SOVIET PERCEPTIONS OF THE CORRELATION OF FORCES

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines evolving Soviet perspectives on the "correlation of forces" between the socialist world and the capitalist countries in general and the Soviet Union and the United States in particular. The focus is on the Khrushchev and Brezhnev phases of Soviet history. The term "correlation of forces" is primarily an analytic concept used by Soviet leaders and scholars to understand and interpret the pace of what they view as the inevitable historical development in favor of socialism. A rough Soviet equivalent of the Western concept of the "balance of power," "correlation of forces" as it is used by Soviet spokesmen encompasses economic, political, and military-security dimensions.

The methodology employed in the thesis in charting the chronological evolution of Soviet thinking regarding the correlation of forces consists of a careful and discriminating textual analysis of terminological variations in Soviet scholarly and official use of the concept over time, with due regard to contextual fluctuations in the domestic and international realms. For its source material, this study relied heavily on the speeches and writing of Soviet leaders as well as utilizing analyses of international developments published in Soviet scholarly journals.
The differing stress on each of the three aspects of the correlation of forces—economic, political, and military—between the Khrushchev and Brezhnev periods allowed us to trace the change and evolution of the Soviet world view from a primary stress on economic factors of the distribution of power under Khrushchev, to an emphasis on the military dimension of the balance under Brezhnev. By monitoring terminological variations in the concept, we were able to identify periods of optimism and pessimism during both the Khrushchev and Brezhnev phases.

We also noted the important role played by the divergent personalities of Khrushchev and Brezhnev on Soviet portrayal of the correlation of forces. Whereas the exuberant Soviet optimism in the military area lacked any basis in fact under Khrushchev, the depiction of the military correlation, while more muted under Brezhnev, was solidly based. These and other such differences, we argued, were a function of the stamp superimposed on Soviet politics by the respective leaders of the time.

This study will, by clarifying the context within which the Soviet leadership makes its choices, contribute to an enhanced understanding of the general foreign policy trends of the USSR.
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CHAPTER I
SETTING THE STAGE

The domain and scope of Soviet power and influence on the international stage has waxed steadily since the end of the Second World War. In light of the concern generated by such events as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, several questions germane to an understanding of Soviet foreign policy aims and intentions assume critical importance: What is the nature of the limitations and opportunities that the Soviets see themselves as being faced with in the pursuit of their international political aims? How do they view the strength of their resources—political, ideological, economic and military—in relation to the resources and potential of the United States? Are they optimistic or pessimistic with regard to the success they hope to achieve in the realization of their foreign policy goals? Can we perhaps identify periods of pessimism and optimism in the history of Soviet international relations?

The attempt to seek answers to these and other related questions will form the focus of this inquiry. Specifically, we shall undertake this quest through a longitudinal analysis of published Soviet pronouncements on the correlation of forces.

The concept of the "correlation of forces" is a key theoretical construct in the Soviet international relations lexicon. Soviet leaders and scholars argue that the two major protagonists on the international scene are the forces of socialism and the forces of capitalism, and in discussing the correlation of forces between these two socio-economic systems, they explore trends in international relations in the context
of the global distribution of power. A careful exegesis of Soviet doctrinal and analytical literature on this subject would thus provide us with a useful barometer of Soviet perceptions on their role, interests, successes, and setbacks in world affairs.

In addition to serving as an analytic tool, Soviet calculations of the relation of forces provide a most convenient means for rationalizing both internal and external policies of the Soviet regime. For example, Lenin cited Soviet weakness in the military and economic realms as the reason for signing the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, and Stalin used such calculations to justify much of the internal repression of his regime. Later instances (which we shall expand upon in subsequent chapters) include Malenkov's and Khrushchev's calculations of Soviet military parity with the West in their attempts to cut defense expenditures, and the latter's emphasis on economic competition to spur people to work harder.

Some Western international relations theorists have of late come to recognize the importance of taking into account the operational code of decision makers in seeking to understand and explain a country's foreign policy choices. Analyses of the foreign policies of states based solely on an objective assessment of international and domestic developments ignore the crucial role of perceptions as filtering mechanisms through which the environment is viewed by policy makers. Attention to the perceptual dimension opens a window on the "black box" element of traditional approaches and enhances our understanding of a country's foreign policy trends by clarifying the context within which decisions are reached. In subject matter and scope, this work lies at the nexus between the areas of Soviet politics and international relations: it
examines the Soviet world-view against the background of internal political dynamics by charting, over time, fluctuations in the treatment of an important concept in Soviet international relations theory.

When in the early 1970s the U.S.S.R. attained strategic parity with the United States in nuclear weaponry, Soviet spokesmen heralded this development by claiming that a further shift had occurred in the correlation of forces in favor of socialism. Western scholars, prodded in part by the changed strategic situation, began to demonstrate a renewed interest in exploring the Soviet world-view, their doctrine on international relations, and their perceptions of U.S. foreign policy. The works of Stephen Gibert (1977), Morton Schwartz (1978), Judson Mitchell (1982), and John Lenczowski (1982) are representative in this regard.

These authors take different philosophical approaches to their subject matter and reach divergent conclusions regarding the nature of Soviet foreign policy (the offensive-defensive debate) and its implications for the American conduct of international relations. But the common temporal focus in all of these studies is on the detente and post-detente phases of Soviet-American relations. While Gibert, Schwartz, and Lenczowski discuss the Soviet perspective on various facets of American foreign policy, Mitchell attempts to elaborate on contemporary Soviet international relations doctrine.

Because of the relevance of Soviet views of the "correlation of forces" in any discussion of Soviet international relations doctrine or U.S.-U.S.S.R. relations, all of the above-mentioned analyses contain some assessment of this concept. But the boundaries of such inquiry are circumscribed in each instance by the time period under study and the
theme of analysis. No thorough examination of the evolution of Soviet thinking about the correlation of forces is undertaken in these investigations.

The one study on this topic of some significance appears as a chapter in William Zimmerman's much acclaimed work, published in 1969, entitled *Soviet Perspectives on International Relations: 1956-1968.* However, one of the drawbacks of Zimmerman's analysis of the concept is that he does not adequately explore the implications of distinctions that Soviet analysts may draw between the status of the overall correlation of forces (which includes economic, political, and military aspects) and the position of the military equation of the correlation alone. In fact, his book devotes relatively little attention to the various facets of this concept and focuses almost exclusively on the military correlation, rather than examining it more broadly.

Moreover, this study is now somewhat dated and many events of significance need to be incorporated in a new analysis which spans a longer period of time and provides a firmer basis for exploring long-term trends and changes in Soviet perceptions. The paucity of systematic and detailed studies of Soviet views of the correlation of forces serves as a major impetus for the present inquiry.

**CHANGE AND THE MARXIST-LENINIST WELTAUNSCHAUUNG**

In order to make an adequate assessment of Soviet perceptions of the correlation of forces, one must examine the assumptions or first principles which underpin Soviet analyses of international politics, as well as their philosophical presuppositions regarding the nature of
change. Such an exercise is essential because it helps the student of Soviet politics in discerning the optimism or pessimism (often veiled) which runs as an undercurrent in Soviet discussions of the correlation of forces at particular points in time. The issue here—that of uncovering often unstated Soviet assumptions—is distinct from, though not totally unrelated to, the point made in the first section of this chapter: that a study of perceptions is necessary for fuller understanding of a nation's policies. Thus, in attempting to examine Soviet perceptions, the analyst must, to the extent possible, minimize "distorting" Soviet views either by ignoring the internal ideological calculus that governs Soviet thinking or by attempting, perhaps unconsciously, to discern Soviet perceptions through a set of criteria that the Soviets do not recognize.

The importance of taking assumptions into account in studying perceptions cannot be overemphasized. As Connolly writes, "To explain the politics of a society we must be able to make the actions, projects, and practices of its members intelligible. But a simple act or pattern of action embodied in institutions is not made intelligible merely by observing overt behavior. Actions and practices are constituted in part by the concepts and beliefs the participants themselves have." This observation is especially true with regard to the Soviet school of thought, which bases itself on Marxist epistemology and differs in fundamental respects from mainstream Western approaches to international relations.

A primary Soviet assumption is that the movement of the world historical process in favor of socialism is "objective" and is therefore preordained. As a corollary to this assumption, official Soviet
doctrine posits the inevitability of the ultimate collapse of capitalism. However, capitalism, or its more advanced manifestation, imperialism, does not yield its entrenched positions without struggle, primarily military struggle. In general, then, capitalist states pursue policies which go against the natural flow of international development. The socialist states, on the other hand, fashion policies which flow with the current. It is this dialectic that is explored in analyses of the correlation of forces.

In the Soviet schema, the policies pursued by states—whether socialist or capitalist—are "subjective" factors either hastening or retarding the tempo of the "objective" historical movement toward socialism and communism. This "objective" process is deemed as being "irreversible." As an authoritative text of Marxist-Leninist ideology explains:

Marxism–Leninsim which regards social laws dialectically sees that they operate in the form of a dominating tendency of development in given social relations. This means that a law determines the general direction of movement necessarily ensuing from certain objective conditions. But social development is contradictory, and the concrete course of events depends not only on general laws but on the actual correlation of class forces, on the policy of the warring classes and many other specific conditions.

International politics, then, are seen to be in a state of flux as long as the two social systems—the capitalist and the socialist—coexist. The notion of change as a natural phenomenon is central to Soviet thinking. In most Western political analyses, stability is taken as a given and any disturbance of the status quo is seen as deserving explanation. Soviet commentators use a very different starting point. For Soviet analysts, change is a given, and therefore is not worthy of explanation in and of itself. What does need to be
explained, however, is the rate of change, or more appropriately, forward movement.

For instance, speaking in 1982 at an international arms control symposium about contemporary international developments, Genrikh Trofimenko, a foremost Soviet Americanologist, stated:

For the Soviet Union, sustaining global stability means maintaining the present balance of military forces in the world. . . . At the same time the Soviet Union accepts the possibility of changes in the sociopolitical status quo. . . . He further describes such changes as a "natural stage in the ongoing sociopolitical evolution of the world," in contrast, he observes, to American politicians and scholars who see these processes as "unnatural." In giving such a restrictive definition to the term stability, Trofimenko's analysis illustrates that this concept in its Western connotation is quite alien to Soviet thinking. In fact, as Trofimenko puts it, "In the Soviet Union politicians and academicians as a general rule do not use the term 'global stability.' They usually refer instead to the global 'balance of forces'." The latter term, of course, embodies the notion of an inevitable forward movement toward socialism.

In this vein, Soviet analysts rightly maintain that the concept of the correlation of forces is different from the Western notion of the balance of power in that, unlike the latter concept in which the attainment of stability in the international system is seen as the central objective, the idea of the correlation of forces presupposes dynamic movement toward a clearly defined end. The term "correlation of forces" would presumably be redundant when the Marxist vision of a communist world was finally realized. As one Soviet analyst has observed, "rivalry, struggle, and conflict of the two opposing systems
are objectively inescapable as long as two different socio-economic systems exist."  

The idea that the phenomenon of change is basic, and that stability and fixity are artificial constructs imposed on reality by observers seeking to understand and explain it, is not a solely Marxist world view. It traces its heritage as far back as Heraclitus. Marxist ideology did, however, append a unique dimension to this perspective in specifying the direction of change: that international social development would inevitably propel itself toward socialism and communism through the instrumentality of struggling classes.

The implications for our study of such a Soviet bias are quite apparent. Overt adherence to doctrine, and often implicit faith in the correctness of the Marxist world view, injects a note of compulsory optimism into most Soviet analyses of the correlation of forces. This is evident in the customary formulation that the correlation of forces is moving in favor of socialism. Soviet leaders and analysts do not and cannot specifically aver that the correlation of forces is not moving in favor of socialism. To do so would not only contravene one of the basic assumptions of Marxist ideology, but would be a logically fallacious proposition to try to uphold in the context of a Marxist framework of analysis. Hints of Soviet pessimism regarding international developments must, therefore, be gleaned from their assessment of the rate of the forward movement toward socialism. In other words, to help us distinguish between genuine and spurious optimism, the question we have to ask ourselves is this one: having declared that the correlation of forces is moving in favor of socialism, in what manner does the Soviet scholar or decision maker proceed to
evaluate contemporary international events?

A final observation relates to the Soviet view of the constituent elements which enter into any estimation of the correlation of forces. In their treatment of the concept, Soviet students of international affairs usually refer to factors which may be grouped under three major aspects: the economic, the military, and the political. The economic and military dimensions are self-explanatory. The political dimension is more of a catch-all category including ideological factors, "class forces," and "subjective" forces such as the policies of states. Class forces is a nebulous term and is not defined precisely in Soviet writing. In the strict Marxist sense, it may be taken to represent the proletariat or the working class whose special role in ushering in a new socialist order is never questioned by Soviet scholars.

This mix of tangible and intangible elements renders virtually impossible any estimation of the correlation based on strictly quantitative measures. As Raymond Garthoff has pointed out, the Soviets do not "make explicit any criteria for calculation" of the correlation. The intangible elements, though, serve an expedient function during periods when the tangible aspects of the correlation do not appear to favor the U.S.S.R. At such times Soviet analysts can cite the influence of such non-quantifiable factors to support their argument for a forward movement, albeit slow, in favor of socialism. This provides us with another clue in our investigation. By closely monitoring the aspects of the correlation which are stressed at particular points in time, we may ascertain both the extent of prevailing optimism or pessimism and arrive at some conclusions regarding the changing hierarchy of values which guides Soviet thinking on matters of international politics.
The most common Russian rendering for the notion of a distribution of power is the generic term sootnoshenie sil or correlation of forces. This expression, in itself, is neutral in its connotation of a favorable or unfavorable balance and needs qualifiers to help specify nature and direction. Sootnoshenie sil is the concept most frequently employed by Soviet leaders and analysts in their discussion of the power distribution between socialism and capitalism. Another neutral expression, which is employed less often and is used interchangeably with sootnoshenie sil, is rasstanovka sil or disposition of forces. Two other terms which are more concise in specifying the nature of the distribution of power are pereves sil, or preponderance of forces, and ravnovesie sil, or equilibrium of forces.

In our analysis, we shall, for purposes of clarity, adhere to the following English equivalents of the Russian phrases outlined above:

(1) sootnoshenie sil as correlation of forces. Very often in English-language Russian sources, this term is rendered in English as balance of forces. In such cases we shall retain this particular translation of the phrase;

(2) rasstanovka sil as disposition of forces or alignment of forces;

(3) pereves sil as preponderance of forces; and

(4) ravnovesie sil as equilibrium of forces.

Soviet literature on international politics has proliferated since 1956 when the first major steps to encourage scholarship in this area were initiated by the post-Stalin leadership. For its source material,
then, this study utilizes published Soviet analyses of international affairs that appear regularly in the following journals: Mirovaia Ekonomika i Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniiia, hereinafter MEMO; International Affairs, hereinafter IA; and Kommunist.

The first two publications are specialized journals dealing with international relations. IA is an English-language version of the Russian journal Mezhdunarodnaia Zhizn' (International Life) which started publication in 1955. The first issue of MEMO appeared in print in July 1957 and is the official publication of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences. Kommunist is the prime periodical issued under the auspices of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In addition, the speeches and pronouncements of Party leaders who shape and influence the conduct of Soviet foreign policy are examined, as are relevant documents of the Soviet Communist Party and the international communist movement.

The methodology employed here in charting the chronological evolution of Soviet thinking regarding the correlation of forces consists of a careful and discriminating textual analysis of variations in Soviet scholarly and official use of the concept over time, with due regard to contextual fluctuations in the domestic and international realms. Our focus will be on the years spanning the tenures of the Khrushchev, Brezhnev, and post-Brezhnev leadership.

Although the use of the research methodology outlined above is fairly widespread among Sovietologists seeking to tap the Soviet political mind, it has been dogged by persistent criticisms which need to be examined. In this section we shall address both the objections that may be raised in connection with the present study as well as the
limitations inherent in the nature of the enterprise.

Two basic queries of a very general character may be raised in connection with the task of undertaking to uncover the perceptions of any individual or group of individuals—in this instance, of Soviet scholars and policy-makers. First, is it possible for an analyst to gauge perceptions accurately? And, second, does an analysis of the printed word provide us with a reliable operational measure of perceptions?

Doubtless, an investigation of perceptions is fraught with difficulties, especially since one can never be completely certain that one's own perceptions do not cloud the clarity and authenticity of the representation of Soviet views. But even the awareness of roadblocks in the path of inquiry is useful, for it can help in alerting the analyst to possible pitfalls in analysis. Cognizance of one's own cultural bias and a conscious attempt to take into account the epistemological foundations of Soviet thinking can at least minimize the risks of misinterpreting Soviet perceptions, and can, in the process, endow us with better insights into the Soviet world-view. The preceding section of this chapter is devoted precisely to such a review of the assumptions underlying the Soviet perspective.

In this study, we hope to record the evolution of Soviet perceptions of the correlation of forces through an analysis of published Soviet materials on the subject. This presupposes a judgement that the printed and spoken word can provide us with a reliable indicator of perceptions. Of course, this is not to deny that Soviet scholars and policy makers do use the written and verbal medium for multiple purposes of which manipulation and justification form a part.
However, Soviet leaders and scholars also endeavor to understand, interpret and integrate the ebb and flow of international events into the larger picture of historical development. One is strengthened in this belief because, within the constraints of Marxist-Leninist doctrine, Soviet discussions of the correlation of forces between socialism and capitalism do attempt to deal with changed international circumstances, either favorable or unfavorable from their perspective.

Moreover, especially in the Soviet Union, communications from the top leadership to various elites on the content and direction of policy takes place, in large measure, through writings and speeches published in the Soviet press. Therefore, attention to the context and intended audience for a particular message can help in clarifying Soviet views. Through a cautious and discriminating approach, then, it is possible for the student of Soviet politics to sift nuggets of valuable insights from the chaff of verbiage.

Our discussion, thus far, seems to imply the existence of a unified and identifiable Soviet perspective. Whether a single Soviet view, representative of a particular time period, can be isolated, or may even be said to exist, is the third issue which we need to consider here. The answer, for reasons we shall delineate below, is neither absolute nor clear-cut. On balance, with reference to our inquiry into Soviet perceptions of the correlation of forces, there appears to be at any one time a basic congruence of stated opinion among Soviet leaders and analysts.\textsuperscript{10}

The exceptions to the preceding observation occur during periods when the top Party leadership is itself either uncertain or in disagreement as to socialism's relative standing in the correlation of
forces with capitalism. At such times, there is a diverse array of often contradictory views of the correlation of forces in the Soviet press and scholarly publications. Debate is, perhaps, encouraged at this stage. But once a crystallization of opinion occurs within the core Party leadership, discussions again assume a tamer and more conformist character. The years between 1962 (especially after the Cuban missile crisis) and Khrushchev's ouster in October 1964, for instance, represent a period of ferment in Soviet discussions of the correlation of forces.

Also, beginning with the latter years of Brezhnev's term of office, Soviet international relations analysts have begun to pay more attention to the methods of analysis of Western academics and have become quite adept at presenting Soviet views in a manner palatable to informed Western audiences. Such a practice could have the effect of complicating our study by suggesting interpretational differences where there are none. But the impediments to analysis posed by the dissemination of selective interpretations of Soviet thinking and behavior by such scholarly good-will ambassadors as Georgi Arbatov and Genrikh Trofimenko are not insuperable as long as one is careful to consult communications which are intended for domestic Soviet audiences as well.

In the West, there has been, since the 1960s, a growing body of literature which has taken for its object the task of identifying "interest groups" in Soviet politics. But Western analysts agree for the most part that advocacy groups function only minimally, if at all, in areas of policy that are grouped in what Seweryn Bialer calls "high politics." Most issues of foreign policy would certainly fall within
the purview of "high politics." Because policies formulated on the basis of assessments of the correlation of forces involve high political stakes, there is a greater tendency toward uniformity of opinion at this level.

Even here, though, there are a few important advocacy groups—such as the military—which may be at odds with the political leadership over the implications, especially in the sphere of budgetary allocations for defense, flowing from a given assessment of the correlation of forces. Where such differences do surface in the course of our analysis, we shall examine their substance and impact. In general, the views expressed by Soviet scholarly circles more or less coincide with those enunciated by the Soviet political leadership.

A final methodological objection likely to be raised in connection with the present study is that we refrain from employing a formal content-analytic mode in conducting our investigation. This criticism is less troubling for several reasons. The nature of the variables we have chosen to analyse does not easily lend itself to quantification. Moreover, in our analysis of Soviet perceptions of the correlation of forces, the "outliers" or deviations from the norm, are important. For example, the number of times the term "preponderance of forces" was used between 1959 and 1961, compared with the frequency of usage of the term "correlation of forces," would render the former term statistically insignificant, but in fact, this alternative formulation is very important as an indicator of a changing trend in Soviet perceptions of international political reality.
GENERAL HYPOTHESES

Over the years there has been a long-simmering debate among non-Marxist scholars over the respective roles of ideology and realpolitik in guiding Soviet conduct. The controversy is not easily resolved because the mix of Marx and Machiavelli in Soviet writing varies according to time and situation, and rarely does one encounter an unadulterated version of either. It is not our purpose here to delve into the pros and cons of this scholarly controversy but merely to note its implications for our study of Soviet perceptions of the correlation of forces.

An analyst who posits that ideology is of overriding concern to Soviet leaders and scholars would expect little or no variation in the usage and discussion of the term "correlation of forces." On the other hand, if one hews to the view that the Soviets do respond to events in the changing world environment, one would infer, at the very least, a less rigid attitude toward varying formulations of this concept. We hypothesize that both of the above positions bear some correspondence with Soviet political reality.

Hypothesis 1: On a higher level of abstraction—the "grand theory" level or what the Soviets would call "strategic" level—where Soviet scholars use the term correlation of forces in referring to the long-term movement of "objective" historical forces, we expect no variation in usage. For example, it will be stated that the correlation of forces was, is, and will always be moving in favor of socialism.

Hypothesis 2: On a lower degree of abstraction—or the "tactical" level—when Soviet leaders and scholars are speaking of the actual and
contemporary situation and short-term projections into the future, we expect considerable variation in usage. Soviet calculations on the latter level perhaps dictate the choice of particular policies during specific historical periods. It is variations in formulation on this second level which will provide the grist for our analysis of the evolution of Soviet thinking on matters impinging on the correlation of forces.

Marxist-Leninist ideology prides itself on having discovered scientific laws of social development—laws which operate irrespective of individuals. The "great man" theory of history, then, is especially at odds with the tenets of Marxist-Leninist doctrine. Of course, it is not just Marxist-Leninists who disagree with theories which ascribe a paramount role to the individual. It is in the nature of all macro-theories to sacrifice emphasis on the particular in order to gain a wider and long-term historical perspective. Western theorists who seek to determine empirical regularities in international political life also tend to minimize the capacity of single individuals to effect significant and lasting changes on the international or domestic stage.

Hypothesis 3: In the short run, however, individuals do make a difference. We argue that the personality and proclivities of an individual do have considerable impact on the conduct of foreign policy. The exuberant optimism of the Khrushchev period, for instance, contrasts sharply with the muted optimism of the Brezhnev period. On the face of it, this may not appear particularly significant. But the overly optimistic streak in Khrushchev's personality and the tendency to look always on the bright side of things translated easily into bluff and bluster, and overstatement of fact and achievement. Many of the events
and occurrences during Khrushchev's tenure in office as well as Soviet policies and the American response to them, would be difficult to account for unless one introduced the impact of Khrushchev's personality into the explanatory equation. The sharp increase in the U.S. military budget for 1961 was occasioned in part by Khrushchev's inflated claims regarding Soviet military might.

Khrushchev's successors in the Kremlin have as a rule refrained from the verbal excesses of their predecessor. The impact of the Brezhnev team's cautious and deliberate approach is most evident in very careful characterizations of Soviet military power. At a time when the military arsenal of the Soviet Union has grown so vastly that some Western military analysts wonder if the Soviets now do not possess an edge over the United States in this area, Soviet commentary has not come close to claiming the military superiority that Khrushchev falsely boasted about in 1960. This conscious verbal reticence, which has been the style of the Brezhnev leadership, and is reflected in contemporary scholarly analyses of the correlation of forces, would justify a bolder interpretation of any Soviet expressions of military confidence, however muted, than might otherwise appear reasonable.

ORGANIZATION OF STUDY

This study is chronologically ordered. Chapter Two will briefly discuss the Leninist and Stalinist world views in order to provide the background for our subsequent analysis. For this review we shall rely mainly on the works of Lenin and Stalin. Chapters Three through Five will discuss three phases in the evolution of Soviet thinking during the
Khrushchev years. The subsequent four chapters (Six through Nine) will trace changes in Soviet views of the correlation under Brezhnev. Chapter Nine will also include an analysis of developments during the Andropov-Chernenko interlude. The general format of Chapters Three through Nine will consist of an exposition of the record and tenor of Soviet statements on the correlation of forces, followed by an analysis of Soviet commentary with reference both to policy and the domestic-international context. The final chapter will make a tentative explorational foray into the period ushered in by Gorbachev's leadership as well as sum up the main results of our investigation into Soviet perceptions of the correlation of forces.


9. For a detailed exposition of these terms, see ibid., pp. 86-90.
10. This does not imply, however, that no differences exist beneath the surface among members of the top political leadership circle. Especially during the Khrushchev era, opposition to the First Secretary's style and method of conducting foreign policy often gave rise to debates of varying intensity within the Presidium. Where such differences of opinion impinged on the Soviet attitude toward the correlation of forces, they will be explored.

In November 1917, the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia, established the first socialist state, and adopted Marxist doctrine as their official credo. The leaders of the young Soviet state could not, however, turn to Marx for answers to vexing policy problems. In the vast corpus of his writings, Marx did not bequeath a well-elaborated theory of international relations.

Marx was more concerned with examining a society's internal economic structure and enunciating laws of historical development. As Kubalkova and Cruickshank have pointed out, the horizontal division of society into states was, for Marx, merely an "epiphenomenon" of vertical class divisions. The European state-system was thought by him to be a transitory social stage brought into existence by the dominant bourgeois class in capitalist society. In his vision of a classless communist world where the state would "wither away," foreign policy concerns must have seemed extraneous at best. Class, rather than nation-state, formed the fundamental unit of Marxist analysis. Based upon inexorable laws of class struggle, Marx predicted the eventual replacement of capitalism with the higher socialist order.

World War I, however, did not prove to be the harbinger of socialist revolutions in the advanced capitalist countries of Europe. When events in Twentieth Century Europe failed to unfold according to the Marxian prognostic schema, Lenin in his 1916 work, Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism, undertook to revise theory to make it accord with international reality. Imperialism, argued Lenin, was
capitalism in its most advanced manifestation. Monopolistic groupings in imperialist countries, motivated by the profit impulse, would seek outward expansion and export capital to backward or "oppressed" countries. In the course of their operations in the undeveloped areas, these commercial groups would draw upon the support of their respective home governments. In this way, the capitalist powers would acquire colonies around the world. This expansionist impetus would, in turn, create conflict between imperialist states which would eventually lead to war. From such reasoning stemmed the Leninist thesis of the inevitability of wars among capitalist countries.

The proletariat in these advanced industrial countries, satisfied with the economic gains passed down to them by the capitalists, would be diverted from performing their historic mission even when conditions would be ripe for revolution. This, Lenin concluded, was the reason for the failure of the First World War (which was an "imperialist" war) to spawn revolutionary movements in the advanced European countries.

Lenin's analysis of capitalism's "imperialist stage" provided the backdrop for his postulation that revolution would occur in a country which represented the "weakest link of the chain." In one bold stroke, then, Lenin adjusted Marxist theory, with its emphasis upon vertical class divisions within industrial societies, to accord with the reality of the horizontal division of society into states.

In effect, Lenin saw advanced industrial states pitted against oppressed nations. The lines of battle were now re-drawn to focus primarily on competition at the international level. Kubalkova and Cruickshank explain the Leninist reformulation of Marxist thought thus:

The vertical and horizontal divisions were now seen to intermingle in a hitherto unprecedented manner. Just as the
bourgeoisie overflows the horizontal boundaries of its own state and becomes an imperialist class spread over all the globe, so the working class is subjected to a similar process... No longer do the classes within states, but states (the backward ones) themselves, assume class consciousness, now on a world scale...

Thus, while Lenin did not at any time deny the importance of class conflict within states, he stressed the global inter-state dimensions of this struggle. According to Leninist thinking, then, the success of a revolution depended not merely on a favorable correlation of class forces within a state but also on the international correlation of forces. This brings us to a discussion of the central theme of the present chapter: to examine Leninist and Stalinist pronouncements on the concept of the correlation and to assess the role ascribed to it in early Soviet foreign-policy decision-making. For this purpose, we shall undertake a brief tour d'horizon of the writings and speeches of Lenin and Stalin on the subject.

**LENIN ON THE CORRELATION OF FORCES**

For Lenin, as for his successors in the Soviet leadership, the concept of the correlation of forces served three major functions. Arguments based upon an assessment of the correlation could be used: (1) to analyze and understand the international situation; (2) to orient and guide policy; (3) to justify and legitimize policy decisions—both external and domestic. All of these purposes were inextricably bound together in Lenin's expositions on the international climate and the goals of Soviet policy during the months preceding the Bolshevik revolution and the years following the establishment of Soviet power in Russia.
Lenin frequently underscored the need for every Marxist to arrive at a "strictly exact and objectively verifiable analysis of the relations of classes [sootnosheniia klassov] and of the concrete features peculiar to each historical situation," and argued that "Bolsheviks have always tried to meet this requirement which is absolutely essential for giving a scientific foundation to policy." He did not, however, detail the criteria for estimating the correlation.

Most of Lenin's arguments in support of or against the policies to be pursued by the Bolsheviks tended to be based upon his reading of the correlation of class forces. In order to provide a framework for our analysis of Leninist thinking on this subject, we shall focus on three themes: the reasons adduced by Lenin to explain the success of the Bolshevik revolution; his arguments in favor of the Brest-Litovsk treaty; and finally his interpretations of the period of Civil War and foreign intervention.

According to Lenin, socialist revolution in Russia owed its victory to a unique concatenation of domestic and international circumstances. The favorable correlation of class forces within the country, achieved through an alliance of the proletariat and the peasantry, had made possible the rout of the capitalist class. But what of the international correlation of forces? Russia was a militarily weak and economically backward nation compared with the powerful "imperialist" countries. The proletarian revolution in Russia, Lenin knew, could not have survived concerted opposition from the advanced capitalist states.

The success of the revolution, then, was made possible only because the countries representing "international imperialism" were locked "in a mortal struggle with each other, were paralysed in their offensive
against Russia." Revolutionary events occurred "independently of world imperialism," and Russia was "temporarily independent of international relations." The existence of a propitious configuration of internal and external factors—the favorable domestic class correlation coupled with the temporary impotence of a powerful international bourgeoisie—not only made possible, but mandated revolutionary advance. Likewise, during a period when the international correlation of forces was unfavorable, retreat was permissible. This represented the crux of the Leninist argument in favor of the Brest-Litovsk treaty. In the early days of Soviet power, the leaders of the USSR were able to acknowledge candidly the weakness of their country—both militarily and economically—vis-a-vis the countries of Europe. But they also held the view that history was on their side and that socialism would eventually replace capitalism on a global scale. In other words, while the correlation of world forces at that particular historical juncture did not favor the Soviet republic, its socialist trend and direction were regarded as indisputable.

Indeed, Lenin in 1917 and 1918 appeared to believe that a revolution in the advanced European countries was imminent. In early 1918, he wrote, "... we, the Russian working and exploited classes, have the honour of being the vanguard of the international socialist revolution. ... The Russian began it—the German, the Frenchman and the Englishman will finish it, and socialism will be victorious." In his theses on the Brest-Litovsk peace, he reiterated, "That the socialist revolution in Europe must come, and will come, is beyond doubt. All our hopes for the final victory of socialism are founded on
this certainty and on this scientific prognosis."\(^9\)

Lenin's expectation that the countries of Europe were on the verge of a socialist revolution and his belief that Russia needed a "breathing space" led him to argue in favor of signing the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. The correlation of class forces on the domestic and the international level would not, he asserted, allow for Russia's continued participation in the war, even in the form of a "revolutionary war."\(^10\)

On the domestic front, the poor peasants in Russia, Lenin reasoned, "are not capable of agreeing to fight a serious revolutionary war. . . . To ignore the objective balance of class forces [sootnoshenie klassovykh sil] on this issue would be a fatal error."\(^11\) In the international arena as well, the Russians, Lenin said, would "have to retreat before forces that are immeasurably greater than ours, before the forces of international imperialism and finance capital, before the military might that the entire bourgeoisie with their modern weapons have mustered against us. . . ."\(^12\)

A policy of revolutionary war would "totally disregard the objective balance of class forces and material factors at the present stage of the socialist revolution."\(^13\) Neither class support nor military and economic might were on the side of the Soviet Republic and Lenin staunchly advocated a "heroic retreat" while the Soviet Republic would "wait until the international socialist proletariat" came to its aid. Then, Lenin predicted, a second socialist revolution would begin which would be "world-wide in scope."\(^14\)

The European revolution did not materialize\(^15\) and as time wore on, the Soviet Republic was faced both with civil war and foreign intervention. The Red Army therefore had to be organized to repel
attacks against the Soviet Republic. Lenin, responding to Kautsky's charge that the Bolsheviks had introduced militarism instead of socialism, justified the action, declaring:

_We are living not merely in a state, but in a system of states, and it is inconceivable for the Soviet Republic to exist alongside of the imperialist states for any length of time. One or the other must triumph in the end. And before that end comes there will have to be a series of frightful collisions between the Soviet Republic and the bourgeois states. If the ruling class, the proletariat, wants to hold power, it must, therefore, prove its ability to do so by its military organization._

To this statement of Lenin the notion of an inevitable clash between socialism and capitalism traces its roots.

The question of military organization, Lenin explained, did not exist for Marx and neither he nor Engels expressed an opinion on this subject. Lenin's reasoning seems to have gone thus: During a period when Russia was weak, the socialist revolution succeeded only because the proletariat was able to capitalize on the contradictions of capitalism which had led to an imperialist war between advanced European countries. With the tacit support of the international proletariat and the favorable domestic correlation of class forces, Russia was able to transform the bourgeois revolution into a socialist one, even when the international military and economic correlation was clearly to the Russian disadvantage.

Lenin believed, however, that for the socialist island to ward off the next "inevitable" imperialist attack and to survive in a sea of imperialism, Russia would have to build up its military and economic strength while maneuvering around capitalist contradictions. The Allied leaders, before the defeat of Germany, had intervened in the Russian civil war in order to restore the eastern front. This armed
intervention, though, continued even after the end of the war, appearing
to confirm the Leninist prognosis.

In late 1919, when foreign intervention efforts were faltering,
Lenin expressed some incredulity at the fact that socialism maintained
its foothold in Russia in the face of imperialist resistance:

From the point of view of a military assessment of these
forces, it really is a miracle because the Entente was and
continues to be immeasurably stronger than we are.

Lenin again resorted to the notion of class forces to explain this
"miracle." The Russian victory "was not really a military victory at
all." It was apparent," Lenin said, "... that in the sphere where
the grossest material factors play the greatest part, namely, in the
military sphere, we defeated the Entente countries by depriving them of
the workers and peasants in soldiers' uniforms.

By the fall of 1920, Russia enjoyed peace, and in November 1920,
Lenin expressed satisfaction that even though the world socialist
revolution had been delayed, "the possibility ... of the existence of
proletarian rule and the Soviet republic" had been maintained. He
returned to the theme of socialist Russia's victory in spite of its
military weakness:

... [T]here can be no question of comparing the military
strength of the R.S.F.S.R. with that of all the capitalist
powers. In this respect we are incomparably weaker than they
are, yet, after three years of war, we have forced almost all
of these states to abandon the idea of further
intervention. ... That has been, not because we have proved
militarily stronger and the Entente weaker, but because
throughout this period the disintegration in the Entente
countries has intensified. ... The workers and peasants of
the capitalist countries could not be forced to fight us.

This stalemate, Lenin argued, won Russia the right to a
"fundamental international existence in the network of capitalist
states," and allowed "not merely" for "a breathing space, but for a
real chance of a new and lengthy period of development."\(^{24}\)

Marx's emphasis on vertical class divisions was not so much repudiated as temporarily side-stepped. Socialist Russia's acceptance, albeit tentative, into the international community was, in Leninist thinking, a step in the positive direction: "The entry of the socialist country into trade relations with capitalist countries is a most important factor ensuring our existence in such a complex and absolutely exceptional situation. . . ."\(^{25}\)

Lenin nevertheless insisted that absolute security for the proletarian revolution in Russia would come only with world revolution, when presumably the horizontal ordering of society into states would give way to a world society governed by the proletariat. Meanwhile, war with capitalist countries would recur. In December 1920, Lenin stated:

I said that we had passed from war to peace, but that we had not forgotten that war will return. While capitalism and socialism exist side by side, they cannot live in peace: one or the other will ultimately triumph—"the last obsequies will be observed, either for the Soviet Republic or for world capitalism.\(^{26}\)

For the moment, however, there was a "balance based on capitalism." Capitalism was stronger and therefore, the "practical task of communist policy" was "to take advantage of this capitalist hostility and to play one side off against the other," while Russia mustered its forces.\(^{27}\) As time wore on, Lenin's conviction of an impending revolution in Europe weakened. The leaders of the Soviet Republic thus set about the task of conducting international relations within the framework of the state system.

Lenin never gave up his belief that the final victory of socialism could only be ensured by the breakdown of the capitalist system in the "advanced" states and its replacement by proletarian rule led by a
vanguard communist party. Thus, in December 1921, after a whole year of peace, Lenin found it hard to explain how it was possible for "only one Socialist Soviet Republic" to exist "surrounded by a whole array of frenziedly hostile imperialist powers." His explanation, predictably, revolved around the idea of the international solidarity of the working class:

It turned out that although the support of the working people of the world was not the swift and direct support that we had counted on, we did receive considerable support of another kind, not a direct support, not a swift support. . . . No matter how precarious this support may be, as long as capitalism exists in other countries we may say that this support can already be relied on.

Peace had led to "an unstable, inexplicable, and yet to a certain extent, indisputable equilibrium." Lenin reiterated:

Materially—economically and militarily—we are extremely weak; but morally—by which . . . I mean not abstract morals, but the alignment of the real forces of all classes in all countries—we are the strongest of all. This has been proved by practice. . . .

Thus, while there was clearly a disequilibrium in the military and economic sense, Lenin declared that from the "political standpoint" an equilibrium of forces had set in "between bourgeois society, the international bourgeoisie as a whole, and Soviet Russia." This equilibrium only related to the immediate "military struggle" which had temporarily ceased. Lenin emphasized that it was "only a relative equilibrium and a very unstable one," because the old world of capitalism would never surrender voluntarily, and that intervention was only a "hair's breadth away."

There was much improvisation in Lenin's use and application of the idea of the correlation of forces. The march of events and the reality of international life gave both shape and content to Lenin's expositions
on this theme. In the end, Lenin was forced to accept and attempt to explain within the Marxist framework, the reality of the continued existence of a single socialist state in spite of the failure of the international revolution to materialize. In a report to the Russian Communist Party in July 1921, Lenin stated:

Before the revolution, and even after it, we thought: either revolution breaks out in other countries, in the capitalistically more developed countries, immediately, or at least very quickly or we must perish.

