet orbit. Coups, wars, political betrayal, and their own blunders have taught his successors that the revolutionary process in the Third World is a much more complicated affair than they first thought. Despite tactical shifts and reverses, however, Soviet use of military instrumentalities to gain advantage from this kaleidoscopic transformation of political systems continues to increase.

48. The provision of military assistance in the form of hardware, support, training, technicians, and advisers is the most important dimension of this policy. Today the Soviets have active military assistance relationships with more than 30 countries of the Third World. The earliest and heaviest concentration of Soviet assistance was and remains on the USSR's southern periphery, in the Middle

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East and South Asia, but recent years have seen a dramatic upswing of activity in Africa. Moreover, military assistance to Peru (and, of course, Cuba) involves the Soviets in Latin America. Heavy Soviet military investment in Southeast Asia helped achieve a successful conclusion to the war in Vietnam in 1975, but the once-substantial investment in Indonesia evaporated after 1965.

49. The original motives of Soviet military assistance were to encourage opposition to US and West European policies and to seek political influence over the external and internal affairs of the client country or movement. These motives continue largely to shape Soviet arms transfer policy, which over the years has compiled a long list of attempts at political penetration through military aid, with mixed results. In the last 10 years, however, Soviet policy toward the Third World has also seen more strictly military motives at work in efforts to acquire access to operational and support bases for Soviet naval, combat air, and air transport elements in distant areas. Moreover, the emergence of arms-seeking Third World states possessing large amounts of petrodollars has imparted an important economic value to Soviet arms sales at a time when the USSR faces a growing shortage of hard currency.

50. The Soviet record of influence buying through military assistance has been mixed, at best, and currently appears quite disappointing. The mid-1960s were marked by a string of coups that turned the USSR out of some of its most favored client states. The 1970s witnessed even more embarrassing setbacks in countries where large investments had been made: Sudan, Egypt, and Somalia. On the other hand, Soviet military assistance during the same period has helped to secure Soviet-favored outcomes in Third World military conflicts in the Indian subcontinent, Indochina, Angola, and Ethiopia; and it has permitted the USSR to establish new footholds in Libya and Ethiopia, while maintaining a political position in Syria, Iraq, and other developing countries with which arms supply relationships have been sustained. The Soviets seem clearly to have concluded that the balance of costs and benefits of such ventures warrants persisting in them. They may see no alternative other than mere ideological posturing from a

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distance and forfeiture of a meaningful political role in the Third World.

51. The expansion of Soviet naval capabilities and presence in distant areas paralleled the intrusion of Soviet military assistance into the Third World, but it stemmed initially from a mixture of motives. What first drew the Soviet Navy out into the world oceans from its traditional roles was a set of new strategic circumstances: potential threats from carrier-launched airstrikes and submarine-launched ballistic missiles and the possibility of creating a credible, eventually potent, SLBM attack force. These continue to dominate Soviet naval requirements, but, as a purposeful adjunct, Soviet naval operations now routinely establish Soviet presence in regions of interest. Beyond showing the flag, the most important mission of the Soviet Navy, in contexts other than general war, is to provide a spoiling or interposition capability that can help deter the United States from direct use of its superior naval strength in regional conflicts. This Soviet capability is most strongly developed in the eastern Mediterranean and is growing as well in the Indian Ocean and along the west coast of Africa.

52. The USSR has not engaged in direct and openly avowed combat operations on a substantial scale in the Third World, although its support in Korea, Vietnam, the Middle East, and in several other minor conflicts involved a sub rosa combat role for some Soviet military personnel, particularly in air defense units. Given time, permissive entry, and suitable conditions for support, resupply, and reinforcement, the Soviets could put major conventional combat forces into any area of the world. However, their typical predicament has been lack of these essentials, especially in the Middle East, where their capabilities are otherwise greatest. Opinions differ as to how seriously the Soviets meant their threat to introduce combat elements into the 1973 Middle East war. Soviet leaders probably expect that there may be times when their ability to protect local equities will depend on their having credible intervention capabilities. They have for some time expanded their airlift capabilities to supplement sea transport capacity, and may be spurred in the future to increase their investment in forces and logistic capabilities tailored for distant intervention.

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53. The Soviets will be alert for opportunities to establish a presence and to turn local developments into trends of wider impact favorable to their interests. The Soviets' reading of US post-Vietnam policy in the Third World, of their own accomplishment in Angola using Cubans as surrogates, and of the gradually expanding geographic horizons of their involvement in developing countries harmonizes with what their ideology predisposes them to believe about political trends in these regions. At the same time, they also appreciate that US policy is not a constant, that political conditions in the Third World are highly volatile, and that new factors, such as oil producers' wealth and the infusion of more advanced weapons, are entering the scene. For all these reasons, the Soviets probably judge it wise to adhere to the policies of the recent past in using their military assets in the Third World--a cautious but determined opportunism, employing surrogates where feasible and displaying a willingness to accept frustrations and reverses in the short run with a view to achieving a positive and more durable political balance in the longer term.

### III. THE THRUST OF CURRENT SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY

54. The foreign policy of the USSR since the inception of the Soviet state has displayed a mixture of conservative tendencies in defense of past gains and a fundamentally assertive stance toward what has lain beyond its control. The balance of elements in that mixture has varied over time, but even when the weight of defense has dominated, Soviet leaders themselves have seen their policy as essentially revolutionary, resting on the expectation of basic structural changes in the international system and within the states that constitute it, and deliberately seeking--for the most part cautiously--to help bring these about.

55. Being more interactive with uncontrolled external forces and actors, Soviet foreign policy displays a kind of flux and pragmatism that is less visible in most areas of internal affairs, including military force development policy. Russian history, Soviet ideology, and their own experience in international affairs impart to Soviet leaders a mentality that permits near-term temperance

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and agile opportunism to coexist with a deep sense of manifest destiny for Soviet power in the world. While they know they must make numerous accommodations with the world beyond their control, they are profoundly reluctant to accept these as more than temporary.

56. This mentality sustains Soviet policy in steady pursuit of systemic shifts in the world order through small steps, and guards its fundamental beliefs against demoralization and massive reappraisals in the face of reversals. The Soviets see the sweep of postwar international affairs as broadly confirming their convictions about the march of history. Because their beliefs about the course of world politics have deep cultural roots, and stem from an ideology that confers domestic political legitimacy, even profoundly novel developments, such as the appearance of nuclear weapons, and deeply disconcerting events, such as the defection of China, have not undermined their governing orthodoxy.

57. The current Brezhnev leadership, judging the Soviet position to have improved substantially since it assumed power in 1964, appears to see its gains as made possible largely by the military programs it pursued: the improvement in the Soviet strategic posture vis-a-vis the US, the deployment of augmented forces and weapons in Europe and the Far East, and the development of instruments for power projection to distant areas. The present leaders ascribe the progress of their policy of detente with the United States and their increased influence in Western Europe since the late 1960s in good measure to the growth of Soviet military power, which has also given impetus to Soviet efforts to assert a military and political presence in the Third World.

58. Partially offsetting Soviet foreign policy gains are persistent unfavorable long-term trends inherited from the Khrushchev era. These include the steady hostility of a China that is gradually growing more powerful, an increase in the costs of maintaining Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe, erosion of Soviet control within the world Communist movement, and a continuing tendency toward reduction in the rate of growth of the economic base on which

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their military power rests. The Soviet leadership has sought to halt or reverse these trends and is still engaged in these efforts, with mixed results.