Actually, however, events did not proceed along as straight a line as we had expected. In the other big, capitalistically more developed countries the revolution has not broken out to this day. True, we can say with satisfaction that the revolution is developing all over the world, and it is only thanks to this that the international bourgeoisie is unable to strangle us, in spite of the fact that militarily and economically, it is a hundred times stronger than we are.

This, however, constituted a very feeble effort at explaining a circumstance that seemed extraordinary to Lenin even as it existed. Witness his oft-expressed incredulity in such statements as:

But is the existence of a socialist republic in a capitalist environment at all conceivable? It seemed inconceivable from the political and military aspects. That it is possible both politically and militarily has now been proved; it is a fact.

It was left to Stalin, who took on Lenin's mantle, to endeavor to integrate doctrine with reality.

THE STALINIST PERSPECTIVE

The leaders of the young Soviet Republic had quickly realized that there were inherent problems in attempting to coordinate simultaneously interests of state and interests of world revolution. The incompatibility between these goals became clear in the crucible of experience. The inconsistent policies pursued in the early 1920s by the
Soviet government and the Comintern, for instance, resulted in the quashing by the German government of the Comintern-sponsored 1923 uprising in Hamburg with arms supplied to the German military by the Red Army.

As prospects of a world revolution grew dimmer over the years, the Soviet leadership under Stalin subordinated the goal of world revolution to the interests of the Soviet state. The former aim was never shelved, merely postponed to an indefinite future. The Marxist conviction that socialism would eventually replace capitalism ran deep among the Bolsheviks. Lenin had estimated the outlook for world revolution in terms of weeks, then months, and then years. By 1925, Stalin could assume that "the victory of socialism in the advanced countries..." could be "delayed for another ten or twenty years." 36

This premise of a long-delayed revolutionary process, coupled with the de facto existence of a single socialist state surviving in the midst of a hostile capitalist ring, provided the basis for the Stalinist thesis of "socialism in one country." Doctrine was once again adjusted to take account of international realities. In a statement made by Lenin in 1923, Stalin found theoretical justification--albeit with some effort--for his argument that the Soviet republic could go it alone without immediate help from the world proletariat. Lenin had then remarked:

... the power of state over all large-scale means of production, the power of state in the hands of the proletariat, the alliance of the proletariat with the millions of small and very small peasants, the assured leadership of the peasantry by the proletariat, etc.--is not this all that is necessary in order to build a complete socialist society from the cooperatives... Is this not all that is necessary for the purpose of building a complete socialist society? This is not yet the building of socialist society, but it is all that is necessary and sufficient for this building. 37
Contrasting his own thesis with Trotsky's notion of "permanent revolution," Stalin argued that the latter idea was "plainly sinning against reality" and was a doctrine of "permanent hopelessness." "Socialism in one country" was no more than an official acknowledgement of existential reality:

Formerly, the victory of the revolution in one country was considered impossible, on the assumption that it would require the combined action of the proletarians of all or at least a majority of the advanced countries to achieve victory over the bourgeoisie. Now this point of view no longer fits with the facts. Now we must proceed from the possibility of such a victory, for the uneven and spasmodic character of the development of the various capitalist countries under the conditions of imperialism, the development, within imperialism of catastrophic contradictions leading to inevitable wars, the growth of the revolutionary movement in all countries of the world—all this leads, not only to the possibility, but also to the necessity of the victory of the proletariat in individual countries.

While Stalin held that socialism in one country was not only possible but necessary, he argued that the "final" victory of socialism, by which he meant "the full guarantee against attempts at intervention and hence against restoration . . . with the support of international capital," would be assured only with "the support of our revolution by the workers of all countries, and still more, the victory of the workers in at least several countries. . . ."40

"Capitalist encirclement" represented a corollary theme to the "socialism in one country" doctrine: The victory of socialism could not be considered "final" as long as capitalist encirclement of the socialist state existed. Meanwhile, "two camps" confronted one another in the international arena, "the capitalist camp, headed by Anglo-American capital and the socialist camp, headed by the Soviet Union."41 The idea of the inevitable clash between the socialist state and capitalist countries ran as a leitmotif in Stalinist thinking.
With Stalin's doctrinal modifications, the process of aligning Marxist-Leninist theory with the horizontal state-structure of international society was complete. As Kubalkova and Cruickshank have aptly noted, "... the Soviet state—allegedly of a different nature but remaining still a state (horizontal unit)—assumed the distinct and rather asymmetrical place that Lenin had envisaged for the Comintern, namely, the epicentre of the (vertical) class scale." Under Stalin, the Comintern became a mere adjunct of the Soviet state and in 1943 the organization was dissolved when it proved to be a hindrance to the normal conduct of diplomatic relations with other states.

Utilizing this brief background as our framework, we shall now attempt to trace the Stalinist perspective on the correlation of forces between the "two camps."

In his report to the Fourteenth Congress in December 1925, Stalin announced that

the decisive feature that has affected all the events in the sphere of foreign relations during this period, is the fact that a certain temporary equilibrium of forces has been established between our country . . . and the countries of the capitalist world. . . . What we at one time regarded as a brief respite after the war has become a whole period of respite. Hence a certain equilibrium of forces and a certain period of peaceful coexistence between the bourgeois world and the proletarian world.

Lenin in 1921 had characterized the equilibrium as a "highly unstable" one. Stalin's view in 1925 was of a more stable equilibrium, albeit a temporary one, for no state of permanent peace could be envisaged between the Soviet state and international proletariat on the one hand, and the capitalist countries on the other. The conjunction of several factors—domestic and international—must have provided the impetus for the Stalinist assessment of the international correlation of
forces. On the domestic front, Stalin was arguing the viability of his "socialism in one country" thesis, even as he was vigorously opposing Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. In such a scenario, a benign view of the contemporary international situation would most certainly have bolstered the Stalinist viewpoint. Apart from self-serving reasons, however, the revolutionary tide in 1925 was at an ebb and the notion of an equilibrium of forces helped to account for the waning of revolutionary fervor.

This equilibrium, according to Stalin, was brought about by the temporary stabilization of capitalism along with the stabilization and consolidation of the Soviet system. But the equilibrium of forces between the two camps implied not equality of the two systems but stability in the form of a temporary phase of peaceful coexistence. Thus, elaborating on this theme in an earlier address to the Fourteenth Party Congress in May 1925, Stalin noted:

Why are there two stabilisations, one parallel with the other? . . . Because there is no longer a single, all-embracing capitalism in the world. Because the world has split into two camps. . . . Because the international situation will to an increasing degree be determined by the relation of forces between these two camps.

Thus, the characteristic feature of the present situation is not only that capitalism and the Soviet system have become stabilised, but also that the forces of these two camps have reached a certain temporary equilibrium, with a slight advantage for capital, and hence, a slight disadvantage for the revolutionary movement; for compared with a revolutionary upsurge, the lull that has now set in is undoubtedly a disadvantage for socialism, although a temporary one.

The stabilisation of capitalism, Stalin observed, would eventually lead to an aggravation of its contradictions even as it temporarily strengthened the capitalist system. Stalin's view of the correlation of forces skillfully addressed personal political considerations, the dynamics of the international situation, and the "lull" in the
revolutionary movement.

Only two years later, however, at the Fifteenth Party Congress in 1927, Stalin declared the stabilization of capitalism to be at an end and his emphasis changed from the themes of peaceful coexistence and temporary stability to the ideas of capitalist encirclement and the inevitability of imperialist wars, as well as clashes between the Soviet state and imperialism:

Whereas a year or two ago it was possible and necessary to speak of a certain equilibrium and "peaceful coexistence" between the U.S.S.R. and the capitalist countries, today we have every ground for believing that the period of "peaceful coexistence" is receding into the past, giving place to a period of imperialist assaults and preparation for intervention against the U.S.S.R. He also observed that the world was "on the eve of a new revolutionary upsurge." In these conditions, the task for the U.S.S.R., Stalin said, was "to take into account the contradictions in the camp of the imperialists, to postpone war by 'buying off' the capitalists and to take all measures to maintain peaceful relations." This, presumably, was the expedient course to follow when the Soviet state was still in a position of military and economic inferiority vis-a-vis a capitalist world in which "production is growing . . . technical progress and production potentialities are increasing." even while its contradictions intensified. In other words, the existing correlation of forces dictated a policy of maneuvering from the sidelines.

With Stalin's proclamation of a new period of revolutionary upsurge, this thesis was adopted as the basis of Comintern policy in 1928. Internally, with Trotsky's elimination from the political scene and the denouncing of the Right deviation, Stalin had moved to the left
with the unveiling of his Five-Year Plan. Since the Comintern, as Isaac Deutscher describes it, "not only shone with the reflected light of the Russian party, but ... reflected each of its internal alinements in turn," that organization was also forced to move to the left. Socialism in one country, however, continued to represent the dominant Stalinist line both in the Russian party and in the Comintern.  

The militantly radical policies pursued by the Comintern in the late 1920s envisaged no cooperation between the Communists and the Socialists. In Germany especially, this split in the left contributed to the rise of Nazism. Only in 1935, after Nazism had become a palpable danger, did the Comintern, no doubt under Stalin's direction, move toward a strategy of the "united front against fascism and war." All of Stalin's energies during this period, until the German invasion of Soviet Russia in 1941, were geared toward warding off the threat of an attack against the USSR—the 1939 Nazi-Soviet pact is an outstanding example. With the 1941 invasion of the USSR by Hitler's forces, the "imperialist war" of 1939 began to be characterized by Stalin as an "antifascist war": a designation which allowed Stalin both to draw a distinction between capitalist states and to account for the coalition between the USSR and the Allied countries. Until the end of the war, Stalin refrained from issuing ideological pronouncements which would most certainly have jeopardized "the coalition of the USSR, Great Britain and the United States of America against the German fascist imperialists."

But ideological scores were not so much forgotten as put on the back burner, for in the aftermath of the Second World War, Stalin revived the two-camp thesis and abandoned his earlier distinction
between fascist and democratic capitalist states. Also, the cause of revolution was vigorously pursued after the war. But, as Deutscher explains, Stalin's method of promoting revolution differed greatly from the Leninist conception of world revolution:

The old Bolshevism, . . . believed in revolution from below, such as the upheaval of 1917 had been. The revolution which Stalin now carried into eastern and central Europe was primarily a revolution from above. . . . Although the local Communist parties were its immediate agents and executors, the great party of the revolution, which remained in the background, was the Red Army.

With most of the eastern European states well on their way to becoming Soviet satellites, Stalin's cordon sanitaire was almost in place. In these favorable conditions, Andrei Zhdanov, speaking in September 1947 at the founding conference of the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform) and reviewing what he saw as positive political change in the countries of eastern Europe, confidently asserted that the end of the Second World War and the defeat of fascism "sharply altered the alignment of forces [sootnoshenie sil] between the two systems—the Socialist and the capitalist—in favour of Socialism." With World War I, he stated, "the united imperialist front was breached and . . . Russia dropped out of the world capitalist system." World War II resulted in a further blow against imperialist positions, because "the enhanced strength of the anti-fascist movement resulted in a number of countries in central and southeastern Europe dropping out of the imperialist system." Only the United States of America, of all the imperialist powers, emerged from the war "considerably stronger economically and militarily." Thus, two camps—one led by the Soviet Union and the other led principally by the U.S.A.—confronted each other in the
international arena. According to Soviet thinking, socialism as a world force was gaining in strength, but no claims of "equality" with capitalism in any sphere—political, economic or military—were advanced. The Soviets at this juncture appeared to limit their world view to the notion that socialism was steadily enhancing its international position. In other words, the Soviets were content with declaring that the correlation of forces was moving in favor of socialism, and for good reason. The United States had in 1945 successfully detonated a nuclear bomb, the immense destructive power of which was amply demonstrated at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. After the Hiroshima bombing, Stalin is reported to have asked of the People's Commissar for Munitions: "A single demand of you, comrades, provide us with atomic weapons in the shortest possible time. You know that Hiroshima has shaken the whole world. The balance has been destroyed. Provide the bomb—-it will remove a great danger from us."\(^{57}\)

In his Cominform speech, Zhdanov identified the "cardinal purpose" of the imperialist camp as being "to strengthen imperialism, to hatch a new imperialist war, to combat Socialism and democracy, and to support reactionary and anti-democratic pro-fascist regimes and movements everywhere,"\(^{58}\) though he also observed that "Soviet foreign policy proceeds from the premise that the two systems—capitalism and Socialism—will exist side by side for a long time."\(^{59}\)

The official Soviet post-war view as outlined by Zhdanov upheld the thesis of an inevitable war unleashed by imperialism upon socialist forces, while simultaneously embracing the idea of coexistence of the socialist and capitalist systems. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the notion of an ever-present external threat perhaps allowed
Stalin to justify to his peoples the need "to organize a new mighty upsurge in the national economy . . ." with all the human sacrifice that it entailed. Stalin stipulated in 1946:

We must achieve a situation where our industry can produce annually up to 50 million tons of pig iron, up to 60 million tons of steel, up to 500 million tons of coal, and up to 60 million tons of oil. Only under such conditions can we consider that our homeland will be guaranteed against all possible accidents. That will take three more Five-Year Plans, I should think, if not more. But it can be done and we must do it.

To achieve such an economic upswing, however, Russia would need a period of peace. There was thus an intertwining of two apparently contradictory positions—peaceful coexistence and the inevitability of war with capitalism—in the post-war Soviet world view. Thus, while Stalin stressed the inevitability of war theme, he appears to have believed that war was not imminent.

Toward the end of his stewardship of Soviet foreign policy, Stalin again ventured to make public his somewhat modified views on the interrelationships between the socialist and capitalist worlds. In a collection of papers entitled Economic Problems of Socialism, Stalin in 1952 argued forcefully on behalf of the proposition that wars between capitalist countries were inevitable but appeared to soft-pedal the notion of the inevitability of wars between the socialist and capitalist systems. He observed that while "theoretically" it was "true" that the "contradictions between capitalism and socialism are stronger than the contradictions among the capitalist countries," the contradictions among capitalist countries "proved in practice to be stronger" because of the "struggle of the capitalist countries for markets and their desire to crush their competitors."

However, neither Stalin nor any other official Soviet spokesman
during this period explicitly detailed their view of the then obtaining correlation of forces: Was the socialist camp stronger or weaker than the capitalist camp? And in what spheres? Stalin's 1946 argument outlining the need to spur Soviet industrial production in order to fend off imperialist attacks, coupled with his assessment of a United States that had emerged from the war "considerably stronger economically and militarily," appeared to imply that the Soviet Union required time to catch up with the capitalist world in these areas. While the Soviet Union in 1949 successfully tested its first atomic bomb, the United States continued to maintain its edge in nuclear technology.*  

That the political power, international prestige and security of the USSR was greatly enhanced as a result of the Second World War, however, was also not in doubt. And it was certainly with this context in mind that Soviet spokesmen argued from 1947 onward that the correlation of forces was moving in favor of socialism. The nature of the Western response during Stalin's 1948 "test of nerves" in Berlin, while driving home the firm resolve of the United States, Britain and France not to allow any further Soviet encroachment in Europe, must also have proved to Stalin that the West was not poised for a battle with the socialist countries, a battle that the Soviet Union did not want. Peace, therefore, was an attainable goal and was seen through the Stalinist prism as being made possible by the contemporary unspecified nature of the correlation between the forces of "imperialism" and the forces of "peace and democracy."

The theme of capitalist encirclement, however, was never formally repudiated, perhaps because of its important function in internal propaganda. Stalin had argued that encirclement was a "political" and
not a "geographical" concept, and therefore presumably remained in force even after the formation of a socialist camp embracing several countries. For instance, one writer observed in an article in Pravda in February 1953:

Certain propagandists have engaged in an academic dispute over whether capitalist encirclement of the Soviet Union continues to exist or has faded into the past. Dogmatists and doctrinaire people have been found who have begun to assert that once the people's democracies friendly to us appeared on our western and eastern frontiers the question of capitalist encirclement was removed. Certain would-be theoreticians have even gone so far as to say that since the powerful camp of socialism has been formed, imperialism has ceased to be a danger to us. Such discourses are anti-Marxist and harmful. 66

But the idea of capitalist encirclement was largely preempted in the post World War II period by the two-camp doctrine. Stalin's 1952 thesis of an amelioration "in practice" in the contradictions between the socialist and capitalist camps appeared to signal a desire on the part of the Soviet leader to avoid military entanglements with the capitalist countries. What role the advent of nuclear weapons played in this assessment is unclear, for Stalin, at least publicly, disparaged the role and significance of nuclear weapons in the conduct or character of a future war. The Stalinist insistence on the continued relevance of "permanently operating factors" 67 even in the nuclear age did much to stymie Soviet military thought. It is quite likely, as Holloway suggests, that while Stalin appreciated the importance of the atomic bomb, "he may well have thought that . . . it would not change the character of war." 68 Thus, it was only after Stalin's death in March 1953 that Soviet leaders and analysts began to address issues relating to the effect of the nuclear revolution on military strategy.
CONCLUSION

With the establishment of the first socialist state in late 1917, the concept of the "correlation of class forces" assumed an international dimension. As Lenin clearly understood, the balance of class forces within Russia alone could no longer be the sole determinant either of particular policy choices or outcomes. Soviet Russia was part of an international system of states and willy nilly was forced to play by its rules. In the event, it was hardly surprising that when "revolution" came to Europe in the mid-1940s, it was, except in isolated instances, not as a result of an entirely spontaneous upsurge of proletarian will, as Marx had foreseen and Lenin had expected, but was for the most part ushered in with the backing of the Red Army.

Lenin's polemical use of the concept of the correlation of forces, most evident in his arguments in favor of revolutionary action in early 1917 and of the Brest-Litovsk peace in 1918, attest to the fact that his view of the correlation was not necessarily shared by his Bolshevik colleagues. Moreover, even assuming general agreement on what constituted the correlation at any point in time, the course of action (or inaction) to be adopted, based upon that particular reading of the correlation, was not immediately evident even to seasoned Marxists. Thus, at the Seventh Party Congress in March 1918, Zinoviev noted:

No one can say how long this breathing spell will last. It seems to me that it is clear only that this peace, acquired by us at Brest, appears as a more or less exact photograph of that relation of forces which exists in the world arena.

Commenting on Zinoviev's stand, Bukharin rejoined:

Comrade Zinoviev stands on a completely fatalistic point of view. He says that now the real relation of forces is
unpleasant, and nothing more. On that he is ready to quiet down, and proposes to others to do likewise. This position is absolutely inadmissible. Revolutionary Marxists have never said that the real relation of forces is such and such; one task in the capacity of realistic politicians consists in the fact that we constantly strive to change the relation of actual forces.

Debates between party members on the role and policy of Soviet Russia on the international stage pointed to the centrality of the "correlation of forces" concept in early Soviet foreign policy decisionmaking. At the Tenth Party Congress in March 1921, however, the right to organized dissent was proscribed, and by the time Stalin consolidated his hold on the Party leadership, his ex cathedra pronouncements on the correlation of forces were fully backed by the rule of unanimity. The oligarchical nature of post-Stalin leadership has perhaps precluded the Party leader from assuming the position of a "repository of truth," and within the boundaries of an ideological consensus, one may argue that debate over foreign policy choices does take place.

For Lenin, assessments of the correlation of forces were intimately connected with the issues of war and peace and the survival of the socialist state. The pursuit of peace was a policy dictated by the unfavorable international correlation, due in large part to the military and economic weakness of the young Soviet republic. It is interesting to note that Lenin's ad hoc resort to a class-based explanation to account for the continued existence of Soviet Russia as a single socialist state surrounded by hostile capitalist countries has since been adopted as an article of faith by Soviet leaders and analysts. Lenin had then declared that Russia had successfully battled a militarily and economically stronger imperialist force because its
leaders correctly appraised the correlation of class forces. An explanation which was fashioned by Lenin only in response to a circumstance that seemed to him theoretically improbable assumed the force of an ideological tenet and has frequently been cited by Soviet leaders and analysts to argue a favorable socialist direction in the movement of the correlation of forces, when military and economic factors do not appear to be in their favor.

Both Lenin and Stalin subscribed to a Eurocentric view of world affairs in discussing the international correlation. Even though Lenin, and later Stalin, expressed the possibility of revolution breaking out in the colonial areas of the world, both linked the "final" victory of socialism to the success of the revolutionary movement in Europe. While the post-World War II era was one of great if not cataclysmic changes in the Third World, Stalin failed to enunciate any clear Soviet policy with regard to national liberation movements and the role of communist parties within those movements. With the failure of his China policy in the years when the Kuomintang and Communists were vying for power and influence, Stalin took an indifferent view with regard to happenings in Asia. His two-camp doctrine precluded the consideration of any "third force" in the international arena, and while he did not make explicit his views of the correlation, it appears reasonable to surmise that his energies were directed toward an estimation of the balance between the socialist and advanced capitalist countries.

For Lenin and Stalin, peaceful coexistence with capitalism constituted a policy which the Soviet Union was obliged to pursue in the face of an unfavorable international correlation. This was seen as a temporary phase lasting until the inevitable clash between the two camps
occurred. But the advent of nuclear technology was soon to change the Soviet calculus of war and peace. Whereas earlier Soviet military and economic weakness made necessary the policy of peaceful coexistence, the development of military technology and the introduction of nuclear weapons soon mandated such a policy for the foreseeable future.

Stalin's successor in the Kremlin would undertake to modify Marxist-Leninist doctrine to take into account both post-war global political changes and the effects of the nuclear revolution.
NOTES


2. Ibid., pp. 94-95.


4. Ibid.


6. Ibid., p. 3.

7. It has not been so easy for Soviet leaders to acknowledge weakness—military, economic, or political—since the USSR emerged as one of the two world superpowers in the years since Stalin's death.


10. Ibid., p. 447.

11. Ibid.


15. In 1918-1919, revolutionary ferment in Germany led to the short-lived establishment of a Soviet government in Bavaria, but such revolts were soon suppressed. Similarly, Bela Kun's 1919 revolution in Hungary proved temporary. The failure of movements such as these gradually led the Bolshevik leaders to understand that world revolution was not going to occur soon.

17. Ibid.


19. Ibid., p. 16.

20. Ibid., p. 17.


22. Ibid., pp. 411-412.

23. Ibid., p. 412.

24. Ibid., p. 413.

25. Ibid., p. 414.

26. Ibid., p. 457.

27. Ibid., p. 442, 443.


29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid., p. 32.


38. Ibid., p. 128. Emphasis added.
39. Quoted in Ibid., p. 188. The doctrine of "socialism in one country" was fully endorsed at the Fourteenth Party Congress in April 1925.

40. Quoted in Ibid., p. 191.

41. J. V. Stalin, Works, vol. 7, p. 95. As Garthoff points out, Stalin had used the concept of two camps as early as 1919. He further states that "[u]ntil 1947, however, it was a subordinate theme, accepted as an implicit and incidental aspect of capitalist encirclement." See Raymond L. Garthoff, Soviet Military Policy: A Historical Analysis (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), p. 70.

42. Kubalkova and Cruickshank, Marxism–Leninism, p. 141.


46. Ibid., p. 59.

47. Ibid., p. 61.

48. Ibid., p. 54.


50. For more on this issue, see Ibid., pp. 404-409.


53. Deutscher, Stalin, p. 554. Yugoslavia was perhaps the only instance where the local Communists were strong enough to effect a revolution. But the independence demonstrated by Tito's Yugoslavia resulted by 1948 in a schism between Tito and Stalin.


70. Quoted in *Ibid*.

71. As we have seen above, Lenin recognized the importance of the material—military and economic—force which the proletariat and the bourgeoisie could muster in the class conflict which would pit them against one another.
CHAPTER III
BREAKING OUT OF THE STALINIST MOLD: 1953-1957

Stalin's death in March 1953 and the Soviet launching of Sputnik I in October 1957 roughly circumscribe the chronological boundaries of this chapter. Both events, in a sense, represented historical watersheds. The demise of the dictator freed Soviet scholars and policy makers from the iron grip of Stalinist orthodoxy and paved the way for new thinking and research in the area of international politics. The pioneering launch of Sputnik, which occurred soon after Khrushchev's June-July 1957 defeat of his political rivals in the Kremlin, ushered in an era of confidence and optimism with regard to the position of the U.S.S.R. on the international stage. This chapter, then, will examine Soviet perceptions of the correlation of forces at a time when politics and policy in the Soviet Union were in a state of flux.

The Stalinist legacy in matters pertaining to the role and position of the U.S.S.R. in world affairs was, in many ways, anachronistic. Along with his upholding of the rigidly defined two-camp doctrine which, in practice, allowed the Soviet Union very little room for maneuver both in its relations with the West and the newly independent Third World countries, Stalin had refused to permit any inquiry into the effects of the nuclear revolution on military doctrine. It was left to his successors to grapple with nuclear and international political realities.

Of the inner coterie which sat at the apex of power in the Soviet Union in the immediate aftermath of Stalin's demise, Molotov emerged as the strongest defender of the Stalinist hard-line foreign policy.
approach. But the more reasonable and pragmatic outlook espoused first by Malenkov and then with some modifications by Khrushchev eventually won, with far-reaching implications for the conduct of Soviet foreign policy. The constraining influence of the isolationist posture so assiduously cultivated by Stalin in the post World War II years was abandoned, and Soviet leaders sought to reorient policy toward the socialist world, the newly independent countries, and the West, in the direction of greater flexibility. The impact of these developments on Soviet assessments of the correlation was considerable.

In this chapter, we will examine Soviet depictions of their strengths and weaknesses in the economic, military, and political areas in the context of leadership debates on the directions to be pursued by Soviet foreign policy. We will also note the effects on Soviet assessments of the correlation of doctrinal modifications introduced by Khrushchev at the Twentieth Party Congress in February 1956. We will conclude with an analysis of Soviet discussions on the subject with a view to determining the congruence, or lack thereof, between Soviet assertions and actual capabilities, and between Soviet statements and Soviet actions in the foreign policy realm.

By and large, Soviet commentators during this period, and particularly after the Twentieth Party Congress, exhibited a cautious and expectant confidence in a brighter future; chose to stress the positive impact on the correlation of favorable developments in the economic and political realms; and tended to be defensive in their discussions of Soviet military capabilities. Consonant with the generally cautious tenor of the discussions, the operative terms used by Soviet leaders and analysts remained unchanged throughout this period.
The two generic formulations with neutral connotations were employed: usually sootnoshenie sil, and occasionally rasstanovka sil.

THE MALENKOV INTERLUDE: 1953-1954

Stalin's theory of capitalist encirclement and the dangers it entailed for socialism contained an explicit acknowledgement of Soviet weakness vis-a-vis the capitalist world. As late as January 1953, the Soviet press continued to denounce, in the strongest terms, "the aggressive policy of the imperialist camp headed by the United States," and a Pravda article in February 1953 upheld the thesis of capitalist encirclement even in the context of the formation of a "powerful and united socialist camp," asserting that "capitalism still rules in most of the countries of the world, including a large number of economically developed countries."

The theoretical underpinnings of Stalinism were not officially repudiated until the Twentieth Party Congress convened in early 1956. Doctrinal reformulations trailed modifications in style and conduct of foreign policy by some years. This lag was partly the result, perhaps, of the fractious debates among top Party leaders on the content and direction of policy. It may also be explained, to some extent, by the understandable state of political disarray following the removal from the scene of a figure who had dominated Soviet life for almost three decades. Thus, writers continued to uphold the thesis of capitalist encirclement while simultaneously expounding at great length on the possibility for a prolonged period of peace and peaceful coexistence between the two systems.
While the accession of a new regime in Moscow brought about no substantial alteration in such basic goals of Soviet foreign policy as the preservation of socialism at home and within the socialist commonwealth, and the extension of Soviet influence wherever feasible, both the methods employed to achieve these aims and the tone of Soviet pronouncements underwent a transformation.

This change was evident, in the months immediately following Stalin's death, when Soviet overtures of peace to the West, and avowals of a positive attitude toward a peaceful resolution of outstanding problems, became standard diplomatic fare. These pacific expressions were not fatuous, however, for the Soviets took concrete steps, early in 1953, to settle past grievances in their bilateral relations with such countries as Greece, Turkey, and Israel. These developments, coupled with a negotiated end to the then stalemated Korean conflict, signalled the dawn of a new era represented by a less recalcitrant Soviet attitude in the sphere of international relations.

In June 1953, a major article appeared in Kommunist which summed up the essence of the Soviet peace proposals of the past few months and argued in favor of peaceful coexistence between the capitalist and socialist systems. Peace, the author averred, was made possible by the "steadily growing economic and political might of the Soviet Union, the moral and political unity of the Soviet people, ... the might of the Soviet armed forces ..., the further strengthening of the camp of peace, democracy and socialism. . . ." The author maintained that the factors strengthening the international position of the U.S.S.R. "have especially grown and gained in strength as a result of the fundamental change in the correlation of forces on the international arena, caused
by the world historic victory of the Soviet Union over fascism in the Second World War." In essence, then, the Soviets advanced the notion that peace between the two opposing systems was made possible by a fundamental change in the correlation of forces: "It is known that aggressive forces would long ago have unleashed war against the U.S.S.R. if they were confident of success in this war. But they do not and cannot have such confidence."  

As the above quotations demonstrate, beyond very general statements regarding the Soviet standing along various axes of the correlation, both leaders and analysts at this stage carefully avoided any further elucidation on the theme. Indeed, mindful perhaps of their disadvantageous position in most areas, they skillfully maneuvered around the thorny issues of Soviet weaknesses and American strengths. The latter point is well illustrated by the following observation by A. Leont'ev. Speaking of people in the West, including "those occupying high positions in the government," who count on peaceful coexistence as a means for "the imperialists to impose their will and policies on the countries of the socialist camp," the writer declared:

The truth of the matter is that the policy of diktat in relations with countries of the socialist camp has not, cannot and will not have even the slightest chance for success. This should be especially clear in our days, given the contemporary correlation of forces on the international arena.

Another reason for the reluctance on the part of Soviet commentators to be specific in their views of the correlation of forces was perhaps because the adequacy of Soviet military strength and the requirements of the armed forces were subjects of some controversy in the highest leadership circles during this period, and Moscow was not speaking with one voice. The reformist position, which was outlined by
Malenkov in a speech to the Supreme Soviet in August 1953, implicitly rested on the key assumption that the introduction of nuclear weapons had changed the calculus of war, rendering it most unlikely.

Such a stance had wide ramifications in the areas of domestic and foreign policy. If war between socialist and capitalist countries was unlikely, then funds could be channeled away from heavy and defense industries into consumer sectors of the economy. The traditionally favored heavy and defense sectors need only be supported to the extent necessary to attain a "minimum deterrent" against an American nuclear attack, while Soviet foreign policy should aim at defusing international tensions and promoting peace. Malenkov seemed to endorse precisely this view when he spoke of increasing considerably "the investment of funds in development of light industry, food industry, . . . to make adjustment in the direction of substantially increasing the plans for production of consumers' goods. . . ." Elsewhere he stated that the search for a peaceful solution of international problems was the "obligation" of any government "which seriously cares for the fate of its people." 8

On the non-military dimension of the correlation, Malenkov chose to stress the positive aspects: "Even the bitterest enemies of our country admit that since the end of the Second World War, there has been a substantial advance in the economy, culture, and people's well-being year after year in the Soviet Union." 9 He refrained from making any comparative allusions to the U.S. economy which might show up Soviet shortcomings. Malenkov's speech also lauded the potential for political success in many of the new initiatives undertaken or contemplated by the U.S.S.R. in its relations with countries like Yugoslavia, India,
Afghanistan, and Turkey.

Growing out of the outlook he adopted, Malenkov's position on the military correlation was that the U.S.S.R. possessed all the means necessary for purposes of defense—a view he expressed in a speech in March 1954, during the course of which he also uttered the now oft-quoted statement that world civilization would perish in a nuclear war and that the thrust of Soviet policy should be to prevent such a war from breaking out. Thus, while Malenkov must have recognized U.S. superiority over the U.S.S.R. in quantity of nuclear weapons and range of delivery capabilities, he appears to have believed that the Soviet Union possessed an adequate deterrent. In his August speech, he had reported with satisfaction the Soviet detonation of a hydrogen bomb and denied the idea of Soviet "weakness." Malenkov asserted:

It is necessary to realize that in the present configuration of forces and in the firm resolve of the Soviet Union and the countries of the democratic camp to defend their vital interests in the international arena, application of the policy of peaceful coexistence of the two systems is the duty not only of the countries of the democratic camp but of all countries. The other way is the way of desperate adventures and inevitable failures.

Malenkov's views diverged rather sharply from those held by his colleagues in the Presidium. Not subscribing to Malenkov's thesis that world civilization would perish in a nuclear war, his main political rivals, Khrushchev and Molotov, argued for continued emphasis on the defense and heavy industry sectors of the economy in order to strengthen the armed forces of the Soviet Union. Khrushchev, for instance, referred to heavy industry as the "very basis of the Soviet economy" and argued for strengthening "tirelessly" the "defense capacity of the U.S.S.R." Ideologically too, Malenkov was on soft ground. It was well nigh impossible to uphold a key Marxist assumption that socialism
would be ultimately victorious the world over if one conceded the possibility that socialist countries along with others would perish in a nuclear war.

In the face of a concerted opposition to his views, Malenkov was compelled to recant. "[I]f the aggressive circles, relying on atomic weapons should decide on madness and desire to test the strength and might of the Soviet Union," he said in his formal retraction, "then there can be no doubt that the aggressor will be crushed by those same weapons, and that such an adventure will inevitably lead to the breakdown of the capitalist system." Consonant with the new position he was forced to embrace publicly, Malenkov agreed that the Soviet armed forces "have and will have everything necessary to carry out their noble mission." With this setback, Malenkov's career suffered an eclipse even though he continued in his post of Premier until February 1955. The Soviet leadership appeared to regard it as a matter of prime importance to improve the Soviet position vis-a-vis the American in the area of the military correlation of forces.

In his attempt to achieve primacy and hence a determining voice in the conduct of Soviet affairs, Khrushchev had perhaps exaggerated the extent of the differences that separated his views from those of Malenkov. While his staunch faith in the communist creed did not permit him to acknowledge the possibility of the destruction of world civilization in a nuclear war, Khrushchev's position on the more substantive issues of foreign policy did not differ very much, if at all, from the Malenkov viewpoint.

There appears to have been a broad agreement between them on such key areas as the need to achieve a rapprochement with Yugoslav leaders;
the necessity for liberalizing Soviet policy in relations with the people's democracies of Eastern Europe; the promotion of a policy of peaceful coexistence between socialist and capitalist countries; and the active cultivation of sympathetic sentiment in the newly independent Asian countries.

But before he could proceed to launch major new initiatives in these areas, Khrushchev had to contend with the rival views propounded by Molotov—a Stalinist partisan. In a verbal joust between these two leaders at a party plenum in mid-1955, the winds of change proved stronger and helped set the course for a more flexible Soviet foreign policy.15

NASCENT CONFIDENCE: 1955-1957

In a three-pronged strategy aimed at improving the Soviet international position, Khrushchev moved toward a more accommodating posture vis-a-vis the countries of the socialist bloc, the West, and the Third World. The Austrian State Treaty which was signed in May 1955 guaranteed the neutrality of Austria. The Geneva summit of the same year signalled an end to the isolationism of the post-war years. The liberalization of Soviet East European policy set the stage for a rapprochement with Yugoslavia in mid-1956. The year 1955 also saw the visit of the Khrushchev-Bulganin team to India, Burma, and Afghanistan in a vigorous effort to tap "anti-imperialist" tendencies in these countries. Even though later events were to belie the confident hopes of the Soviet leadership, these moves effectively wrested Soviet foreign policy from the clutches of the Stalinist straitjacket. Moreover, these
initiatives in the area of foreign policy signalled a more confident view of the Soviet position in the overall correlation of forces.

The doctrinal adjustments needed to justify and legitimize new foreign policy approaches were made in February 1956. From the prominent pulpit of the Twentieth Party Congress, Khrushchev promulgated the thesis of the non-inevitability of wars in the present era, pronounced that peaceful coexistence was the general line of Soviet foreign policy, and declared the possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism and communism.

Khrushchev stated that the "Marxist-Leninist precept that wars are inevitable as long as imperialism exists" was formulated at a time when "imperialism was an all-embracing system" and the "social and political forces which did not want war were weak, poorly organized, and hence unable to compel the imperialists to renounce war." But the correlation of forces was rapidly moving in favor of socialism. Arguing that the situation had changed "radically" in the years since World War II, Khrushchev elaborated:

Now there is a world camp of socialism, which has become a mighty force. In this camp the peace forces find not only the moral, but also the material means to prevent aggression. There is a large group of other countries, moreover, with a population running into many hundreds of millions, which is actively working to avert war. The workers' movement in the capitalist countries has become a tremendous force today. The movement of peace supporters has sprung up and developed into a powerful factor. Under such conditions, war was not "fatalistically inevitable."

Khrushchev was equivocal about whether his thesis of the non-inevitability of war applied to wars involving capitalist states alone or to wars between socialist and capitalist states. But as Nogee and Donaldson have pointed out, "the message was clear that he meant
both to be avoidable." While Khrushchev did not specifically credit
the nuclear revolution with necessitating a change in doctrine, such a
calculus must have played an important role in his thinking. He did
provide a clue pointing in that direction when he declared that the
U.S.S.R. was "resolutely against war" and in favor of peaceful
coexistence, for "[i]n deed, there are only two ways: either peaceful
coexistence or the most destructive war in history. There is no third
way."\(^18\)

In pronouncing peaceful coexistence to be the "general line" of
Soviet foreign policy, Khrushchev argued for shifting the frame of
reference of East-West competition from the military to the economic
sphere. For Khrushchev, it was the improving Soviet position in the
economic correlation of forces that was to provide the major impetus for
global social and political change. He explained:

> When we say that the socialist system will win in the
> competition between the two systems—the capitalist and the
> socialist—this by no means signifies that its victory will be
> achieved through armed interference by the socialist countries
> in the internal affairs of capitalist countries. Our
certainty of the victory of communism is based on the fact
> that the socialist mode of production possesses decisive
> superiority over the capitalist mode of production. . . . We
> believe that all the working people on earth, once they have
> become convinced of the advantages communism brings, will
> sooner or later take the road of struggle for the construction
> of a socialist society.\(^19\)

Khrushchev also raised the theoretical possibility that some countries
might achieve a peaceful transition to socialism. War would no longer
be the sole midwife of revolution.

We shall now examine the considerable impact of post-Stalin foreign
policy moves and reformulations of the Marxist-Leninist creed on Soviet
assessments of the correlation of forces. War, according to Khrushchev,
had ceased to be inevitable, due to the action of a wide range of
factors, among which the tremendous growth of "peace forces" was primary in importance. But if the "imperialists" started a war, there were "mighty social and political forces possessing formidable means . . . to give a smashing rebuff to the aggressors and frustrate their adventurist plans." The significance of military power, then, was not ignored.