59. The main elements of Brezhnev's foreign policy have all been in place since at least the late 1960s and some trace back to the Khrushchev period:

- Detente diplomacy toward the United States.
- Detente diplomacy toward Western Europe.
- Defense of the East European status quo.
- Containment of China.
- Movement into the Third World.

A. Detente Diplomacy Toward the United States.

60. In the United States, the policy of detente has been called managing the emergence of Soviet power on the global scene. The Soviets have come close to characterizing their own policy of detente as a way of managing at once the emergence of Soviet global power and the relative decline of US power. "Managing" in this case means to the Soviets both encouraging and helping along favorable trends, but also preventing or controlling dangerous discontinuities. The evident conviction of Soviet leaders that long-term processes in East-West power relations favor the USSR coexists with their concern about the capacity of the United States, when aroused, to resist those changes and the possibility that such resistance could take forms that might produce dangerous confrontations. Their respect for American political and military power, as well as their consciousness of the changeability of world affairs, persuades them to weigh carefully their desire to press for new advantages against their concern for control and predictability in relations with the United States. In addition, their strong interest in advantageous economic relations and technological access to the West encourages them to promote in the West generally expectations of stable relations with the Soviet Union.

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61. The strategic meaning of US-Soviet detente for Soviet leaders is the management of change in world politics in ways that control costs and risks while constraining as little as possible Soviet efforts to exploit fresh opportunities for gain. Such processes as SALT and US-Soviet cooperation in regional security negotiations allow the superpower competition to be monitored and modulated. On occasion, detente-engendered participation by the Soviet Union in new international forums or in the management of issues from which it was formerly excluded offers Soviet leaders opportunities for exerting by diplomatic means influence that otherwise might not be available or might require more costly or risky measures to pursue. These processes also oblige Soviet leaders to calibrate their own competitive behavior against the risks of disrupting detente, particularly in areas where the core interests of the US are perceived to be deeply engaged. This calibration has not, however, reduced the willingness of the Soviet Union to pursue competitive advantages vigorously in areas such as Africa, where Moscow may perceive US interests to be less deeply engaged or US policy to be hamstrung by domestic political constraints.

62. On balance, Soviet leaders appear to regard the arms control element of detente diplomacy as a material aid to their military policy. Such efforts as SALT, the talks on mutual and balanced force reductions (MBFR), the nuclear test ban negotiations, and the dialogue on deployments in the Indian Ocean are seen in varying degrees by the Soviets as means of influencing and perhaps limiting the military response of the United States to the growth and emergence of Soviet military power. In the Soviet view, the very existence of these negotiations helps to create a predisposition in the United States to see growing Soviet power as legitimate and natural, whereas even a decade ago Soviet claims to an expanded global role were seen as illegitimate and unacceptable. While the USSR is prepared to consider some modification of its own military policy preferences to sustain the arms-control dialogue, Soviet leaders have shown themselves to be strongly resistant to arms-control agreements that would oblige them to alter their basic military doctrine and force development and deployment plans. When compelled in SALT to make a choice, Soviet leaders display a perceptibly greater readiness to modify or even withdraw their own demands for explicit restrictions on US strategic programs than to accommodate US proposals for constraints on highly valued Soviet programs.

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63. Because both sides see strategic and other military issues as central to the US-Soviet relationship as a whole, the Soviets value arms-control dialogues, and especially SALT, as a kind of cement in the whole detente enterprise. Whether linkages to other issues are explicitly stated or not, the fortunes of the larger policy are strongly affected by the progress of SALT as a process, which, in the Soviet view, requires periodic punctuation by formal agreements.

64. Of late a key objective of Soviet leaders has been to get back on track with a detente policy which they have seen partially derailed by an accumulation of difficulties that began immediately after its first great success, the Summit of 1972. A countertrend in the United States--as seen in controversy over the first SALT agreements, assessments of Soviet behavior in the 1973 Middle East war, the snarling of economic relations with the grain deals and Jewish emigration, reactions to events in Angola, and election debates--induced new skepticism in American opinion and rendered the tone of the bilateral relationship increasingly abrasive. The Soviets hoped for and expected that this trend would be reversed after the 1976 elections. They were thrown off balance by the novel--and, in their view, possibly hostile--assertiveness of the new Carter administration, especially with regard to SALT and human rights.

65. The prominence of the human rights theme in the administration's early approaches to the USSR perplexed and, of course, offended the Soviet leadership. It probably added to the arguments for a tough initial response to the new administration. Soviet leaders were largely insensitive to the internal moral and political wellsprings of this behavior by the United States, seeing it as a well-aimed propaganda arrow. They were unsure what the United States expected to achieve from this immediately, but they tended to react with characteristic concern to maintain stability in Eastern Europe and to eliminate incipient threats to domestic tranquillity. More crucial, they suspected that the human rights gambit might be the initial salvo in a much more combative and sustained US policy toward the USSR. Soviet concern over the new administration's approach to human rights and to SALT evidently led to a

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fairly comprehensive stocktaking during the spring and summer of 1977. By midsummer, the Soviets could discern at least temporarily reassuring signs emerging from Washington not only in official statements, but in other evidence. To sustain what, in Soviet eyes, was this American "return to realism," Moscow had to become more responsive, too. Foreign Minister Gromyko's discussions with President Carter and Secretary Vance in the fall, which culminated in a new negotiating framework for SALT, probably persuaded the Soviet leaders that their detente policy was on track again.

66. Since then, however, the Soviets have probably perceived a growing accumulation of disturbing symptoms of stagnation or even deterioration in Soviet-American relations. While the range of unresolved questions in SALT was gradually narrowed after the fall breakthrough in Washington, the Soviets have probably perceived the US position on remaining issues as becoming progressively more intractable. Moscow has made clear its dissatisfaction with what it perceives to be US tendencies to protract the negotiations and to exert leverage by invoking the specter of Senate refusal to ratify without fresh Soviet concessions. More recently, they have seen the prospects for an early SALT agreement further clouded by increasingly vocal adverse US reactions to Soviet behavior on the Horn of Africa and by a growing tendency of the US administration to associate the fate of SALT negotiations with the outcome in Africa.

67. The Soviet leaders therefore probably have the sense of approaching a watershed, since they continue to regard the outcome of the present SALT negotiations as the key to the prospects of their detente diplomacy toward the United States in the next few years. They are keen for an agreement on political grounds because they believe that failure to achieve one would strengthen those forces in the United States they regard as most hostile to the USSR, fuel more generally skeptical American attitudes toward detente, and possibly encourage compensating moves by the administration. At the same time, they probably appreciate that no agreement acceptable to them will have easy sledding through US internal politics. These perceptions argue for flexibility, as well as toughness, on their part.

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68. Soviet views of the US cruise missile program are critical to any assessment Moscow must make of SALT options. The Soviets clearly wish to constrain this program as much as possible. Their unenthusiastic public reaction to cancellation of the B-1 program should not be read as indicating the cruise missile was their only concern all along. Privately they probably welcomed the B-1 decision as averting a formidable new threat. Moreover, the B-1 decision changed the strategic landscape and presented the Soviets with a more concentrated political target. Where several years ago they had to plan on facing both a large B-1 and a cruise missile threat, they now see a chance to come out of the negotiations facing prospects of a US cruise missile threat alone, at least for a time. But their problem is not merely to achieve formal limitations on that threat in SALT, but to cultivate a mixture of formal limitations and political conditions that will dampen the pace at which this technology advances and proliferates. They may hope to benefit from friction between the US and its NATO allies on the question of the cruise missile's availability to the allies. In the long run, they probably expect to face serious cruise missile threats from the United States and others, but they hope to slow and channel the process whereby this happens, while they work on comparable and appropriate defensive technologies.

69. Despite their concern with the cruise missile, they evidently do not believe its effects on the strategic balance would be as great as those they earlier anticipated from extensive US ABM deployment. Rather, they see cruise missiles as a new technology seeping out of the strategic competition to make their whole damage-limiting strategy more difficult, and they wish to slow this phenomenon at minimum cost.

70. The Soviets' expectations for their longer term relationship with the United States will be much influenced by their experience with current strategic arms negotiations and by developments in the Middle East and Africa. Their present judgment is probably that prospects are somewhat better than they feared last spring but poorer than they hoped in the fall. They probably expect that Washington's activism will combine with more hostile

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public American attitudes to produce less predictable and, intermittently, more competitive US behavior than they earlier anticipated. They are probably less concerned that Washington may succeed in downgrading the importance of the USSR in American foreign policy in ways that could diminish their international status and are reasonably confident in any case that the sheer weight of the Soviet Union in world affairs will prevent this from happening. The Soviet leaders probably appreciate that their prospects for managing political relations with the US on a desirable basis will depend on tactical subtlety and on positions they choose or are forced to take on developments external to the direct bilateral relationship.

#### B. Detente Diplomacy Toward Western Europe

71. Soviet detente policy toward the United States in the early 1970s followed upon Soviet efforts of the mid-1960s to respond to changed political conditions in Europe. France and, somewhat later and more cautiously, West Germany were looking toward the East in a manner that presented the USSR with both diplomatic opportunities and palpable threats to its East European hegemony. Moscow's task was to convince European capitals as well as Washington that Eastern Europe was untouchable, that Moscow was the sole partner of consequence in any political dialogue over new European security arrangements, and that more West European independence from the United States was a promising course.

72. The results of Soviet policy in the succeeding 10 years were mixed. Moscow clearly succeeded in driving home the point that there would be no revising of the political map of Europe by stealth or negotiation. The USSR proceeded to cultivate reasonably amicable relations with the major European countries for both political and economic ends. On the other hand, a combination of unwelcome events--from the invasion of Czechoslovakia to the souring of the Helsinki gains--tended to block what Moscow had earlier seen as improved chances for a more pronounced West European shift away from reliance on the United States.

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At bottom what altered the more expansive mood of the mid-1960s was a renewed appreciation on the part of West European elites, including those of the left, that the USSR is a nation whose behavior, values, and power are not congenial to their way of life. Problem areas can be tranquilized, as in the Berlin agreements of 1971, but Moscow probably sees no major diplomatic revolutions in the making with the kinds of governments currently in office.

73. The longer term objectives of Soviet policy in Europe remain what they have long been, to assure the USSR's hegemony in the East while gradually levering the United States out of the West in a manner that precludes the emergence of a politically and militarily united Western Europe. In present circumstances, they see the most active source of dynamism on the West European scene to reside in internal political and economic developments.

74. The implications of Eurocommunism are crucial, and here they see both good and bad news, and much ambiguity. Leftwing electoral prospects imply movement in what would once have seemed wholly welcome directions for the Soviets. Yet the Communist parties so eager to play a role in this are, from Moscow's point of view, deserting certain Leninist orthodoxies as well as some pro-Soviet political positions, creating danger for the ideological integrity of the USSR's own dominions and new uncertainties for European politics. This produces notable ambivalence in Soviet behavior. In doctrinal matters, the Soviets want to make their orthodoxy evident without anathemizing wayward parties. With respect to the recent elections in France, they indicated some distaste for the prospect of a victory of the leftwing alliance on the terms likely to prevail between its members, and appear to be satisfied with the outcome.

75. Soviet policy aims at cultivating and promoting among West European governments and publics an inclination to pay greater deference to Soviet interests both in all-European affairs and in the framing of national security policies. The behavior of Soviet leaders in working toward this end often appears to be calibrated according to the size and location of the state in question and to

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Soviet perceptions of the political vulnerability of its government. In its various separate dealings with NATO members, the USSR has displayed a tendency to be relatively more blunt and forceful in pressing Soviet desires with the small Scandinavian states of the Northern Tier, which are both closer to Soviet borders than most other West Europeans and more vulnerable to the force of the Finnish example. In the Southern Tier, on the other hand, while the Soviets evidently have considerable hopes that the coherence of NATO will over the long run be weakened by the disruptive forces at work, their behavior remains somewhat constrained by a variety of complicating factors, including their desire to woo both Greeks and Turks. Even in Italy, where the Soviets clearly hope that the slow insinuation of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) into the government will gradually attenuate Italian ties to NATO, this is partially offset by Soviet concern over the price they pay in the PCI's growing incentives to take a more independent line toward Moscow.

76. In their dealings with the strongest European states--Britain, France, and West Germany--near-term Soviet expectations are probably modest. Although the Soviets continue to see the nationalist element in French policy as helpful to their interests over the long term, in recent years they have seen disturbing negative trends in French behavior, particularly the warmer French posture toward NATO. Similarly, in the case of the Federal Republic, Soviet leaders are especially concerned over what they see as a trend toward increasing West German weight in NATO, a trend which they fear may lead to eventual German acquisition of cruise missiles and possibly other advanced weapons. Finally, the Soviets interact with the three largest European powers and the United States in Berlin, which Moscow continues to regard as a point of Western vulnerability where pressure may be applied at any time, if circumstances warrant.

#### C. Defense of the Status Quo in Eastern Europe

77. The prospects for Soviet policy in Western Europe are interwoven with the economic and political fortunes of its Warsaw Pact allies, and are affected by how the USSR manages the persistent task of preserving its

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hegemony in Eastern Europe. Soviet leaders regard this task as a quasi-domestic problem, a characteristic which distinguishes Soviet policy toward Eastern Europe from all other elements of Soviet foreign policy. Major economic and ideological developments in the states of this region have important implications for the USSR, and political setbacks in Eastern Europe strongly affect Soviet politics, even leading (as in 1956) to a serious weakening of the Soviet leadership's cohesion. In the present circumstances, the Soviets can see developments inimical to social and political stability in Eastern Europe emerging from several directions. The workers riots of June 1976 in Poland were especially unsettling to Moscow, and economic difficulties in other Warsaw Pact countries have also been a source of concern. In recent years, the Soviets have seen the economic burdens associated with maintaining their position in Eastern Europe grow, as Communist economies in the area consumed subsidized Soviet energy resources that could otherwise be exchanged for scarce hard currency.

78. It is generally understood that the Soviet leadership would use whatever means it deemed necessary, including force, to maintain control. If economic or political discontent once again generated a deep crisis in Eastern Europe and forcible Soviet measures were taken to end it, this would inevitably damage Soviet interests in other regions and probably, as in 1956 and 1968, impede preferred Soviet policies toward the West at least for a time. For the present Soviet leaders and for any likely successors, however, what would be in question in confronting a serious challenge to their grip on Eastern Europe would not be the ultimate outcome, but only the costs of achieving it.

#### D. Containment of China

79. While the Soviets regard the United States as their major competitor in the world and Europe as the most important arena of the competition, they now regard China as their most intractable opponent. For years, despite sober calculations to the contrary, the Soviets entertained hopes

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that after Mao's death some sort of rapprochement with China could be achieved. At the same time they have also feared that detente between Peking and Washington might move rapidly to heightened security cooperation and significant infusions of US technology directly helpful to China's military efforts. Neither the hopes nor the fears have materialized, although Soviet anxieties about the possibility of Western military-related assistance to China are still strong.