Soviet leaders and analysts, however, refrained from presenting a clear picture of Soviet military might. For example, while K. Ivanov opined that "[t]here is every ground to believe that not only the friends of the Soviet Union but also its enemies are well aware of its really tremendous strength," he avoided discussing the specifics of that "strength." Rather than compare overall Soviet military power with that of the United States, commentators chose either to indulge in favorable comparisons of contemporary Soviet military capabilities with pre-war Soviet strength or to attest to a "further strengthening of the defence capacity of the Soviet Union."

Soviet portrayal of the correlation of military forces strongly suggests that scholars and leaders alike were keenly aware of the inferior military position of the U.S.S.R. vis-a-vis the United States in strategic nuclear weaponry and chose to discuss this aspect of the correlation in a manner that would permit them to avoid conceding Soviet inferiority. Military analysts, though, did intimate a Soviet intercontinental delivery capability: "The present development of the means of atomic attack makes it possible to strike powerful blows across oceans as well."

By mid-1955, the Soviet Union had acquired a limited number of long range bombers capable of reaching American territory. Whereas Soviet military strategy prior to 1955 was predicated on the calculus of
deterring an American nuclear attack on the U.S.S.R. by holding out the specter of a Europe that would be a Soviet hostage in the event hostilities occurred, now the Soviet Union could, in theory at least, strike the American continent itself. Even though Moscow's inventory of such delivery vehicles was small, it did mean, as Edgar Bottome has pointed out, that "[a]fter 1955 there could be no certainty that the United States would not receive a devastating nuclear attack on its major cities in the event of war with the Soviet Union."²⁵

The U.S.S.R. in this period chose not to deploy large numbers of long-range bombers. Khrushchev's thesis of the non-inevitability of war had meant, at the very least, that in the judgement of the Party leaders, the likelihood of a general war was remote. Soviet security from an American attack was not seen as an imminent concern. Therefore, rather than engage in an expensive competition with the United States in the area of procuring long-range bombers, the Soviet leadership had opted to allocate resources to the research and development of the ballistic missile rocket.²⁶ Anticipating a breakthrough in this venture, Soviet leaders and analysts were, at this stage, cautiously optimistic about the future prospects of the U.S.S.R. in the military sphere.

If the Soviets were guarded in their discussions of the military correlation, no such reticence was in evidence in their commentary on the economic dimension. At the Twentieth Party Congress, Khrushchev declared that socialism would prove its superiority over capitalism in the economic sphere. Encouraged by the consistently high post-war rates of growth in industrial production, Soviet commentators waxed eloquent about the great advantages of the socialist economy. As one observer
wrote:

Comparison of the rate of industrial development in the Soviet Union and in the capitalist countries furnishes proof of the tremendous superiority of the socialist economic system over the capitalist system. . . . The economic success of the Soviet Union, as even many bourgeois newspapers acknowledge, is astonishing and testifies that the Soviet people are winning round after round in this competition.27

Soviet commentators were also sensitive to the political significance of high economic growth rates. They believed that the example of Soviet economic successes would make other countries—especially the newly independent countries in search of an optimum development strategy—look to the Soviet Union as a model for development.

The benefits of the socialist method of production with its "non-crisis" and "inflation free" atmosphere were a frequent topic for discussion and perhaps played the role of a morale booster in the Soviet body politic.28 Any evidence of economic crisis and stagnation in western countries was assiduously cited to support the argument of the superiority of the socialist economy over the capitalist.29 The emphasis was upon "overtaking and outstripping the most advanced capitalist countries in per capita production in an historically short period."30 This goal was defined as the principal economic aim of the Soviet Union, according to the Draft Directives of the Sixth Five-Year Plan. How soon the Soviets expected this "economic task" to be accomplished became clear only later in 1959, when the time frame was defined in terms of one decade. This provides an idea of the degree of economic optimism then current in Soviet leadership circles.

The Soviets did confess to their current inferior economic position in relation to that of the United States. But they held that this was
only a temporary phenomenon. Consider, for instance, the argument of Kuzminov:

True, the level of the development of production in the Soviet Union is as yet lower than in the U.S.A. The reason for this is the shocking economic backwardness which we inherited from the old Russia. But on the basis of socialism, the socialist economy is showing rates of growth which no capitalist country, including the U.S.A., could dream of. These high rates have already enabled us to outstrip such old industrial countries as Britain, France, and Germany and to draw considerably closer to the U.S.A. in level of development. The time will come—and it is not so far distant—when we shall overtake even the U.S.A.

Clearly, then, this was superiority in the making, for while Soviet commentators claimed superiority for the socialist system of economy, they did not claim Soviet superiority in the economic correlation of forces.

The most dramatic effects of the post-Stalin doctrinal revisions were felt in the area of the political correlation of forces. Khrushchev jettisoned the Stalinist two-camp approach which treated the leaders of the newly independent countries as mere "lackeys" of imperialism. Rather than stress a rigid socialist/imperialist dichotomy, Khrushchev attempted to integrate the forces of socialism, the nonaligned movement, and peace supporters in the capitalist countries, into a "vast zone of peace."

The forces of peace have been considerably augmented by the emergence in the world arena of a group of peace loving European and Asian states which have proclaimed non-participation in blocs as a principle of their foreign policy. . . . As a result, a vast 'peace zone' including both socialist and non-socialist peace loving states in Europe and Asia, has emerged in the world arena. This zone embraces 1,500,000,000 people—that is, the majority of the population of our planet.

Because of this Khrushchevian reconceptualization, the camp of peace, democracy, and socialism swelled its ranks overnight and came to
embrace a larger percentage of the earth's territory and population.

Soviet analysts now stressed that "[t]he numerical strength and power of the peace forces is much superior to the forces of aggression and war."33

The acknowledgement of the possibility of different paths to socialism eased the way for the Soviet reconciliation with Yugoslavia. The appearance of socialist unity that such a rapprochement signified meant that Soviet analysts could count Yugoslavia among its socialist allies rather than "losing" that country to the capitalist camp.

Whereas in early 1955 commentators were defensive in their discussions of the overall correlation of forces, after the Twentieth Party Congress they were more upbeat in their analyses. The contrast in tone and emphasis between the following two assessments, one from early 1955, the other from late 1956, is revealing:

Today nobody can deny that the balance of strength [sootnoshenie sil] between the Soviet Union and the United States has become clearly defined. It should be realized that the Soviet Union, with all its manpower resources and its allies abroad, plus the moral and political support which the popular masses in other countries give to its policy of peace, represents an invincible force in the struggle for peace and security of the nations. A comparison between the Soviet Union as it is today and the United States, taking these facts into account, makes it perfectly obvious that the U.S.S.R. is not weaker than the United States.

To an ever increasing extent the course of international events is today determined by the new world system—that of socialism. . . . The achievement of national independence by almost 1,200 million people in Asia, Africa and the Middle East has still further changed the world balance of forces to the advantage of peace, democracy, and progress.33

The former evaluation of the correlation was first made by Molotov in his February 1955 report to the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet in which he discussed the general direction of Soviet foreign policy in the context of the international situation.36 It may be hypothesized that until the
formal defeat of his Stalinist approach toward international affairs, Soviet analyses of the correlation of forces reflected Molotov's latent suspicion and pessimism with regard to any basic reorientation of Soviet foreign policy. Assessments of the correlation, therefore, were negatively formulated and based largely on those elements which were more or less under Soviet control—manpower resources, Soviet allies, and popular support for the Soviet policy of peace.

After the Twentieth Party Congress, commentators were much more positive and outward looking in their analyses of the correlation. The influence of Khrushchev was now manifest. Arzumanyan in 1963 was to write of this period thus:

The peace-loving foreign policy of the U.S.S.R. leapt into activity in 1953, especially after the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, greatly increasing its influence on the entire course of international relations in the interest of the peoples.

It should be noted, however, that even in the latter 1956 estimate, the claim was merely one of an improving situation. The Soviets did not argue that the socialist system was an equal or even almost equal of the capitalist world in the overall correlation of forces. What had happened from their perspective is that they had seized the political initiative to their advantage; caused uncertainty in the minds of American policy makers regarding the credibility of the massive retaliation doctrine; and managed to maintain, over a period of time, a strong edge over the United States in rates of growth of industrial production. They therefore perceived an invigorated socialism as an ascendant force in world affairs.

This confidence was temporarily shaken when the Hungarian crisis erupted into open defiance of Soviet authority. By and large, Soviet
analysts blamed the Hungarian problem on the machinations of Western powers. But some writers did attempt to grapple with the issues underlying the disaffection of the Hungarians without, however, mentioning the role of Soviet policy in the eruption of the Hungarian crisis. 38

By early 1957, however, after enough time had elapsed since the successful quashing of the Hungarian revolution, a note of self-assurance crept back into Soviet analyses. Socialist unity had been restored, albeit forcibly, and after the initial shock, Soviet leaders and analysts portrayed the Hungarian episode as an unsuccessful imperialist attempt to change the movement of the correlation of forces in their own favor.

During the first half of 1957, the Soviets held a succession of talks at the government and party level with representatives of the People's Republic of China, Poland, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Albania. These talks had the effect of reinstating Soviet confidence in the viability of the socialist alliance.

Thus, in early 1957, an editorial in IA reasserted: "Our time is distinguished above all by the fact that socialism has transcended the boundaries of a single country and become a world system tipping the international scales in its own favour." 39 Soviet commentary during 1957 once again returned to the theme of socialist ascendance in the world: "In this contest between the two social systems, socialism is daily becoming stronger politically and economically, while capitalism is continually growing weaker." 40
For the most part, Soviet assessments of the correlation of forces were a fairly accurate reflection of the contemporary balance of military and economic capabilities and the promising political potential arising from a more accommodative recasting of foreign policy approaches toward the West, the socialist countries, and the Third World.

Soviet perceptions of the correlation of forces in the military sphere were shaped by their relatively vulnerable position in the face of superior American military strength. Under the Eisenhower administration, the United States was building up its nuclear arsenal, was strengthening the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) by rearming West Germany and admitting that country into the NATO alliance, and was sponsoring the formation of anti-Soviet alliances in various parts of the world.\(^{41}\) By 1955, the United States had also succeeded in introducing tactical nuclear weapons in Europe. Medium-range bombers stationed at overseas bases ringing the Soviet Union and long-range bombers operating from U.S. territory rendered the U.S.S.R. very vulnerable in the event of war. America also held a very considerable lead over the Soviet Union in numbers of nuclear weapons throughout this period.\(^{42}\)

That commentators took note of the greater military might of the United States is evident in the defensive tone of Soviet writing on this theme. After 1955, however, when long-range bombers entered Moscow's inventory, Soviet analysts began to speak tentatively of the "possibility" of the U.S.S.R. making intercontinental nuclear strikes. But firm repudiations of American invulnerability came only after the
successful Soviet launch of a ballistic rocket in the latter part of 1957.

If the Soviets were not sanguine about the existing military
correlation, the same could not be said about their perceptions of
developments in the economic and political spheres. Indeed, if we view
dispassionately what was happening at the time in these areas, the
expectations of Soviet leaders and scholars do not appear unreasonable.
Heavy industry was being strengthened; the virgin lands program was
rejuvenating Soviet agriculture; and industrial output was registering
very high rates of growth. When Soviet analysts compared this
impressive performance with the faltering economies of the capitalist
countries, they could only be confident about the possibilities for
bridging the economic gap at some point in the future.

On the political scene, there was also scope for optimism. Overall
Soviet strategy as it was fashioned in the years after Stalin's demise
became more confident and outward-looking in its approach. The Soviet
leadership opened lines of communication between East and West and
attempted to create an amelioration in tensions after long years of the
Cold War.

Discarding the suspiciousness of the Stalinist period, this new
approach was enshrined in Khrushchev's oft-repeated phrase that peaceful
coexistence with the West represented the general line of Soviet foreign
policy. The Geneva Summit of 1955 between President Eisenhower and
Khrushchev represented the first major meeting between the leaders of
the U.S. and U.S.S.R. since the Potsdam Conference of 1945. While the
summit was short on substantive results, its true significance lay in
the fact that it marked an end to Soviet isolationism.
With regard to the socialist sphere, Soviet commentators argued that the integrity of the world socialist system could not be breached. This perception was strengthened by the successful weathering of the crisis surrounding the Hungarian revolt of 1956. The rapprochement with Yugoslavia provided additional weight to the notion of socialist "unity," and the Sino-Soviet rift was only in its incipient stage at this time. The primacy of the U.S.S.R. was acknowledged, if not liked, by most other Communist countries, and in return Moscow magnanimously promulgated its doctrine of different paths to socialism.

The ideological shift in the Soviet attitude toward the nonaligned countries allowed commentators to integrate the latter into a "vast peace zone" and to posit a significant change in the correlation of forces in favor of socialism and peace. Such a political strategy was doubly advantageous to the Soviet Union in the face of the rigidly negative attitude adopted by U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles toward the nonaligned movement. The Soviets were indeed largely successful initially in tapping the strong reservoir of anticolonialist sentiment in many Third World states. However, Khrushchev's hopes regarding the rich potential of such countries for conversion to socialism were to be belied in later years. But major Soviet setbacks in the Third World were to manifest themselves only later.

Thus while events such as the crisis in Hungary, and the failure of high-level Soviet-Western political conferences to yield results on such contentious issues as the fate of Germany, might have had the effect of temporarily dampening their enthusiasm, the Soviets appear clearly to have felt that the international political momentum favored the socialist cause.
In keeping with the ideological innovations introduced by Khrushchev at the Twentieth Party Congress, the overall thrust of Soviet foreign policy was aimed at furthering the influence of the U.S.S.R. in world affairs while simultaneously taking care not to provoke a nuclear confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union. These dual goals did not always prove compatible.

Soviet international political strategy had to be developed in the context of a military correlation which was unfavorable to the U.S.S.R. This meant that any policy aimed at the exploitation of what the Soviets perceived as a favorable political correlation would have to take account of the probable American reaction to it. Fortunately for the Soviet Union, the United States under the Eisenhower Presidency had declared American adherence to the massive retaliation doctrine. The credibility of "massive retaliation" in any instance other than a direct Soviet attack on the United States came into question after the U.S.S.R. developed an intercontinental delivery capability in 1955. The starkness of the policy alternatives presented to the United States by the doctrine of massive retaliation allowed the Soviet Union a greater maneuverability in their international conduct than would have been possible under a less rigid doctrine.

For instance, Soviet military action in quelling the Hungarian rebellion was definitely undertaken after the leadership weighed the risk of a Western military response against the risk of allowing a breach in the socialist alliance that might well spread to other Eastern European countries. The Soviets must rightly have counted on a low probability of Western involvement in the Hungarian incident because, among other reasons, the Western policy of relying on a nuclear response
to a wide range of crises was hardly credible.

Similarly, Soviet behavior during the Suez crisis of 1956 provided a useful illustration of the difficulties involved in attempting to project a Soviet image of befriending Third World countries while steering clear of a direct military confrontation with the West, especially the United States. Khrushchev's threats of rocket attacks against France and Britain during the course of the Suez affair were calibrated, for instance, to avoid any danger of actually embroiling the U.S.S.R. in the conflict. In response to a severe American reaction to this threat, Khrushchev hastily retreated from his ominous and threatening posture, thus revealing the value placed by the Soviet leadership on avoiding a direct confrontation with the United States in the face of an asymmetrical strategic relationship.

Khrushchev had clearly sought political gains in his resort to "missile diplomacy," as the timing of his rocket threats aimed at France and Britain demonstrated. To some extent, the U.S.S.R. did win the favor of the Third World, if only for its diplomatic and "moral" support of Egypt against colonial powers (even though Khrushchev's bluff failed miserably vis-a-vis the United States). Moreover, the Soviets could point to their investment of economic resources in the underdeveloped Third World as proof of their desire to promote economic development and genuine political independence in these countries. The Soviets were able to capitalize politically on their aid programs by emerging as an alternative source to capitalist "aid with strings" and by concentrating their limited resources on conspicuous and highly visible projects.

By winning over the sympathy of nonaligned countries in the Third World through offers of economic help, the Soviets hoped to undercut the
influence of the West in these areas. The Soviet leadership also attempted to pierce the wall of Western-sponsored military alliances that surrounded the U.S.S.R. In September 1955, an arms agreement worth $250 million was signed with the militantly nationalist Egyptian leader Nasser. But even as the Soviets were trying to cast wide their nets of influence, they were characteristically cautious: the arms deal with Egypt was arranged through an intermediary—Czechoslovakia.

Soviet policies during this period, then, were carefully orchestrated to exploit political strengths without exposing military shortcomings.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the period between March 1953 and August 1957, the Soviet Union was in a markedly inferior military and economic position in relation to the United States, and the same could be said generally about the standing of the socialist bloc vis-a-vis the West as a whole. Soviet leaders took due account of this fact both in their evaluation of the correlation and in the policies they pursued in the international sphere. But by 1955 the U.S.S.R. had achieved a strategic deterrent capability, albeit a very limited one, and was anticipating an imminent breakthrough in the development of an intercontinental ballistic rocket. These developments, coupled with economic and especially political successes, were to set the stage for a period of optimism and confidence in Soviet commentary on the correlation of forces.

For Stalin, capitalism had continued to be the dominant world system, even following highly significant post-war political changes.
By 1956, the Soviet perception of the international system began to change: capitalism's erstwhile dominant position was seen as being in the process of being vitiated. Capitalism was deemed to be "powerless" to hinder the world historic process of socialist transformation, even as the "international camp of socialism" had begun to exert an "ever-growing influence on the course of world events."

Over the next few years this burgeoning confidence would increasingly be reflected in very optimistic assessments of the correlation of forces.
NOTES

1. As a Soviet observer wrote, "Stalin's erroneous approach to the nature of the national liberation movement after the Second World War impeded the development of friendly relations between the U.S.S.R. and countries which had discarded the yoke of colonialism. The solution of a number of international problems was unwarrantedly protracted. The line of self-isolation which Stalin conducted hampered expansion of the U.S.S.R.'s foreign political contacts..." V. A. Zorin, Vneshniaia politika SSSR na novom etape (Moscow, 1964), p. 8. Quoted in Sidney Ploss, To the Twenty-third Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, FPRI Research Monograph Series, No. 8, University of Pennsylvania, 1965, p. 75.


4. A. Nikonov, "Vneshniaia politika SSSR--politika mira i mezhdunarodnogo sotrudnichestva" [USSR Foreign Policy is a Policy of Peace and International Cooperation], Kommunist (7) May 1953, p. 29.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.


9. Ibid., p. 11.

10. For text of Malenkov's speech see Pravda, March 13, 1953, p. 2. Even as late as January 1955, Y. Frantsev writing in IA was perhaps echoing the Malenkov position when he declared, "The Soviet state has at its command all the means requisite for the defence of its borders..." Frantsev, "Lenin--Founder of Soviet Foreign Policy," IA (1) January 1955, p. 15. Emphasis added. Such a statement did not reappear after Malenkov's dismissal as Premier in February 1955.


18. Gruliow, Current Soviet Policies--II, p. 37. Emphasis added. Khrushchev himself was later to say in reply to a western journalist who had asked whether a prewar situation was non-existent in the relations among capitalist countries or in general: "Not only between capitalist countries, but in general between capitalist and socialist countries." N. S. Khrushchov, Speeches and Interviews on World Problems: 1957 (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1958), p. 203.


20. Ibid. Emphasis added.


26. President Eisenhower was to observe in early 1958, "we should not try to excel in everything." The Soviets, he argued, had "done much better than we have in this matter." "They stopped their Bison and Bear production, but we have kept on going, on the basis of incorrect estimates and at tremendous expense in a mistaken effort to be 100% secure." Quoted in John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 188. Bears and Bisons refer to Soviet long-range bombers. As Edgar Bottome points out, under the impetus of the "bomber gap" scare, the Americans soon held a 5-1 lead over the Russians in bombers. See *The Balance of Terror*, p. 36.


36. See above, fn. 34.


42. For numbers of nuclear weapons in the arsenals of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. between 1953 and 1957, see Bottome, The Balance of Terror, Appendix A, p. 155.

43. Between 1953 and 1957, the annual percent growth rate of Soviet industrial production was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Growth Rate</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>9.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>10.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>11.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>8.2</td>
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<td>1957</td>
<td>7.7</td>
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44. The Hungarian revolt was by no means an isolated phenomenon. There were potent signs of disaffection with Moscow in Poland. In the months following the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian Revolution, Khrushchev's position within the Presidium was somewhat weakened. But by June-July 1957, he managed to reassert his political authority. For details, see Robert Conquest, Power and Policy in the USSR (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1961), pp. 292-328.
45. In keeping with the Soviet strategy of cultivating "national bourgeois" leaders of Third World countries and viewing them as allied with the socialist bloc in the quest for peace, Soviet commentators began to speak of the rise of "social and progressive forces" in international affairs. While Khrushchev never denied the importance of the working class in ultimately effecting the socialist revolution, he appears to have believed that the befriending of "progressive forces" would hasten the transition to socialism in these countries.

46. In 1954 Afghanistan became the first non-communist recipient of Soviet economic aid. Early credits were small and used for the construction of wheat elevators, a flour mill, a bakery, and for the paving of Kabul streets. In 1956, a $100 million credit was extended for various projects. Among others, the Soviets helped with the construction of the Bagram and Kabul airfields. In 1955 India received a credit of $116 million for the Bhilai steel mill. An additional sum of $126 million was extended in 1956. Indonesia was offered $100 million in 1956 in economic assistance and had also been the recipient of large amounts of military goods in this period. See George S. Carnett and Morris H. Crawford, "The Scope and Distribution of Soviet Economic Aid," in U. S. Congress, Joint Economic Committee, Dimensions of Soviet Economic Power (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962), pp. 567-469.

47. The figure of $250 million is cited in Bruce Porter, The USSR in Third World Conflicts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 17. As Porter explains in fn. 13, "The agreement was a barter arrangement (Egyptian cotton and rice in exchange for the arms), so the figure of $250 million is only a Western estimate of the value of the weapons." Ibid., p. 17.
CHAPTER IV
YEARS OF OPTIMISM
AUGUST 1957 — SEPTEMBER 1961

The period under review in the present chapter spans an optimistic phase in the Soviet outlook on the role and influence of the U.S.S.R. in world affairs. The opening salvo in this round of surging confidence was fired by the launching of the first Soviet Sputnik on October 4, 1956.¹ Sputnik I exploded, as it were, two "myths" that the Soviets had, in the past, sought very hard to dispel—the "myth" of the strategic invulnerability of the United States, and the "myth" of the technological backwardness of the Soviet Union. This tangible display of scientific and military prowess, coupled with their economic and political successes, impelled Soviet leaders and analysts to regard "the continuous strengthening of the productive influence" of world socialism on the historical process as "the main characteristic of our epoch."²

Just as this optimism reached its crest in 1960–61, the combined onslaught of the increasingly bitter Sino-Soviet polemics, a deceleration in the overall rate of growth of the Soviet economy, and the inauguration in Washington of an internationally activist President, prompted a Soviet reassessment of the speed with which global developments were moving in favor of socialism. The need for a reappraisal of earlier optimism was reinforced by the Cuban missile episode in October 1962.

We shall seek to address the following questions:

(1) What, according to the Soviets, were the factors underpinning their belief that international developments were moving in a favorable direction?
(2) As far as the outside observer is able to tell, did the underlying reasons provide sufficient grounds for such optimism?

(3) How was this confidence reflected in Soviet depiction of the correlation of forces between socialism and capitalism?

(4) To what extent did the pattern of Soviet international and/or domestic policies conform to or deviate from the picture drawn by Soviet analysts and leaders of the correlation of forces?

The first and third questions are empirical queries and may be dealt with fairly easily on the basis of evidence culled from the prolific writings of Soviet analysts and leaders. The second and fourth questions are inferential in nature and thus require a contextual interpretation of Soviet assertions. For instance, it is simple enough to state that on March 1, 1960, Khrushchev, in a speech in India, declared that the Soviet Union was the world's strongest military power. It is much more problematic, however, to determine whether Khrushchev himself believed the statement to be accurate or inaccurate, and further, to infer the purposes he might have intended to fulfil in advancing such a claim.

In attempting to draw conclusions from the multi-faceted evidence, the researcher walks a methodological tightrope. Between the poles of utter credulity and outright rejection, one has to keep to the middle ground of a discriminating analysis of Soviet writing. The most one can hope to do is garner contextual evidence to demonstrate that the inference drawn is reasonable, once account is taken of the interplay of events within the larger picture of Soviet domestic and international politics.

The major thesis of this chapter is that while the launching of
Sputnik, with all the military implications flowing therefrom, played an important part in boosting Soviet optimism, it was only one of several ingredients in what the Soviets saw as their recipe for international success. Soviet political and especially economic gains were seen as the bedrock upon which the international structure of a socialist future could securely rest. Khrushchev, all his rhetoric to the contrary notwithstanding, appears to have held the belief that it was through winning economic battles that socialism would ultimately emerge victorious in the "war" against capitalism. The mutual recriminations exchanged by the Chinese and Soviets prior to the "open break" in 1963 are very instructive in this regard, for they forced the Russians to delineate their staunch faith in peaceful economic competition with the capitalist West in the face of a vigorous ideological challenge by the Chinese.

Not all of the events occurring between the autumn of 1957 and the autumn of 1961 were favorable from the point of the Soviet leadership. The Soviets nevertheless were optimistic during much of this period. How and why this optimism persisted will form the primary focus of the ensuing analysis.

The most direct evidence of Soviet confidence in the favorable international position of the U.S.S.R. was the introduction of an alternative phrase to characterize the distribution of power between socialism and capitalism. Alongside the term sootnoshenie sil, Soviet writers, following the lead of Khrushchev, commenced in 1959 to argue that there was, in effect, a preponderance of forces (pereves sil) in favor of socialism. Although the former term, being a more generic formulation, prevailed quantitatively over the latter phrase, this
development was significant, for it provided an index of the evolving Soviet perspective on the growing role and influence of the U.S.S.R. in world affairs.

In the discussion that follows, we will begin with an exposition of Soviet commentary on the correlation of forces, and then turn to an analysis of the Soviet perspective on the distribution of power.

QUIESCENT OPTIMISM: 1957-1959

The launching of Sputnik I marked an important watershed in Soviet discussions of the distribution of power between socialism and capitalism. Soviet scholars were circumspect in their immediate reactions to the military implications of this event. They did begin, however, vigorously to deny American military superiority and to argue that the Sputniks had altered the correlation in an important, but unspecified, way. V. Korionov, for instance, described the correlation as "tipping still further" in favor of socialism, and an editorial observation in January 1958 spoke of "radical changes" which had occurred in the balance. N. Inozemtsev declared that "[t]he launching of the artificial earth satellite brought a qualitative change in international relations." But commentators refrained from asserting, for the most part, that the successful test firing of the ballistic missile (with the help of which the satellite--Sputnik--was launched into space) conferred military superiority on the Soviet Union. The lone avowal of such superior military strength in the wake of the satellite launching was voiced by an analyst in early 1958. Fulminating against Dulles' attitude toward the U.S.S.R., the editorial writer said,
"He [Dulles] continued to agitate for his 'negotiations of strength' policy, even after the Soviet Union had shown its military and scientific supremacy." Indeed, such an assertion was not echoed by other analysts or Soviet leaders until 1960, and appears to indicate that the Soviets regarded the claim as both premature and unwise.

The Chinese believed that the Sputnik breakthrough had resulted in such an overwhelming accession of strength in favor of the socialist countries that the latter could pursue an aggressive revolutionary strategy in the Third World. Imperialism was only a "paper tiger" when seen through the Maoist prism. The Soviets, on the other hand, drew a very different set of conclusions from the same event. They stressed that it was now possible to demand peace from the imperialists since the U.S.S.R. possessed a credible deterrent. The Soviet leadership appeared reluctant to jeopardize their peaceful coexistence diplomacy, their domestic economic programs or their policy of cultivating "non-socialist" allies (such as India and Egypt) by actively promoting a socialist revolution in these countries.

Thus, while the Soviets showed increased confidence in the credibility of their nuclear deterrent and rejoiced over the territorial vulnerability of the United States, their assessments of the military impact of Sputnik were modest and carefully couched, especially when contrasted with Mao's bald assertions that "... the East wind is prevailing over the West wind" and "the socialist forces are overwhelmingly superior to the imperialist forces." The Soviets, moreover, were reluctant even to argue that the ICBM development had served to bring about an equilibrium of forces.

Khrushchev, in all likelihood, believed in the adequacy of the
existing Soviet deterrent. The following statement, which he made in
the course of a speech to the Supreme Soviet in December 1956, would
seem to support such a thesis:

We make no bones about the fact that if agreement is not
reached on disarmament, the Soviet Union will give due
attention to developing the latest types of weapons. But it
will do this rationally so as not to overburden our budget,
our economy, and our people by heavy expenditure.

The Soviets, for instance, did not embark on a crash program to
produce ICBMs in large numbers and opted instead to wait for the
development of more sophisticated second-generation missiles. According
to Edgar Bottome, "... it would appear that between 1957 and 1962 the
Soviet Union built less than 4 percent of the ICBMs and only 20 percent
of the heavy bombers that American intelligence estimated its economy
could have sustained." Data on Soviet defense expenditures for this
period provide added force to the argument that Khrushchev wished to
economize on defense. Abraham Becker's analysis of Soviet defense
outlays shows a consistent drop in defense spending between 1955 and
1957, with only a slight increase in 1958, but to an amount still below
that for 1955.

The advantages of Sputnik were seen as having larger ramifications
in the political and economic spheres. Soviet scholars argued that this
advance in military technology would serve as a catalyst in accelerating
the tempo of change. The "sobering" of Western powers in general, and
of America in particular, was viewed as one of the catalytic effects of
Sputnik. In an economic sense it "symbolize[d] the level of the
productive forces and the growth of science and technology achieved by
the socialist system." The following comment by a Soviet analyst
captures the flavor of Soviet discussions of the effect of Sputnik on
the distribution of power:

The successful Soviet testing of an intercontinental ballistic missile, Soviet successes in jet aircraft construction, etc. have all demonstrated how baseless are imperialism's claims to military supremacy. But it is not, of course, primarily a question of the Soviet Union's military successes. . . . The changes in favour of socialism now taking place in the world and which cannot be checked have deep social and economic roots, and it is above all in the political and economic fields that the balance of forces between the two systems is changing.12

The necessity for economic competition and peaceful coexistence with the capitalist West had been a shibboleth with Khrushchev ever since the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956. "The victory of a social system," he said after the Sputnik launching, "will be decided not by rockets, not by atomic and hydrogen bombs, but by the system that provides man with greater material and spiritual benefits. We hold that socialism is a better system of society."13

As we have seen in an earlier chapter, the Soviets had been optimistic (well before the Sputnik launching) about their political successes and economic prospects and had spoken, albeit tentatively, of the superior strength of the peace forces.14 The Sputniks only served to strengthen this faith in the superiority of the peace forces since the Soviets clearly recognized that this technological advance would serve to neutralize, to a degree, the strategic threat posed to the Soviet heartland by the United States. As a prominent Soviet defense analyst put it, "[t]he main thing about the ICBM is that it makes it possible to strike at any part of the globe."15

Therefore, if the West were deterred and if Soviet economic and political successes proceeded unhampered, the implication that the peace forces were superior to the forces of war followed logically from the Soviet perspective. In this vein, an analyst at the close of 1958 (a
year during which great strides were taken in the economic sphere) declared that the strengthening of the "political, economic and military might" of the socialist camp made that camp "the strongest power in the world today, the most reliable safeguard of peace. . . . The balance of forces on the international arena today has substantially altered. The forces of peace have increased and grown stronger than ever. They are now superior to the forces of war."  

The above claim, made at a time when the Soviet economy was at peak performance whereas the United States was experiencing an economic slow-down, caused the writer to declare confidently: "The great superiority of the new socialist system and the inevitability of its complete triumph is being thrown into greater relief in the course of the economic competition between the two systems." Soviet and socialist economic might not only enhanced the attraction of the socialist model but made possible "increased disinterested aid to the underdeveloped countries who have won freedom from colonial oppression" and created "increasingly favourable" conditions for "the fight for peace and international security."

The allusion to the camp of socialism being the "strongest power in the world today" referred to more than mere military might: Soviet economic successes were very important both in the context of peaceful economic competition and in their translatability into political gains.

By both American and Soviet estimates the year 1958 was an exceptionally good economic year for the U.S.S.R. Soviet sources placed the percentage increase in national income over the previous year at 12.6. A contemporary Western study calculated a 9.9% increase in the Soviet GNP growth rate over the previous year. According to the latter
Khrushchev capitalized on this impressive economic performance in unveiling the Seven-Year Plan for economic development at the Twenty-First Party Congress in February 1959.

Soviet economic optimism soared in early 1959 and Khrushchev reflected this confidence when he outlined the specifics of the Seven-Year Plan in his report to the Twenty-First Congress:

The principal tasks of this period are to establish the material and technical base for communism, to strengthen further the economic and defensive might of the U.S.S.R. and simultaneously to provide ever fuller satisfaction of the growing material and spiritual requirements of the people. The historic task of overtaking and surpassing the most highly developed of the capitalist countries must be accomplished. He added that Soviet success in fulfilling the plan "will lead to strengthening the forces of peace and weakening the forces of war" and reiterated that the "economy is the chief field in which the peaceful competition between socialism and capitalism is unfolding." In his December 1957 speech to the Supreme Soviet, Khrushchev had implied the need to consider the guns vs. butter issue while allocating resources to acquire the "latest types of weapons." That is, he seemed to realize that the Soviet Union could not divert large amounts of funds from other sectors of the economy to defense without seriously unbalancing the budget. By 1959, however, he appeared confident that the U.S.S.R. could have both guns and butter. Certainly, the tremendous upsurge in the Soviet economy during 1958 must have eased to a certain extent the problem of competing demands on the budget. Defense spending rose sharply in 1959 and the Strategic Rocket Forces were established as a separate branch of the armed forces in the same year.

In conjunction with their economic advances, the Soviets continued
to maintain their edge in space technology. The first artificial solar satellite was launched in January 1959 (timed perhaps deliberately to coincide with the opening of the Twenty-First Congress), and in the control figures of the Seven-Year Plan approved by the Congress it was stated that "[t]he series production of intercontinental ballistic rockets has been successfully organized." Khrushchev repeated this assertion in his report to the Congress. Claims such as these stoked the perceptions of an impending "missile gap" in the United States. If this were Khrushchev's intent, he did not belabor the military aspect of the correlation, saying only that the Soviet Union possessed the means "to deal a crushing blow against an aggressor at any point on the globe." Instead he proclaimed that fulfillment of the Seven-Year Plan would so increase the economic potential of the U.S.S.R. that, along with the increasing economic potential of the socialist countries, it would "ensure a decisive advantage for peace in the correlation of forces."

He went on:

Indeed, when the U.S.S.R. becomes the world's leading industrial power, when the Chinese People's Republic becomes a mighty industrial power and all the socialist countries together will be producing more than half of the world's industrial output, the international situation will change radically. . . . One need have no doubt that by that time the countries working for peace will be joined by new countries that have freed themselves from colonial oppression. . . .

In his concluding report to the Congress, Khrushchev said: "If we take the countries which are in the world socialist system and the countries which are waging a valiant struggle for their freedom and national independence, the preponderance of forces is now on the side of those peace-loving countries." Khrushchev was speaking here of the overall correlation of political, economic, and military forces, rather
than just the military balance, as his next statement makes amply clear: "In territory, size of population and availability of natural resources, the peace-loving countries are superior to the imperialist states."³¹

This claim was merely a more emphatic version of earlier assertions regarding the superiority of the peace forces. Most Soviet commentators during the first half of 1959 did not re-echo the declaration that the "preponderance of forces" was on the side of peace-loving countries, but chose instead to stress the domestic and international significance of Soviet economic achievements and to speak of the imminent future when "the fulfillment of the Seven-Year plan along with the successes in the economic development of other socialist countries . . . will ensure the decisive preponderance of peace-loving forces in the international arena."³² (As we have seen above, Khrushchev employed both these formulations in his report to the Twenty-First Congress.) Analysts continued, however, to maintain that the forces of peace and democracy possessed "by far the superior strength."³³

In promoting peaceful coexistence between socialist and capitalist states, Khrushchev had drawn a distinction between sober and aggressive forces in the West, arguing that the chances for peace were enhanced if the former group were politically ascendant in imperialist societies. With Khrushchev's September 1959 visit to the United States to meet with President Eisenhower, Soviet scholars began to evince even greater confidence in the success of Soviet diplomacy and foreign policy and attributed this "turning-point" in international relations to "a great and decisive superiority"³⁴ of peace-loving forces over those of aggression and war. As one analyst put it:

Against the background of the predominance of the forces of peace over those of war it has for the first time in the
history of mankind become possible to avert wars. Statesmen regardless of their views and aspirations, have to adapt their policy to this fact of epochal importance if they are not to be swept aside by the onward march of history.

THE ASSERTIVE PHASE: 1960-1961

Khrushchev's exuberant hopes for matching the level of United States industrial production by 1965 and overtaking that level by 1970 were probably based on the expectation that the United States economy would continue its sluggish performance of the 1950s, while the Soviet Union would maintain or surpass the economic record of 1958. Even if such a scenario had held true, the task of overtaking the U.S. economy by 1970 would not have been easy. Unfortunately for Khrushchev, the economic growth rate for 1959 registered a steep decline, mainly due to a disastrous fall in agricultural production occasioned by adverse weather conditions. According to a Western estimate, the annual growth rate of the Soviet gross national product fell to 3.9 percent in 1959 after a high in 1958 of 9.9 percent. The American GNP growth rate for that same year was 6.6 percent.