80. The Soviets appreciate that the national roots of Chinese hostility to the USSR are deep, making the prospects for greatly improved relations remote indeed. They also realize, however, that constraints on China imposed by its internal politics, particularly during the Mao succession, its economic and military backwardness, and the tenacious difficulties between China and the US help to keep China weak and comparatively isolated. Thus, while the Soviet Union's China problem remains difficult and continues to harbor the potential for developing into a threat of great magnitude, the Soviet leaders find it manageable for the time being. Moreover, with Mao's passing, they probably believe the likelihood of a new severe crisis provoked by irrational, blindly hateful Chinese behavior has receded.

81. Unable to move Chinese policy directly through successive resorts to ideological dialogue, punitive economic measures, thinly veiled nuclear threats, and assorted blandishments, Soviet policy settled some time ago on attempting to contain China's power and influence in Asia and in the Third World and to impede its access to the economic, technical, and military resources of the advanced capitalist countries.

82. In Japan, intrinsic difficulties in Soviet-Japanese relations, ranging from the intractable matter of the Northern Territories to abiding Japanese suspicion of Soviet motives, appear to impose severe limits on Soviet flexibility. The Soviets realize that some give on the Northern Territories might improve the chance for better relations with Japan, especially in a period of Japanese nervousness about the US role in the western Pacific. But the precedent-setting implications of any territorial concessions, especially in that region, seem to be judged by the Soviets as more dangerous for their future relations with China and Eastern Europe than attractive for the

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promise of better relations with Japan. Moscow probably does not have high expectations of developing strong positive ties with Japan in the near future, or of greatly weakening Japan's ties with the US, but will be satisfied to see Japan remain weakly armed and deterred from abandoning its policy of rough equidistance toward China and the USSR.

83. The Soviets are highly alert to any signs that Peking may be interested in improving Sino-Soviet relations, however narrow the range or cynical the motive. In recent years, as they anticipated Mao's impending death, they probably considered various packages they might offer the Chinese, including economic assistance and new approaches to border management. They hope they are now dealing with a Chinese regime that is at least capable of recognizing that its own self-interest may be served by the appearance of even a small improvement in Sino-Soviet relations. But a Soviet initiative that confronts the central impasse in the relationship has to hold out the prospect of concessions on the regional arms balance and on territorial issues, and perhaps even on a range of political-ideological matters. Moscow is extremely reluctant to make such concessions, particularly without very high confidence that Peking would fully reciprocate them. More tactical flexibility could be expected from Moscow, however, in the event of a promising turr. in Chinese internal affairs.

#### E. Movement Into the Third World

84. In Lenin's image of the world transformed, conflagration in the hinterlands of imperialism leads to crisis and revolution in the metropolis of capitalism. This vision persists in Soviet ideological efforts to give comprehensive meaning to the development of the Third World, and it contributes to the determination of Soviet leaders to expand the USSR's power and influence there. The diverse regions and countries of the Third World present common challenges to Soviet policy at a very basic level: socio-economic development, political instability, regional conflicts, and nationalism. The revolutionary potential of these common elements makes the Third World an arena of interest and necessary involvement for the USSR, but also makes that arena extremely unpredictable and difficult to deal with.

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85. Although the desire to regain ideological legitimacy and attractive force imparts a stimulus to Soviet foreign policy in the Third World, that policy is shaped increasingly by the specific and highly varied conditions of regions and countries. The Middle East is clearly the part of the Third World of greatest concern to the Soviet Union. Soviet determination to play a major role in this region, and the fact that Israel's fate, as well as access to oil, anchor US interests firmly in the area, continue to make it a potential arena for US-Soviet confrontation on the Soviet doorstep. It is also the region where the Soviets have since the early 1970s endured a succession of severe setbacks, most notably their humiliating expulsion from Egypt. The Soviets' gains in Libya and Yemen (Aden) and in patronage over the Palestine Liberation Organization are poor compensation for their losses.

86. Over the last few years, Soviet influence and freedom of action in the Middle East have been constricted by three converging developments. The first and most important of these has been the enormous rise in influence of the conservative oil-producing states, led by Saudi Arabia and Iran, working against Soviet interests. Second, the value of a military-political connection to the Soviet Union has been eroded by Soviet inability to secure the satisfaction of Arab aspirations in the conflict with Israel. Third, the Soviet position has been further weakened by the growing orientation of the economies even of radical Arab countries toward the capitalist industrial states.

87. In the ongoing effort to combat these trends, Moscow seeks to preserve its ties with the radical elements of the region as the strongest available evidence that the USSR retains a disruptive potential sufficiently great to prevent its exclusion from attempts to reach a Middle East settlement. The importance of the USSR's ties to these elements has been increased by the dramatic opening of direct negotiations between the two principal actors in the Arab-Israeli conflict, Egypt and Israel, both of which wish to minimize the role of the Soviet Union.

86. Apart from the Middle East, India has long been the most important object of Soviet attention in the Third World, both to help contain China and as a cornerstone of

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Soviet influence with the nonaligned movement. The fall of Indira Gandhi was perceived by Moscow as a major setback. While the new government's dependence on the USSR for economic and military aid remains considerable, it is clearly intent upon diversifying its foreign relations and improving ties with the US. The Soviet leaders will attempt to trade cautiously on India's dependence to limit the damage of Gandhi's removal and to cultivate new bases for the special relationship they hope to preserve.

89. The Soviets have seen Africa grow from a political backwater to an arena of major interest in a few years. They are not oblivious to the costs and risks of their diverse involvement on that continent. But their willingness to exploit moderately tempting situations, despite these risks, is clearer in Africa than in the rest of the Third World. Most recently this willingness has been demonstrated by Soviet conduct in the Horn of Africa. Having been ousted from Somalia and their Berbera base because of the shift of their support to Ethiopia in the Ogaden conflict, the Soviet leaders moved quickly and decisively to help secure an Ethiopian victory. Their determination to supply whatever was needed to drive the Somalis out of the Ogaden--in materiel, Soviet advisers, support for Cuban combat forces--was reinforced by their resentment of US policy in the Middle East and by their suspicion that the US also encouraged the Somalis to oust them. The Soviets were aware that their setback in Somalia was widely regarded as fitting into a pattern of other recent injuries to Soviet prestige, particularly in the Middle East. Against this background, Soviet leaders evidently perceived an increasing threat to the credibility of their pretensions to status as a great-power actor with an expanding presence on the world scene. These considerations, along with a favorable diplomatic environment for supporting an African state whose territorial integrity had been violated, gave the Soviet leaders strong incentives to demonstrate that the Soviet Union could make its will felt at a point of Third World contention where the US was perceived as unable or unwilling to act. Equally important, the Soviets were tempted to deepen their Ethiopian commitment by the hope of restoring their lost position on the coast of the Horn and by the opportunity to entrench themselves in the largest East African state. Having successfully helped Mengistu to

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expel the Somalis, the Soviets probably believe their achievement has impressively advertised Soviet-Cuban capabilities to nationalist movements elsewhere in Africa, and has improved Soviet chances of playing a larger role in determining the outcome of the struggle for Rhodesia.

90. Other Third World areas currently receive a lower Soviet priority. In Latin America, Moscow's diplomatic posture since the fall of Chilean President Allende is fundamentally one of watching and waiting, while in Southeast Asia, the overarching motivation of Soviet policy remains isolation of China, with Vietnam as the USSR's most important anchor.

91. How the Soviets draw the balance sheet of their positions in the Third World depends on the time frame and the standard they use. While they are acutely aware of their failures and troubles, these may be regarded by the Soviet leadership as the inevitable casualties of more extensive and progressively deepening engagement of Soviet interests in the Third World and the gradual multiplication of the Soviet presence abroad. The Soviet leaders are encouraged to persist by what they see as basic trends, notably the withdrawal of the United States from long-established positions and flagging US public interest in contesting Soviet influence in the Third World (especially Africa and Asia). They seem to perceive the American withdrawal from Vietnam as a watershed, marking the end of an era in which US readiness to intervene militarily dominated Soviet risk calculations in the Third World. They may read the US decision to withdraw ground forces from South Korea as indicating the persistence of that trend and, while they are aware of the special external circumstances that constrained American freedom of maneuver in the Horn, they are likely to regard US inability to find means to prevent their successful large-scale intervention in the Ethiopian conflict as further such evidence. Finally, while the growing assertiveness of Third World countries--as reflected in the radically revised terms of trade imposed by members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and in the North-South dialogue--is hardly harnessed to the USSR's purposes, Soviet leaders perceive that assertiveness as causing the West more net harm than themselves.

92. The current Soviet leadership took charge of Soviet foreign affairs when memories of Khrushchev's Cuban missile debacle were still fresh and while radioactive dust

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from China's first nuclear detonation was still settling. Overall, Brezhnev and his associates probably count their foreign policy a success in the sense that it has substantially advanced the Soviet role in the world; it has secured for the USSR through a combination of diplomacy and enormous military effort acknowledgement of coequal superpower status with the US; and it has kept individual setbacks from being generalized into rank disasters internationally and from disrupting stability in the leadership at home.

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## IV. SOVIET PERSPECTIVES ON THE FUTURE

93. In assessing what Soviet power will amount to and what it will be able to achieve in the future, Soviet leaders are conscious of the pervasive dualism in their foreign and military policies: a blend of pushing, activating, and exploiting forces for change in favor of Soviet interests, on the one hand; and preserving, defending, steadying, and channeling activities to consolidate past gains and to avert unmanageable risks, on the other. To a degree, the policies of any great power display this dualism. The Soviets see the unique quality of their own role in the world to be the revolutionary purposefulness of both assertive and defensive actions, and the harmony of those actions with the interests of the Soviet state and the direction of historical change. That this quality is manifest, not in visionary statesmanship, but in the steady labors of various bureaucracies and in a collective leadership of post-Bolshevik wardheeler politicians makes it the more tenacious.

94. Although the Soviet leaders know that nuclear weapons have altered the past rules and heightened the risks of political-military interplay, their own experiences persuade them that military power has not lost its relevance to world affairs in the nuclear age. The military strength of the USSR has an internal subjective function for the Soviet leadership in giving it a sense of greater security and confidence. It also has an external role in conditioning the views of foreign decisionmakers as to what is necessary and possible in dealing with the USSR.

95. The Soviets have observed a greater readiness on the part of their opponents to take Soviet interests into account in a growing range of political-military issues around the globe. They know this is not because the West now finds Soviet values more congenial and they believe they have Soviet military power largely to thank for the change. They are aware that the West hopes by a variety of means, including economic inducements, to raise the USSR's stake in a stable world order so as to deflect it from potentially disruptive aggressive behavior. Whatever else Soviet leaders may think of this Western conception of detente, it conveys to them a Western appreciation that the USSR's military power could be employed to

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promote a more venturesome Soviet foreign policy if Soviet leaders were not persuaded on political and economic grounds that present policies are more promising.

96. For present Soviet leaders, military power is crucial to both assertive and preservative action. In times of crisis or tension, their military power allows the Soviets to stand on forward positions and, like cash in the bank, gives them added flexibility of action. The Soviet leaders view their military power as conditioning the political environment and allowing them greater freedom of choice in mixing collaborative and more threatening modes of action. It permits either mode to be pursued more confidently: collaborative acts because they are unlikely to be perceived by others as reflecting weakness, and actions implying threat because Soviet capacity to back them up is seen as more credible. This assessment of the value of the USSR's military power shapes the leadership's agenda of goals and expectations for the near and midterm future.

97. The present Soviet leadership's future outlook is probably also conditioned in substantial measure by the advanced years of Brezhnev and other senior figures. Having achieved much in advancing the role of the USSR in the world, they seem committed to maintaining the relatively steady course set in the late 1960s and early 1970s, that of amassing military power, penetrating new areas of influence at moderate risk, avoiding high levels of tension with the West, and containing the challenge of China.

#### A. The Internal Outlook

98. Internal developments have a crucial, if not always direct or obvious, bearing on Soviet foreign affairs. Leadership politics affects policy choice. Dissent and repression have become international issues for the USSR. The Soviet economy continues to be the ultimate source of Soviet physical power. Soviet leaders know that the USSR's gains in the global power arena have been at least as much the consequence of internal contradictions and domestic disarray in their opponents' camp as of successful external projection of Soviet strength and influence. They are conscious

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of the advantages conferred by the stability of the Soviet political order for their conduct of sustained international competition and they expect to retain those advantages.

99. The public outlook of the present Soviet leadership on internal trends, while sober and restrained, does not accord with the bleak prospects widely forecast abroad. It is likely that Soviet leaders foresee mounting troubles of varying degrees of intensity on several domestic fronts, but they appear to believe that these can be managed or, if necessary, endured at an acceptable cost.

100. With respect to the inevitable leadership transition that must follow the passing of Brezhnev and his senior colleagues, the potential for instability is no doubt appreciated. Little has been done to prepare for the transition, however, presumably because Brezhnev continues to give priority to consolidating his own position. Having weathered the Stalin and Khrushchev successions, Soviet leaders may be confident that the regime will be able to manage the next succession as well. They are doubtless aware that previous successions have sometimes led to major changes in the conduct of foreign affairs, such as occurred following Stalin's death and Khrushchev's removal from office. Yet they probably expect the main directions of foreign policy to be maintained for a time after Brezhnev's departure from office, since the reduced cohesion of the post-Brezhnev leadership will make it difficult, at least in the initial phase of succession, to reach agreement on new policy directions.

101. Domestic political dissent makes Soviet leaders jittery. But political dissent is perceived as only an incipient danger, to be dealt with vigorously while it is still small, employing the massive powers available to the regime for this purpose. As long as detente lasts, the Soviet leaders will be more inclined to use these powers with circumspection, and will expect Western governments, out of a similar concern for detente, to keep the issue of Soviet political dissent at the margin rather than at the center of their relations with the USSR.

102. On the economic front, by contrast, the Soviets know they face very tough problems. They see the dismal slide of returns on capital investment. They are aware of the economic constraints, and also the ethnic, social, and political problems that current demographic trends may

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generate. They know that feeding their economy with adequate natural resources is increasingly taxing, and there is growing evidence that they expect a worsening pinch in oil supplies. Added to this is the perennial threat of crop failures which can cause disruptions in almost all sectors of the economy. The increasingly dim outlook for the economy is apparent in the reduction of the growth rate of industrial targets in the current five-year economic plan and especially in recent annual plans. In anticipation of possible future constraints on their capability to earn hard currency, the Soviets have recently begun to exercise more stringent controls on industrial imports from the West in order to reduce their hard-currency debt and enhance Western perceptions of their credit worthiness.