Khrushchev had made an issue of Soviet success in peaceful economic competition with the United States. A slow-down in the rate of growth therefore raised the question of economic priorities, and in January 1960, in a speech to the Supreme Soviet, Khrushchev proposed cuts in the Soviet defense budget while simultaneously presenting Soviet military might as more than sufficient to repel threats from imperialism. It was in this period that Khrushchev and other Soviet analysts began to claim that the Soviet Union was the strongest military power in the world. The first mention of Soviet military superiority came in a
speech delivered by Khrushchev in February 1960 in New Delhi, India.\textsuperscript{39} This theme was echoed by other Soviet leaders and commentators during the course of that year and the greater part of 1961. Mikoyan in April of 1960 spoke of the "military superiority of the Soviet Union."\textsuperscript{40} M. Marinin writing in the same period said that "the Soviet Union relying on its industrial technical might has achieved a \textit{definite} military preponderance over the United States and its imperialist allies."\textsuperscript{41} Malinovsky in February 1961 repeated Khrushchev's March 1960 formula that "the Soviet Union has become the strongest military power in the world,"\textsuperscript{42} and \textit{Pravda}'s analysis of the 1961 draft program of the Communist Party chose to stress its military aspects and claimed that the Soviet Union was the strongest military power in the world.\textsuperscript{43}

With regard to the overall correlation, most Soviet scholars in 1960 and 1961 insisted that the preponderance of forces was on the side of peace and socialism, as the following observation illustrates: "The correlation of forces between the two systems is steadily changing and for several years now these changes have obtained for socialism a preponderance over capitalism in the scales of the planet."\textsuperscript{44} In January 1961, a group of analysts declared that there was "a very well-defined preponderance of the forces of socialism and peace over the forces of imperialism and war" in the international arena.\textsuperscript{45} This same article also repeated the November 1960 formulation of the Conference of Communist and Workers Parties that "[t]he superiority of the forces of socialism and peace is absolute."\textsuperscript{46}

Soviet commentary during 1960 and most of 1961 was much more assertive in its claims than between 1957 and 1959. What is one to make of these Soviet assertions of military superiority during 1960 and 1961?
Clearly, as the record shows, the Soviet Union was in a strategically inferior position vis-a-vis the United States throughout this period. Lawrence Freedman states that by September 1961, U.S. intelligence estimates placed the number of deployed Soviet ICBMs at a mere ten.47

It is very probable that the Soviet leadership chose deliberately to mislead the world about Soviet military power. In fact, Khrushchev freely admits in his memoirs that one of the reasons for Soviet reluctance to cooperate with the Americans in space technology was the fear that this would apprise the U.S. of relative Soviet weakness in the military area.48 Soviet boasts about their military strength fuelled the myth of the "missile gap" in the United States and became an issue in the 1960 Presidential campaign.49

For Khrushchev, the military clout of the Soviet Union served a useful purpose—only in the short run—in staying the hand of the "imperialists," forcing them to be "realistic" by compelling them to accept meekly the verdict of history. But it was the deterrent and compellent values of military power that he deemed important—not its practical utility. In the long run, only Soviet economic and political successes could, he believed, ensure a stable foundation for the spread of communism. From this philosophical standpoint, it made eminent sense to exploit any short-term military advantages that the West "perceived" the Soviet Union to possess. To this end, Khrushchev brandished the military club (his manufactured crises over Berlin are good examples), seeking to capitalize politically on a putative Soviet military superiority while taking care to trim Soviet defense expenditures in order not to jeopardize the course of economic competition with the United States.50
Also, the assertion of military superiority, following as it did on the heels of an announcement calling for cuts in the defense budget, might have been intended to serve as verbal ammunition in the anticipated battle with the generals over this issue. By openly asserting that the Soviet Union was the world's strongest military power, Khrushchev may have hoped to send a clear signal both to the Chinese, who were accusing the Soviets of pusillanimity in pursuing the goal of revolution, and to the military establishment in his country, that Soviet military strength was adequate to meet the "imperialist" challenge. Thus it is likely that Khrushchev in this fashion hoped to manipulate simultaneously both his domestic constituency and his socialist and international audiences.

In 1961, however, the Kennedy Administration increased the U.S. defense budget, adopted the doctrine of flexible response, and announced a more activist international policy. These developments were accompanied by an economic recovery in the United States. The Soviets must thus have perceived an American challenge on all three fronts—economic, political, and military.

Initial Soviet reaction to the Kennedy Administration's policies was sanguine. Analysts chose to emphasize the positive aspects of Kennedy's program and spoke of such things as the U.S. President's expressed desire for a dialogue with the Soviet Union. The Bay of Pigs fiasco only served to vindicate the Soviet faith in the "preponderance of the forces of peace and socialism," and Khrushchev in January 1961 flamboyantly declared:

In the past we used to say that history was working for socialism. By that we meant that eventually man would consign capitalism to the dustbin and that socialism would triumph. Today we can say that socialism is working for history,
because the rise of socialism and its affirmation on a worldwide scale are the basic content of the historical process in our times.\textsuperscript{33}

He also reaffirmed his belief that "[v]ictory for the Soviet Union in its economic competition with the United States, and victory for the socialist system as a whole over the capitalist system, will be a major turning-point in history . . ." and that "[t]he most important thing today is to win time in the economic competition with capitalism."\textsuperscript{54}

As long as this view both of the military and the overall correlation was not severely criticized by the Americans, Soviet leaders and analysts continued to evince great optimism. Strumilin in September 1961 had very encouraging predictions for the world "twenty years from now." Speaking of the potential for the expansion of the socialist community, he wrote:

We do not know how many of these underdeveloped countries will fully enter the commonwealth of socialist countries in the next ten or twenty years, but we can expect with certainty that their gravitation toward this camp will increase with every year, rather than diminish. . . . But let us assume out of caution that not more than 30\% of the populations of neutral countries and not more than 10\% of those of the imperialist camp take the socialist road during the next twenty years, and that in the first decade—up to 1970—the percentages are only half of these. . . .\textsuperscript{55}

The above assessment was made mainly on the basis of the economic attraction of the Soviet model for countries wishing to telescope the period of economic development. The Draft Program of the Communist Party released in July 1961, for instance, had announced that

\begin{quote}
In the current decade (1961-1970), the Soviet Union, in creating the material and technical basis of communism will surpass the . . . U.S.A. in production per head of population. . . . In the next decade (1971-1980) the material and technical basis of communism will be created.\textsuperscript{56}
\end{quote}

This program, which was presented to the Twenty-Second Party Congress in October 1961, was another example of Khrushchev's faith in the
overriding importance of the economic correlation of forces.

But by October 1961, spokesmen for the Kennedy Administration had questioned the basis for the extreme optimism displayed by Soviet analysts with regard to the correlation of forces. Khrushchev had failed to intimidate the West with his Berlin adventure. The American press, too, began now to talk of a resurgence in the international power and prestige of the United States. In the face of such adverse trends, Khrushchev in July 1961 had perhaps reluctantly called for an increase in U.S.S.R. defense expenditures, and Soviet comment on the correlation of forces underwent a subtle metamorphosis. The Russian response to the "changed" situation will form the subject of the next chapter.

ANALYSIS

Were Soviet depictions of the distribution of power between socialism and capitalism reasonable given the "shifts" in the military, political, and economic spheres on which these assessments were based? And how did their stated views of the correlation accord with the policies they pursued during the period under consideration?

In general, Soviet assessments of the correlation of forces from the launching of Sputnik to the close of 1959 seem realistic. The development of the ICBM helped the U.S.S.R. to break out of the strategic straitjacket in which it had earlier found itself: The insignificant numbers of Soviet long-range bombers had hardly constituted a credible or a reliable deterrent against the vastly superior American strategic forces. High economic growth rates in the U.S.S.R. during most of the 1950s reinforced Soviet faith in the
socialist economy. Lastly, the policy of courting the newly independent countries of the Third World for political allegiance was quite successful, at least initially. The cautious optimism that the Soviets evinced during this earlier period appears to be consonant with the implications of the above developments.

Perhaps a sampling of Western opinion on (1) the Sputnik development and (2) Soviet economic progress and their political moves in the international arena would provide us with a benchmark against which to evaluate the modesty of Soviet claims during the 1957-1959 period.

Popular Western reaction to Sputnik was as alarmed as it was swift. In the United States, journalists and defense spokesmen began to argue that a dangerous missile gap was in the making. Even some scholars joined in this chorus of concern. Professor J. Sterling Livingston in a confidential briefing session of the Committee for Economic Development said:

The evidence seems to indicate that we are lagging behind the Soviets in the arms race because of 'calculated decisions made by the military people' which resulted in our not undertaking the development of the ICBM at the time the Soviets undertook its development.

Assurances by administration spokesmen that the mere launching of an earth satellite did not necessarily add to the military strength of the Soviet Union were drowned out by the media and public at large, which chose to stress the emergence of a dangerous lag in the military sphere. Soviet economic advances were also a topic of widespread discussion in the United States. Many Americans saw in the rapid Soviet economic progress a channel for the spread of socialist influence around the world with all the attendant negative implications for the
dissemination of American global power. The Soviet challenge, as it was perceived in the United States, was of a comprehensive character, embracing military, political, and economic aspects. In the face of these perceived adverse trends, the influential American journalist Walter Lippmann opined that the global balance of power favored the Soviet Union:

... [A]s compared with our great rival and adversary, we are at this time in a decline. ... The amazing rate of progress in the Soviet Union portends—if we do not catch up with it—a growing Russian superiority, not only in military power, but in political and economic influence. ... We have to accept the hard fact that not only have we fallen behind, but that, ... we shall continue to fall behind.

All things considered, then, Soviet assessments of the correlation of forces between 1957 and 1959 were not unreasonable. So, while Robert Strausz-Hupe spoke of America's "diminishing freedom of choice" and wondered how the United States could "recapture the initiative," his Soviet counterpart, A. Arzumanian, wrote:

Are we not anticipating in asserting that imperialism has ceased to be the dominant factor of the present day? To this question a specific answer must be given. Imperialism has lost forever the possibility of determining the course and direction of world social evolution. Of course imperialism still rules over a wide territory of the globe, it is still comparatively strong and capable of offering comparatively great resistance to the new social system, it can still cause mankind untold harm. But of determining the direction of world evolution, imperialism is no longer capable.

From 1960 onward Soviet commentary on the correlation of forces assumed a markedly manipulative character. Soviet assertions of military superiority were not consistent with objective capabilities. A little under a year earlier, in March 1959, Khrushchev had told an East German audience that if it were possible to invent an instrument which would measure with precision the political and military strength of the socialist countries and the West, it "would show that both sides are
sufficiently strong at present." While the Soviets were still ahead of the United States in space technology, there had been no military breakthrough which would have conferred on the U.S.S.R. the military superiority that the Soviets were claiming in this period.

Even in the area of the economy, the trends, as we have seen, were not encouraging. The "silver lining" on the economic cloud, as far as Khrushchev was concerned, perhaps resided in the fact that the drop in the Soviet growth rate in 1959 was occasioned by a poor showing in agricultural rather than industrial production. The latter registered an increase in the percentage rate of growth over 1958. And while the rate of industrial growth fell in 1960, it was by a negligible margin. Moreover, the overall rate of growth of the Soviet economy did pick up considerably in 1960. It was, presumably, with the facet of industrial production in mind that Khrushchev optimistically issued the Draft Program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in July 1961.

The Draft Program set some rather unclear goals for Soviet agriculture: "In the first decade the Soviet Union will outstrip the United States in the output of key agricultural products per head of the population." The Program did not claim to outstrip the United States in overall agricultural production in a decade. Besides, the definition of "key agricultural products" could always be open to interpretation. For industrial output the Soviet Union was to aim "within twenty years" to "leave the present overall volume of U.S. industrial output far behind."

The more or less simultaneous occurrence of three circumstances must have provided the impetus for Khrushchev to seek a solution in a policy of deceit: (1) the emergence of the "guns or butter" quandary
when Soviet economic growth rates dropped in 1959; (2) the Chinese assault on Soviet global strategy, especially during 1959-60; and (3) the heated debate on the "missile gap" issue in the United States in 1959-60.

By proclaiming "military superiority" Khrushchev may have hoped: to undercut political opposition to his reduction in the arms budget while providing for the diversion of freed resources into other sectors of the Soviet economy; to inform the Chinese that Soviet espousal of peace and peaceful coexistence did not spring from a sense of weakness; and to score political points in areas of conflict with the West (such as in Berlin). Khrushchev at this time had perhaps no plans for a major expansion of Soviet military forces, and sought to exploit Western perceptions of Soviet strength to the maximum.

Soviet leaders and analysts emphasized the importance of the economic aspect of the correlation of forces above all others. Soviet economic successes, according to commentators, would allow for the rapid economic development of other socialist countries, would make possible "disinterested aid" to uncommitted countries of the Third World, would enhance the strength of the peace forces in capitalist countries, and provide the foundation for Soviet defensive might.

Soviet policies reflected this economic and political predilection. During the Khrushchev era, economic aid was used primarily as a political instrument: The Soviet leadership proffered generous economic assistance to those nonaligned countries which were anti-Western and anti-imperialist. Soviet aid was extended in the building of large-scale projects in the state sector—such as steel plants, dams, and the like. Khrushchev made common cause with the nationalist
bourgeoisie in these countries, arguing that the desire of these leaders for peace and their sentiment against imperialism and colonialism bound these countries into an alliance with the socialist bloc. The "non-capitalist path of development" was touted as representing a stepping stone toward a "higher" form of development—socialism.

In keeping with Khrushchev's belief that the Soviet economy was the prime battlefield for the war of ideologies, Soviet economic aid commitments to nonaligned countries exceeded Soviet military aid commitments.\(^6\) That, in the final analysis, actual deliveries of arms aid exceeded deliveries of economic aid does not dilute the essence of the Khrushchevian bias.\(^7\)

Khrushchev pursued a forward strategy with regard to the countries constituting what has come to be known as the Third World. But his policies vis-à-vis these countries were based more on using economic and political rather than military means to attain influence. Certainly, the military instrument (in the form of arms aid) played an important role, but it never attained the predominant position that it did in later years under Brezhnev.

It might be objected that the only reason that the Soviet Union under Khrushchev was not more active militarily was because the Soviets did not possess the military wherewithal to pursue such a course. But one must point out that under Khrushchev the very areas (conventional arms, military manpower, naval development) the strengthening of which would have made possible a more active military strategy in the Third World, were areas in which Khrushchev introduced drastic budget cuts, opting instead for nuclear firepower.\(^7\) Even in the latter area, the Soviet Union did not develop nuclear weapons and missiles nearly as fast.
as the West expected it would between 1957 and 1961.  

Moscow in the late 1950s also undertook to reduce its armed forces in the German Democratic Republic and Hungary. In his memoirs Khrushchev defends his military programs—such as troop cuts and, in the naval area, the scrapping of cruisers—on economic grounds: "We had to economize on our army abroad as well as at home. The maintenance of a division abroad—that is, on the territory of another socialist country—costs twice as much as the maintenance of a division on our own territory." 

Of aircraft carriers, he said "... [W]e couldn't afford to build them. They were simply beyond our means. Besides, with a strong submarine force, we felt able to sink the American carriers if it came to war. In other words, submarines represented an effective defensive capability as well as reliable means of launching a missile counterattack." 

Soviet foreign policy during this period attempted to translate perceived military strengths into political gains. But the Soviet leadership always stopped short of pursuing their advantage to the point of risking a war. During the 1958 Middle East crisis, for example, when American and British troops landed in Lebanon and Jordan, Khrushchev, as Richard Lowenthal worded it, "... was determined to use every conceivable political pressure to prevent the Western powers from carrying out their supposed intentions while at the same time evading a military commitment of his own." Khrushchev did not engage in saber-rattling in this instance to the same degree as he had done previously during the Suez crisis of 1956, presumably because he wished to avoid a direct clash with the United States. The Soviet response
during the 1958 Quemoy crisis was similarly vague and cautious.

Only in Berlin, a festering political sore for the Soviet Union and East Germany, did Khrushchev attempt to press his perceived advantage to the fullest. Even in this instance, however, he retreated each time when confronted with the readiness of Western powers to face up to the challenge.

Khrushchev did not, however, seek to secure weapons systems at any cost in order to achieve the strategic superiority he so often claimed. In 1960, as we have noted, when faced with a slow-down in the economic growth rate, Khrushchev instituted cuts in defense spending. And in the protracted polemical dispute with the Chinese over the issue of peace and revolution, the Soviets argued that revolution was compatible with peace and criticized "dogmatists" for "acknowledging in words" that a radical change had occurred in the correlation of forces without understanding its "real substance." 78

Soviet arms acquisition policies during much of this period appear to reflect Khrushchev's belief in the adequacy of a credible deterrent—a view he endorses in his memoirs:

I believe an important part of our military doctrine should be that we not try to compete with our adversaries in every area where they are ahead of us; as long as we preserve our nuclear deterrent, we will be defending our country effectively and serving our people well. 79

Soviet international policies were for the most part in accord with A. Sovetov's evaluation of the possibilities and limitations on Soviet freedom of action in the global arena. The Soviet Union would not promote revolution at the cost of peace:

In a world where states with different social and economic systems exist this is first of all a struggle for the consolidation of peaceful coexistence. . . . In the atmosphere of rapid social development, characteristic of the present
era, peaceful coexistence, while not retarding social changes in countries where these changes are ripe, must at the same time ensure a situation in which internal processes in particular countries do not lead to military clashes of the two antipodal systems.

CONCLUSION

The years following the Sputnik launch in the autumn of 1957 saw the rise and peaking of Soviet optimism regarding the correlation of forces. Socialism was now seen as the dominant factor in shaping international development. The Soviets began to argue that the preponderance of forces was now on the side of peace and socialism. The 1960 Moscow Statement of eighty-one Communist Parties declared:

Today it is the world socialist system and the forces fighting against imperialism, for a socialist transformation of society, that determine the main content, the main trend, and main features of the historical development of society.

The Soviets, however, did not interpret this favorable correlation as license to promote socialist revolutions in the Third World countries. Soviet leaders insisted that a policy of peaceful coexistence was fully compatible with the spread of socialism and in their polemics against the Chinese argued that the working class could not visualize the creation of a Communist civilization on the ruins of world cultural centers. The Soviets, during this period, held that local wars should also be avoided because such wars could quickly escalate into all-out nuclear conflict.

Consistent with the view that the Soviet Union should steer clear of providing active military support and encouragement for socialist revolutions in the Third World, Khrushchev's military doctrine as he
enunciated it in early 1960 stressed a credible nuclear deterrent and
denigrated the role and importance of conventional forces in any future
conflict. In a sense, such a military strategy mirrored the American
emphasis on nuclear firepower under the Eisenhower Presidency.

Perhaps one of the reasons Khrushchev was not aggressive in using
military methods to pursue Soviet political ambitions in the Third World
was that until the accession of President Kennedy in 1961, the United
States was not actively engaged in that area either. But with a change
in American political and military strategy and tactics initiated by the
Kennedy Administration, Soviet confidence began to waver. As it became
increasingly clear that the Khrushchevian approach failed to meet
adequately the new American challenge, Soviet commentary on the
correlation reflected some uncertainty about expressing the unqualified
optimism of the previous years.
1. On the 26th of August 1957, the Soviets had successfully test-fired a ballistic rocket. But the significance of this breakthrough was generally recognized in the West only after the launching of Sputnik I. As Khrushchev put it, "When we announced the successful testing of an intercontinental missile, some U.S. statesmen did not believe us..." N.S. Khrushchov, Speeches and Interviews on World Problems: 1957 (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1958), p. 203.


7. N. S. Khrushchov, Speeches and Interviews... 1957, p. 378.


9. Becker's figures in billions of rubles (given below) represent the estimated total high in defense spending in the USSR:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rubles</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>15.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>14.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>14.39</td>
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<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>14.63</td>
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Cited in Bottome, The Balance of Terror, p. 192, fn. 3.
10. On analyst wrote, "The Soviet Union's development of an intercontinental missile capable of delivering a retaliatory atomic blow through cosmic space has radically changed the entire strategic situation. Now Soviet intercontinental missiles can reach any point in U.S. territory. This fact exerts a considerable cooling effect on the hotheads of the self-confident adventurers and helps to stabilize the world situation." Commentator, "The Western Powers and Nuclear Tests," IA (11) November 1958, p. 71.


17. Ibid., p. 7.

18. Ibid., p. 8.

19. Ibid.


23. Ibid., p. 55.

24. See above, fn. 8.

26. Grulio, *Current Soviet Policies III*, p. 5. Interestingly, the word "series" had been absent in Khrushchev's theses on the control figures of the Seven-Year Plan which were published in the Soviet press in November 1958. It should be noted, moreover, that Khrushchev merely said that the production of ICBMs had been organized, not that the leadership had actually planned to produce ICBMs en masse.

27. Ibid., p. 43, 203.


29. Ibid., p. 58.

30. Ibid., p. 201. Emphasis added.

31. Ibid.


35. Ibid. Emphasis in original.
36. One may hypothesize that Khrushchev himself was not fully persuaded regarding the likelihood of attaining all the economic goals of the Seven-Year Plan but used high targets in order to provide an incentive to the Soviet peoples to work harder. For instance, in 1957, Khrushchev had announced that the USSR could "surpass the United States in per capita meat production by 1960." The Soviet inability to achieve this goal was obvious in the modest targets set for meat production in the Seven-Year Plan. Khrushchev in elaborating on the 1959-65 goals said: "... [I]t is clear that the meat production assignments laid down by the control figures are below the level required to catch up with the United States in this commodity. But this by no means signifies that our country has no chance of raising meat production to 20 to 21 million tons.

Thus while not raising the state's planned assignment to 20 million to 21 million tons of meat which would strain the plan, we must at the same time not inhibit but encourage the initiative of individuals who launched the movement to catch up with the United States in a short time in per capita output of meat and other livestock products." Pravda, December 16, 1959. Emphasis added. Trans. in U.S. Congress, Joint Economic Committee, Comparisons of the United States and Soviet Economies, Part 1 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1959), p. 222, fn. 31.

37. U.S. Congress, Joint Economic Committee, Annual Economic Indicators...1964, p. 95.


42. Pravda, February 23, 1961, p. 3.

44. V. Gantman, et al., "Tekushchie problemy mirovoi politiki" [Current Problems of World Politics], MEMO (7) July 1960, p. 32.


46. Ibid., p. 35. See also A. Arzumanian, "Novyi etap obshchego krizisa kapitalizma" [New Stage in the General Crisis of Capitalism], MEMO (2) February 1961, p. 18, where he talks of the "even more obvious preponderance of forces in the international arena" in favor of world socialism.

47. Lawrence Freedman, U.S. Intelligence and the Soviet Strategic Threat (London: Macmillan, 1977), p. 73. Holloway states that "only four of the SS-6 ICBMs which had been flight tested in August 1957 were deployed, and it was not until 1962 that the deployment of the next generation of ICBMs (the SS-7 and SS-8) got under way." He adds that "[i]n the early 1960s Soviet policy had given priority to the deployment of the SS-4 MRBM and the SS-5 IRBM, which could strike targets in and around Europe." See Holloway, The Soviet Union and the Arms Race, p. 43.


50. The U-2 flights over the Soviet Union must have provided the Eisenhower Administration with sufficient data to preclude fears of Soviet military superiority. Khrushchev himself could not have been unaware of this possibility. While spokesmen for the Eisenhower Administration, and President Eisenhower himself, repeatedly denied that the United States was in a strategically inferior position, the media continued to speak of the "missile gap," which became, as mentioned above, an issue in the Presidential election of 1960.

51. Khrushchev's assertion of Soviet military superiority in a speech in India came on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Sino-Soviet Friendship Treaty.


54. Ibid., p. 19.


59. See, for instance, a statement by Vice President Nixon in Ibid., p. 16.


63. A. Arzumanian, "Velikaia Oktiabr'skaia revoliutsiia—nachalo novoi epokhi vsemirnoi istorii" [The Great October Revolution—the Beginning of a New Era in World History], Kommunist (16) November 1960, p. 29.

64. Pravda, March 5, 1959, as cited in Zagoria, The Sino-Soviet Conflict, p. 425, fn. 22.

65. The rate of growth of industrial production rose to 11% in 1959 from the previous year's 10%. In 1960 and 1961, industrial production rose by 10% and 9% respectively. The rate of growth of agricultural production fell to 0.6% in 1959 from a high in 1958 of 10.6%, and rose only slightly in 1960 and 1961, by 1.9% and 3.1% respectively. See Clarke, Soviet Economic Facts, 1917-1970, p. 9, 11.
66. The 1960 rate of growth of Soviet GNP was estimated at 5%, up from 3.9% in 1959. The rate of growth of U.S. GNP, on the other hand, fell from 6.6% in 1959 to 2.7% in 1960. The comparative 1961 figures for the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. are 6.5% and 1.9% respectively. Even though the 1960 rate of growth of Soviet GNP did register an increase over the previous year, none of the subsequent years of the decade were to reach the 9.9% GNP growth rate of 1958. See Annual Economic Indicators...1964, p. 95.


69. Between January 1954 and December 1963, the total Soviet economic credits and grants extended to the non-communist Third World countries was approximately $3.3 billion. See Annual Economic Indicators...1964, p. 115. Between 1954 and 1964, the total amount of Soviet weapons exports to nonaligned countries was $2.7 billion. See Bruce D. Porter, The USSR in Third World Conflicts: Soviet Arms and Diplomacy in Local Wars, 1945-1980 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 19.

70. Actual drawings under Soviet economic credits and grants during 1954-1963 totaled $1.2 billion. See Annual Economic Indicators...1964, p. 115.

72. By August 1961, the United States had 78 cruise and ballistic missiles, 80 sea-launched ballistic missiles in five Polaris submarines, and 1526 strategic bombers. The Soviets had a few ICBMs (see fn. 48 above) and perhaps 120 Bear and 70 Bison heavy bombers, and 1100 Badger medium bombers. See John Prados, The Soviet Estimate: U.S. Intelligence Analysis and Russian Military Strength (New York: The Dial Press, 1982), pp. 119-120.


75. Ibid., p. 31.


77. See Zagoria, Sino-Soviet Conflict, p. 196.

78. See M. Marinin, "Chelovechestvo mozhet i dolzhno zhit' bez voin" [Mankind Can and Must Live Without Wars], MEMO (8) August 1960, p. 5.

79. See Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament, p. 34. Emphasis in original.


84. See Holloway, The Soviet Union and the Arms Race, pp. 39-43.
CHAPTER V
STEADY EROSION OF CONFIDENCE: 1961-1964

From late 1959 to late 1961, Khrushchevian foreign policy had rested on the optimistic expectation of the dawn of a new spirit of "realism" among political leaders in the West, especially the United States. In the Soviet view, such "realism," which was forced upon the American leadership by the changed correlation of forces, was to manifest itself as an increasing realization of and adjustment to Western impotence in the face of the historical movement toward socialism. Proceeding from the belief that the preponderance of forces now favored the U.S.S.R. and its allies, Soviet leaders and analysts had appeared confident that socialism represented the wave of the future. According to Soviet commentators, the adoption of "realistic" policies by the United States would allow for an unimpeded, and therefore a faster, rate in the movement of the correlation of forces in favor of socialism.

The election of John F. Kennedy to the Presidency of the United States belied the high hopes of Khrushchev. Both the policies and rhetoric of the Kennedy Administration set into motion the process of vitiating the basis of the Khrushchevian approach to foreign policy. How could the premise of a "realistic" American leadership be upheld when, as Kennedy declared in his inaugural address, the United States "would pay any price, bear any burden meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty"? Moreover, the change in official American strategic doctrine from one of massive retaliation to that of flexible response, accompanied by
the necessary adjustments in force posture, appeared to buttress the administration's resolve to pursue an internationally activist foreign policy. "We intend to have a wider choice," Kennedy declared in July 1961, "than humiliation or all-out nuclear war."² In thus redefining both American objectives and the means to be used in achieving them, the Kennedy Administration exposed the shortcomings of the relatively passive and limiting posture implicit in Khrushchev's characterization of strategic alternatives in terms of "peaceful coexistence or the most destructive war in history."³

Finally, the new American administration also challenged in the starkest terms the notion of Soviet preponderance of forces in the military sphere—a claim which Khrushchev, as we have seen in earlier chapters, first advanced in early 1960. In October 1961, as the Twenty-Second CPSU Congress was coming to a close and the final moments of the tense Berlin crisis drama were being played out, U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric issued a scathing rebuttal of the idea of Soviet military superiority. Citing available data on military forces, Gilpatric asserted:

The destructive power which the United States could bring to bear even after a Soviet surprise attack upon our forces would be as great as—perhaps greater than—the total undamaged force which the enemy can threaten to launch against the United States in a first strike. In short we have a second strike capability which is at least as extensive as what the Soviets can deliver by striking first.⁴

In his peroration, Gilpatric again emphasized that "[t]he Soviets' bluster and threats of rocket attacks against the free world ... must be evaluated against the hard facts of United States nuclear superiority. ..."⁵

The Gilpatric speech will provide the take-off point for the
present chapter. The foreign policy challenges it outlined were, in effect, a crystallization of the ideas articulated throughout 1961 by President Kennedy and other American government spokesmen. As we have noted above, these challenges threatened the very integrity of the foundation upon which Khrushchev's foreign policy was based and also questioned the unalloyed optimism underlying Soviet assessments of the correlation of forces.

Soviet efforts, during the remainder of Khrushchev's years in office, to reconcile these unfavorable trends with their earlier unmitigated optimism will be discussed below in two sections, with the Cuban missile crisis providing the chronological dividing line. While signs of misgivings were present from late 1961 onward, it was with the Cuban missile crisis that Soviet leaders and analysts attempted to examine the assumptions underlying their confident expectation of victorious socialism. But only after Khrushchev's ouster did extravagant claims of Soviet military superiority disappear completely as Soviet commentators struggled to address the full scope of the American challenge.

We shall turn now to an examination of the impact of the changing international situation on the evolving Soviet perspective on the correlation of forces.

OSCILLATING CLAIMS: 1961-1962

As the months of 1961 rolled by, it was becoming very evident that Khrushchev's attempts to mislead the United States and the West about the strategic balance had failed. American government spokesmen
pointedly questioned optimistic Soviet assessments of a preponderance of forces in favor of socialism. Even though Khrushchev seemed reluctant to abandon his extravagant claims entirely, Soviet leaders and analysts were put on the defensive in attempting to counter American criticism and refute the facts underlying the new U.S. optimism.

The Twenty-Second CPSU Congress convened in October 1961 and in his report to this assembly, Khrushchev spoke of the "aggravation of the international situation" which had compelled the Soviet Union "to suspend the reduction of armed forces planned for 1961, increase defense expenditure, . . . and resume tests of new and more powerful weapons." He further stated that the "superiority of the forces of peace and socialism over those of imperialism and war has become more evident" and that "the fact that the socialist community of nations has a preponderance of strength is most fortunate for all mankind."

"Everything necessary has been done," Khrushchev somewhat complacently declared, "to ensure the superiority of our country in defense." He added cryptically:

We consider that at present the forces of socialism, and all the forces championing peace, are superior to the forces of imperialist aggression. But even granting that the U.S. President was right in saying a short time ago that our forces were equal, it would be obviously unwise to threaten war. One who admits that there is equality should draw the proper conclusions.

The "proper conclusions," according to Khrushchev's reasoning, were that seeing the "important changes" in the "alignment of world forces" in favor of socialism, the United States would pursue "realistic" policies,
seeking accommodation with the U.S.S.R. and allowing for the unhampered spread of the socialist revolutionary process in the world. Repudiating the basis of confident Soviet portrayals of the correlation of forces, the United States, however, was determined to pursue activist policies in the international arena and was adjusting its military doctrine and force structure to make such policies viable.

To meet the American challenge head on would have necessitated a major change in the Soviet military doctrine enunciated by Khrushchev on January 14, 1960, which placed heavy reliance on nuclear forces in any future war. For reasons to be explored in the analytic section below, Khrushchev was perhaps unwilling to change the substance and course of his foreign and military policy in mid-stream. On the one hand, he appeared to count on a metamorphosis in American thinking which would obviate the need to effect a change in the Soviet international approach: "If realistic thinking gains the upper hand in U.S. policy, a serious obstacle to a normal world situation will be removed." On the other hand, he continued to insist on Soviet military superiority and the preponderance of the forces of socialism and peace. In his concluding speech to the Twenty-Second Congress, which came after the Gilpatric speech mentioned earlier, Khrushchev reiterated: "Today the world socialist system is more powerful than the imperialist countries in military terms as well." 

Soviet international affairs commentary in the latter part of 1961 generally reflected some uncertainty—either directly or indirectly—resulting from the trenchant American criticism of Soviet views of the military and overall correlation of forces. Analysts like Inozemtsev, for instance, continued to assert that "[t]he superiority of
the forces of Socialism over imperialism on a world scale is characteristic of the present stage in the general crisis of capitalism,\(^{14}\) but also observed that "[t]he fact that the imperialist Powers have modern weapons represents a tremendous threat to all mankind,\(^{15}\) and that "[i]mperialism does not intend to surrender without battle."\(^{16}\)

In the area of the military correlation of forces, Soviet commentators presented a fairly wide range of opinions, claiming Soviet military superiority; implying equality between the U.S. and the Soviet Union in the military sphere; and expressing strong misgivings about American military strength. As we have seen above, Khrushchev appeared simultaneously to concede that the Soviet forces were equal to those of the United States and to argue that the Soviet Union and the socialist countries were militarily stronger than the capitalist bloc countries.

In an article in Kommunist in December 1961, two analysts lauded the pursuit by the U.S.S.R. of such "humane and progressive goals" as "peace and happiness of the peoples" even when the Soviet Union possessed "military superiority."\(^{17}\) In a MEMO January 1962 review of international affairs, it was declared that the events of 1961 "graphically confirmed . . . that in our epoch of world development, the course and outcome of events are . . . determined . . . by the progressive world socialist system which has attained superiority over the countries of imperialism in the military sphere. . . ."\(^{18}\)

Writing in Kommunist in March 1962, Arzumanian spoke of Soviet "military-technological superiority" over the United States and added that "[f]or the first time in history, the military-technological preponderance of a state is being used . . . in the interests of
maintaining peace." Similarly, another commentator asserted that the "Soviet Union is the most powerful country militarily." And yet another stated that "far from having inferior military strength, it [Socialism] is ahead of the capitalist system in this field as well." As late as September 1962, a Soviet spokesman wrote, "Today the imperialists do not have a monopoly of nuclear weapons. In terms of military equipment the Soviet Union, far from being inferior to them, surpasses them."

Other academicians expressed grave concern about American military might. One writer poignantly observed that "a disturbance of the balance tempts the reckless elements in the imperialist camp to use the temporarily favourable situation to destroy those whom they consider their enemies." Another commentator warned that the United States was counting on "gaining a temporary military advantage over the Soviet Union."

Further, analyses by Soviet international affairs observers were frequently dotted with statements showing a clear appreciation of the scope of American military strength, such as: "Never before has the military potential of imperialism been so great or its military organisation so comprehensive"; "... U.S. imperialism ... is armed to the teeth"; "Contemporary imperialism represents an enormous danger for the peaceful development of international relations. It should be kept in mind that the combined military machine of imperialism has grown. ..." Still other writers insisted that the military superiority of the imperialist camp was "nullified altogether" and conceded rather reluctantly the notion of a military equilibrium: "We are not going to
argue about who has more of what... We are even prepared to accept the thesis of a military equilibrium..." A prominent spokesman of the Khrushchev period, V. Korionov, observed, "In the past few years imperialist politicians have needed to learn to speak words which for them are quite unusual: the equality of the forces of socialism and capitalism in the military sphere." 

As the above statements amply indicate, there was a degree of uncertainty and ambivalence in the Soviet portrayal of the military correlation of forces. These oscillating claims, it seems reasonable to infer, reflected the breakdown of the consensual view of the military correlation of forces following the strong American repudiation of the official Soviet view of the military balance.

There were also telltale signs of a wavering of Soviet confidence regarding the overall correlation of forces. While analysts continued to speak of the "superiority of the forces of socialism over the forces of imperialism" and to maintain that there was a preponderance of forces in favor of peace and socialism, such assertions were tempered by lines of argument employed by Soviet analysts in combating renewed American optimism and in defending their own assessment of the correlation.

Soviet commentators, for instance, obliquely acknowledged that the socialist forces had suffered a reversal when they insisted that a correct appraisal of the correlation could only be made when one took into account "the decisive laws of our epoch" in which "all the contemporary revolutionary processes, the alignment, direction, and dynamics of the development of progressive forces in the world arena strengthen the positions of socialism..." This presupposed the
"ability to distinguish temporarily active factors from permanently active factors, foreign political fluctuations from basic tendencies in the development of international life." In the Soviet view, then, the successes won by "[imperialist reaction, headed by the United States of America]" which is "striving to give a 'historical reply' to the changes occurring in the world in accordance with the law-governed forces of social development," were only temporary.

Even "temporary" imperialist successes, however, constituted a grave impediment to the movement of the correlation in favor of socialism. Soviet analysts thus indirectly conceded that history had zigzagged. One commentator urged the peoples to vigilance so that "no accidents and zigzags of historical development may catch them unawares."

Soviet writers, around late 1961, also attacked American optimism on the grounds that it was based on narrow-minded and class-based arguments. Marinin criticized the "ideologists and strategists of imperialism" for ignoring "the many-sided essence" of the correlation of forces:

Indeed, in speaking of the correlation of forces between the two systems, the strategists of imperialism more often than not think of the direct power correlation, such as the correlation of military and economic potentials. . . . [T]he scientific estimation of military and economic potentials cannot be abstracted from such vital factors as the level and scope of the development of science, the education and political awareness of the broad masses of the population, cadres, and their ideological armament. In these areas socialism has significantly outstripped capitalism.

Soviet Defense Minister Marshal Malinovskii, after averring that "[i]n engaging in competition thrust upon us by the aggressive forces for quality armaments, we are not only not inferior to those who threaten us with war, but in many respects we are superior to
them. . . .," went on to state that "the defensive strength of a state does not depend on military strength alone, but on the political form of the state and its productive potential, the level of development of science and technology and the qualitative structure of the population."

Another analyst wrote that the "change in the balance of forces in favour of Socialism which is more and more effectively shackling the forces of war, is far more than a change in relative military potentials. It also includes the economic, political and ideological superiority of Socialism."

Thus, while on the one hand Soviet foreign policy commentators claimed Soviet preeminence in the military sphere and argued that the socialist economic system was superior to the capitalist system of economy, on the other hand, they were at pains; from late 1961 onward, to deprecate the value of estimating the correlation on the basis of these factors alone. As we have seen in earlier chapters, Soviet leaders and analysts have always distinguished the concept of the correlation of forces from the western notion of the balance of power. The former term, according to the Soviets, encompasses political-ideological, economic, and military factors.

But the insistence on the need to take comprehensive account of all aspects of the correlation at a time when the Soviets themselves had (since 1960) made extravagant claims of a preponderance in favor of socialism based on military and economic superiority, did appear to allow the Soviets to effect, in a roundabout fashion, a downgrading of their earlier claims in these areas.

With respect to the political correlation of forces, Soviet
confidence did indeed receive a spur from an unexpected quarter—Cuba. In December 1961, Fidel Castro declared that "he was and always had been a Marxist-Leninist." Khrushchev had earlier seemed somewhat cautious in his attitude toward the Castro regime. With the serious American foreign policy challenges during the course of 1961, however, courtship with Cuba—a country in close geographical proximity to the United States—must increasingly have appeared to Khrushchev as an attractive political opportunity.

Soviet analysts began to speak of a "new" correlation of forces in the world with the merging of socialist and national-liberation revolutions in one gigantic stream. With the Cuban example in mind, Marinin wrote:

In the present situation there is an extremely mobile border between the socialist and national-liberation revolutions. The objective functioning of factors in the world stimulates the process of acceleration . . . of national-liberation anti-imperialist revolutions into socialist revolutions . . . . Such is the logic and dialectic of the revolutionary process in conditions of the new correlation of forces in the world arena. It is possible to state with confidence that Cuba reveals the tomorrows for many people. . . .

He further stated:

Observing the necessary sobriety and realism, we are right to recognize that the number of the so-called weak links of imperialism is growing considerably. This promises new breaks in the imperialist chain . . . whether under the spontaneous blows of revolutions of the socialist type or under the blows of the anti-imperialist revolutions with the tendency to grow into socialist revolutions.

Soviet commentators, then, did appear to be relatively optimistic in speaking of the political correlation of forces even though they indirectly expressed some unease with regard to the military balance. It was probably with a view to redressing the Soviet-American military balance that Khrushchev embarked on his venture to place Russian medium
and intermediate-range ballistic missiles on the territory of the new Soviet ally—Cuba. This action in a country so close to American shores provoked a sharply negative reaction from Washington and culminated in the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962. Khrushchev was forced to agree to the removal of the missiles in exchange for an American pledge not to intervene militarily in Cuba. With the failure of Khrushchev's Cuban enterprise, Soviet reappraisal of the correlation which had been triggered by the moves of the Kennedy Administration began anew.