103. It does not appear as yet, however, that the Soviet leaders have synthesized these trends into a prognosis of economic crisis so grave as to raise questions about the need for a major change of direction in the basic thrust of their foreign policy compelling them either to draw back from detente and revert sullenly to autarchy, or to attempt so radically to enlarge the scope and alter the character of their relations with the West as to facilitate a deep Soviet plunge into the international capitalist economic arena. Both extremes would be unpalatable, and the second almost certainly unacceptable since it would be perceived by all to have been adopted under grave economic duress. In the coming years, Soviet leaders will probably continue to seek extensive economic engagement with the West, pursuing new advantageous arrangements that do not exact politically distasteful concessions. They count heavily on capitalist avarice and Western disunity to facilitate this course, but will be prepared to pull back should growing economic ties with Western countries build pressures on them to pay what they regard as a politically unacceptable price.

104. The effect of potentially deleterious internal social, economic, and political developments--were they to become actual--on Soviet foreign policy are exceptionally difficult for outside observers to gauge. For ideological reasons as well as because of political risk, Soviet leaders may also have trouble in recognizing the potential severity of such problems before they are upon them. But as rulers

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of a nation that, in little more than two generations; has come through civil war, collectivization, purges, a colossally destructive war, and reconstruction to become a second superpower, they will not easily be unnerved by a crisis of factor productivity. A crisis of factor availability, such as a decline in oil production might precipitate, would be more difficult for Soviet leaders to assimilate. If forced to choose, however, they are likely to endure economic hardships and do with less, rather than experiment with radically new institutions and policies.

#### B. The Military Outlook

105. The most likely Soviet prognosis for the next decade would not include revolutionary shifts in the overall military balance or in the US-Soviet strategic nuclear balance brought about by the weapons programs of the major powers. Present Soviet leaders probably expect, however, that the USSR will be able, by continuing on its present military course, to retain its power position relative to the US and NATO, and--more likely in the next few years, less certainly thereafter--to improve upon it in some significant ways.

106. The Soviets can now anticipate improvements in the intercontinental strategic balance with the United States in the early 1980s. Current Soviet modernization programs, particularly the MIRVing of ICBMs and SLBMs will have come to completion, by and large, while the US posture will still be dominated by weapon systems of the 1960s and earlier. This condition, along with other improvements in the Soviet strategic posture, could persuade Soviet leaders that their strategic war-fighting capabilities had been materially, if only temporarily, enhanced. The present Soviet leaders' deep aversion to nuclear war is most unlikely to be mitigated because of such perceived advantages, but they might expect their adversaries to perceive that this condition had enhanced Soviet confidence and staying power in crisis situations. If the Soviets do foresee a period of perceptible strategic improvement between now and the early 1980s, they can probably also foresee that circumstances may arise in which they could extract political benefits from it. It is highly unlikely that the current leaders

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would deliberately provoke a crisis simply to test the effects of their strategic gains on NATO, but their enhanced confidence may predispose them to act in ways that could provoke unsought crises with the West. In any event, the Soviet leaders would probably expect their improved strategic position to influence the West's conduct in any crisis that supervened during a period of perceived Soviet advantage.

107. Short of crisis situations, the more generalized political effects of improvements in the Soviet strategic posture between now and in the early 1980s would be extremely difficult for Soviet leaders to anticipate. The fact of such improvements probably would not have to be broadcast by the USSR since they are likely to be publicized in the US and elsewhere in public debate. It is unlikely, however, that Moscow could derive substantial political benefits from changes in the strategic balance unless in its diplomacy and propaganda it actively underscored their significance as a new turning point in relations between the two camps. To do so, however, would risk galvanizing the West to adopt new military measures that would require the USSR, in turn, to increase its own efforts or fall back in the arms . . . competition. Which horn of the dilemma Soviet leaders might choose would depend on a number of circumstances: on the Soviet interpretation of the defense debate in the West and the Soviet estimate of how that debate would be influenced by the USSR's efforts to capitalize on its strategic gains; on the Soviet interpretation of the political will of the US and its allies; and on the emergence of disputes involving the two superpowers in which the outcome, in the Soviet view, was likely to be influenced appreciably by Western perceptions of a Soviet advantage in the strategic balance.

108. Over the longer term, in the mid- to late 1980s, Soviet leaders are probably much more uncertain about the effects of military competition with the West at the margin. On one hand, they may hope that successful SALT diplomacy on their part and US internal constraints will markedly limit the pace and scope of US strategic force improvements, perhaps forestalling or delaying such systems as the M-X ICBM, submarine- and ground-launched cruise missiles, hard-target SLBMs, longer range air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs), and follow-on ALCM carriers. Similarly, they may expect projected

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NATO force improvements to bog down in political and economic problems, particularly those that might result from the entrance of Communist Parties into the governments of Italy or France. On the other hand, they cannot rule out the possibility that most US strategic options and projected NATO force improvements will come to fruition. But even in this case, while the Soviets would be unsure of retaining the more favorable balance in intercontinental forces they can foresee for the early 1980s, they would not expect the strategic balance to be turned against them. They rely on their past investments, present military momentum, and vigilance during the next decade virtually to rule out such prospects.

109. Probably even more worrisome to Soviet leaders than US strategic and NATO conventional force improvements is the prospect that the "depolarization" of the familiar strategic competition could be sharply accelerated by a number of factors, such as dissemination of nuclear-capable cruise missile technology to US allies and others, nuclear proliferation, and more-rapid-than-expected Chinese military modernization aided by the West.

### C. The Foreign Policy Outlook

110. As they look to the decade ahead, Soviet leaders see manifold uncertainties in the foreign affairs environment with which they must deal. These offer promise as well as risk and danger. But Soviet leaders probably believe that the balance of military power has markedly reduced the likelihood of major reversals in their core interest areas in Europe and in the standoff with China. They would also expect that their strength has reduced the probability of crises they could not adequately handle in important, if more marginal, areas such as the Middle East. There may also be domestic crises in Eastern Europe, but the Soviets remain confident that they can be dealt with without risk of military intervention by the West.

111. The Soviets expect the United States to be an assertive actor, willing to experiment and broadly engaged in world affairs in contest with the USSR as well as in matters where the USSR has little direct interest. They

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.. probably expect to witness fluctuations in US sensitivity to the dangers over the long term of incremental Soviet gains in the world. What they call zigzags in US policy will have to be anticipated and endured to some extent as the inevitable byproduct of a disorganized international environment in which US power relative to that of the USSR is seen to be in a general, if uneven, decline. The economic health of the West is expected to be troubled, but the economic collapse of the West is not in prospect. On the contrary, the West's great productive capacity, its powerful role in world trade, and its overall technological superiority over the USSR are perceived to pose a continuing challenge to Soviet global aspirations. The United States is expected to devote new energies to enhancing the cohesion and strength of NATO and to improving NATO's military capabilities, but the obstacles are judged by the Soviets to be formidable.

112. Soviet leaders cannot be sure how long their present policies for managing relations with the United States will continue to prove workable. They are constantly apprehensive about a US reversion to "cold war" behavior; this could be induced by an international crisis or an accumulation of perceptions in the United States that the "correlation of forces" was shifting too dangerously. But, failing such a turn, the current Soviet leaders would expect to continue their present policies toward the United States for some time with the aim of attenuating US reactions to adverse trends, collaborating in managing problems where US and Soviet interests partially overlap, and gaining economic benefits. The Soviets probably see a similar outlook for Europe, although the possibility of internal political discontinuities, perhaps stemming from gains by Eurocommunism or the destabilization of post-Tito Yugoslavia, would appear greater.