SHAKEN CONFIDENCE: 1962-1964

Immediately following the Cuban missile crisis, Soviet commentary on the military correlation of forces was thrown into disarray. One analyst rather defensively penned that "the Soviet Union and the Socialist countries possess at least the same weapons as the capitalist countries." In a similar vein another writer said, "The Soviet Union's scientific and technical potential in defence of its safety is equal to that of the United States. . . ."

Reporting to the USSR Supreme Soviet on the international situation, Khrushchev in December 1962 refrained from expressing any opinions on the comparative military might of the USSR and the USA. He merely stated that "[i]n our times, the imperialists cannot disregard the growing might of the Soviet Union and of the other socialist countries. We have the necessary number of powerful intercontinental rockets, which will enable us to strike back if war is started against us." And to the "leftist adventurists," he warned of the dangers of taking the imperialist threat lightly: "If it [imperialism] is now a
'paper tiger', those who say this know that this 'paper tiger' has atomic teeth. It can use them and it must not be treated lightly." \(^{44}\)

But by February 1963, in an election speech, Khrushchev returned to the theme of Soviet military superiority: "[T]he Soviet Union and the commonwealth of socialist countries . . . surpass the imperialist camp in armaments and armed forces." \(^{45}\) In the same speech, however, Khrushchev also spoke of a tense international situation which "requires that we constantly remember and show concern for the requirements of our defense, so that the Soviet Union can worthily oppose an imperialist camp that is armed to the teeth." \(^{46}\)

Khrushchev argued that while it "would be desirable to build more enterprises that make products for satisfying man's requirements . . . to invest more means in agriculture . . . ," the voters "would rightly judge it a crime, if out of a desire to make a display of extraordinary successes in satisfying people's every day needs, an underestimation of the country's defenses were permitted. . . ." \(^{47}\) Justifying increased Soviet military expenditures, Khrushchev openly acknowledged that "if we stop paying attention to our defense capabilities, then the correlation of forces could change to our disadvantage." \(^{48}\)

Again in a speech in Hungary in July 1963, Khrushchev reiterated that "we have now surpassed the imperialists in military matters." \(^{49}\) Soviet foreign policy commentators during this period chose either to maintain that a state of military equilibrium existed between the United States and the USSR or claim Soviet military superiority. In their review of international affairs during early 1963, a group of analysts after criticizing the "radically discredited" imperialist approach of reducing everything "only to the correlation of the military potential
of the two systems," went on to declare that "even if one takes only the military side of the equation, then here too the advantage is on the side of the socialist camp. . . ."\(^{50}\)

Lemin, in April 1963, stated that the Soviet Union "excels in the economic and military spheres."\(^{51}\) Another commentator wrote in late 1963 that "... having attained great successes in economic competition with capitalism and having secured for itself a military advantage, the socialist states . . . are determining the course of historical development."\(^{52}\) One analyst, on the other hand, was content to affirm that "[t]he very appearance in the past years of the imperialist doctrine of 'balance of terror' shows that imperialism today is unable to ignore the fact that the socialist camp is at least equal to it in power."\(^{53}\)

The answers to the puzzling question of why the Soviets insisted on asserting Soviet military superiority even after the tenuous basis for such claims had been exposed in the West, must be sought in the domestic and international implications flowing from an admission of inferior military strength. These reasons we will explore in the analytic section below. Suffice it to point out here that the very existence of contradictory views on the military balance among Soviet international relations analysts reflected some of the confusion and disagreement that perhaps prevailed in the USSR at this time.

Throughout 1963 and 1964, Khrushchev never ceased to underscore the primary importance of the economic correlation of forces and of the need for socialist victory in peaceful economic competition with capitalism:

Now that the nature of war has changed, and now that there is a new alignment of forces in the world arena in favor of the forces of peace and socialism, the policy of peaceful coexistence has much more important goals and tasks and has an
essentially new content. Its final goal is the attainment of the most favourable conditions for the victory of socialism over capitalism in peaceful economic competition. Khrushchev also spoke of the immense power of attraction that a successful socialist economy would be able to project:

Comrades, when we speak of victory in economic competition, the point in question is not only cement or metal, but also policy, the power of our ideas.

The successes of the Soviet Union in the building of communism and the successes of the other socialist countries strengthen the belief of the working class of all countries.

Soviet writers on international affairs also stressed the importance of achieving a preponderance in the sphere of "material production." Lemin, for instance, observed:

It is true that in volume of industrial production it [the world socialist system] is, for the time being, lagging behind the camp of the chief capitalist states. But it is the dynamism, the prospects of development which are of decisive significance. As a result of higher rates of growth the correlation of forces is continuously moving in favour of socialism. The time is not far away when the socialist system will catch up with and surpass the capitalist countries in the sphere of material production.

Korionov argued that the main ingredient in a program of victorious socialism and communism was the winning by the socialist world of the economic competition with capitalism. Such an economic victory would allow for the attainment by the camp of socialism of "maximum preponderance of forces over the camp of imperialism."

For the Soviet Union and the socialist world to achieve a preponderance in the area of material production would have required spectacular economic successes in the socialist countries. The Soviet Union, however, was increasingly obliged to devote greater budgetary funds to defense in an attempt to keep up with the American military effort. While industrial production was keeping up a steady annual rate
of growth, agriculture was not performing well. In 1963 the rate of agricultural production fell disastrously.\textsuperscript{58}

On the heels of the modest Soviet economic performance in 1963, Khrushchev, attesting to a "process of relaxing international tension that received its impetus from the conclusion of the treaty partially banning nuclear tests," announced a proposal to reduce military expenditures in the 1964 budget.\textsuperscript{59} While Khrushchev was at great pains to deny that cuts in military spending were forced on the USSR because of difficulties in economic development, he did concede that "expenditures on armaments and on maintaining an army yield no profits but are a direct expense for society."\textsuperscript{60} Money spent on guns could be more productively spent on butter. V. Korionov clearly expressed the dilemma: "It has fallen to the lot of the Soviet people to bear the main brunt of the struggle against imperialism. It is not an easy thing to bear such a burden, and the Soviet people have had to go without many things."\textsuperscript{61}

In January 1964, Khrushchev again voiced his preference for economic over military competition:

\begin{quote}
But still, comrades, you cannot put a rocket in soup, you cannot quell hunger with a rocket, rockets are for defense. But in order to develop, to strengthen the life of society, one must work, produce material wealth . . . everything man needs.
\end{quote}

With regard to the political correlation of forces, Soviet commentators expressed concern in such areas as the potential for imperialist exploitation of the Sino-Soviet rift, the unifying tendencies in the Western alliance, and the implications of the American adoption of the flexible response doctrine.

In reviewing Walter Lippmann's work on Western unity, Inozemtsev
defensively observed that "[t]he sense of reality deserts Mr. Lippmann when he compares the internal processes going on in the world socialist system with the processes in the capitalist world and on that basis draws the conclusion of an 'amelioration in the position of the West.'" He went on to dismiss Lippmann's analysis of Sino-Soviet differences as "absurd speculations." 63

As Sovetov remarked:

Differences in the Communist movement inflict harm on the Communist parties and diverts them from the struggle against imperialism. All this can and actually does give pleasure only to the foes of Communism. Imperialist circles are already devising plans for utilising these differences for another anti-Communist drive. 64

Speaking of the Western alliance, Sanakoyev, for instance, stated that "one cannot ignore the successes already scored by American imperialism under the guise of a 'Communist bogey'. The economic and political integration plans for Western Europe . . . lead to the setting up, under Washington's aegis, of an 'Atlantic Community.'" 65 When a few months later, there were signs of disagreement among alliance partners, one analyst wrote that it "would be extremely dangerous to regard the discord between the U.S.A. and its European allies as a sign of the complete collapse of NATO." 66

Soviet commentators also saw in the American adoption of the flexible response doctrine an effort on the part of the imperialists to use the "positions of strength policy to carry out a programme of militant anti-communism and to change in their favour the correlation of forces that has taken shape in the world and to turn back world development." 67 Sovetov warned that the "spread of illusions that retribution for aggression could be dodged made uncontrolled acts by reckless elements a much more palpable danger" 68 and maintained that
"the possibility of exporting counter-revolutions remained in continents far removed from the world Socialist system."^{69}

In general, however, the Soviets seemed sanguine about the political correlation of forces. Lemin argued that "the preponderance of the forces of peace and socialism over the forces of imperialism and war is an all-round material preponderance which is no longer far away and an already existing political and moral preponderance."^{70} The American military intervention in Vietnam was only in its incipient stages at this time and as long as the threat posed by the U.S. adoption of the flexible response doctrine was only theoretical in nature, the Soviets portrayed it as a belated American response to and recognition of the strength of the socialist countries: "What is the reason for Washington's absorbed interest in anti-guerrilla warfare? The trend of events in recent years has convinced even the most diehard apologists of capitalism that socialism cannot be defeated either in peaceful economic competition or in a world-armed conflict."^{71}

Of the overall distribution of power, Soviet analysts spoke of a "growing preponderance of the forces of socialism and peace"^{72} and one analyst described the chief task of Soviet foreign policy in terms of transforming "the period of peaceful coexistence to a protracted period of peace during the course of which socialism [would] secure for itself maximum preponderance of forces over capitalism."^{73} Soviet writers also depicted the forces of peace and socialism as superior to the forces of imperialism. Khrushchev, in January 1963, said: "We not only declare but know well that the forces of socialism and peace are mightier than the forces of imperialism."^{74} Writing in *International Affairs*, B. Marushkin underlined: "Today Socialism's superiority over imperialism has become a reality."^{75}
And in January 1964, A. Sovetov declared that "Socialism has gained superiority over capitalism as regards the balance of power." 76

After late 1961, when Khrushchev's strategy of missile deception lay in shambles, Soviet commentary on the distribution of power displayed remarkable elasticity. There were oscillating claims regarding the correlation of forces and assertions of Soviet military superiority interspersed with rather menacing portrayals of American military strength and imperialist efforts to "turn back the clock of history." In the ensuing section we shall explore the meaning of and reasons for the varying Soviet appraisals of the correlation and examine the international initiatives undertaken by Khrushchev after the Cuban missile crisis brought the most assertive phase of his foreign policy to a close.

ANALYSIS

Soviet depictions of the economic correlation of forces remained rather consistent throughout the Khrushchev years. Commentators lauded the "dynamism" of the Soviet economy and its high growth rates. Even though there was a secular decline in the annual economic growth rate during the 1960s, Soviet leaders and analysts continued to hold out the prospect that the USSR economy would eventually surpass the overall industrial and agricultural production of the U.S.A. The Soviets held that only preponderance in the "sphere of material production" would, in the final instance, lead to a socialist transformation in the world.

For all his boasts about the Soviet advantage in the military correlation of forces, for instance, Khrushchev, at the Twenty-Second
Congress, had again underscored his belief that enduring gains for socialism could be had only when the socialist world achieved "preponderance" over the capitalist countries in "absolute volume of production":77

... Lenin's statement to the effect that socialism exercises its influence on world development mainly by its economic achievements is today more valid than ever. The all-round and growing influence of the building of socialism and communism on the peoples of the non-socialist countries is a revolutionary factor that accelerates the progress of all mankind.78

Khrushchev exuded optimism that socialism would win in peaceful economic competition and argued that the recent "growth in production" in the economy of capitalist countries was "unstable" and could not be sustained over the years.79

Both in 1959 and 1963, when faced with a disastrous drop in the economic growth rate, Khrushchev resorted to cuts in the defense budget. While it was becoming increasingly evident that USSR economic production would not be able to keep up with the targets outlined in the 1961 Communist Party Program, neither Khrushchev nor Soviet analysts repudiated this economic timetable. But some tempering of the economic optimism of the 1950s was evident in that specific references to the Program's economic schedule did become less frequent during Khrushchev's last years in office. The primacy of the economic correlation of forces, in ensuring lasting socialist successes, however, remained an article of Soviet faith.

From late 1961 until late 1962, Soviet analysts were optimistic about the political correlation of forces. They had gained "socialist" Cuba as an ally and their expectations regarding the transformation of national revolutions into revolutions of the "socialist type" were high.
In spite of several foreign policy setbacks in late 1962 and 1963 such as the Cuban missile crisis and the Sino-Soviet schism, Soviet commentators exuded apparent confidence with regard to the political correlation of forces.

But a close examination of Lemin's April 1963 assertion of "political and moral preponderance" (quoted earlier) for the Soviet Union and socialist countries reveals the limits of such assertions. Peace, not propagation of socialist revolutions, was seen as the by-product of Soviet preponderance in the political correlation of forces. Moreover, in their discussions of the correlation, the negative impact of Soviet foreign policy reverses was obliquely, if not directly, acknowledged by Soviet commentators. But no indication of future directions for Soviet foreign policy were forthcoming during this period. Only in the aftermath of Khrushchev's ouster did Soviet analysts and leaders embark on a rethinking of their approach to the West and the Third World.

The intangible aspects of the political correlation perhaps made it easier for Soviet analysts, during a period of considerable upheaval, to argue in favor of socialist preponderance in this area, especially at a time when the idea of Soviet military preponderance was being questioned in the West. It was in the Soviet portrayal of the military correlation of forces that anomalies abounded and we shall therefore examine this aspect in some detail.

Throughout the period under consideration in this chapter, the strategic balance favored the United States. The Soviets, nevertheless, continued to assert superiority in the military correlation of forces. This claim was advanced even after the Cuban missile episode in October
1962. The decreasing value of such claims, vitiated by contradictory Soviet assertions of military equilibrium and expressed fears of a "disturbance in the balance," served to underscore the diminishing Soviet belief in the military preeminence of the U.S.S.R.

Several factors may help to account for this continued Soviet insistence on military superiority in the face of adverse international trends and conditions. Over the years Khrushchev had sought in vain to exploit the political potential he saw in the threat of the "missile gap" in order to achieve such important and varied Soviet aims as a final settlement of the German issue, the exclusion of the Western Powers from Berlin, and Western non-interference in Third World revolutionary processes. The missile deception strategy, as long as it went unchallenged, allowed Khrushchev: to contain pressures from sections of the Party leadership and the military establishment for constant increases in defense expenditures; to parry Chinese ideological criticism regarding lukewarm Soviet support of revolution; and to attempt to wrest political concessions from the West.

When, in the autumn of 1961, the U.S. administration publicly insisted that America possessed nuclear superiority, Khrushchev was put on the defensive. Rather than admit inferiority in the military correlation of forces and openly jeopardize his foreign policy, his personal prestige, and his domestic political fortunes, Khrushchev and other official Soviet spokesmen appeared willing at times to concede military parity while continuing contradictorily to reassert Soviet military superiority. Also, the overall economic consequences following from an admission of inferior military strength would have been damaging to the U.S.S.R. An open acknowledgement of strategic inferiority would
doubtless have generated pressures for greater increases in military 
expenditures with the resultant diversion of scarce resources from the 
agricultural and light industry sectors of the Soviet economy to the 
military.

In response to Khrushchev's July 1961 speech announcing a one-third 
increase in the Soviet defense budget, Kennedy had announced a further 
increase in the American defense budget. Khrushchev perhaps recognized 
that the Soviet Union could not match American military expenditures and 
at the same time hope to catch up with the United States economy "in a 
historically short period." The Soviet government, however, did take 
steps—such as the testing of the fifty megaton nuclear bomb and the 
creation of the "global rocket"—to enhance the credibility of the 
Soviet nuclear deterrent. And in a speech in March 1962, Khrushchev 
appeared satisfied that the United States was just as vulnerable as all 
other countries:

The situation is changing still more now. Our scientists and 
enGINEERS have developed a new inter-continental rocket which 
they call global; this rocket is invulnerable to anti-missile 
Weapons.

A few months later he declared again:

In order to ensure its security the Soviet Union was forced to 
develop in the last few years nuclear weapons of 50, 100 and 
more megatons, inter-continental rockets, the global rocket 
which is practically impervious to defence and an anti-missile 
rocket. The ruling groups of the United States, who do not 
have the same powerful weapons, have no grounds at all to say 
that the balance of strength has changed in their favour.

Thus, while the Soviets kept insisting on the military superiority 
of the U.S.S.R., the nub of all the Soviet discussions on the military 
correlation of forces, after the introduction of more powerful nuclear 
weapons and delivery vehicles in the arsenal of the armed forces, was a 
belief in the adequacy of the Soviet nuclear deterrent. As Talensky
The modern level of nuclear saturation . . . is so high that it is no longer possible to destroy all means of retaliation even through a surprise attack based on highly accurate intelligence data concerning the location of nuclear-rocket facilities. There will always be enough of them left to strike a crushing retaliatory blow.

As long as the Soviets felt assured that the U.S.S.R. possessed at least a minimum deterrent against the threat of a U.S. nuclear attack on the Soviet homeland, Khrushchev and other official spokesmen, for reasons outlined earlier, probably believed that more would be lost than gained from an open admission of military inferiority.

It is important to note that even as Soviet leaders and analysts continued to maintain the claim of Soviet military superiority, they also appeared to be grappling with such crucial issues as the political value of military superiority and the problem of security in the nuclear age. The official American rebuttal of the idea of Soviet military superiority and adoption of the flexible response doctrine, coupled with Khrushchev's failure to translate perceived military superiority into political gains (between late 1959 and early 1960), must have prompted the scholarly efforts in this direction. Of the problem of security in the missile era, Talensky wrote:

There was a time when the military might of a state, if superior to that of its probable enemy or bloc of enemies, guaranteed a certain degree of security. . . . Today, however, the situation is such that neither military strength nor a system of military blogs can save the world from the doom of a nuclear rocket attack.

Another commentator spoke of the limits of using military power in the contemporary period:

Never before has the military potential of imperialism been so great, or its military organisation so comprehensive. It looks as though this apparent 'might' has turned the heads of the leading men in bourgeois military science and their
employers. They are still afraid to admit that the possibilities of utilising this military strength are being steadily reduced and that it is less and less of an effective weapon of imperialism's foreign policy expansion.

In the early years of the Kennedy Administration, the typical Soviet reaction to the threat of global military activism inherent in the official adoption of the doctrine of flexible response consisted either of homilies on the inevitable reverses that imperialist policy would suffer as a consequence of its use, or of strictures on the universal danger of any local conflict escalating into a world-wide nuclear war. The strategic doctrine officially espoused by Khrushchev in January 1960 had stressed the importance of nuclear firepower in any future world conflict and no third option was considered possible outside the alternatives of peaceful coexistence or a destructive world war. Such a strategy, in effect, mirrored the almost total American reliance on nuclear forces under the Eisenhower Administration.

To address adequately the challenges presented to the Soviet approach to international problems by the flexible response doctrine, Khrushchev would have been required to make fundamental changes in Soviet military policy and doctrine. If the U.S., as Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric said, was to increase its ability "to handle lower levels of conflicts, including local wars and ... sub-limited guerrilla type struggles," the U.S.S.R. with its lack of adequate power-projection capabilities would be hamstrung in its efforts to promote revolutionary change in the world.

Khrushchev, however, appeared unwilling to effect a major revision in his foreign and military policy. In the first place, he perhaps genuinely believed that the escalatory potential inherent in any local war would inhibit superpower involvement in such conflicts. He may also
have been of the opinion that the success of such operations was moot. Certainly, the Bay of Pigs fiasco must have served to strengthen this latter view.

Moreover, any basic changes in Soviet military doctrine would have necessitated corresponding costly increases in the acquisition of nuclear and conventional military hardware—a trend which Khrushchev, in all likelihood, was reluctant to encourage. Satisfactory Soviet economic performance depended to a great extent on the rate of capital investment. A major siphoning of resources away from the productive sectors of the economy to the military would then have compromised the productivity of the Soviet economy and severely hampered Soviet progress in catching up with the United States in the economic area.

It was perhaps Khrushchev's continuing faith in the importance of nuclear firepower that impelled him to seek to rectify the nuclear balance by installing medium-range ballistic missiles in Cuba. The psychological advantages accruing from so cheaply nullifying the American military advantage could not have been lost on Khrushchev. As he wrote in his memoirs, "In addition to protecting Cuba, our missiles would have equalized what the West likes to call the 'balance of power.'" With his Cuba gamble, Khrushchev may also have hoped to satisfy his generals and befriend the Cubans without greatly impairing Soviet economic performance.

In the aftermath of the Cuban crisis, Khrushchev did pay more attention to the requirements of Soviet defense. Steps such as dispersal and concealment of Soviet ICBMs were taken to improve the survivability of these missiles. Missiles were deployed in hardened silos and new generations of the Soviet ICBM—the SS-7 and SS-8—were
deployed in 1962-1963.\textsuperscript{88} It is quite likely that a major expansion of the Soviet ICBM program was planned after the Cuban debacle.\textsuperscript{89} But no open-ended expansion of nuclear and conventional forces appears to have been contemplated during the Khrushchev period.

To the end, Khrushchev denigrated the role and usefulness of large armies, surface ships, and the like: 
"[W]e are not living in Napoleon's time. . . . It is now a different century—the century of nuclear weapons possessing unprecedented destructive force."\textsuperscript{90} In his polemics with the Chinese, Khrushchev strongly supported the notion of deterrence. A situation of mutual assured destruction would prompt "rational" men—both capitalists and socialists—to seek to avoid a nuclear conflagration: "But comrades, the policy of the imperialist countries is, after all, also determined by people. And these people also have brain-cases and brains. . . . [E]ven the imperialists . . . are obliged to reckon with the actual realities. . . ."\textsuperscript{91}

In 1963, Khrushchev and Kennedy also moved toward some accommodation in the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. A Soviet-American agreement to set up a direct communication link ("hot line") was concluded in June 1963 and soon afterwards the Partial Test Ban Treaty was signed in August 1963. This thaw in the international situation, coupled with increasing evidence of a disastrous grain harvest, prompted Khrushchev to call again, in December 1963, for cuts in the defense budget to allow for a re-channeling of resources to the consumer sectors.

The international policies pursued by the U.S.S.R. between late 1961 and Khrushchev's ouster thus went through a confrontational stage which lasted until the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962, followed by
some relaxation in tensions with the West and efforts toward concluding negotiated agreements, especially in the area of arms control. Khrushchev's failure in the 1961 Berlin campaign with the consequent loss in his personal prestige intensified his dilemma: Soviet claims to military superiority became less and less convincing with each foreign policy set-back. The emplacement of medium- and intermediate-range missiles in Cuba offered Khrushchev a quick and inexpensive way out of his dilemma. Several characteristics of this solution must have appealed to Khrushchev: the deployment of such missiles would, at a stroke, have roughly doubled the Soviet nuclear megatonnage targetable against American soil, at much less cost to the Soviet Union than a similar effort on Soviet territory would have entailed.

After the additional setback of the Cuban venture, Khrushchev devoted more attention to detente with the West, along with taking steps to improve Soviet ICBM capability. The increasing polarity in the views of Soviet and Chinese leaders on the advisability of an active pursuit of revolutionary goals in the nuclear age may also have propelled Khrushchev to seek concrete arms control agreements with the West, since by 1963 the break with China appeared inevitable in any case. While Khrushchev during his tenure was unable to effect a change in the Western position on Berlin and the German Peace Treaty, he did preside over an increase in Soviet influence in the Third World, and in his final years in office abandoned his confrontational posture in favor of securing arms control accords with the West.

When Khrushchev was removed from office in October 1964, domestic issues perhaps played the greatest role in his downfall. But certainly, some of his foreign policy adventures, such as the Cuban
missile crisis, did not stand him in good stead. Also, the military establishment, perhaps weary of Khrushchev (especially after his announcement of a cut in the 1964 defense budget), probably supported the rival Presidium faction in the "palace coup" which ousted him from his position as Party First Secretary.

While on the one hand Khrushchev boasted about Soviet military superiority and rattled rockets in order to secure political gains, on the other hand, his arms acquisition strategy appears to support the argument that he was pursuing a minimum deterrent posture. Only between summer 1961 and spring 1963, when international tensions were rather high, did Khrushchev refrain from calling for cuts in the defense budget to help improve the performance of other sectors of the Soviet economy. Khrushchev's successors in the Kremlin strove to reverse the Khrushchevian hierarchy of values into a primary stress on the military aspect of the correlation. Under Brezhnev, military power was valued not merely for its deterrent functions but also for its active use in promoting the spread of communist influence around the globe.

CONCLUSION

In a sense, Khrushchev's missile deception strategy was at least partly responsible for the nuclear arms race of the 1960s. Not only did such a strategy fail in its effort to wrest political concessions from the West, but it embroiled the U.S.S.R. in a costly arms race. At a time when Khrushchev would perhaps have preferred to steer the Soviet economy in the direction of greater productivity, he was obliged to allocate greater amounts of resources to the non-productive defense
sector and counter American assertions of U.S. nuclear superiority.

The effect of these and other developments on Soviet portrayals of the correlation of forces was in many ways chaotic. Soviet leaders and analysts at various times claimed military superiority, conceded military equilibrium, and even obliquely acknowledged U.S. military superiority. They argued that there was a socialist preponderance in the political correlation, while warning that history had zigzagged. Until the Cuban missile crisis they asserted that there was an overall preponderance of forces in favor of socialism and peace. After October 1962, they refrained from using this particular formula to describe the overall correlation of forces, but they still insisted that the forces of socialism were mightier than the forces of imperialism. At the same time, however, they expressed grave concern about imperialist attempts to change the correlation of forces in their own favor.

While he was unwilling either to change his foreign and military strategies or give up his extravagant claims regarding the military and overall correlation of forces, Khrushchev was unable to ignore completely the challenges presented to the Soviet Union by the American administration. The combined effect of these two factors was to manifest itself in contradictory assessments of the correlation both by Soviet leaders and analysts. Such oscillating appraisals reflected the ebbing Soviet confidence in the imminence of a surging socialist tide of change and revolution. Faced with what appeared to be a bleak period for socialist successes, Soviet commentators often took refuge in an important axiom of Marxist-Leninist ideology—that historical development inevitably propels itself toward socialism—to affirm a socialist direction in the movement of the correlation of forces.
With Khrushchev's ouster, Soviet appraisals of the correlation of forces would be scaled down to match objective Soviet capabilities while greater attention would be paid to acquiring the military hardware to allow the Soviet Union to meet the challenges posed by the changed American military strategy and internationally activist U.S. policies.
NOTES


2. Quoted in Gaddis, Strategies of Containment, p. 203.

3. After his ouster, direct criticism was launched against the Khrushchevian approach for its passive reliance on the "automatic action of a preponderance" in promoting the spread of socialism. See Chapter VI.


5. Ibid., p. 101.


7. Ibid., p. 10.

8. Ibid., p. 12.

9. Ibid., p. 42.

10. Ibid., p. 50.

11. Ibid., p. 53.

12. Ibid., p. 58.

13. Ibid., p. 209.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid., p. 18.


19. A. Arzumanian, "Vernyi put' obespecheniia prochnogo mira mezhdu narodami" [The True Path of Maintaining Lasting Peace Among Peoples], Kommunist (4) March 1962, p. 27.


22. G. Frantsov, "Chto skryvaetsia za lozungom 'ideologicheskogo razoruvenzia'" [What Lies Behind the Catch Phrase 'Ideological Disarmament'], Kommunist (13) September 1962, p. 111. As these statements of Soviet military superiority indicate, William Zimmerman's observation regarding Soviet claims in the area of the military correlation of forces during this period needs to be amended. Zimmerman had stated that "[r]ather than assert claims of a military pereves sil, Soviet commentators in mid-1962 fairly consistently described the military position of the two camps as being in equilibrium." Even after the Cuban missile crisis, as we shall see below, Soviet leaders and analysts continued to claim Soviet military superiority. See William Zimmerman, Soviet Perspectives on International Relations: 1956-1968 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 191.


30. For a statement of the superiority of socialist forces, see Viskov, "The Crisis of Imperialism's Foreign Policy," p. 22. For assertions that the preponderance of forces is on the side of the socialist community, see V. Korionov, "Lippman protiv Lippmana," p. 122, and Popov and Sergeev, "Mirnoe sosushchestvovanie-general'nyi kurs sovetskoi vneshnei politiki," p. 62.


32. Aleksandrov and Nakropin, "Mirnoe sosushchestvovanie i sovremennost'," p. 28.


40. Ibid.


51. I. Lemin, "Leninskii printsip mirnogo sosushchestvovaniia i sovremennosti" [The Leninist Principle of Peaceful Coexistence and Our Times], *MEMO* (4) April 1963, p. 3.


62. See Khrushchev's speech as trans. in XVI CDSP 3, February 12, 1964, p. 16.


64. A. Sovetov, "Road to Detente: Possibility and Reality," IA (1) January 1964, p. 6.


68. A. Sovetov, "Old Year, New Year," IA (1) January 1963, p. 4.

69. Ibid., p. 5.


72. Lemin, "Leninskii printsip," p. 3.

73. V. Korionov, "Leninizm i mirovoi revoliutsionnyi protsess," p. 17.

74. See the speech by Khrushchev at the Sixth Congress of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, as trans. in XV CDSP 5, February 20, 1963, p. 15.


76. A. Sovetov, "Road to a Detente," p. 6.


78. Ibid., p. 18.

79. Ibid., p. 23.


81. Ibid., p. 227.


85. See, for instance, Viskov, "The Crisis of Imperialism's Foreign Policy," p. 23.


90. See Khrushchev's speech of December 13, 1963, to the Plenary Session of the CPSU Central Committee, as trans. in XV CDSP 49, January 1, 1964, p. 11.

91. See Khrushchev's speech at the Hungarian–Soviet Friendship Rally in July 1963, as trans. in XV CDSP 29, August 14, 1963, p. 3.

Khrushchev's departure from the political scene in October 1964 paved the way for a serious reappraisal of the Soviet perspective on the correlation of forces and a more cautious approach to foreign policy. While the Brezhnev-Kosygin team reaffirmed Soviet adherence to the principle of peaceful coexistence with the capitalist West and continued to uphold the thesis of the non-inevitability of war, they rejected Khrushchev's immoderate and unrealistic claims with regard to the correlation of forces as well as his flamboyance in the conduct of Soviet foreign policy.

The ongoing all-round American military buildup during the Johnson presidency, the increasing involvement of the United States in the Vietnam conflict from 1965 onward, the problem of unity in the socialist alliance, plus Soviet failure to meet economic targets, reinforced Soviet efforts to take stock of the international situation, to reassess the global position of the U.S.S.R., and to moderate the optimism of Soviet estimates of the correlation of forces. At the same time, however, the Soviet leadership embarked on a concerted program of military renewal aimed at eliminating the gap in strategic arms with the United States and at acquiring the power projection capabilities that would increase the global reach of the U.S.S.R. through long-range conventional mobility.

The policy decisions in the military and international spheres made in the Kremlin during the course of 1965 were formalized at the Twenty-Third Party Congress in early 1966. From mid-1966 until the end
of 1968, the Soviet leadership was preoccupied with such thorny international issues as the deteriorating relations with China, the Czechoslovak crisis, and the Arab-Israeli war. During this same period, however, the strategic, as well as the overall, military situation of the U.S.S.R. was improving, and the U.S. military effort in Vietnam, in addition to proving extremely expensive, was beginning to lose popular domestic support.

The present chapter will examine the changes in Soviet assessments of the correlation from the time of Khrushchev's ouster in October 1964 to the end of 1968, when the broad outline of the approaching situation of strategic parity between the superpowers was becoming evident. In the first section we shall consider how Soviet leaders and analysts depicted the correlation in the immediate post-Khrushchev period and also explore indirect criticisms of the Khrushchevian assessment implicit in Soviet commentary of the time. The second section will deal with the Soviet treatment of the correlation in the years following the Twenty-Third Party Congress which convened in March 1966. Finally, we will analyze the policy implications flowing from the prevailing Soviet reading of the correlation.

In the early years of the Brezhnev regime, the focal term of reference reverted to the more neutral expression sootnoshenie sil. Conscious of the foreign policy setbacks of the early 1960s, and the inferior strategic position of the U.S.S.R. in relation to that of the United States, Soviet leaders and analysts were generally circumspect in their descriptions of the correlation of forces. After the Twenty-Third Party Congress, when many of the policies aimed at redressing the military balance were in place, the tone of Soviet commentary appeared
to project the image of a stabilizing situation, but no overt signs of optimism were yet in evidence.

CRITICISM AND REAPPRAISAL: 1964-1966

In the months following Khrushchev's ouster, Soviet analysts reflected official dissatisfaction with the style and conduct of foreign policy during the previous years. One commentator, writing in December 1964, asserted that without a correct and realistic appraisal of the correlation of forces, it was easy "to slip into a subjective or voluntaristic estimation of events," and that "policies and diplomacy divorced from reality, not based on objective laws of social development, are likely to turn ultimately into adventurism."² Similarly, another writer decried "subjectivism and hare-brained schemes" both in domestic and foreign policy.³

A September 1965 Pravda editorial was even more explicit in its criticism of the Khrushchevian approach to international affairs:

A voluntaristic, unrealistic approach to the phenomena and events of international life is deeply alien to our party's Central Committee and the Soviet state. For such an approach, as Lenin taught, can have grave consequences; it is capable of giving rise either to smug overconfidence or to weakness in the face of the military threat from imperialism.

In their discussions of the distribution of power, Soviet leaders and analysts now opted for realism in place of "overconfidence." Such a judgement was reflected in generally guarded assessments of the correlation.

In the area of the military correlation of forces, for instance, most Soviet spokesmen carefully avoided specificity and were content to observe that the Soviet Union possessed great military might.
References to Soviet and socialist military preponderance or even equilibrium were dropped. And while the strength of the American military machine was not glossed over, writers refrained from engaging in direct comparisons of Soviet and American military power.

Speaking in November 1964, Brezhnev, in vague fashion, declared: "We possess a mighty armament that furnishes a reliable guarantee. . . ." A few months later, Kosygin stated that the countries of socialism possessed "great military and economic might." Statements such as these were, most likely, deliberately ambiguous. American military might was duly acknowledged. Admiral Gorshkov, writing in early 1965, catalogued the vast numbers of strategic missiles in the American nuclear arsenal and, asking whether the military might of the U.S.A. was a "myth," answered: "No, we are by no means inclined to minimize the power of the U.S. Armed Forces. They really do constitute a powerful military organization."7

However, both leaders and analysts also denied the notion of American military superiority. Brezhnev spoke of the "alleged" U.S. supremacy in the area of nuclear weapons and in a characteristically non-specific response, said: "No one can intimidate the Soviet people and the peoples of the other socialist countries. We know our strength and are confidently marching along the path we have chosen."8 Brezhnev returned to this theme in July 1965:

The whole world knows that our might does not need advertising or wordy proofs. . . . It is scarcely necessary to cite concrete data about the number of intercontinental and orbital missiles the Soviet Union has at its disposal. Suffice it to say merely that there are enough, fully enough to put an end once and for all to any aggressor, to any grouping of aggressors.

U.S.S.R. Defense Minister Malinovskii, in early 1966, addressing
himself to U.S. Defense Secretary McNamara's optimistic assessments of American nuclear firepower, said:

We do not want to enter into a polemic with Mr. McNamara about the magnitude of the respective military potential of the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. . . . Without going into details, let us merely add that our Armed Forces have everything necessary to cool those hot-heads who are painting pictures of the destruction of entire states.\(^10\)

Analysts also continued to employ the line of argument that was used extensively during the later Khrushchev years of deprecating the value of estimating the correlation on the basis of military potential alone. Vladimirov, for instance, criticized imperialist theories which assessed the "triumphs and successes of Soviet foreign policy" based on the economic and military-technological potential of socialism and argued in favor of the importance of "moral-political and ideological potential." In the latter sphere, he asserted, "capitalism has already suffered a decisive defeat."\(^11\)

In countering Walter Lippmann's thesis that since 1962 the correlation of forces had been changing in favor of the West,\(^12\) Marinin attacked Lippmann's claim on the grounds that his one-sided emphasis on the military correlation failed to take into account all the complex factors that enter into an estimation of the correlation.\(^13\) Apart from criticizing Lippmann's argument, though, Marinin failed to clarify his own assessment of the comparative military strength of the countries of socialism and capitalism.

The general effect of the tone and substance of Soviet commentary on the military correlation strongly conveyed an implicit acknowledgement of the current Soviet weakness in this sphere. But both official and scholarly discussions on the subject frequently referred to the considerable Soviet expenditures in the military area--a
circumstance which no doubt was perceived as opening up the prospect of overcoming the Soviet military disadvantage. As Brezhnev acknowledged:

We do not conceal the fact that a substantial part of our national budget goes to building up the combat strength of our armed forces. The Soviet people well understand the need for these expenditures and fully support the measures of the Party and government to strengthen the defense might of our homeland.¹⁴

Further, Brezhnev, in a speech in July 1965, noting that the imperialists were "furnishing their armies with new weapons and military equipment" and were "working out the strategy and tactics for the implementation of their aggressive plans,"¹⁵ called for a broad strengthening of Soviet nuclear and conventional capability.¹⁶

The Soviet leadership in 1965 moved away from the almost exclusive Khrushchevian emphasis on the development of nuclear-missile systems. Their military program, while stressing the expansion of strategic forces, was broadened to include the "large role that still belongs to conventional types of arms."¹⁷ In his report of March 9, 1966, to the Twenty-Third Party Congress, Brezhnev strongly reiterated the Party decision "to ensure the further development of the defense industry, the perfection of nuclear-rocket weaponry and all other types of equipment."¹⁸ Along with the cherished goal of matching American strategic capability, the Soviet leaders were also engaged in shoring up their conventional military strength, a development which within a decade was to result in direct and indirect Soviet military activism in various parts of the globe.

In their characterization of the economic correlation during the Brezhnev era, Soviet analysts discarded the extremely optimistic appraisals of the earlier period. There was a marked deemphasis of this aspect of the correlation. While Soviet writers continued to argue in
favor of the need for successful economic construction in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, and posited economic competition as an important component of the class struggle, they refrained from asserting the Khrushchevian view that socialist preponderance in the economic correlation would in the near future result in great revolutionary gains.

Reference to expectations of the imminent prospect of catching up with and overtaking the U.S. economy were shelved. In his report to the Twenty-Third Congress, Brezhnev criticized the "subjectivist approach" of the Khrushchev period because of which "certain miscalculations were made in working out the seven-year plan; running ahead was permitted. The expansion of production established for some branches did not always conform to actual possibilities." On the topic of economic competition with capitalism Brezhnev displayed caution when he stated in non-committal fashion: "We are steadily closer to the objective set by the Party of outstripping the most highly developed capitalist countries in per capita industrial output." The economic timetable of the 1961 Party program which specified a two-decade period during which Soviet economic performance was to surpass that of the United States was almost never mentioned during the Brezhnev period.

Nor did Soviet commentators echo the Khrushchevian notion that victory in peaceful economic competition with capitalism would in itself create optimum conditions for the global dissemination of the socialist credo. As one Soviet analyst put it:

But by itself the increases in might and the change in the economic correlation of forces in the international arena in favour of socialism does not automatically decide in which direction—peace or war—international events will develop. Soviet spokesmen openly acknowledged the economic consequences of the
priority of development of defense and heavy industries. Suslov, for instance, referring to furnishing the Soviet military with "first-class military equipment," remarked: ". . . it goes without saying that all this demands that the Soviet people make no small material sacrifices and spend a substantial part of the national income for defense." 23

At the Twenty-Third Party Congress, Brezhnev spoke of the "superiority in rates of economic growth" in the socialist countries, but also noted that the rise in economic growth rates in the United States had resulted in the launching of a new American offensive on world markets. He acknowledged, too, that the crop failures of 1963 and 1965 had a "negative effect on the national economy." Soviet discussion of the economic correlation in the years after Brezhnev took office displayed the same caution and realism which was characteristic of the Brezhnev approach in general. Moreover, victory in economic competition was no longer seen as a necessarily decisive ingredient in facilitating the spread of socialism around the world.

In the political area, the Soviets had reason for concern. The increasing American involvement in the Vietnam conflict, U.S. military intervention in the Dominican Republic and the Congo, the continuing deterioration in Sino-Soviet relations after the failure of bilateral talks in November 1964 and February 1965, and the centrifugal tendencies in the socialist alliance represented unfavorable developments which had to be taken into account in estimating the correlation.

One leading Soviet analyst, for instance, wrote that U.S. foreign policy exerted a "great and sometimes decisive influence on the processes going on in the course of the competition between the two world systems. . . ." 24 Such an admission was in marked contrast to
earlier statements by scholars who asserted that imperialism had long
since lost its capacity to determine international events. In a survey
of contemporary international events, a group of Soviet scholars spoke
of the menace resulting from the "activization of adventuristic circles
in the imperialist camp" and argued that the "rise of a number of highly
dangerous situations" was brought about by the "efforts of the United
States and its allies to oppose the further change in the correlation of
forces in the world arena in favour of socialism." Soviet writers
portrayed Vietnam as the first important instance of the practical
application of the American doctrine of flexible response and depicted
this U.S. move in terms of an effort to reverse the direction of the
correlation of forces.

Soviet commentators were also very defensive in their discussions
of the Sino-Soviet schism and the opportunities for exploitation that it
opened up for the West. Along with their ideological and other
differences with the Chinese leadership, the recurring problems of unity
within the socialist alliance led Marinin to declare that imperialism
was "beyond doubt" counting on an exacerbation of the differences in the
world communist movement. And in a statement which revealed his
uneasiness with regard to the developments in the socialist bloc, he
observed:

However, the process of internal consolidation occurring in
the socialist countries and the uniting of the majority of
them on the basis of proletarian internationalism--this is an
objective factor exerting the most direct influence on the
problem of the correlation of forces.

Moreover, while Soviet writers continued to dwell at length on the
differences and contradictions among the NATO allies, they appeared to
recognize that such squabbling had distinct limits. In the final
instance the NATO countries were united in their opposition to the spread of communist doctrine:

With the new balance of forces in the world, despite the deepening and aggravation of inter-imperialist contradictions, big armed clashes between the imperialist states themselves are becoming less and less probable. Such wars would sharply undermine imperialism's common front against the world revolutionary movement. The tendency to unite imperialist forces has in particular been expressed in the formation of NATO.

With regard to the prospects for revolutionary change in the Third World, the Soviets were initially fairly optimistic. But with setbacks such as the coups in Indonesia in 1965 and Ghana in 1966—countries which had been befriended by the U.S.S.R.—Soviet leaders and analysts began to reassess their approach to the Third World. Only in the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, would the effects of this reappraisal become manifest in Soviet doctrine and practice.

In summing up the events which occurred during the first part of the 1960s, Inozemtsev's assessment of the correlation was quite modest:

There have occurred some unfavorable developments for the revolutionary and peace-loving forces such as the well-known difficulties in the world communist movement, the direct military intervention of the imperialist powers... the activization of reactionary forces and pro-imperialist conspiracies in several young national states of Asia and Africa.

But with all the complexities of the situation... the upsurge as well as the temporary ebb, the fundamental tendencies of world development remain invariable.

Soviet discussions of the overall correlation during this early period reflected the generally cautious tenor of their comment on various aspects of the correlation of forces, and indirectly acknowledged that history had zigzagged. The emphasis now was on bitter struggle. In a speech in April 1965, Brezhnev stated that "the historical question 'Who will defeat whom' on the international level
will be decided . . . only in struggle against the forces of the old world in whatever form this struggle takes place. Communists have never expected the exploiters to retire from the scene voluntarily to make way for the new order." This statement clearly conveyed the idea that the Soviet Union would seek to counter the imperialist military offensive in kind. Such a stance represented a sharp deviation from the Khrushchevian emphasis on peaceful economic competition with capitalism and indicated Soviet readiness to acquire and employ the long-range military capabilities that such intervention would require. Brezhnev continued:

In individual engagements of this tense struggle either temporary reversals or successes are possible. But the general line of development is perfectly clear and well-defined: the forces of peace and socialism are constantly growing.

Soviet analysts echoed this moderate assessment of the correlation of forces. Lemin wrote that while there were inevitable delays, difficulties and retreats in the course of the forward movement of the world revolutionary process, the general tendency of development favored the forces of peace, progress, and socialism. Korionov wrote that the attainment of changes in the correlation of forces in favor of socialism did not occur of its own accord but was the result of the struggle of various detachments of the world revolutionary movement against imperialism.

During the early 1960s, Soviet leaders and analysts had entertained extremely optimistic expectations regarding the speed of revolutionary transformation in the world. When events in the latter part of the 1960s belied these expectations, Soviet writers attempted to account for the slow pace of revolutionary change by frequently referring to the
process of replacement of feudalism by capitalism. Using this analogy, Soviet spokesmen sought comfort by arguing that the replacement of capitalism by socialism was "proceeding at a considerably faster rate," considering that it took capitalism a whole "epoch" encompassing "several centuries" in order to supplant feudalism. Thus, Marinin could say that Marxist-Leninists did not "have the basis for 'complaining' about the tempo of development of the revolutionary process in the world." Faced with what appeared to be dim prospects for an imminent socialist transformation, the Soviets shifted their frame of reference to the long-term view of history. They now stressed struggle—protracted struggle—in the course of which socialism would eventually replace capitalism.

In the immediate post-Khrushchev period, Soviet leaders and analysts refrained from characterizing the correlation in optimistic phraseology. *Sootnoshenie sil* again became the characteristic expression for referring to the distribution of power. Moreover, even in the use of this term, the Soviets consciously or unconsciously displayed a certain defensiveness which manifested itself in negative or qualified statements regarding the nature of the correlation. One analyst, for instance, wrote that the correlation of forces no longer favored imperialism. Sovetov, in discussing the aggressive policy of imperialism, stated that the overall balance of forces continued to tilt in favor of Socialism. In a speech in June 1965, Suslov observed that the correlation of forces in the international arena was "generally favorable for socialism" but that "the forces of world reaction and American imperialism were becoming more active." Brezhnev's report to the Twenty-Third CPSU Congress was similarly cautious in its reference
to the balance: "[T]he increased aggressiveness of imperialism by no means signifies that there has been any change in the correlation of forces in the world in its favor." 39

Tomashevskii expressed some of the Soviet concern latent in the above statements when he noted:

Notwithstanding the fact that the balance of world forces has changed irrevocably in favor of Socialism (in the broad Leninist sense, taking into consideration material, moral and political factors), despite the fact that imperialism is historically doomed, it is a strong and dangerous enemy of the Socialist countries and of all the peoples fighting for peace and social progress. 40

And Mel'nikov, echoing Soviet apprehensions, argued that while imperialist efforts to change the movement of the correlation of forces would enable it to "establish seats of aggression, provoke conflicts, unleash local wars," it was incapable of "becoming again a dominating factor in world development" and "liquidating the great social and political achievements of the working people." 41 Some of this veiled Soviet pessimism of the early Brezhnev years gave way to greater self-assurance in the wake of an improving military and economic situation at home, coupled with America's increasingly unpopular and costly war in Vietnam.

WANING PESSIMISM: 1966-1968

In his closing address to the Twenty-Third Congress in April 1966, Brezhnev declared that while the work ahead of them was "great and arduous," the Soviets looked to the future with "confidence and optimism" which was based on a "realistic assessment" of the "vast potential" of the Soviet Union. 42 From mid-1966 onward, when the bulk
of the post-Khrushchevian policies were in place, Soviet leaders and analysts revealed a cautious expectation of an improving situation with reference to the correlation of forces. While many of the problems which confronted the U.S.S.R. when the Brezhnev team took over in October 1964 were still far from being fully resolved, the Soviet leadership by mid-1966 was perhaps satisfied with the pace and direction of Soviet military and economic progress.

The post-Khrushchev leadership, as we have already noted, undertook a broad-based expansion of Soviet military power. After a slight drop in 1965, Soviet military spending increased annually from 1966 onward. In 1968 military expenditures rose by approximately 11% over the military budget for the previous year. The effect of these efforts in the military area imparted a measure of confidence to Soviet discussions of the military correlation of forces. In their election speeches of June 1966, both Brezhnev and Podgorny apprised voters of the Soviet policy of maintaining preponderant development of heavy industry as the chief basis of strengthening the country's defense capacity.

Moreover, in two separate but closely timed remarks, Brezhnev uncharacteristically spoke of the superiority of the Soviet Army. In the above mentioned election speech of June 1966, Brezhnev declared:

In today's conditions our country is obliged to devote even more effort and attention to strengthening its defensive might. We shall keep the armed forces of the land of Soviets at the highest level of contemporary military technology and continue to maintain our army's superiority so that at any moment it will be ready to deliver a crushing rebuff to the aggressor.

Again, in early July 1966, in an address to graduates of a military academy, Brezhnev asserted:

The Soviet Army now possesses sufficient quantities of the most modern military equipment and retains its superiority.
over the armies of the imperialist states. . . . We have been forced to speak once again of our country's military might. . . . We mention it first of all because such is the actual state of affairs at present. Our superiority in the latest types of military technology is a fact. . . .

Since Brezhnev did not advance the claim of military superiority before or after this time, one may argue that his usage of the term, at a time when the strategic balance continued to favor the U.S., was for tactical political reasons of the moment rather than as a signal for a shift in the Soviet appraisal of the military correlation. One is strengthened in this belief when one examines the target audiences and the general tenor of the speeches themselves.

In the first instance, Brezhnev was speaking to the population at large, upholding the need for greater expenditures in the military area even though they were a "great burden for the people." In order to justify this need as well as to placate the voters for not championing the cause of the consumer as ardently as Podgorny and Kosygin had promised in 1965, Brezhnev perhaps felt it was politically prudent to claim military superiority rather than admit military weakness.

Further, he argued that while there was a "steady change in the correlation of forces in favor of socialism, peace, and progress," the Soviets could not allow this "general tendency" to blind them to the dangers of the contemporary international situation when imperialism possessed "not inconsiderable forces."48

When Brezhnev again made the claim of Soviet military superiority, he was addressing a military audience:

This subject [Soviet military superiority] must be touched on again also because certain generals and even responsible statesmen in the U.S.A., flying into a passion, are frivolously and rashly maintaining the opposite and are proclaiming in every way the military might of the U.S.A. 49
In addition to countering American assertions of U.S. superiority in the military sphere, Brezhnev was probably reminding his audience that he had strongly supported the ongoing Soviet military buildup and remained their special patron in the Politburo.\textsuperscript{50}

Soviet analysts in this period continued to be circumspect in their assessment of the military correlation, but there were hints of an increasing confidence in Soviet military capacity. Gantman and Tomashevskii in early 1967 observed:

> The present correlation of forces, including the correlation of military potential of the two world systems, deprives imperialism of the possibility for accomplishing its main class goals—to destroy socialism, suppress the revolutionary movement, and to unleash world thermonuclear war.\textsuperscript{51}

Inozemtsev wrote that imperialist policy based as it was on military strength had been deprived of its very basis because it no longer enjoyed a "superiority of forces."\textsuperscript{52} A group of commentators in early 1968 boldly declared:

> Qualitative changes in the correlation of forces in the world in favor of socialism, and the powerful nuclear-missile potential established by the ... efforts of the Soviet people, has tied up the hands of the champions of imperialist war. A principally new military-political situation favorable to the forces of social progress ... has been established in the world.\textsuperscript{53}

An armed forces spokesman was even more explicit about the significance of the military dimension of the correlation. Writing in the Party journal, Kommunist, he asserted that the Soviet army and navy were reliable safeguards of the gains of socialism and communism and that their strength represented one of the most important factors in the international arena in favor of peace, democracy, and socialism.\textsuperscript{54} The necessity for Soviet military action during the Czechoslovak crisis, coupled with the Soviet decision to begin a Far East military buildup on
their border with China, provided an inexorable impetus for a continued all-round expansion of Soviet military might. The emerging Brezhnev approach to foreign affairs in general and the correlation of forces in particular, with its stress on the military dimension, was aptly encapsulated in this statement by Lomov, who noted: "The political means of preserving peace can be fully effective only if they are based on real strength, first and foremost, military power."

Soviet economic performance between 1966 and 1970 was good enough to allow the leadership to increase agricultural investment, protect the large outlays for heavy industry and defense, and attain higher living standards for the populace at large. Moreover, following a record harvest in 1966, some funds were diverted from agriculture to other sectors of the economy, especially to defense.

But Soviet leaders and analysts, even during good economic times, no longer exuded the excessive optimism of the Khrushchev era with regard to the economic correlation of forces, and ceased the practice of setting specific dates for the Soviet economy to catch up with that of the U.S. They concentrated instead on speaking of the higher economic growth rates achieved by the socialist countries, thus framing the discussion of the economic correlation in a context that appeared favorable to the forces of socialism. Thus, Suslov, the ideologist of the regime, acknowledging that "in recent decades the rate of industrial development in certain capitalist countries had risen," attempted to soft-pedal this development:

However, despite all innovation, capitalism has increasingly manifested its untenability in the competition with the socialist world. Even in the years of its greatest successes its economy developed more slowly than that of the socialist countries. In addition, the growth of the capitalist economy has proceeded extremely unevenly.
One Soviet analyst took comfort in the fact that the Soviet Union occupied second place in the world in the scale of industrial production.\(^6^0\) And Zagladin attempted to explain the reasons for the difficulties experienced by socialist states in demonstrating their superiority in the economic sphere by arguing that in a majority of instances, socialism had triumphed in countries with a medium and even a low level of economic development.\(^6^1\)

Clearly, the Soviets had staked the success of the revolutionary process in the world on military might. Economic strength was important and was not ignored, but the development of the economy would now have to proceed without jeopardizing large military expenditures. The Khrushchevian practice of attempting to trim the military budget to allow for economic growth was now abandoned.

In the political sphere, the Soviets saw both emerging opportunities and persistent difficulties. As noted in the earlier section, the collapse of regimes friendly to the Soviet Union in Asia and Africa resulted in greater realism and a lowering of Soviet Third World expectations. K. N. Brutents, for instance, in discussing the problems of the African revolution, wrote that the breakdown of the colonial regimes, the emergence of new states, some of which had openly spurned the capitalist path of development, and the "rapid growth of the economic might and authority of world socialism, especially after the U.S.S.R.'s launching of the world's first sputnik," had led to the belief that "all, or almost all, the developing countries would opt for the noncapitalist way without much delay." Such an expectation, he observed, had "tended to create the erroneous impression that the struggle was almost at an end . . . that the forces of imperialism were
played out."  

Another analyst blamed "objective factors" as well as the "intrigues of imperialism and internal reaction" for the "zigzags" of the national-liberation movement, but argued that "[a]lthough there may be temporary setbacks on some sectors of the front, liberation tendencies continue to grow and break through with renewed strength in other sectors of the world national-liberation movement."  

Razmerov and Tomashevsky acknowledged that "the anti-imperialist struggle is an intricate process, in which, besides victories, unexpected developments and temporary failures are possible."  

Tolstikov testified to an ongoing reappraisal of Soviet Third World policy in the late 1960s:

The revolutionary forces of the world are taking stock of their great victories and achievements. At the same time, they are striving critically to review individual errors and shortcomings, to draw on the wealth of past experience, and to make a correct assessment of the changes taking place in the world in order to accelerate the triumph of the great ideas of the October revolution on a world scale.  

The turn toward realism in Soviet views regarding the prospects for a socialist transformation of the Third World was to manifest itself in two major changes in Soviet Third World policy in the next decade. One of these shifts would be reflected in the increased Soviet support of Marxist and left-wing parties with decidedly pro-Soviet tendencies.  

The second change would be seen in a greater Soviet willingness to use the military instrument in conflict situations in the Third World.  

Moreover, each of the crises in which the U.S.S.R. was involved during this period only served to strengthen the trend toward greater Soviet reliance on military power. While the 1967 Arab-Israeli war resulted in a serious set-back to the Soviet client-states, its immediate effect was a more active Soviet military presence in the
Similarly, in the wake of the Czech crisis, there was a "substantial and permanent reinforcement" of Soviet ground troops in Central Europe, as well as a demonstration of the Soviet resolve to hold the socialist community together by force, if necessary.

In the Far East, Soviet problems with China mounted, but as China went into a self-imposed diplomatic isolation following the Cultural Revolution in August 1966, some of the pressures on the Soviet Union issuing from competition with the Chinese for influence in the Third World eased. But the reverse was true of the situation in Vietnam, where the Soviets accused the Chinese of undermining efforts to end the Indo-Chinese conflict. In his speech to the April 1967 Karlovy Vary Conference of European Communist and Workers' Parties in Czechoslovakia, Brezhnev stated that if the socialist countries "were able to act in defence of Vietnam in agreement and coordination with China, the task of ending the American aggression would be considerably facilitated." Elsewhere, speaking of American escalation of the Vietnam war, Brezhnev reminded his audience that "imperialism does not refrain from brute force or even direct aggression, especially when it can find even the smallest fissure in the anti-imperialist front." This, he said, was "exemplified by the criminal aggression of the U.S.A. in Vietnam."

By 1968, however, with the mounting unpopularity of American involvement in the Vietnam conflict in the United States, Soviet leaders were able to see a silver lining on the dark clouds of "imperialist aggression." Noting the "increasing strength" of "factors of political and economic instability in the capitalist system," Suslov anticipated "new possibilities for an upsurge in the revolutionary movement." During this period the Soviets and Americans also made the first
tentative efforts in the area of strategic arms control. In July 1968, Brezhnev apprised his audience of an understanding which had been reached "on holding an exchange of opinions between the Soviet Union and the U.S.A. regarding an integrated program of limiting and reducing systems for delivery of offensive strategic nuclear weapons and anti-ballistic missile defense systems."73

Thus, while the Soviets in the post-Khrushchev period discarded their earlier naive optimism in the political area, they were far from giving up any hope of future successes. As Brezhnev, in late 1967, observed about the "scale and complexity of the tasks facing the revolutionary forces:"

Many tense battles have yet to be fought. . . . But we may be confident that the present stage signifies a tremendous step forward on this road, and that it will take a worthy place in the annals74 of mankind's struggle for progress and freedom, for socialism.

The sum-total of the Soviet assessment of the military, economic and political correlation between late 1966 and 1968 made for a cautious but expectant attitude toward the overall correlation. The key term of reference continued to be sootnoshenie sil.75 Lemin, for instance, noted that "despite the gloomy and dark aspects of the contemporary international situation," the correlation of forces was "strongly inclining in favour of peace and socialism," and that the "positions of the Soviet Union [were] strengthening in a decisive manner."76

Inozemtsev wrote that "the steady increase in our [Soviet] economic, political, and military might, [had] strengthened the positions of the Soviet Union in the struggle against the forces of international counterrevolution" and had "increased its possibilities in the area of extending real help and support to the peoples of other
countries struggling for social and national freedom." 

Toward the end of the decade of the 1960s, both Soviet leaders and analysts in their discussions of the correlation seemed to display less pessimism than they did during the initial Brezhnev years. Brezhnev himself described the socialist world in 1968 as living a "full-blooded life" and as being in a "state of continual forward development." In a major speech to the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet in June 1968, Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko was even more bold and explicit regarding rising Soviet international expectations:

The Soviet Union is a great power situated on two continents—Europe and Asia—but the range of our country's international interests is determined not by its geographical position alone. . . .

The Soviet people do not have to beg for the right to have a say in settling any question involving the maintenance of international peace, the freedom and independence of the people, and our country's broad interests.

The right is ours by virtue of the Soviet Union's position as a great power.

Thus, as the Soviets found themselves on the threshold of the 1970s, they looked to the future with a qualified optimism which envisaged socialist victories to be attained in the crucible of struggle. Factors such as successful Soviet efforts in enhancing the military strength of the U.S.S.R., steady Soviet economic progress, and a realistic view of Soviet political possibilities in the world had mitigated in large part the pessimism that had set in in the last years of the Khrushchev era.

ANALYSIS

A trend toward greater realism in Soviet assessments of the military, economic, and political correlation was one of the dominant
results of the Soviet reappraisal of the Khrushchevian approach to foreign policy. The confused portrayal of the correlation, both by Soviet leaders and analysts, during the final years of the Khrushchev era, gave way to a greater uniformity of opinion when the Brezhnev team took over the reins of the Soviet leadership.

This realism was depicted, first and foremost, in the concordance between objective Soviet economic and military capabilities and political possibilities, and Soviet estimates of the correlation. The focal terms of reference reverted to the more neutral expressions—sootnoshenie sil and rasstanovka sil. Verbal excesses were avoided and Soviet international relations commentators as well as leaders took the tack of expressing the most reasonably tenable view of the correlation.

The military correlation was generally expressed in terms of a great or increasing Soviet military strength, and while Soviet writers took great pains to deny American military superiority, they displayed a keen understanding of the might and menace represented by the American military machine. References to Soviet military superiority dropped from currency almost entirely. 80

The customary circumspection with regard to the military correlation was also evident in Soviet discussions of the economic and political correlation. Even during the years of a very favorable performance by the Soviet economy (1966-1970), Soviet writers ceased the Khrushchevian practice of setting unrealistic schedules for catching up with the U.S. economy. Instead, the commentary focused on the aspects of the Soviet economy which displayed the inherent "superiority" of the socialist mode of production—-for instance, high economic growth rates,
and dwelt on the negative elements in the imperialist economies—such as inflation, poverty, and unemployment. 81

The setbacks suffered by the Soviet Union in the political area vis-a-vis the West, the Third World, and the socialist world in the mid-1960s impelled the Soviet leadership to review their political strategy in these areas. The escalating American military action in Vietnam convinced the Soviets that the doctrine of flexible response in action posed a considerable threat to Soviet global interests. The collapse of several regimes in the Third World which had been touted by the Khrushchev leadership as being "revolutionary-democratic" in nature (e.g., Ghana in 1966 and Mali in 1968) reinforced the necessity for a modification in the Soviet approach to the Third World. These problems, the Soviet difficulties with China, and the crisis in the socialist alliance, together impelled the Soviets in the direction of a determined and consistent effort to increase their strategic and conventional military strength.

The Brezhnev leadership appears to have been dissatisfied with the narrow range of policy options open to the Soviet Union in the face of the "aggressive" American pursuit of its international political interests. Khrushchev had formulated the Soviet international position in terms of the stark alternatives of peaceful coexistence or an annihilatory nuclear war. He had predicated Soviet foreign policy on the assumption that "realistic" leaders in the imperialist countries would resign themselves to the global dissemination of the socialist credo and seek to coexist peacefully with the socialist countries, under conditions where the "preponderance of forces" (in Khrushchev's estimation) was in favor of socialism. The crucial arena of struggle
between the two systems, Khrushchev had argued, was in the sphere of economic competition.

When the American adoption of the flexible response doctrine found its first practical application in Vietnam, the impotence implicit in the passive Soviet strategic posture became manifest. Explicit criticism of the Khrushchev approach found its way into Soviet international relations journals. Marinin argued that in the face of an active enemy which repeatedly shifted to "counter-attacks," there was "nothing further from the real interests and the tasks of furthering the development of socialism than to rely on the automatic action of a preponderance in the correlation of forces."\(^{82}\)

The Brezhnev leadership set about the task of rectifying what it saw as the shortcomings of the Khrushchev approach. In a sharp break with the past, the new regime began an all-round build-up of Soviet conventional and nuclear strength. While the goals of Soviet policy remained unaltered, the emphasis now began to shift in the direction of using military means to further Soviet interests. The importance of this change in emphasis cannot be overstressed.

Many Western analysts, concentrating on the Soviet strategic build-up in the late 1960s and 1970s, often trace the initial ballistic missile development and deployment decisions to the Khrushchev era.\(^{83}\) While this may be true, the stress on the strategic aspect of the superpower relationship tends to obscure the most important difference between the Khrushchev and Brezhnev approaches to the role of the military in international affairs. As we have noted above, Khrushchev repeatedly downplayed the importance of conventional forces and was interested primarily in building up Soviet nuclear strength vis-a-vis
This nuclear build-up would render nugatory all nuclear threats or "nuclear blackmail," and East-West competition would be channelled into the economic sphere, an area of paramount importance to Khrushchev. Under Brezhnev, Soviet military expansion, while continuing in the field of strategic nuclear arms, was broadened to include conventional air, naval, and ground forces. This all-round buildup in Soviet power-projection capabilities meant that overcoming the strategic gap would give the Soviet Union considerable additional political leverage; i.e., the United States could not threaten the U.S.S.R. with nuclear attack every time the Soviets used their conventional forces. Such forces could therefore be used in a limited way to further Soviet political objectives, primarily in the Third World.

This modification was in effect a mirror image of the U.S. doctrine of flexible response, just as Khrushchev's earlier reliance on nuclear weapons was designed to counter American threats of "massive retaliation." Interestingly enough, Soviet scholars and political leaders by the late 1960s were becoming increasingly aware of the limitations of the use of conventional power projection capabilities, as evidenced by the problems faced by the U.S. in Vietnam. For instance, Gromyko, in reporting to the Supreme Soviet in 1968, stated:

\[\text{The current revolutionary era is breaking down traditional concepts of strength. . . . Can it be said that the number of the American army's missiles, hydrogen bombs, submarines, aircraft carriers and bombers is decreasing? Of course not. Every year, every month, their number is growing and the U.S. budget spends increasingly larger sums of money on the manufacture of armaments. Judging by quantitative yardsticks, U.S. influence and policy in the world arena should have become stronger. But in actual fact the exact opposite has happened. . . . The curve of munition production in the U.S.A. is continuously rising, while the prestige of the United States is declining. . . .}\]

Ironically, while they recognized this as a problem for the United

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States, Soviet commentators failed to apply these limitations to their own country, a failure which was to be of considerable consequence many years later in Afghanistan.

CONCLUSION

All in all, the 1965-1968 period was one in which the Soviets, in a sense, drew in their horns and took steps to overcome their shortcomings in the military area. By the end of the decade of the 1960s, the Soviets could again look expectantly toward a more promising socialist future. They were close to their goal of reaching strategic parity with the United States and had, over the same period, vastly improved their power-projection capabilities, with all the potential that this development contained for the use of the military instrument in diplomacy and international affairs.

The next decade was to witness the rise and second peaking of Soviet optimism regarding the correlation of forces. Also in this decade, the Soviets began to rely increasingly on the use of their military might in the pursuit of their international goals, even as the Americans, frustrated with the stalemated Vietnam conflict, had begun a reexamination of their military role in the Indo-Chinese war and in the world in general.

We shall explore the impact of the developments of the 1970s on the evolving Soviet assessment of the correlation of forces in the subsequent two chapters.
NOTES


11. V. Vladimirov, "Leninskaia vneshniaia politika" [Leninist Foreign Policy], *MEMO* (4) April 1965, pp. 6-7.


16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.


31. Ibid., p. 12.

32. I. Lemin, "Vneshniaia politika SShA," p. 34. See also Iu. A. Bork, et al., "Tekushcie problemy mirovoi politiki" [Current Problems of World Politics], MEMO (1) January 1965, p. 70.

33. V. Korionov, "Mezhdunarodnoe znachenie XXIII c'ezda KPSS" [The International Significance of the Twenty-Third CPSU Congress], Kommunist (6) April 1966, p. 17.


35. In two isolated instances, Soviet writers deviated from this customary circumspection. In a Pravda editorial of November 1, 1964, only a few weeks after Khrushchev's ouster, it was stated that the "forces of peace, democracy, and socialism are in our time superior to the forces of war, reaction and imperialism." For trans. see XVI CDSP 44, November 25, 1964, p. 4. Writing in the April 1965 issue of IA, D. Tomashevsky wrote that the "basic difference distinguishing the world today from that in 1917 or 1921 is first and foremost the tremendous growth of the forces of Socialism--material as well as moral and political--which now exceed the forces of capitalism." "Lenin's Views on Socialist Foreign Policy," IA (4) April 1965, p. 8. In both cases, however, the general tenor of the writing was far from optimistic. Also, the Pravda editorial chiefly dealt with the Soviet role in the national liberation movement and was written before the string of Soviet setbacks in Africa and Asia occurred.


43. See World Military Expenditures and Arms Trade, 1963-1973 (Washington, D.C.: Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, 1974), p. 56. This is not to suggest that military spending did not increase in the pre-1966 period. But the chief difference between Khrushchev and Brezhnev years was that while Khrushchev attempted when necessary to cut the defense budget to stimulate economic growth (for instance in 1960 and 1964), Brezhnev saw the Soviet economy as the engine for enhancing Soviet military might. Soviet military expenditures continued to rise throughout the Brezhnev era, reflecting the leadership's predilection for military over economic means for establishing the Soviet role in world affairs.

44. Computed from military expenditures for 1967 and 1968 in millions of constant dollars in Ibid.


46. Ibid., p. 16. Emphasis added.


48. See Brezhnev's election speech in XVIII CDSP 23, p. 16.

49. See Brezhnev's address to Military Academy Graduates, XVIII CDSP 26, p. 5.


51. V. Gantman and A. Tomashevskii, "Oktyabr' i krizis vneshnei politiki imperializma" [October and the Crisis of Imperialism's Foreign Policy], Kommunist (3) February 1967, p. 33.


60. V. Khvostov, "Sovetskaia vneshniaia politika i ee vozdeistvie na khod istorii" [Soviet Foreign Policy and its Influence on the Course of History], **Kommunist** (10) July 1967, p. 80.

61. See V. Zagladin, "Velikii Oktiabr' i sovremennyi mirovyi revoliutsionnyi protsess" [Great October and the Contemporary World Revolutionary Process], **MEMO** (10) October 1967, pp. 9-11.


67. Ibid., pp. 21-22.

68. See Ibid., p. 23.


74. Brezhnev, *The CPSU in the Struggle for Unity*, p. 43.

75. In one anomalous instance that I have been able to trace, V. Tolstikov spoke of the "preponderance of the forces of Socialism and peace over those of imperialism and war" which represented "a most important factor speeding up revolutionary changes on our planet." See "The World Revolutionary Movement," p. 79. No other Soviet analyst or leader, during this period, used terms other than sootnoshenie sil and in some cases, rasstanovka sil, in referring to the correlation of forces.


78. See Brezhnev's speech in XX CDSP 27, p. 7.


80. For the two anomalous instances in June and July 1966, when Brezhnev referred to Soviet military superiority, see pp. 167-169 of this chapter.
81. See, for instance, Brezhnev's speech to the Nineteenth Conference of the Moscow City Party Organization, Pravda, March 30, 1968, pp.1-2, as trans. in XX CDSP 13, April 18, 1968, p. 6.


84. It is quite likely that even in the area of strategic firepower, the decision, probably taken in March 1963, to go in for larger numbers of ICBMs, was only reluctantly agreed to by Khrushchev, for in April 1963 he publicly complained about the inefficiency of the defense industry enterprises. On this point, see David Holloway, The Soviet Union and the Arms Race (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 128. On Khrushchev's complaints about the defense industry, see Gelman, The Brezhnev Politburo, p. 243, fn. 53.

CHAPTER VII
KINDLING OF CONFIDENCE: 1969-1974

The present chapter covers a period of rising Soviet expectations regarding the international role and influence of the U.S.S.R. With the attainment of strategic parity in sight, the inchoate signs of a trend towards detente in East-West relations, and the beginning in July 1969 of a gradual disengagement of American troops from Vietnam, Soviet writers began to evince increasing satisfaction with the direction of unfolding international events.

In his inaugural address in January 1969, the new Republican President of the United States, Richard Nixon, had promised a weary nation that he would seek to bring an end to direct U.S. involvement in the Vietnam conflict and to replace an era of confrontation with an era of negotiation.\(^1\) Nixon also formally declared U.S. adherence to a concept of "strategic sufficiency," in effect renouncing the quest for strategic superiority.\(^2\) The trends implicit in these policy statements were favorable from the Soviet perspective. In the European theater, likewise, the election in October 1969 of Willy Brandt as Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany appeared to open up prospects for a dialogue on outstanding European issues.\(^3\) On the Third World scene, such events in Latin America as the September 1970 election of Salvador Allende in Chile offered the Soviets hope of a crystallization of the revolutionary process in America's back yard. And despite persisting disappointments in Africa and the Middle East, the Soviets continued to find ample opportunities for involvement in the region. Soviet support of left-wing guerrilla movements, especially in Africa, increased during
this period.

The continuing Sino-Soviet rift, coupled with signs of a Sino-U.S. rapprochement, issues of bloc solidarity, and growing economic constraints after 1970 impelled the Soviets, on the one hand, in the direction of seeking detente in relations with Western countries and, on the other hand, convinced them of the need to maximize their gains in the Third World.

We shall note, in this chapter, how the Soviets integrated these variegated developments into their assessment of the correlation. The Twenty-Fourth CPSU Congress of March 1971 will serve as a dividing line in our discussion of the period under consideration. From the platform of the Twenty-Fourth CPSU Congress, Brezhnev elaborated his Peace Program, which sought to improve relations between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A., as well as with the West European countries, to strive towards bringing an end to the Vietnam war, and to proceed in the direction of arms control. Over the next few years, as the main elements of the Peace Program were translated into reality, the cautious signs of confidence which the Soviets had displayed since 1969 flowered into an optimism that became increasingly more manifest and was to reach its peak between 1975 and 1977.

Throughout the years from 1969 to 1974, Soviet spokesmen were careful to use the term sootnoshenie sil or rasstanovka sil in referring to the correlation of forces. Soviet confidence and optimism during this period can be gleaned mostly from the manner in which their expectations regarding future developments in favor of socialism were formulated. Even after the signing of the SALT I agreements in May 1972, Soviet scholars and leaders did not actively trumpet the notion of
strategic parity. While they intermittently pointed out that the United States itself had been forced to acknowledge that there was a military balance of forces (*balans sil*), the routine refrain insisting on the existence of a rough parity in the strategic relationship was to come only later in the face of American accusations of Soviet strategic superiority.

**ASSESSING STRENGTHS AND DRAWBACKS: 1969-1971**

Soviet commentary on the military correlation of forces tended to emphasize, in an unspecified way, the general might of the armed forces of the U.S.S.R. as well as its nuclear missile strength. Alimov and Polyansky declared that the "growing economic and defence potential of the Socialist countries" was "exerting a decisive influence on the changes taking place in the international arena in favour of Socialism and against imperialism." In the documents of the Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties which convened in Moscow in June 1969, it was asserted that U.S. imperialism had to take into account the relationship of forces in the world and the nuclear potential of the Soviet Union in the conduct of its international policy.

The importance of the military element of the correlation was underscored in statements declaring that the "growing economic and military might of the socialist countries, the Soviet Union above all," was "a reliable bulwark of all the revolutionary forces"; and that the "growth in the military potential of the Socialist countries" was rendered "imperative" in order to defend socialist gains.

One analyst spoke of the great political significance of the
interconnection between international relations and the revolution in military affairs—a link he posited as being especially important in view of the global development of the means of military struggle. He went on to elaborate on the broad scope of the Soviet Union's military might:

The presence in the Soviet Union of nuclear-missile weapons and other contemporary means of military struggle . . . had led to severe limitations on the military possibilities of imperialism.

The Soviets mentioned both their nuclear and conventional capabilities in connection with the favorable movement of the correlation. Admiral Gorshkov, for instance, explaining the presence of Soviet naval vessels in the Atlantic Ocean, stated:

NATO's naval leaders are apparently still unable to reconcile themselves to the loss of their former monopoly rule of the sea. However, whether they want to or not, they will have to reckon with the real facts of the present correlation of forces on the high seas.

Teplinsky described the Soviet Union's "mighty nuclear-missile armoury" as "the decisive element in the Soviet Union's strength," one which operated "as a deterrent to the aggressive aspirations of world reaction, headed by U.S. imperialism." And in offering guidelines for the strategic arms talks, a Pravda commentator stated that any calculations by militarist circles of the West on the possibility of winning a thermonuclear war were rendered "unrealistic" by the existing "military-strategic balance of forces."

The obverse of this stress on the importance of Soviet military strength was the insistence on the impotence of American military power in the international arena. Spurred by growing evidence of the failure of the U.S. military venture in Vietnam, and reassured by Nixon's admission of the impossibility of a "purely military solution" to the
Indochinese conflict, Soviet writers wrote encouragingly of the "collapse" of optimistic imperialist "ideas, illusions, and principles." In analyzing the lessons for the U.S. from its involvement in Vietnam, Zhurkin insisted that the changed correlation of forces had made it impossible for imperialism to make gains in the international arena through the use of force. Marinin and Sokolov added that the valiant fight put up by the Vietnamese people against superior American firepower revealed the limitations of military power. The Documents of the June 1969 Moscow Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties referred to the "contradictions between the imperialist 'policy of strength' and the real possibilities of imperialism" and in a cogent expression of rising confidence asserted that imperialism could "neither regain its lost historical initiative nor reverse world development."

The Soviets saw both defensive and offensive possibilities in their own accretion of military power. Their strategic strength served a defensive role both in restraining the imperialists from threatening the Soviet homeland, and in promoting a "realistic approach" to international relations among Western ruling circles. Moreover, with the weakening of the American resolve to intervene militarily in Third World conflicts, the Soviet leadership could entertain hopes of utilizing their own vastly improved conventional power projection capabilities to further the cause of world revolution as well as to defend socialist gains.

With the immense potential which the Soviets perceived in their military power, it was hardly surprising to hear Brezhnev declare that the Soviet Union had "spared no efforts or resources" to keep the Soviet
armed forces well-equipped. 18

With regard to the economic aspect of the correlation, the Soviet leadership maintained that the U.S.S.R. would exert its "main influence on the world revolutionary process" through its "economic achievements." 19 There was a marked contrast here, however, between the Brezhnev and Khrushchev views on the importance of the economic correlation. Khrushchev held that the attainment of a "decisive preponderance" in the economic correlation was the prime condition for a peaceful victory of socialism in the international arena, and was willing, when necessary, to call for a diversion of economic resources from defense to other sectors of the economy. For Brezhnev, on the other hand, military considerations were preeminent. Economic advances provided the foundation for a strong defense. In his speech to the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Brezhnev assessed the need for economic successes thus:

The defense capability of the Soviet Union and, to no small extent, that of the entire socialist community, the possibility of countering the imperialist policy of aggression and war, depend on our economic achievements.