113. The Soviets' forecasts of relations with China are especially uncertain and reflect their difficulty in understanding the wellsprings of Chinese political action. Over the span of a decade the possibility of a substantial improvement in Sino-Soviet relations is surely entertained by the Soviets and is clearly the alternative strongly desired. A far-reaching reconciliation is almost certainly excluded and is difficult for the Soviets to imagine without postulating a radical discontinuity in China. A more likely,

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still somewhat favorable, Soviet forecast assumes continued strong antagonism, but with more fluidity in the relationship as both sides seek to improve the shape of the triangular relationship with the United States, which is now seen as skewed in Washington's favor.

114. Unabated hostility from the present Chinese leadership or its successors is probably still regarded by Soviet leaders as more likely than not. How severe a threat an unremittingly hostile China could pose to Soviet security and foreign policy interests a decade from now is probably seen by Soviet forecasters as depending mainly on factors external to China. While the Soviets do anticipate that China's economic and military power, especially under stable, pragmatic rulers, will grow steadily in the years ahead and are concerned about the costs that countervailing Soviet efforts would impose, they are probably relatively confident that China cannot by its own devices cause the Sino-Soviet power relationship to shift seriously to Soviet disadvantage. However, a deeply hostile China whose military capabilities grew rapidly with the aid of large-scale economic, technical, and particularly military assistance from the West would confront the USSR with a two-front version of the worst period of the Cold War. Soviet capacity to influence US behavior provides an important measure of relief, but the Soviets are aware that if they cannot alter China's stance toward the Soviet Union they may have to accept constraints on their own policy toward the United States so as to avoid raising US incentives for higher levels of security cooperation with China.

115. In the Middle East, the Soviets believe the prospects for arresting or reversing the sharp downturn in their fortunes would be improved by the failure of direct Israeli-Egyptian negotiations and by the demise of Sadat which they hope such a collapse would precipitate. They are probably skeptical about the possibility of achieving an enduring Arab-Israeli settlement and will try to obstruct attainment of any agreement from which they are excluded. A reversion of the region to its previous polarity would provide the USSR with a more congenial policy environment than the present one, although it would pose again the same uncomfortable risk of a new war threatening Soviet confrontation with the United States. To reduce this risk the USSR would probably favor a Soviet-American jointly engineered Middle East agreement in which the weight of the Soviet

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Union would be seen as resting unmistakably on the Arab side. Almost any agreement the two sides could be persuaded to accept would be likely to lessen tensions and reduce the risk of war for a time. Yet the Soviets probably remain confident that no attainable agreement could so thoroughly pacify the region as to make Soviet arms and support irrelevant to its politics.

116. In the rest of the Third World, the Soviets probably expect continued confusion and political volatility, as in Africa at present and presumably elsewhere in the future. They are likely to draw at least some encouragement about their prospects elsewhere in Africa from their successful intervention in Ethiopia. But although they would forecast an overall decline in US influence in the Third World, they would be uncertain of the pace of decline and would not be confident that durable Soviet influence would necessarily replace that of the US. They would expect more cases in which their heavy political and material investments are rewarded by perfidy and expulsion, but, overall, a strengthening of the Soviet position in the Third World and perhaps, as a bonus, the acquisition of a few stable and relatively hospitable partners on the model of Cuba.

#### D. Discontinuities and Alternative Soviet Forecasts

117. Some Soviet leaders may be more prone to systematic pessimism than this projection depicts. They may see the possibility of a combination of external and internal developments that would significantly worsen the Soviet Union's international position in the coming decade. The secular decline in the growth rate of the Soviet economy, for example, together with severe energy shortages, could provide grounds for forecasts of political instability in Eastern Europe and of serious economic pressures for reductions in the growth rate of military spending, which over time could constrict Soviet military options.

118. Coincident with political and economic difficulties in their own sphere, a pessimistic forecast might anticipate that a more assertive US Government, economic health in the West, and increased general reluctance to accommodate Soviet interests in East-West relations could

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lead to a groundswell of anti-Sovietism in Europe and parts of the Third World. China could weigh in the balance to produce a situation in which Soviet ability to do more than defend core interests might be severely constrained.

119. Another view could incline toward systematic optimism. Some prognosis might anticipate that continuation of present military and political trends could present a qualitatively more favorable situation in which the USSR could in a nonviolent, incremental fashion cause regional security arrangements to be redefined in its favor. For example, it might expect some chance of channeling new negotiations on European security toward arrangements in which the Soviet role in the West is enhanced, the US role reduced, and, given appropriate internal developments in Western Europe, a degree of "Finlandization" becomes possible. Clearly the role of Soviet military power in this image of the future would be to persuade the United States and especially its allies that new accommodations to Soviet interests had to be accepted, despite their obvious portent for the ultimate security and independence of the USSR's neighbors.

120. That some Soviet leaders indulge in something like the pessimistic view seems plausible in light of the habitual Soviet fearfulness of reverses, some elements of Soviet rhetoric about forces in the West favoring "cold war," and looming economic difficulties for the USSR. The optimistic view seems somewhat too sanguine and therefore uncharacteristic, but it bears some resemblance to Khrushchev's outlook in the late 1950s, under much less favorable conditions, and recalls Brezhnev's reported prognosis on detente to East European Communist leaders in the early 1970s.

121. The diverse themes raised in this depiction of what we believe to be the probable Soviet forecast of global power competition, and the plausible variants on it, are not mechanically connected to any precise assessment of the prevailing strategic and other military balances, or necessarily to any specific Soviet strategy for exploiting military power to political ends. The leadership probably includes all these possibilities in its outlook, and must take short-term as well as long-term action in a long-term competition.

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122. Conditioning both the main-line Soviet forecast depicted here, and plausible variants of it, is the awareness of Soviet leaders that major discontinuities may occur that could so alter the international environment as to oblige sharp changes in their external policies in the short run. Although we have no reason to believe that Soviet leaders are better able than others to predict specific discontinuities and disruptions that would radically alter their present prognosis, their world view and life experience make them sensitive to the fact that such discontinuities are more likely than not to occur. During their political careers, they have frequently seen the international environment altered by unexpected events.

123. Discontinuities in world politics both favorable and adverse to Soviet interests can be envisaged, although mixed features are present in each of them. Abrupt changes that would be perceived as severely damaging or threatening to Soviet interests would include: rapid progress in Sino-American rapprochement leading to explicit security cooperation; a violent, contagious crisis in Eastern Europe; and new large-scale wars in the Middle East or Korea. In addition to their adverse direct effects, these events would be seen as seriously endangering the stability of Soviet relations with the United States. Discontinuities that Soviet leaders would welcome include: a new Chinese leadership that sought accommodation with the USSR; revolutionary regime change in Saudi Arabia or Iran; and the replacement of some existing governments in Western Europe and Japan by new ones committed to weakening, if not abrogating, present alliances.

124. Anticipation of possible discontinuities both strengthens the tendency of Soviet leaders to hedge against serious future reverses and encourages them to build options for exploiting possible windfalls. They see the continuing expansion of Soviet military power as serving both the hedging and goal-oriented elements of their policy. Moreover, the momentum established by current Soviet programs makes it likely that the scope and rate of military expansion exhibited in recent years will be sustained well into the next decade, regardless of what discontinuities in world politics may occur. With respect to US sensitivity to Soviet arms programs, the Soviet leaders appear to have concluded that it is not their programs alone that directly stimulate US military efforts or Soviet restraint

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which limits them. Rather, they see US military programs as driven or restrained by a great variety of political perceptions and impulses within the US decisionmaking process. Soviet leaders seek to influence them chiefly through political means, diplomacy, and their public rhetoric. These tools can be selected to fit the mood in the United States. But long-leadtime Soviet arms programs that have been set in train for other reasons can hardly be turned on and off to influence that mood.