Defense needs were accorded priority over economic development considerations and Brezhnev conceded that large resources had to be appropriated for defense and thus not all of the country's resources could be utilized for promoting a rise in living standards. 21 In July 1971, Brezhnev again acknowledged that the Soviet Union could have "moved [its] economy ahead much faster" were it not for "large defense expenditures" 22 which remained a characteristic feature during the entire Brezhnev years.

The economic index that Soviet spokesmen used most often in comparing the Soviet economy with the American was the area of
industrial production. In his speech at the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in June 1969, Brezhnev observed:

In the economic sphere the distance separating us from the United States, the most powerful and richest country in the capitalist world, has also shortened appreciably. In 1960, our industrial output was 55 per cent of the American, while in 1968 it reached about 70 per cent.

One analyst expressed satisfaction that the world socialist system by 1970 contributed about two-fifths of the world industrial output as against one-fifth for 1950. But as Brezhnev's above-quoted statistics amply showed, the American industrial economy was much larger than the Soviet. Kortunov acknowledged U.S. primacy in the industrial area:

There is no doubt that the U.S. capitalist economy has displayed unprecedented dynamism. The U.S.A. has become the world's first industrial power, surpassing all others in scale of production.

Also, as the Soviet leadership recognized, the United States was technologically far more advanced than the Soviet Union, and Brezhnev warned against underrating the "strength of those with whom we have to compete in the scientific and technological sphere," adding that the "struggle [would] be a long and difficult one." A leading Soviet international relations scholar, Inozemtsev, stated that the experience accumulated by the leading capitalist countries, "above all the U.S.A.," in such high-technology fields as computers was of "considerable interest" to the Soviet Union. Clearly, the Soviets must have hoped that one of the positive benefits of a detente in United States-Soviet relations would be in the area of increased economic exchanges between the two countries, which would permit the U.S.S.R. to avail itself of American technological expertise. As we had noted in an earlier chapter, the Soviet leadership until 1970 was able to channel enough resources into the agricultural and consumer sectors of the economy to
allow for moderate growth in both these areas. Soviet spokesmen thus appeared reasonably sanguine about holding up the U.S.S.R. as a model for Third World development, especially since the country's economy had not yet manifested the signs of a severe economic downswing which was to become evident toward the end of the 1970s.

With regard to the political correlation, two developments played a dominant role in defining Soviet perceptions of their opportunities and limitations in the international arena: the faltering American military effort in Vietnam and the persisting Sino-Soviet schism. As two Soviet analysts described it:

... the world is now entering a phase of its development when the revolutionary forces, provided they are united and rallied together, have within their grasp the chance of reaching new frontiers from which to start a broad offensive against the positions of imperialism and its accomplices.

Assessing the "real correlation of forces between imperialism and the revolutionary movement on the threshold of the 1970s," Marinin and Sokolov concluded that "notwithstanding the difficulties and failures in individual detachments," the revolutionary forces had assumed the "historical offensive." In arriving at this appraisal, they took into account both the collapse of imperialist "optimism" of the 1960s as well as the "unfavourable influence ... on the conditions of the anti-imperialist struggle" which was exerted by the "anti-Leninist, hostile conduct" of the Chinese leadership.

Salvador Allende's election in Chile in September 1970 brought a left-wing government to power and provided a spur to Soviet confidence in the world revolutionary process. The Soviets also saw opportunities in Africa where, as one scholar described it, "reactionary regimes had been overthrown in the Sudan, Somalia and Libya," and where "the peoples
of Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea (Bissau) had entered the decisive stage in their armed struggle against the Portuguese colonists."³³

According to the documents of the June 1969 Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties, "[t]he social and political situation in the world" made it possible "to raise the anti-imperialist struggle to a new level. Decisive superiority over imperialism could be secured by intensifying the offensive against it."³⁴

Soviet discussions of the political aspect of the correlation centered on the growing internal and external constraints on U.S. policy as a result of the Vietnam conflict, the tasks of the world revolutionary movement, and the growing possibilities for a detente in East-West relations.

Slodovnik, referring to the American experience in Vietnam, stated that the United States could not impede the development of the world revolutionary process.³⁵ Vishnevsky succinctly encapsulated the Soviet viewpoint on this issue when he observed:

The growing world revolutionary process, the deepening of the general crisis of capitalism and the continuing change in the correlation of forces in favour of socialism reveal with increasing clarity the contradiction between the adventurist foreign policy course of American imperialism and its practical possibilities. Washington strategists have to pay increasing attention to stability on the home front because of the rapidly growing mass movement of protest against the Vietnam adventure and the militarisation of the country.³⁶

Soviet analysts saw in the American predicament in Vietnam not merely improved prospects for revolutionary advance but also greater possibilities for an amelioration in the level of hostility in U.S.-Soviet relations. This amelioration was possible because of the rise of a "moderate wing" among American ruling circles which assessed the correlation "soberly" and was inclined to "search for mutually
acceptable solutions to outstanding international issues." In Europe, the process of detente had got underway with the election of Willy Brandt as Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany. Brandt with his policy of Ostpolitik and his concept of "two states within one nation" set the stage for the normalization of Soviet relations with Western Europe.

From the Soviet perspective, then, the 1970s were to open up "real possibilities for resolving big problems . . . in the interests of peace, democracy and Socialism." and to provide "new and even wider opportunities for the offensive against imperialism." Soviet scholars, given the evidence of the failure of the American military effort in Vietnam, could again state confidently that imperialism had ceased to be the dominating force on the international scene. Gorokhov asserted that the socialist system was "steadily increasing its superiority," and Brezhnev declared that the Soviet leadership strove to make the socialist world "stronger today than yesterday, and stronger tomorrow than today."

While Brezhnev saw new opportunities "in the struggle for peace, democracy, national independence and socialism," he warned that "any weakening of socialist positions in the world" would have a negative impact on progress in these areas. Similarly, one analyst cautioned against a premature confidence in the preponderance of the forces of peace, democracy, and socialism, which would lead to a fragmentation of the world revolutionary movement.

On the whole, Soviet leaders and analysts expressed cautious faith in a resurging revolutionary tide. Deborin saw Soviet foreign policy as being "permeated with the spirit of revolutionary optimism." In a
speech in Hungary in November 1970, Brezhnev said that the Soviets were "full of optimism" with regard to the "prospects of the world socialist system." The vastly increased Soviet military strength doubtless played the major role in the rise of Soviet confidence in the overall correlation of forces. Tomashevsky, for instance, in speaking of the importance of the moral and political aspects of the correlation, emphasized that the effectiveness of these factors on the correlation of forces "increased tremendously when they rested on material strength."

Over the next few years, Soviet confidence in their international role and revolutionary potentialities was to grow steadily stronger—a development we shall explore in the ensuing section.

RISING TIDE OF OPTIMISM: 1971-1974

The period following the Twenty-Fourth CPSU Congress, in the words of one commentator, represented a "new stage in postwar history" characterized by the move toward peaceful coexistence and a retrenchment of American military power abroad. The already evident chronic problems of the Soviet economy must, for the Soviets, have paled in comparison with what they perceived as an economic crisis in America and the West—a result largely of the United States' war effort in Vietnam. These developments, in tandem, marked the beginning of an upsurge in Soviet optimism which was to reach its crest between 1975 and 1977.

Soviet faith in their military strength increased steadily during the course of the 1970s. Analysts frequently referred to the "enhanced might," the "growing economic and military might," of the Soviet Union and the socialist community. In addition, Soviet scholars and
leaders spoke of the collapse of U.S. military superiority and the American recognition of parity in the military-strategic area between the United States and the Soviet Union.

In a MEMO editorial of April 1971, it was observed that the capitalist states signed such agreements as the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty and the 1970 UN Declaration on Strengthening International Security because they took into account "above all, the economic and military might of the U.S.S.R., which had deprived the United States of the prospects of 'maintaining a decisive superiority' over the U.S.S.R. in the military sphere." By September 1972, after the major SALT I accords were signed by the U.S. and the Soviet Union, Sovetov drew attention to the importance of the "new balance in the military-economic potentials" of socialism and capitalism.

Another commentator explained that the "postwar foreign policy concepts of the United States which were based on the idea of creating and utilising military superiority over the U.S.S.R." were now superseded by the new principle of equality enshrined in the "Basic Principles of Relations Between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A." Inozemtsev echoed this assessment when he declared that the SALT I agreements had dealt "serious blows" to "the dogmas of the 'cold war,' and the conceptions of 'intimidation' and 'superior force'." Arbatov asserted that the "growth of the Soviet Union's defensive might dispelled hopes that the U.S.A. would be able to achieve military superiority. . . ." Soviet spokesmen also specifically adverted to American admission of strategic parity. In reporting a speech by President Nixon, Pravda noted that the U.S. President "was obliged to acknowledge the radical change in the military alignment of forces in the world arena and the
achievements of the U.S.S.R. in this area," and quoted him as saying that "the United States and the Soviet Union have equal nuclear potential." A _MEMO_ editorial spoke in terms of the balance of forces (balans sil) which led President Nixon to declare the end of U.S. strategic superiority and the beginning of a strategic equilibrium (ravnovesiia). In a similar vein, Anatoly Gromyko and Kokoshin stated:

The recognition by the U.S. ruling circles of the nuclear parity between the Soviet Union and the United States was recorded in the documents signed during the May 1972 meeting in Moscow. Yet another commentator observed that the term "military bipolarity" in vogue in the West mirrored "the forced recognition of the political, economic and military power of the Soviet Union and the nuclear missile parity that existed between the USSR and the USA." Soviet confidence in their military strength was reinforced by the evident failure of the American military venture in Vietnam. In mid-1971, when the United States was still militarily involved in the Indochinese conflict, a Soviet analyst, reviewing America's Southeast Asia policy, remarked that at that stage the vast majority of Americans no longer entertained illusions of a military victory and wanted a speedy end to the war. Matveev directly linked growing American difficulties with the rise of Soviet military power:

The defensive efforts of the socialist countries, the Soviet Union in particular, have borne their fruit. They have proved to be a distinctive bridle which now restrains the militant strategists of the imperialist camp.

The Soviets maintained that the "change in the balance of power" in favor of socialism forced U.S. ruling circles to reexamine their foreign policy strategy, and arrange relations with the Soviet Union on the
principle of peaceful coexistence.\textsuperscript{62} Thus, the positive shifts in
international relations, such as the relaxation of East-West tensions
and the American military withdrawal from Vietnam, were perceived as
being made possible by the changed correlation of forces, in which the
element of military power played a crucial role:

The socialist states have proved able to put up against
international imperialism . . . such economic and defensive
strength which has created an entirely new situation in the
world, and compelled the ruling classes of the Western powers
not only to take into account the new socialist world but also
to recognize the vital necessity of arranging relations with
the USSR and other socialist countries on the principle of
peaceful coexistence.\textsuperscript{63}

In a November 1973 speech, Brezhnev underlined that the "real might" of
the socialist countries, along with other factors, had resulted in an
increase in their influence on the entire system of international
relations.\textsuperscript{64}

With the signing of the Paris Agreements in January 1973 and the
final American withdrawal from Vietnam, the Soviets, in discussing the
"military-political defeat" of imperialism,\textsuperscript{65} elaborated on the
"bankruptcy and futility of the strategy of local wars of aggression."\textsuperscript{66}
The "real relationship of world forces," they maintained, had led to a
"crumbling" of the foreign policy strategy of imperialism, which had
counted on military strength.\textsuperscript{67} Even as they recognized the limitations
of U.S. military power, the Soviets appeared to perceive an increased
role for the projection of Soviet military might. A. A. Yepishev, head
of the Main Political Administration of the Armed Forces, wrote in the
Soviet Communist Party Journal in 1972:

[I]n the present era, which is characterized by a
strengthening of the position of socialism and by the sharp
antagonism between the two social systems, a deepening of the
external function of the Soviet Armed Forces has logically
taken place.\textsuperscript{68}
Thus, in the attainment of strategic parity and in the then prevalent mood in the United States for a retrenchment of American military engagements around the globe, the Soviets saw new opportunities for the use of their own military power projection capabilities to expand their influence in international affairs.

Throughout the 1971-1974 period, the Soviet leadership held high defense expenditures to be sacrosanct. Soviet Defense Minister Grechko asserted that "increasing the country's defense capability in every way possible . . . and constant readiness to defend the great gains of socialism" continued "to be one of the most important tasks of the Party. . . ." Soviet Defense Minister Grechko asserted that "increasing the country's defense capability in every way possible . . . and constant readiness to defend the great gains of socialism" continued "to be one of the most important tasks of the Party. . . ." Brezhnev again underlined the defense-economy connection when he stated that the USSR's "defence capability continue[d] to be strengthened on the basis of the overall growth of the country's economy." But while Soviet economic growth rates had started their decline in the 1970s, defense expenditures continued to rise, demonstrating the Soviet resolve to maintain the strength of the USSR military even at relatively high cost.

Soviet discussion of the economic correlation of forces between 1971 and 1974 tended to emphasize East-West cooperation over competition. Trukhanovsky, in the month following the Twenty-Fourth Party Congress, observed that "[e]conomic ties with bourgeois countries play[ed] an important role in Soviet foreign policy." Another writer commented on the increasing recognition in the United States of the existence of objective conditions for an expansion of economic relations with the Soviet Union.

This stress on East-West, and especially Soviet-American, economic cooperation was probably related to a decision by the Soviet leadership
to alleviate some of the problems of the U.S.S.R. economy through the import of Western technology and capital. A 1972 Soviet description of the types of products to be exchanged between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. in a series of contracts signed in late 1971 indicated the Soviet desire for access to American technology:

Under these contracts United States firms will supply the Soviet Union with mining, oil and other industrial plant [sic] and sell the patents for a number of technological processes.

In a general way the Soviets continued to speak of the socialist system's "steadily growing economic might," and of Soviet successes in industrial production. Kudrov, in elaborating on the economic achievements of socialism, mentioned that the economic development rate in socialist countries was higher than that in the capitalist world, and that the socialist share in world industrial production was rising. But he also acknowledged the problem of effectiveness of production and observed that there was a considerable lag in labor productivity, both in industry and agriculture. Soviet labor productivity was projected to reach 75 percent of the 1972 U.S. level by 1975 through a program aimed at more efficient utilization of production funds and capital investments. On the whole, Soviet comment on the economic aspect of East-West competition during the period under consideration tended to be rather muted.

Analysts also contrasted the more or less stable Soviet economy with the economic crisis in the United States and the West. No doubt encouraged by the deteriorating situation in Western economies, Sanakoyev wrote:

The achievements of socialist countries in economic and cultural development demonstrate vividly the great advantages of the new socialist system, which, against the background of
the deepest crises and cataclysms experienced by bourgeois society, ensures the stable advance of the fraternal countries. . . .

Politically, the Soviets during this period saw favorable new opportunities on the horizon. "World development at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s," according to one commentator, was "characterized by the further strengthening of the positions of socialism and all revolutionary anti-imperialist forces on the one hand, and a sharp aggravation of the economic and political instabilities of capitalism on the other."

At the Twenty-Fourth Congress in March 1971, Brezhnev had formulated Soviet policy as combining "firm rebuffs to aggression with the constructive line of settling pressing international problems, and of maintaining normal and . . . good relations with states belonging to the other social system." He also defined the international duty of the U.S.S.R. in terms of helping to "invigorate the worldwide anti-imperialist struggle."

By 1973, the process of East-West and Soviet-American detente was well under way. From the Soviet perspective, this development had been made possible by the favorable change in the correlation of forces in which the factor of military-strategic parity played a significant role. The series of arms control agreements signed between September 1971 and May 1972, including the SALT I agreements, appeared to formalize Soviet-American detente. In Europe, the signing of the Final Quadripartite Protocol on the status of West Berlin in June 1972 and the convening of a European Security Conference in July 1973 represented, for the Soviets, positive steps in the direction of resolving outstanding European problems.
Also, in 1973, the Americans pulled out of Vietnam in circumstances that did not augur well for U.S. military activism abroad. In this incipient trend, the Soviets saw a clear and promising signal that the United States would be a less potent factor in constraining Soviet freedom of action in the international arena. One analyst, in the wake of the American withdrawal from Vietnam, opined:

The inexorably changing relationship of world forces in favour of socialism, the growing economic and military might of the Soviet Union and the socialist community as a whole . . . have exposed the utopian character of the plans to crush socialism through "superior strength" and check the disintegration of the colonial system. The foreign policy strategy of imperialism, which had counted on military strength, is . . . crumbling in Europe and in other parts of the world.82

In the American defeat in Vietnam as well as in the willingness of the U.S. to contemplate a relaxation of tensions with the U.S.S.R., the Soviets perceived the dominance of "realistic" tendencies among ruling circles which correctly appraised the correlation of forces and came to the realization that war was an unacceptable means for solving international problems.83

Another significant event, which was to offer the Soviets possibilities for actively furthering the revolutionary cause, was the overthrow in April 1974 of the right-wing dictatorship in Portugal and the subsequent fall of the Portuguese colonial empire in Africa. Soviet revolutionary optimism grew steadily during this period as the constraints on their revolutionary activity, especially in the form of vigorous American opposition, grew fewer.

Sanakoyev and Kapchenko, writing in September 1974, concluded that international development was characterized by the "ever more rapid advance of world socialism," and the "accelerating disintegration and decay of imperialism." This trend, they declared, influenced both the
foreign and home policies of individual states and determined the basic
direction of change in the system of international relations. The
latter in turn stimulated the world-wide revolutionary process. A
MEMO editorial of the same period stated that the contemporary epoch of
world development presented the "growth of opportunities for new
advances for the revolutionary and progressive forces."

These positive political portents served in large measure to offset
Soviet disappointments in the Third World. The U.S.S.R. lost its
foothold in Egypt when President Sadat expelled Soviet military
personnel from that country in mid-1972 and decided, after the
stalemated October 1973 Arab-Israeli war, to turn to peaceful means
(with the help of active American mediation) of regaining Egyptian
territory lost in the 1967 Middle East war. This development
represented a serious setback to Soviet influence in the Middle East and
perhaps provided the primary impetus for a shift in the emphasis of
Soviet Third World strategy. Soviet leaders in the mid-1970s
increasingly turned their attention to supporting Marxist regimes in
Asia, Africa, and Latin America in an effort to enhance their global
power and influence.

In Chile, the Soviets saw their hopes for the success of peaceful
revolutionary transition shattered when President Allende was overthrown
in a rightist military coup in 1973. For the Soviets, the Chilean
tragedy underscored the importance of military might in sustaining and
protecting revolutionary gains. On the whole, events in Chile and the
deteriorating Soviet-Egyptian relationship only served to propel Soviet
policy in a more militant direction.

The formative events in shaping Soviet expectations with regard to
imminent opportunities for the extension of Soviet influence in the Third World were the American retreat from Vietnam, and the fall of the Portuguese empire in 1974. Thus, even though the Soviets did not make major gains in the Third World during this period, they were optimistic about the prospects for furthering their interests.

Soviet views on the overall correlation of forces assumed an increasingly more confident tenor as the 1970s rolled by. In 1971, commentators referred generally to the "further change in the correlation of forces ... in favour of peace, democracy and socialism," and the "continuing change in the correlation of forces in the world arena." One analyst stated that the "world balance of forces had changed still more in favour of socialism, peace, and progress." These assertions were non-specific in nature and offered little indication of the extent of Soviet optimism.

By mid-1972, after the SALT I agreements were signed and the situation of military-strategic parity was officially acknowledged in the U.S. by administration spokesmen, Soviet writers spoke of a "new and important change in the global alignment of forces" and referred to the "balance [balans] of strategic forces, resulting from the development of the nuclear-missile potential of the U.S.S.R.," as the single most important development of the post-war period.

Sovetov remarked that the "imperialists' possession of 'preponderant forces' steadily faded away and today does not exist any longer." He added confidently that the "historic initiative" had been "completely and forever wrested" from the imperialists, and that "radical changes" had taken place in the "very structure" of present day international relations—a sphere in which the superiority of
socialism was "most evident." International relations were being shaped "largely under the impact of socialist foreign policy." After the American military withdrawal from Vietnam in 1974, it was asserted that "not a single international issue" could be settled without taking the policy of the U.S.S.R. and other socialist countries into account. Sanakoyev remarked that the relationship of forces in the international arena at the "present stage" had developed "as never before" in favor of the forces of peace and progress. Socialism was now exerting "an ever greater positive influence on world affairs."

Soviet commentators repeatedly stressed that the entire system of international relations was undergoing a "fundamental restructuring" under the impact of socialist influence, and that the "prerequisites" for this "radical restructuring" were present by the early 1970s. Brezhnev remarked in August 1973 that the international situation offered hope that detente was not a "temporary phenomenon" but the "beginning of a fundamental reconstruction of international relations." And in his speech to the World Congress of Peace Forces on October 26, 1973, Brezhnev was able to speak of the socialist "philosophy of historical optimism" where peace with the capitalist world would go hand in hand with social progress.

Soviet commentary on the correlation of forces was characterized by a rising tide of optimism. From the Soviet perspective, socialism was "gaining the upper hand in all major spheres of life." Zhurkin contended that American recognition of the potentialities of socialism in the military sphere "where the balance of strength is expressed most clearly and materially" constituted a "considerable departure from the traditional canons of official U.S. ideology." He added, with regard
to the correlation of forces:

In analysing the changing relationship of forces, special emphasis is being made on the balance of strength between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. Here an important element is an understanding of the fact that the Soviet Union is militarily and economically the strongest power of the socialist system and the growth of its powerful potential—both military and non-military—... is the basis of the changes that have taken place in the world balance of forces and which create a growing barrier in the way of those who seek to promote interventionist acts and preach the policy of strength.

This rising tide of Soviet optimism was to reach its crest in 1975-1977 and was to culminate in the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979. Increasing pressures in the United States in the late 1970s, and especially after the invasion of Afghanistan, for greater defense expenditures and a more resolute opposition to Soviet global policies resulted in a toning down of Soviet confidence in their ability to "restructure" the system of international relations according to the Soviet design.

ANALYSIS

Sootnoshenie sil continued to be the favored term used by Soviet leaders and analysts in referring to the overall correlation of forces. Soviet writers during this period generally tended toward a realistic assessment of their potential in the economic and political areas of the correlation. With the attainment of strategic parity, commentators began to draw attention to the balance of forces (balans sil) or equilibrium (ravnovesie) in the military correlation, and especially stressed American recognition of this development. By mid-1972, when the SALT accords were signed, the total for the United States and the Soviet Union in numbers of strategic launchers were 2140 and 2142,
respectively. Having labored for over two decades since World War II under a situation of strategic inferiority, the Soviets were particularly gratified by the official American acknowledgement of a rough military-strategic equality between the United States and the Soviet Union. Almost all their references to the equilibrium of forces in the military sphere were made in the context of American comment on this facet of the superpower relationship. This fact alone points to the tremendous importance attached by Soviet spokesmen to the role of the military aspect in the favorable movement of the correlation and in the emergence and dominance of "realistic" tendencies among Western and American ruling circles which correctly appraised the correlation.

Of the events which played a significant role in boosting Soviet optimism, the attainment of strategic parity was undoubtedly considered to be the most decisive by Soviet spokesmen. This development (and the favorable international changes in its train) was ranked by Soviet scholars along with the October Revolution and the Second World War as representing the three major qualitative shifts in the movement of the world correlation of forces.

The military factor was, in the Soviet view, preeminent in helping the process of restructuring the entire system of international relations. The West, and America in particular, was "compelled" to accept the principle of peaceful coexistence with the socialist world because of the "growing appreciation of the real correlation of world forces" and the realization that war was "unacceptable as a means for solving international problems." Moreover, Soviet military power provided the springboard for a more active Soviet presence in the socialist countries and the Third World.
Soviet policies during the period under review reflected this emphasis on military means. Apart from providing covert military support to various insurgency groups in Africa and the Middle East, Soviet personnel for a short time took direct part in the air defense of Egypt in 1970. Also, during this period, according to Hosmer and Wolfe, Soviet economic aid to the Third World for the first time lagged far behind military assistance. Soviet defense expenditures continued their rise in the 1970s, even as the economic growth rate fell steadily during the decade. These policies were quite consonant with the Soviet view which, while insisting on the importance of moral and political factors, acknowledged that the change in the correlation of world forces was "above all, a result of the steady growth in the might of world socialism."

As the Americans began winding down their military operations in Vietnam, the Soviet leadership was thus becoming more venturesome in its use of the military instrument. This Soviet assertiveness provided a stark contrast to the American outlook, which became more inward-looking under the combined impact of the Vietnam debacle, the Watergate scandals, and the economic recession. In the face of what they perceived to be a general retreat of world imperialism, Soviet scholars believed that the U.S.S.R. had wrested the agenda-setting role from the United States and had become the dominant factor in shaping international relations. According to the Soviets, imperialist forces were on the defensive, while socialism was on the offensive and was victorious.

In the Soviet view, the entire system of international relations was in the process of being restructured according to new principles.
which involved detente and peaceful coexistence with the West; the application of the Brezhnev Doctrine and socialist internationalism in relations with other socialist countries; and active struggle to further the revolutionary process in the Third World. As one Soviet scholar observed:

In the present epoch characterized by mankind's transition from capitalism to socialism, when the working class and its allies are becoming the dominating force of social development, the new principles—those of socialist internationalism, support of the liberation struggle of the peoples, and of peaceful coexistence of states belonging to different socio-political systems—are coming to play an increasingly leading role in international affairs.

This burgeoning Soviet confidence in the predominance of socialist influence in international affairs was to set the stage for the highly optimistic appraisals of the correlation of forces during the mid-1970s.

CONCLUSION

Soviet optimism regarding the correlation of forces gathered increasing momentum between 1969 and 1974. This optimism was primarily based upon the benefits that the Soviets perceived as flowing from the attainment of strategic parity with the United States—peace with the West together with optimum conditions for a revolutionary transformation of the world. In the 1970s, the collapse of the Portuguese empire in Africa was to provide ample scope for the spread of socialist influence on that continent. This, coupled with the increasing possibilities for revolutionary gains in Ethiopia and parts of Asia, enhanced Soviet confidence in the ability of the U.S.S.R. to determine the course of international politics.

Between 1975 and 1977, Soviet confidence was to reach its peak as a
result of the evolving world situation, which included the continuation of detente in Europe together with the opportunities for an acceleration of the revolutionary process in Asia and Africa. We will explore the implications of these developments on the Soviet assessment of the correlation of forces in the following chapter.
NOTES


3. See Ibid., p. 78.


7. A. Nikonov, "Sovremennaia revoliutsiia v voennom dele i nauka o mezhdunarodnykh otnosheniakh" [The Modern Revolution in Military Affairs and the Science of International Relations], MEMO (2) February 1969, p. 3.

8. Ibid., p. 11. Emphasis added.


21. Ibid., p. 96.


27. Brezhnev, The CPSU in the Struggle for Unity, p. 94.


31. Marinin and Sokolov, "Imperializm i revoliutsionnye sily," pp. 4-5.

32. Ibid., p. 4.


42. Ibid., p. 86.

43. F. Silin, "Tekushchie problemy mirovoi politiki" [Current Problems of World Politics], MEMO (4) April 1969, p. 68.


45. Brezhnev, The CPSU in the Struggle for Unity, p. 211.


49. Ibid., p. 58.


51. A. Sovetov, "Peaceful Coexistence--A Real Factor in International Relations," IA (9) September 1972, p. 11.

53. N. Inozemtsev, "Integrity and Effectiveness of Soviet Foreign Policy," Pravda, June 9, 1972, pp. 4-5, as trans. in XXIV CDSP 23, July 5, 1972, p. 2.


58. V. Petrovsky, "Current U.S. Thinking on Foreign Policy," IA (11) November 1973, p. 76. For a statement that "bourgeois political leaders" recognized the fact that "the nuclear arsenals of the USA and the USSR were roughly comparable," see V. Matveyev, "Realities and Demands of the Nuclear Age," IA (4) April 1974, p. 57.


60. V. Matveev, "Bor'ba za mir v meniaiushchemsia mire" [The Struggle for Peace in a Changing World], MEMO (12) December 1971, p. 3.


67. Ibid., p. 58. Emphasis added.

68. A. A. Yepishev, "Istoricheskaia missia armii sotsialisticheskogo
gosudarstva" [The Historical Mission of the Army of the
Socialist State], Kommunist (7) May 1972, p. 64. It was
during the 1969-1975 period, according to Mark Katz, that
Soviet thinking on the relationship between local war and
world war changed. While previously the Soviets held that
local wars would inevitably lead to a world war, they now
proffered the view that such an escalation was not likely
because of the increased strength of the Soviet Union. This
transformation had a significant effect on Soviet views
of Third World conflict. As Katz puts it: "The ability to
prevent the outbreak of world war through the increased
strength of socialism meant not only that the U.S.S.R. could
play a greater role in aiding progressive forces to counter
a local war launched by the imperialists, but also that the
Soviet Union could itself make foreign policy gains through
local wars without fear of world war." (See Mark N. Katz,
The Third World in Soviet Military Thought (London: Croom
Helm, 1982), p. 69.)

69. A. Grechko, "Standing Guard Over the Homeland," Pravda,
February 23, 1973, p. 2, as trans. in XXV CDSP 8, March 21, 1973,
p. 20.

70. Brezhnev, Following Lenin's Course, pp. 378-379.

71. V. Trukhanovsky, "The Leninist Policy of Peace and Cooperation

72. Ye. S. Shershnev, "Soviet-American Relations and Their
Prospects," SSHA (1) January 1973, pp. 18-28, as trans. in


p. 82.

75. See, for instance, A. Mileikovsky, "The Economic Competition
Between the Two Systems and the Problems of Peace," IA (4)
April 1972, p. 39.

76. See K. Mikulsky, "Trends in World Economic Development,
IA (4) April 1971, p. 10.

77. V. Kudrov, "Piatidesiatiletie SSSR i ekonomicheskoe
sovernovanie dvukh sistem" [Fifty Years of the U.S.S.R. and the
Economic Competition of the Two Systems], MEMO (10) October
1972, pp. 3-13. On the problems of the Soviet economy, see
also Brezhnev, Following Lenin's Course, p. 379.

79. Editorial, "Ob ugлubлении общего кризиса капитализма" [The Deepening of the General Crisis of Capitalism], MEMO (9) September 1974, p. 3.


81. Ibid., p. 146.

82. Vidyasova, "Crisis of Imperialism's Foreign Policy," p. 58.

83. See Brezhnev's speech of October 1973 in Following Lenin's Course, p. 328.


85. Ibid., p. 83.


90. V. Zhurkin, "Imperialism i mezhdunarodno-politicheskie krizisy" [Imperialism and International Political Crises], MEMO (8) August 1972, p. 12.


92. Ibid. Emphasis added.

93. Ibid., p. 3. Emphasis added.


95. Vidyasova, "Crisis of Imperialism's Foreign Policy," p. 56.


100. Brezhnev, Following Lenin's Course, p. 267.

101. Ibid., p. 322, 327.


104. Ibid.

105. Culled from a variety of Western sources, David Holloway gives the following figures for the strategic balance as of June 30, 1972:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U.S.A.</th>
<th>U.S.S.R.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1054 ICBMs</td>
<td>1527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>656 SLBMs</td>
<td>459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>430 Bombers</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2140 Total</td>
<td>2142</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


110. On this point, see Gelman, The Brezhnev Politburo, p. 86; and Holloway, The Soviet Union and the Arms Race, p. 130.


CHAPTER VIII


The present chapter explores the Soviet perspective on the correlation of forces during a period of heady revolutionary successes in the Third World. Beginning with the fall of Saigon in April 1975, the USSR, often with Cuban assistance, actively helped in setting up pro-Soviet Marxist regimes in countries of Africa and Asia. The 1979 Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua brought a left-wing government to power in America's hinterland. Soviet military muscle, directly or indirectly, played a large role in consolidating the power of these governments against internal opposition. By 1976, Kissinger had been forced to acknowledge that Soviet global aspirations were "now rooted in real power, rather than a rhetorical manifestation of a universalist doctrine."1

The cumulative impact of Soviet gains in the Third World initially overrode disappointments stemming from the growing obstacles to the process of detente in U.S.-U.S.S.R. relations. Soviet optimism regarding the correlation of forces reached its peak between 1975 and 1977. The socialist "peace offensive" of the early 1970s had, in a sense, brought both the promise of peace with the West and an acceleration of the revolutionary process in the rest of the world. To be sure, the Soviets did suffer setbacks in Egypt and Somalia, and their differences with the Chinese survived Mao's death in 1976. While they were not indifferent to these unfavorable developments, the overall trends, from the Soviet perspective, were of a positive nature.
The neo-isolationist mood in the United States in the wake of the Vietnam war meant that the only power capable of offering effective resistance to Soviet international activism had opted out of the arena of struggle. The reunification of Vietnam in 1975 appeared to provide compelling evidence of the impotence of the vast American military machine in supporting U.S. allies against an "invincible" socialist tide. The crippling effect upon American foreign policy of the Watergate crisis and the Vietnam debacle signalled to the Soviets a more or less permanent retreat from a course of U.S. global power projection.

In the last two years of the decade, even as more countries in Asia and Latin America came under the sway of socialism, the deterioration in Soviet-American relations continued apace. Moreover, Soviet fears of a drawing together of its two principal rivals—the United States and China—began to gather momentum: the two countries established full diplomatic relations in January 1979, and soon thereafter, in April 1979, China abrogated the Sino-Soviet Friendship Treaty. In 1978, China and Japan signed a peace treaty which contained a thinly disguised anti-hegemony clause aimed against the Soviet Union.

Between 1978 and 1979, Soviet leaders and analysts no longer expressed unqualified confidence with regard to the correlation of forces. A worsening Soviet economic situation coupled with pressures in the United States for greater defense spending and a qualitative escalation of the arms race caused concern in the U.S.S.R. about the direction of international events. Even though the process of European detente by and large continued unhampered through the 1970s, Soviet-American detente registered a steady decline after the successes of the early 1970s. The period of rising Soviet optimism which had
begun at the turn of the 1970s culminated in the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. Thereafter, a note of pessimism and defensiveness crept into Soviet analyses of the correlation of forces.

We shall examine evolving Soviet perceptions of the correlation in the two sections below. In the first part of the chapter, we shall consider the period from 1975 to 1977, when Soviet confidence was at its acme. In addition to speaking in glowing terms about the correlation of forces, a handful of Soviet spokesmen expressed their optimism by referring to a preponderance (pereves sil) in favor of the forces of peace, progress and socialism. Soviet views on the correlation of forces in the subsequent two years (1978-1979) were much more reserved and qualified in their expressions of confidence—a development we shall explore in the second section.

APOGEE OF SOVIET OPTIMISM: 1975-1977

Soviet commentary on the military correlation of forces stressed the vast military power of the Soviet Union and the situation of military-strategic parity between the United States and the Soviet Union. One analyst observed that the "inexorable growth of socialism's might" and the "change in the balance of forces in its favour" had made possible a "new qualitative stride" in the influence of socialist foreign policy on the international process. Other writers referred in general to the growth of powerful socialist forces capable of countering "bellicose imperialist reaction"; the "immensely increased" military might of the socialist countries; and the "strong defense potential" of the Soviet Union and the socialist commonwealth. Kortunov attributed
the need for a fundamental restructuring of international relations to the "growing might" of world socialism.  

Trofimenko observed that while the United States had been counting on the fact that in the final analysis it could attain "indisputable superiority" over the U.S.S.R. in the "important area" of strategic capability, the Soviet Union, by dint of thrusting upon America "high rates of competition in the military sphere," had neutralized this American advantage. Soviet spokesmen during this period frequently referred to the military-strategic parity obtaining between the United States and the Soviet Union. This parity was considered essential in the shift toward "realistic" thinking among members of Western ruling circles who, having correctly appraised the correlation of forces, acquiesced in the steady and inevitable socialist transformation of the world.  

By 1976, several corollary themes emerged in connection with Soviet discussions of the military correlation of forces. Following a vigorous effort by the U.S.S.R. to gain footholds in former Portuguese colonies in Africa, which included the judicious use of their growing military power, the specter of a looming Soviet military menace and Soviet military superiority began to be raised in the West, especially in the United States. Soviet leaders and analysts responded with firm denials of a Soviet military threat and repeatedly insisted on the existence of a rough Soviet-American military parity rather than Soviet "superiority" in this area. The U.S.S.R., Brezhnev underlined, was not seeking military superiority:

We do not seek to upset the approximate equilibrium of military strength existing at present, say, between East and West in Central Europe, or between the USSR and the USA. But
in return we insist that no one else should seek to upset it in his favor.

Soviet analysts also sought to deflect charges of striving for military superiority by calling attention to American military might, high defense spending in the United States, and earlier false alarms regarding the bomber and missile gaps. One commentator observed that the "ideology of militarism" continued to hold sway in the U.S. Nikolayev took note of the "unbridled inflation of the U.S. military budget." The same writer went on to add that talk in the U.S. about Soviet military superiority was an "invention" which was being cavalierly bandied about without reference to precise data and with a view to justifying a high level of military spending. He concurred with the opinion of a journalist who wrote in the *Christian Science Monitor* that the contemporary scare about a Soviet military threat was akin to the missile-gap myth which in the early 1960s served to provide the impetus for increased spending on defense and a vastly superior American strategic arsenal.

Arbatov, echoing this theme, stated that the 1950s bomber gap campaign, during which "major military programs" were adopted, was later found to be based upon an overstatement of the number of Soviet bombers. Similarly, the "missile gap" scare of the early 1960s, he asserted, resulted in "[m]issile-building programs of unprecedented scale." Even though "it was [later] admitted that the Soviet 'missile threat' had been overstated" (by a factor of 30, according to Arbatov), the United States had proceeded with its strategic missile program.

The noteworthy point in this polemic regarding the military correlation between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. is that the emphasis of Soviet commentary in the latter half of the 1970s was marked by vigorous
denials of Soviet military superiority, accompanied by a staunch insistence on the existence of a rough military parity. This was in contrast to early 1970 discussions of parity, which were generally couched in the context of American recognition of the Soviet status of equality with the United States in this area. Soviet military power had come of age and the tenor of Soviet discussions on this subject reflected their growing confidence in this aspect of the correlation.

Thus, while Soviet analysts pointed to the negative consequences of the arms race and by late 1977 accused U.S. ruling circles of attempting to gain "unilateral advantages" over the U.S.S.R. by "developing new types and systems of weapons capable of influencing the overall balance of forces," they argued that "[a]ny imperialist attempts to reach military superiority over the Soviet Union and the socialist community" were "doomed to failure." While Soviet strategic strength was seen as having tied the hands of the imperialists, Soviet conventional power was perceived as having made possible active Soviet support of Marxist regimes in the Third World. Strategic military parity, in the ultimate sense, was considered to be the guarantor of social progress and the Soviets were determined to uphold it even at tremendous cost.