125. Depending in part on what the United States does, probably more on what technology offers, Soviet military priorities may shift marginally. Thus, strategic defenses might receive higher emphasis in coming years; or general purpose navy and projection forces might receive additional attention as the vigor of continental land combat force improvement tapers off somewhat. But overall, despite the increased weight of economic constraints, the rate of growth in defense spending is unlikely to decline substantially in the next decade.

#### E. The Successor Leadership

126. The question arises as to how the Soviet leadership, evolving from its present to a new constellation, is likely to assess the role of Soviet military power and behave in using it. Leadership transition is likely to involve periods of policy drift and contention as aspirants to Brezhnev's role and senior status on the Politburo compete with one another. While fresh initiatives in foreign policy may be attempted, new directions are unlikely, at least until the successor leadership has been consolidated.

127. The post-Brezhnev Politburo, like the present one, probably will be made up of men with long experience in the territorial party apparatus. The crucial difference will be a generational one. While several of the 14 current members will still be in the Politburo five or 10 years hence, their new colleagues will include men who were born after 1930, and who have few mature recollections of the convulsions of the 1930s and the hazards and suffering of World War II. On the other hand, current members of the Politburo (with but one exception) had been born by 1918. Their formative years were a time when the Soviet Union saw itself as encircled and besieged. Reared in a continental tradition,

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they did not encounter the global dimensions of Soviet foreign policy until late in life. Having witnessed the gradual emergence of the USSR as a superpower, they see it as the culmination of prolonged, arduous, and costly efforts. This predisposes them to value highly what has been accomplished, what they perceive to be their heritage and their legacy. While they have displayed a steady inclination to advance the USSR gradually onto the global political arena and to exploit fresh opportunities that have presented themselves, they seek above all to preserve and consolidate their gains and tend toward caution in calculating the risks of actions designed to enlarge their patrimony.

128. By contrast, the USSR's superpower status may appear to the heirs of the present leadership not so much a culmination as a point of departure. Accordingly, they may be less satisfied with conservation, or even with irregular, opportunistic advances, and more impatient to exert pervasive leverage on world affairs. Habituated to a powerful Soviet Union and to being regarded as increasingly powerful by foreign leaders, they may be bolder in exploiting that power to achieve their ends, less preoccupied with the risks of venturesome actions--risks which they may in any case calculate differently--and more attracted by opportunities for the aggrandizement of Soviet power. They may be less sensitive to the ease of slipping into very grave danger than to the promise of clever policies backed by strength. Before they discover the limits on translating superpower strength into political influence, they may go through a fairly protracted phase of exploring and testing those limits.

129. Depending on circumstances, however, the effect of the distinctive generational experience of these future Politburo members on their thought and action could conceivably be otherwise. Lacking the conditioning preoccupation of their elders with potential external threats against which they felt inadequately prepared, having perhaps had their ideological mind set even more deeply eroded by longstanding privilege and material prosperity, they might find the Soviet security position satisfactory and decide to give overriding priority to grappling with the internal problems that Brezhnev allowed to accumulate during his rule--including a decline in economic growth,

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wasteful economic management, worsening ethnodemographic problems, and slackened discipline in the party and labor force. During such a phase a successor leadership might be inclined, particularly if the West seemed receptive, to subordinate foreign policy to domestic ends in an effort to acquire from abroad technology and other inputs which could accelerate Soviet economic development.

130. A tendency in the post-Brezhnev leadership to turn inward and pursue the USSR's global mission less energetically would involve a more substantial break with the present policies and thus seems less likely to prevail than a tendency to employ the USSR's power more vigorously in the world arena. Nevertheless a call for a less ambitious foreign policy and a concentration on internal reform may find advocates in a new leadership's deliberations. Whatever their inclinations, the future Politburo members, since their experience in foreign affairs will be somewhat limited, will be impressionable in the early post-Brezhnev years. They may be strongly influenced by their initial perceptions of the balance between the opportunities and risks of bold action on the world scene, on the one hand, and of the advantages and costs of more cooperative relationships with the West, on the other.

#### F. Conclusion

131. On balance, the USSR's international behavior during the next decade is likely to remain vigorous and assertive, with the collaborative element of Soviet policy toward the United States and its allies carefully shaped to serve competitive ends as seen in Soviet calculations. The Soviets will continue to see their military strength as an impressive backdrop to the conduct of foreign policy. They are likely to eschew boasting and saber rattling. But, they will wish to assure that the general magnitude of Soviet strength is perceived and appreciated, rebutting efforts to depreciate it that imply the USSR can be pressured or ignored.

132. International crises or tests of strength are likely to find the Soviets more stalwart in the defense of their declared interests than they have been historically. Whereas Khrushchev could in 1962 persuasively appeal to the

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precedent of Brest-Litovsk to counsel the wisdom of retreat in the face of superior might, the Soviets now probably believe they have bought their way out of the situation in which that precedent applies. In general, they will see others as having at least an equal obligation to compromise. This inclination will, however, be highly dependent on actual local power balances in regions of potential confrontation, and on the Soviets' estimate of the relative centrality to the parties of interests that are in conflict. They will not stubbornly press a marginal Soviet interest against a central US concern in an area of relative Soviet weakness; but they may display an increased tendency to offset weakness in one area of contest by raising the possibility of involving an area of Soviet strength. Were a Cuban crisis to be replayed today, for example, the USSR would be in a better position militarily than it was in 1962 to link its resolution to European issues.\*

133. The Soviets will assert the right and display willingness to fish in tempting troubled waters, on the model of Angola and the Horn. The profile they assume will be governed by the desire to avoid needlessly provoking the United States or staking their reputation too strongly on uncertain outcomes. They will be prepared to see political and material investments in dubious ventures written off, but will be on the lookout for the chance to enforce the durability of such investment. Here local political, military, and logistic variables will be important, as will the strength, timing, and durability of US resistance.

134. Soviet policy is likely to display an increased tendency to press for creation of new, or revision of existing, regional security arrangements along Soviet preferred lines. This may or may not involve intrusion of new Soviet military roles, but it will involve pressure to reduce US political and military influence and to enhance Soviet political influence. The Soviets are unlikely to apply direct military pressure to advance their political goals, unless a crisis situation supervened. But Soviet diplomatic efforts are likely insistently to press the

\* For a dissenting view on paragraph 132, from the Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, see the end of the Key Judgments.

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view that the time has come to make changes because local conditions could precipitate a confrontation in which the USSR has enhanced power to affect the outcome.

135. The foregoing themes are components of a fairly natural evolution of the Soviet Union's foreign policy, taking into account its emergence as a superpower. The changes from past behavior that they imply are gradual and continuous, and are rooted in the basic perceptions and values that have long informed Soviet policy. To discourage Soviet assertiveness on the international scene, internal social and economic troubles would have to be profound, enduring, and, of course, clearly perceived as such by the Soviet leadership; such a recognition might well affect the very character of the Soviet regime as strongly as its international behavior.

136. In calculating the temper of their foreign policy assertiveness of the next decade, Soviet leaders will give the closest attention to the power, determination, and stability of the United States as a competitive actor, and to the degree of cohesion US alliances display. Over that span of time, these variables may not of themselves alter the character of Soviet goals and expectations in world affairs, but they will be crucial in determining the time frame in which Soviet leaders consider them realistic, and, hence, the basis for practical policy choices.

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