Soviet commentators also expressed satisfaction at the futility of American military power in attaining imperialist aims. According to one Soviet analyst, the new alignment of forces in the world had forced the imperialists to recognize that "history's choice between capitalism and socialism [could not] be determined through military means." Another writer declared that the American defeat in Vietnam demonstrated in concentrated fashion the inability of the imperialists to attempt by military means to reverse the direction of the correlation of forces.
The change in the world balance of forces, from the Soviet perspective, had dashed all imperialist hopes for a military victory over socialism and Brezhnev emphasized that the U.S.S.R. would spend on defense "exactly as much as is needed for the reliable security of the Soviet Union and for the defense . . . of the gains of socialism, so that potential aggressors [would] not be tempted to try by force to decide in their favor the historical controversy between the two opposing social systems. . . ."20

The prime importance of the military aspect of the correlation of forces in furthering socialist aims was clearly recognized and duly acknowledged by Soviet scholars and leaders. The "might of socialism," said Granov, "exerted a tremendous restraining influence on the aggressive plans of world reaction."21 Vakhrameyev observed that "[a]s for the alignment of forces in the military sphere, the socialist community possesse[d] all the necessary means of protecting the historic socialist gains and the cause of peace and security on earth."22 Soviet military might played an important role in Soviet political successes, and the failure of the Chilean revolution only reinforced the Soviet belief in the need for a revolution to be able to defend itself.23

Thus, even as the Soviets argued that the "category of correlation of forces in the world cannot and should not be reduced to the correlation of states' military potentials, and that in the ultimate end this correlation is nothing but the correlation of class forces in the worldwide system of international relations,"24 they agreed that "[t]he military strength of a state is by all means a decisive element of its position in the world,"25 and that the "high military potential of the socialist countries [was] among the decisive factors for preserving
peace and the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems."  

In the area of the economic correlation of forces, Soviet scholars spoke in general terms of socialist successes, but they also referred to shortcomings in the Soviet economy. Granov wrote that the "transformation of the USSR into a great industrial power . . . refute[d] the myth of the inability of socialism to ensure the building of the most modern economy." Rymalov attested to the "steady consolidation of the role of socialism in the world economy," and stated that the socialist share of world industrial production had risen from twenty per cent in the early 1950s to roughly forty per cent in the early 1970s. According to one analyst, "[a] modern multi-structural industry, large-scale mechanised agriculture and advanced science constitute[d] the basis of the USSR's great economic might."  

Soviet writers also favorably compared the steady economic growth in the U.S.S.R. with the crisis situation in the economies of Western countries between the early and mid-1970s. Against the background of "incessant economic crises and production slumps," "unbridled inflation," and the "currency crisis" in the West, especially the United States, the Soviets argued that the socialist countries had the "most dynamic, steadily developing economy." Moreover, in an effort to display the advantages of their economy, Soviet scholars often referred to the availability in the U.S.S.R. of such benefits as free medical care and better working conditions.  

In spite of the apparent enthusiasm with which the Soviets enumerated socialist economic successes, it was clear by the mid-1970s that the continuing secular slow-down in the rate of economic growth in
the Soviet Union had made it imperative to predicate economic growth on increased labor productivity and effective use of resources, i.e., on qualitative rather than quantitative criteria. Lagging Soviet labor productivity, according to Soviet leaders and analysts, presented a serious problem at a time when increases in growth rates in the U.S.S.R. depended on "intensive" rather than "extensive" development. At a meeting celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the formation of the U.S.S.R., Brezhnev formulated the principal economic task as consisting of a shift of emphasis to "intensive methods of running the economy:"

The point is to generate economic growth more and more by increasing labor productivity and accelerating the progress of science and technology, by fuller utilization of productive capacities already in operation, by increasing the yield of every ruble invested in the economy, every ton of metal, fuel, cement and fertilizer used.

Efficiency of production and the overall scientific-technological level of industry were seen as crucial factors in Soviet-American competition. While Soviet analysts maintained that their higher rates of growth in the early 1970s had permitted them to outstrip the U.S.A. in the production of such items as iron, coal, and steel, they also acknowledged that the U.S.S.R. lagged behind the U.S.A. in important areas of production, "including those requiring higher levels of processing--in the products of the instrument and electronic industries, plastics, synthetic fiber, and electric power, and in the level of automation of production and introduction of computers."

According to Kudrov, the economic competition between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. could not be understood as a "process of struggle over unchanging, stable indices and goals." He observed that while the Soviets at one time accorded priority to catching up with the United
States in the per capita production of steel, "[t]oday, to speak of steel alone does not mean much. . . ." 38

On the whole, then, while the Soviets claimed a steady narrowing of the gap between the economies of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., they acknowledged the industrial and technological primacy of the United States. America, stated one scholar, ranked "first in the world in the overall level of science and technology, and particularly in their application in practice." 39 The Soviet Union, in the sixth decade since the revolution, continued to remain the "world's second biggest industrial producer." 40

By mid-1977, one Soviet writer could claim only that the "fulfillment of the Tenth Five-Year Plan in 1980" would "increase the Soviet national income to about 85 per cent of the USA's in 1975. . . ." 41 This was a far cry from Khrushchev's exuberant hopes of surpassing the productive potential of the U.S. economy by 1980. The Soviet per capita gross national product by the beginning of the 1980s was only half that of the United States. 42 Thus, even though the Soviet leadership sought comfort in the economic difficulties and low growth rates in Western countries during the latter 1970s, it could not express unqualified satisfaction with the rate of economic progress in the U.S.S.R.

Soviet leaders and analysts during this period chose more frequently to stress the magnitude of the economic successes already achieved rather than to speak of untrammelled future economic glories. The Soviet Union, it was asserted, had reached the stage of "developed socialism," which was the second stage in the socialist phase of development. 43 Soviet leaders and analysts refrained from predicting
the time-frame in which a communist society of plenty would emerge in the U.S.S.R. As the Brezhnev era progressed, the Soviet regime appeared to rely more on success in military rather than economic competition in furthering Soviet international goals.

Along with growing confidence in their military might, the Soviets appeared to view the movement of the political correlation with a high degree of optimism. Socialist victories in Vietnam and Laos, and the successful backing of Marxist regimes in Angola and Ethiopia, led Soviet analysts to speak confidently of the "growing momentum of the world revolutionary process."44 At the Twenty-Fifth Congress of the CPSU, Brezhnev declared the contemporary epoch to be one of "radical social change" where the "positions of socialism [were] expanding and growing stronger."45 The socialist community was seen as "the chief transformative force in international relations, and a powerful accelerator of social progress."46 Socialist ideas, according to Soviet commentators, were spreading "all over the zone of the national liberation movement."47 The changes in world social development of the 1970s, stated Timofeyev, mirrored above all "the further shift in the alignment of socio-economic and political forces on a global scale."48

From the Soviet perspective, the "mounting influence of revolutionary forces"49 had resulted in a veritable "revolutionary tide" sweeping countries on various continents toward socialism.50 The more or less successful Soviet military activism in the Third World during this period created expectations among analysts and leaders of an acceleration of the pace of historical development in the direction of socialism. In his report to the Twenty-Fifth Party Congress, for instance, Brezhnev enthusiastically observed that "the immediate future
[was] sure to provide new evidence of socialism's boundless possibilities, of its historical superiority over capitalism."\(^5^1\)

Inozemtsev noted that the "swift changes in the socio-economic and political face of the world" represented the "characteristic feature of the contemporary period."\(^5^2\)

Concurrent with the upswing in the revolutionary process, Soviet commentators observed a deepening of the general crisis of capitalism. In the United States, such unfavorable developments as Watergate, the Vietnam debacle, and economic troubles appeared to corroborate the Soviet view of a social system which "had entered into a phase of internal shocks of unprecedented severity."\(^5^3\) According to Sanakoyev, the "acute crisis of bourgeois society" had "gripped every sphere of life in the capitalist countries: the economy, internal and foreign policy and culture."\(^5^4\) After the long and ultimately futile travails in Vietnam, and the distrust of the "imperial" Presidency occasioned by the sordid events lumped together under the term "Watergate," there was a pronounced trend toward isolationism both in the U.S. Congress and in the country at large. This was most evident in Congressional refusal to approve Kissinger's proposal to supply clandestine aid to anti-Marxist elements in Angola.\(^5^5\) The voluntary American withdrawal from the arena of international political struggle only served to encourage Soviet confidence in the invincibility of socialism. As Brezhnev stated: "The power of attraction of socialism has become greater still against the background of the crisis that has erupted in the capitalist countries."\(^5^6\)

These positive trends, as the Soviets saw them, played a large role in boosting Soviet confidence in the political correlation of forces
even at a time when the process of U.S.-Soviet detente was fast losing its momentum. By 1975, detente came under increasing fire in the United States from various quarters. One of the major criticisms (in the West) directed against detente was its failure to curb Soviet global activism. For the Soviets, detente with the United States did not fulfill early hopes of unfettered advantages to be gained from trade ties, technological transfers, and economic credits. With the pronounced decline in superpower detente, prospects for a major strategic arms control agreement to follow up on the 1974 Vladivostok accords also receded, thus paving the way for a qualitative arms race.

During the 1975-1979 period, however, Soviet spokesmen continued to refer to detente as one of the motive forces of international politics. While they took note of the growing opposition to detente in the West, analysts argued that "the tendency toward a consolidation of international detente [was] now gaining an upper hand throughout the world" because realistically-minded political leaders could not afford to "ignore the real correlation of forces in the world." Similar views were expressed by Soviet scholars as late as 1977. Detente was variously described as a "stable process"; a "deepening" development which had begun to "dominate international relations"; and a "leading trend of international development."

As long as the Soviets perceived the momentum of historical development to be in their favor, they vigorously pursued opportunities for the global expansion of their power and influence. From their perspective, there was an organic link between the "acceleration of social progress and the deepening of detente." As a leading Soviet international relations scholar put it: "Detente promotes social
progress, and social progress promotes detente. Reacting to American critics of the detente process, Brezhnev at the Twenty-Fifth Congress categorically stated:

Some bourgeois leaders affect surprise and raise a great to-do over the solidarity of Soviet Communists, the Soviet people, with the struggle of other peoples for freedom and progress. This is either outright naivete or more likely a deliberate befuddling of minds. What could be clearer, after all, than that detente and peaceful coexistence refer to interstate relations. This mainly means that disputes and conflicts between countries are not to be settled by war, by the use of force or threats of force. Detente does not in the slightest cancel out, nor can it cancel out or alter the laws of the class struggle. . . .

We make no secret of the fact that we see detente as the way to create more favorable conditions for peaceful socialist and communist construction.

With such a view of detente, the Soviets between 1975 and 1977 appeared inclined to credit normalization of East-West relations with providing the potential for a rapid unfoldment of the revolutionary process. While Soviet commentators did not fail to speak of the opposition to detente in the United States, they stressed the prospects for its durability. Perhaps one of the reasons for Soviet optimism was that detente in Europe remained largely unaffected even as its benefits were being questioned in the United States.

In their overall assessment of the correlation of forces, Soviet leaders and analysts displayed remarkable confidence. Based chiefly on their military might and the political gains in different areas of the globe that such military power had made possible, Soviet writers continued, as they had since the early 1970s, to refer to the process of restructuring international relations under socialist auspices. Kapchenko, for instance, wrote: "Life shows that the fundamental restructuring of international relations has already become an integral feature of the present-day international reality." Along with the
swift "pace and scale of social development," the Soviets saw "clear evidence of qualitatively new phenomena exerting a revolutionising effect on the re-arrangement of the whole present-day system of international relations."67

These positive developments, according to Soviet scholars, occurred above all because of the general change in the correlation of forces in the world arena in favor of the forces of peace and progress:

The change in the balance of forces of the two social systems constitutes a decisive factor in restructuring the system of international relations because this balance is a key issue determining its very nature.

And the correlation of forces, from the Soviet perspective, was highly favorable to socialism. Nikolayev, writing in late 1974, already spoke of the increasingly evident "preponderance of the forces of peace and progress over the forces of war and reaction."69 In September 1975, Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko was even more definitive in his assessment of the distribution of power. In a major article on the successes of Soviet foreign policy, he wrote in the Party journal, Kommunist:

The present marked preponderance of the forces of peace and progress provides them with the opportunity for laying down the direction of international politics.68

Kortunov echoed this optimistic appraisal:

The growing preponderance of socialism's strength over capitalism and the rapid development of the world revolutionary process has tended to change the whole character of contemporary international relations.71

The U.S.S.R. as the leading country of the socialist alliance had, in the Soviet view, wrested the role of arbiter of international affairs from moribund capitalism. In the words of a leading international relations scholar:
... [T]he basic direction of the social progress of mankind is now determined by the countries of socialism, ... their influence on the course of world events, on the international situation has grown even stronger and deeper. ... The historical superiority of socialism over capitalism is very obvious today. ... This Soviet optimism was to abate somewhat between 1978 and 1979. During this period, the United States, rudely shocked and disturbed by Soviet global venturesomeness, attempted to upgrade its weapons capabilities, thrusting upon the Soviets a competition in armaments at a time when Soviet economic progress was almost at a standstill. In addition, the evolution of a Beijing-Tokyo-Washington axis, however moot may have been the threat it posed to the Soviet Union, was nevertheless a legitimate cause for concern from the Soviet perspective. Notwithstanding these negative developments, the Soviets continued their offensive in the Third World—an offensive which culminated in the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. In the following section, we shall consider Soviet comment on the correlation of forces during the transition years between the height of optimism in socialist strength and the beginning of unease regarding the permanence of socialism's predominant role in international politics.

RETREAT FROM HEADY OPTIMISM: 1978-1979

By 1978, as opposition to detente mounted in the United States, there were strident calls for both an increase in U.S. defense spending and efforts to check what some Americans perceived as aggressive Soviet behavior in the world. Soviet leaders and analysts now began to contrast the "development of international relations in the first half of the 1970s," which was "marked by the entrenchment of the principles
of peaceful coexistence, by political detente and broader all-round cooperation between socialist and capitalist countries," with the situation in "recent years," which "witnessed a certain growth in the opposition offered by the reactionary forces of world imperialism to the progressive changes taking place both in individual countries and in the world as a whole."

Brezhnev, in his speech delivered on the sixtieth anniversary of the October Revolution in late 1977, evinced concern at the "unfavorable turn" in superpower relations and pressed the case for detente:

International relations are now at a crossroads, as it were, which could lead either to ... lasting peace or, at best, to balancing on the brink of war. Detente offers the opportunity of choosing the road of peace. To miss this opportunity would be a crime. The most important, the most pressing task now is to halt the arms race, which has engulfed the world.

The intensifying qualitative arms race provided a major focus for Soviet discussions on the military correlation of forces. Soviet scholars averred that the United States was seeking military superiority—an aim which, they declared, would be frustrated by vigorous Soviet counter-efforts to maintain military-strategic equilibrium. In particular, the Soviets expressed concern about the effects of such weapons systems as the MX ICBMs, the Trident submarines, cruise missiles, and the neutron bomb, on the military-strategic balance. As one analyst put it, "New achievements in military technology introduce an element of unbalance in the correlation of military forces. . . ." Thus, while Soviet analysts on the one hand claimed that the U.S.S.R. would not allow the U.S. to upset the approximate military-strategic parity, on the other hand, they voiced fears about the creation of a future military imbalance against the Soviet Union.
Similarly, Soviet spokesmen during this period were ambivalent in their assessments of the imperialist capacity to use its military power in the furtherance of its international aims. Lebedev, for instance, argued that "[e]xisting socialism's increasing might [was] making it ever harder for the imperialists to use military force in the attainment of their foreign policy objectives."\(^80\) Another analyst, however, appraised the situation differently:

The most reactionary circles in the West are, along with attempts to revive the old methods, intensifying the search for new ones that would enable imperialism to launch an offensive on the positions of socialism, and the democratic and national liberation movements. One must remember that the opponents of detente and disarmament still possess considerable resources and are mounting vigorous and diverse actions in various directions.\(^81\)

Such ambivalence reflected some uncertainty on the part of Soviet spokesmen regarding their earlier expectations of a waning imperialist capability to offer effective resistance to the spread of socialism around the world.

By and large, Soviet writing on the military balance of forces continued to dwell on the existence of a rough military-strategic parity;\(^82\) to decry upwardly spiraling military expenditures;\(^83\) and to refute the idea of a Soviet military menace.\(^84\) In addition, Soviet analysts began to evince fears of a military threat emanating from China.\(^85\) While they realized that with the "existing balance of power and the state of China's military-industrial potential, the Beijing leaders [were] obviously aware that it would be reckless to test the strength of the USSR and the entire socialist community,"\(^86\) Soviet scholars saw an increasing military threat from East and West posed by a militant China in league with "militarists and imperialist reactionaries."\(^87\)

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The signing of the SALT II Treaty in Vienna in June 1979 temporarily revived Soviet hopes of breathing new life into the detente process. In his Vienna speech on June 16, 1979, Brezhnev, in recalling the deterioration in Soviet-American relations during the second half of the 1970s, stated:

It is regrettable that . . . relations between our two countries began to develop unevenly. They went through a period of stagnation and even regressed somewhat from the charted course. . . . I believe that the present meeting [with President Carter] can become an important step toward improving Soviet-American relations and making the international climate healthier.

But the chances of Congressional ratification of the SALT II agreement, which were already slim during the latter months of 1979, were dashed completely by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. On the whole, then, the Soviets between 1978 and 1979 underscored their determination to uphold the military-strategic equilibrium, but expressed dismay at what they perceived were American efforts to upset the military equilibrium and attempt anew through force to check the spread of socialism.

The substance of Soviet commentary on the economic correlation of forces remained basically unchanged during 1978 and 1979. The U.S.S.R., it was stated, had reached the stage of a developed socialist society and was creating the groundwork for the transition to communism. Soviet analysts continued as before to emphasize the magnitude of the economic achievements of the U.S.S.R. by comparing current economic indices with the state of the Soviet economy in the past, and by contrasting the economic crisis in the West with the relatively crisis-free economies of the socialist countries.
Soviet economic shortcomings, however, became even more pronounced during 1978 and 1979. Industrial production during 1978 was scheduled to rise by 4.5 per cent—a production target lower than that for 1977 and one which, according to a Western analyst, was "less than the figure required to keep up with the current [Tenth] Five-Year Plan . . . aimed at narrowing the gap between the Soviet and United States economies." Moreover, the per cent annual growth rate of the Soviet GNP, by Western calculations, reached a low point of 0.8 in 1979.

Vakhrameyev, acknowledging Soviet economic problems, wrote:

Of course, the Soviet Union and the other fraternal socialist countries still face various difficulties and problems. . . . The Socialist world has yet to surpass the capitalist world in overall national income and industrial production, per capita production and labour productivity.

The economic correlation of forces was thus seen as moving gradually in favor of socialism even though the current economic balance was clearly recognized as favoring the United States and the Western countries.

Just as the Soviet leadership during this period had begun to be concerned about the direction of developments in the area of the military and economic distribution of power, it was no longer entirely sanguine regarding the smooth progress of the world revolutionary movement, in spite of several successes. Between 1978 and 1979, Marxist regimes came to power in Afghanistan, Kampuchea, and Nicaragua. The Soviet role in the April 1978 coup in Afghanistan (which brought a pro-Soviet leftist government to power in that country) is still unclear. But the U.S.S.R. moved quickly to recognize that government and help it to consolidate its power. In Kampuchea, its military support of the Vietnamese invasion of that country in December 1978 helped install the pro-Soviet Heng Samrin government in power. The July
1979 Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua created a major breach in America's back yard.

One Soviet analyst stated that such "historic victories" as those of the heroic Vietnamese people, the emergence in the course of revolutionary struggle of progressive states like Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands, the successful course of the revolution in Ethiopia, the revolution in Afghanistan and other revolutionary changes in Asia and Africa . . . [had] given fresh impetus to the national liberation movement. . . .

Referring to socialist successes in Latin America, another commentator was very hopeful regarding prospects of future gains in the region. The Nicaraguan revolution, he stated, "reflected the intensification of revolutionary processes on the Latin American Continent." He further added that just as the "triumph of the righteous Nicaraguan cause was preceded by the victory of progressive forces in Grenada, Dominica, and Saint Lucia," so the events in Nicaragua would provide a stimulus in the further struggle of the Latin American peoples against the forces of imperialism.

The developments of 1978 and 1979, as a whole, helped sustain Soviet faith in the continued momentum of the revolutionary process, and to this end, the Soviets strove to maintain the political offensive. (An example of this is the direct military intervention they undertook in support of the Marxist regime in Afghanistan.) But Soviet confidence was no longer unqualified, because the political underpinnings of what Soviet leaders and analysts termed "social progress" were, in their view, being undermined by the policies of "imperialism" and "Maoist reaction."
Detente, for the Soviets, represented "a struggle to create favourable conditions for communist construction and for the development of the world revolutionary process." As the Soviets saw it, the Western interpretation of detente sought to create conditions that would guarantee the sociopolitical status quo in the world. From the Soviet perspective, China's "Maoist leaders" also sought "to frustrate the efforts to extend political detente . . . by trying to maintain old and create new pockets of tension." According to one analyst, the "distinctive features" of China's foreign policy course were its "striving for hegemonism, retreat towards the stance occupied by enemies of the world revolutionary movement and collusion with the forces of imperialism on an anti-Soviet and anti-socialist basis."

The policy of detente was thus perceived as being beleaguered from both the right and left ends of the political spectrum. Along with the vigorous imperialist efforts to bury detente, Soviet leaders and analysts expressed renewed concern about imperialist attempts to "reverse the tide of history." The activization of "reactionary imperialist forces," according to one scholar, meant that "despite the fact that the forces of peace and peaceful coexistence have gained strength, the situation in one region or another, or in the world as a whole may sometimes take a turn for the worse, the attacks against detente may be stepped up and the arms race accelerate."

Moreover, such initiatives as those undertaken by President Carter after he took office in 1977, which led to the 1978 Camp David Agreements on the Middle East between President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin, appeared to signal a renewal of the American role in world affairs. While Soviet analysts debunked these accords, they were uneasy.
about the exclusion of the U.S.S.R. from the Middle East peace process. Further, the 1978 treaty between Japan and China, the establishment in 1979 of diplomatic relations between China and the U.S., followed by Chinese abrogation of the Sino-Soviet Treaty, created in Soviet eyes a united front among its principal rivals in the world arena.

Earlier, Soviet scholars had spoken optimistically about the ascendance and unimpeded growth of the forces of peace and socialism. A leading analyst now characterized the international situation as a "contest between the forces of peace and progress and those of aggression and tension" which had become "acute," owing to "attempts by the reactionary circles to slow down and reverse international detente, and to make capital out of the policy of the present Beijing leadership which has joined its fortunes with the sworn enemies of socialism and of the national liberation movement." Thus, while Soviet writers held that world social progress would continue with or without detente, they added that the "state of international relations" had a "direct effect on the course of this process." This constituted a tacit admission that an unfavorable international climate harmed the course and pace of revolutionary progress.

With their confidence somewhat shaken on the political and economic fronts, coupled with the unwelcome prospect of a renewed arms race in the military sphere, Soviet appraisals of the overall correlation of forces no longer exuded the optimism and sense of promise of the previous period. As always, Soviet analysts continued to argue that the movement of the correlation of forces in favor of socialism was an objective process, but refrained from characterizing the distribution
of power in terms of a preponderance in favor of the forces of peace and socialism. Soviet scholars also began to allude to resurgent Western notions of the possibility of changing the balance of forces in favor of imperialism, of the necessity of dealing with socialist countries from a "position of strength," and of the greater advantages offered by the capitalist world.

While they were critical of American attempts "to prove that the balance of forces [was] tilting in favor of capitalism," Soviet scholars were clearly concerned lest imperialism regain its lost initiative in world affairs. Vakhrameyev expressed this concern when he wrote:

. . . [I]f the world balance of forces is to continue changing in favor of socialism as the decisive factor in mankind's development during the present epoch, it is necessary to rebuff . . . imperialist attempts [to change the correlation of forces in its favor], steadily to strengthen the economic, political and defence might of the Soviet Union and the whole socialist community, the unity and solidarity of the world socialist system and all revolutionary, anti-imperialist and peace-loving forces. . . .

Until the fiercely negative Western, and especially American, reaction to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, Soviet leaders and analysts in the final years of the 1970s were both hopeful and cautious regarding the international situation. They spoke of the possibilities for strengthening international detente and rendering it irreversible, while also calling attention to the obstacles in consolidating the detente process and in restructuring the whole system of present-day international relations.

The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in late 1979 saw the culmination of the period of Soviet global assertiveness and optimism which had been ushered in at the turn of the 1970s. Thereafter, in the
face of a renewed America ready to jettison the recriminations and self-flagellation of the immediate post-Vietnam era and to reassert its global role, Soviet commentary on the correlation of forces turned to take account of the new world situation—a development we shall address in the ensuing chapter.

ANALYSIS

Were Soviet appraisals of the correlation of forces during the period under consideration in this chapter in keeping with the general character of unfolding international developments? In other words, was Soviet optimism, as well as its steady decline, reasonable given Soviet global expectations and achievements? What may we make of persistent Soviet denials of aiming for military superiority? These are some of the questions we shall address in this section.

By and large, if we take into account the Soviet perspective, Soviet assessments of the distribution of power were more or less in consonance with the general trends of international life. On the face of it, it appears surprising that Soviet optimism reached its acme between 1975 and 1977, precisely during the time when the policy of detente was being subjected to severe recriminations in the United States. But when we explore the reasons underlying Soviet confidence, the nature of this paradox becomes clearer.

Soviet spokesmen had consistently held that they saw in detente the possibilities of limiting East-West military conflict and competition and of channeling it in fruitful areas of East-West economic cooperation. They also saw in detente the opportunities for a
burgeoning of the revolutionary process in the world.\textsuperscript{113} By 1975, detente had fulfilled some, but dashed other, Soviet expectations. A number of limited superpower arms control agreements had been signed, but the much-hoped for SALT II Treaty had to wait until 1979. While the benefits the Soviets expected from U.S.-Soviet trade, credit and technology exchanges were vitiated in the mid-1970s by the passage of the Jackson and Stevenson Amendments to the trade bill and the Export-Import Bank bill respectively,\textsuperscript{114} East-West economic ties in the European sphere were steadily strengthening. Thus, by the time the policy of detente was being seriously questioned in the United States, the Soviets had somewhat reconciled themselves to forgoing major benefits from economic relations with the United States—benefits with which they had hoped to resolve some of the endemic problems of the U.S.S.R. economy.

Moreover, even while U.S. critics of detente were stepping up their protests against that policy, efforts at reaching bilateral superpower arms control agreements were not entirely jettisoned. This, coupled with the fact that detente on the continent remained largely unaffected by developments in the United States, must have sustained Soviet faith in the continued viability of the Brezhnev Peace Program which was enunciated at the Twenty-Fourth Party Congress in 1971, and upheld at the Twenty-Fifth Party Congress in 1976.

Further, in 1975, the availability of long-range Soviet power projection capabilities coincided with the opening up of opportunities for a rapid expansion of the revolutionary process in countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The Soviets were quick to exploit the emerging revolutionary tendencies in these countries through reliance on
direct and indirect (often through Cuban proxies) military support. Military-strategic parity between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., coupled with the "general crisis of capitalism" as epitomized by the political malaise experienced by the United States in the wake of Watergate and the withdrawal from Vietnam, represented, in the Soviet view, two of the major factors constraining American freedom of maneuver in the international arena.

The Soviet leadership, brought up on the imperative of revolutionary advance, saw in their military power the most reliable means for furthering the cause of revolution in the Third World. Ever since the Brezhnev team had taken over the reins of power in the U.S.S.R., it had staked the success of its foreign policy and the enhancement of its role and influence in international affairs on the accretion of military power—both nuclear and conventional. While the Soviet leadership continued to pay lip-service to the value of economic competition, this aspect of the correlation of forces was not accorded the degree of importance that it received under Khrushchev. Economic needs during the Brezhnev period consistently took a back seat to military demands and requirements. Consequently, it was hardly surprising that Soviet leaders and analysts made very confident appraisals of the overall distribution of power, since, from the Soviet perspective, both the military and political correlation of forces were quite favorable to socialism.

When, in 1978 and 1979, the Soviets faced political and military challenges from various quarters, they toned down their optimistic assessments of the correlation of forces. Among the main challenges were: the drawing together of China, the U.S., and Japan in a
quasi-alliance against the Soviet Union, thus enhancing (in the Soviet view) the military threat they faced; the gradual emergence of the United States from its self-imposed isolation after Vietnam—a development which was to end the period when the Soviets felt free to pursue their global interests in an unhampered fashion; and finally, the American resolve to increase military expenditures in order to prevent the growth of a dangerous lag in military capabilities detrimental to the U.S.

Soviet analysts, in the face of these trends, were no longer sanguine regarding the pace of revolutionary progress and repeatedly spoke of the dangers of an arms race. References to a preponderance of forces in favor of peace and socialism also dropped from currency during 1978 and 1979. Soviet writers made frequent mention of the obstacles in the way of detente and the difficulties of restructuring international relations according to new principles. Such an admission stood in stark contrast to the period prior to 1977, when the process of restructuring of international relations under Soviet aegis was seen to represent the characteristic feature of international life.

We may now turn to an examination of the question of Soviet denials of aiming for military superiority. As we have noted above, Soviet leaders and analysts considered military power as a crucial element in the movement of the correlation of forces toward socialism. Ever since the attainment of strategic parity with the United States, Soviet spokesmen have heralded this development as providing the objective basis for favorable changes in the international climate—detente and peace with the West together with an acceleration of the revolutionary process in other parts of the world. Molchanov, for instance, declared
that the might of the Soviet Union, by creating a "real counterbalance to the forces of imperialism," had "radically changed the correlation of forces in the world" and "promoted . . . positive changes . . . in the world arena." 115

In the official Soviet view, as it was expounded between 1975 and 1977, the increase in Soviet military power effectively checkmated imperialist attempts to halt or reverse, by force, the natural movement of the correlation of forces in favor of socialism: strategic parity with the United States played a key role in preventing the imperialists from unleashing a nuclear war and provided the U.S.S.R. with an important instrument of leverage by denying the U.S. the political advantages of strategic superiority. The growth in Soviet long-range power projection capabilities also allowed the Soviet leadership to use its conventional military might to promote the rise of Marxist regimes in the Third World at a time of global retrenchment of American military power.

After 1976, as more and more American critics of Soviet foreign policy began to speak of a Soviet military menace and raised the prospect of Soviet military-strategic superiority, Soviet spokesmen consistently underscored their aim to be one of maintaining strategic parity. This goal carried with it the explicit warning that the U.S.S.R. would not tolerate any upsetting of the existing approximate military-strategic parity by the United States.

It is interesting to note that the accelerated Soviet buildup of strategic and conventional forces initiated in the mid-1960s had continued even after the attainment of strategic parity in 1969-1970. Brezhnev, for instance, is reported to have told President Nixon at the
May 1972 Moscow meeting that the U.S.S.R. "would press ahead with its programs in those areas not covered by the Interim Agreement." This Soviet buildup of its military strength occurred during a time when the United States had, under President Nixon, enunciated American adherence to the concept of strategic sufficiency. The Nixon-Ford years, according to Gaddis, "saw the most substantial reductions in American military capabilities relative to those of the Soviet Union in the entire postwar period." 

By the mid-1970s, then, Soviet military strength was substantial, and it is likely that the Soviets believed that they did in fact enjoy a slight advantage over the United States in the military area. The Soviet Union held the lead over the United States in certain categories of weapons—both nuclear and conventional. Soviet military superiority, however, has been difficult to ascertain in a definitive manner, largely due to fundamental differences between U.S. and Soviet force structures. It seems reasonable to posit that the Soviet leadership would have felt comfortable with a slight margin of military superiority over the United States and its allies. Certainly, Soviet statements contrasting the American geopolitical situation with that of the U.S.S.R. gives credence to such reasoning.

Girgoriyev, for instance, justified the need for the numerical superiority of the Soviet armed forces by referring to their hostile border with China. Arbatov insisted on the existence of a "rough general equality" and argued that Soviet superiority in certain strategic areas (such as numbers of land-based and submarine-launched ballistic missiles and missile throw-weight) was offset by American superiority in other areas (such as numbers of strategic bombers and
missile warheads). These disparities, he argued, "were linked to differences in geographic position, the nature of possible threats to their security. . . ." Moreover, like Grigoriyev, he upheld the necessity for Soviet superiority over the United States in the "number of . . . [conventional] weapons:"

America is separated from the rest of the world by two oceans and has as neighbors two friendly countries that pose no military threat to it—Canada and Mexico. But the USSR Armed Forces have to protect enormously long land borders near which one finds by no means only friendly states.

For the Soviet leadership, attaining an edge over the United States in the military-strategic area was undoubtedly considered a desirable goal. The Soviet contention that the principles of equality and equal security should be the only possible basis of any arms control agreement, 120 for instance, left open the interpretation of "rough parity" or "approximate equilibrium," for the term "equal security" could by no means serve as an objective measure of each side's military capabilities.

However, with mounting pressures in the United States by the late 1970s for an upgrading of American military capabilities vis-a-vis the U.S.S.R., Soviet leaders and analysts, perhaps fearful of being embroiled in an arms race with an economically superior rival and of losing unilateral advantages garnered in certain areas, disavowed any aim of achieving military superiority. The Soviet leadership perhaps came to the realization that military superiority was not an easily attainable goal and strove in their public statements to forestall a new round of the arms race. And Brezhnev in an interview with a West German newspaper argued that the very concept of military superiority lost its
meaning "in the presence of the enormous arsenals of stockpiled nuclear weapons and delivery systems. . . ."121

One may conclude that Soviet leaders and analysts were probably sincere in insisting that they did not aim for definitive military superiority over the West, since they could not be sure that such superiority was attainable in practical terms. Even if superiority were attainable, the economic costs would place a tremendous strain on an already overburdened economy, and would probably trigger a massive U.S. military buildup and a new round in the arms race.

In the early 1980s, Soviet leaders and scholars were to continue their insistence on the imperative of maintaining a rough parity in the military area, even as the new Reagan Administration emphasized its desire to regain America's military predominance and reestablish the leading role of the U.S. in the international arena.

CONCLUSION

Soviet optimism regarding the correlation of forces reached its high point in the mid-1970s and tapered off by the end of the decade. Soviet military power and the rapid pace of revolutionary change in different regions of the globe provided the primary impetus for boosting Soviet confidence. In the Soviet perspective, the isolationist mood that set in among the government and peoples of the United States was symptomatic of the general crisis of capitalism and was due in part to a "realistic" understanding on the part of U.S. ruling circles of the "real" alignment of forces, which favored socialism. Encouraged by international trends and developments, Soviet spokesmen began to
characterize the distribution of power in terms of a predominance in favor of the forces of peace and socialism.

Such optimism, however, soon turned sour in the face of growing opposition in the United States to what was perceived as Soviet adventurism abroad. This opposition took the form of a more concerted effort to reassert America's role in world affairs, to counter in kind the Soviet military buildup, and to move toward a more advantageous relationship with Communist China. One Soviet writer, lamenting these developments, wrote:

The arms race is being used against socialism for military and political blackmail and constant economic pressure to "wear it down" by unproductive expenses and prevent the new social order from taking full advantage of its superiority to capitalism.

Soviet analysts in the final years of the 1970s expressed renewed fears of imperialist attempts to "turn back the clock of history" and reverse the forward movement of the correlation. These concerns were to become more manifest with the onset of the 1980s, as the international climate took a turn for the worse—a development we shall explore in the following chapter.
NOTES


7. G. Trofimenko, "Na sterzhnevom napravlenii" [On the Pivotal Course], MEMO (2) February 1975, p. 5.


16. Ibid., p. 95.


18. O. Bykov, "SSHA i real'nosti mezhdunarodnoi razriadki" [U.S.A. and Realities of International Detente], MEMO (8) August 1976, p. 31.


20. See Brezhnev's Speech at the Plenary Session of the CPSU CC on October 25, 1976, Pravda, October 26, 1976, as trans. in XXVIII CDSP 43, November 24, 1976, p. 11.


25. Ibid. Emphasis added.

26. Ibid., p. 105.


29. Ibid.


38. Ibid., p. 9.

39. Ibid., p. 10.


44. K. Gadzhiyev, "In Search of Alternatives," IA (1) January 1975, p. 82.


52. N. Inozemtsev, "XXV c"ezd KPSS i problemy sovremennogo mirovogo razvitiia" [The Twenty-Fifth Congress of the CPSU and Problems of the Contemporary World Process], MEMO (11) November 1976, p. 4.


55. See Gaddis, Strategies of Containment, p. 316.


65. See Matveyev, "In the Struggle for the Vital Interests of Humanity," p. 3.

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70. A. Gromyko, "Programma mira v deistvii" [The Peace Program in Action], Kommunist (14) September 1975, p. 5. Interestingly enough, this article was given wider coverage when it was reproduced in the December 1975 issue of IA. See A. Gromyko, "Peace Programme in Action," IA (12) December 1975, pp. 3-19.


74. Ibid., p. 86.


82. Ibid., p. 68; V. Levonov, "Disarmament and International Security," p. 82; V. Dolgin, "Sotsialisticheskoe sodruzhestvo—za mir, za razoruzeniia" [The Socialist Community—For Peace, For Disarmament], Kommunist (4) March 1979, p. 16.


86. Ibid., p. 69.


96. O. Ignat'ev, "Pobeda naroda Nikaragui" [The Victory of the People of Nicaragua], Kommunist (13) September 1979, p. 95.


98. Ibid., p. 86.


102. Ibid., p. 87. On this point, see also Editorial, "Programma deistvii vo imia mira" [The Program of Actions in the Name of Peace], MEMO (2) February 1979, p. 4.


107. Ibid., pp. 81-82.

108. Ibid., p. 86.

109. Ibid. Emphasis added.


113. See fn. 70 above.


118. K. Grigoriyev, "Who is Whipping Up the Arms Race?" Pravda, August 4, 1976, pp. 4-5, as trans. in XXVIII CDSP 31, September 1, 1976, p. 5.


122. V. Kortunov, "Socialism and International Relations," IA (10) October 1979, p. 49.
CHAPTER IX
CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE: 1980-1985

The December 1979 invasion of Afghanistan by the U.S.S.R. marked an important watershed in the evolving Soviet perspective on the correlation of forces. Soviet confidence in the unopposed capacity of the U.S.S.R. to lay down the direction of international politics began to waver as leaders and analysts were forced to wrestle with a host of unfavorable military, political, and economic developments at home and abroad: U.S.-Soviet detente became a dead letter; proponents of an American military buildup picked up strength as the Soviet action in Afghanistan appeared to provide irrefutable proof of Soviet global adventurism; America began to reassert its global role; the Polish crisis created a serious source of concern for the Soviet Union; Soviet economic performance reached a disturbingly low point in 1979 and prospects for a pronounced upturn in the economy did not appear very promising; finally, strengthening Sino-U.S. ties which, had been so ardently promoted by President Carter's National Security Adviser Brzezinski, generated fears in the Soviet Union of a new encirclement.

Even before the Afghan intervention, Soviet spokesmen had evinced grave concern about negative international trends. A leading Soviet analyst, Fyodor Burlatsky, had written:

... [N]either the superiority of the forces of peace over the forces of war ... nor the balance of forces within the framework of the bipolar system should ... lull humanity into the hope of an automatic prevention of a thermonuclear holocaust. . . .

Burlatsky specifically adverted to the possibility of dangerous shifts in the correlation of military and political forces occurring as a
result of new advances in military technology and imperialist attempts to create "third" and "fourth" forces in Asia and Europe. Clearly, the competition in arms technologies and the gradual formation, from the Soviet perspective, of a quasi-alliance made up of the U.S., China, Japan, and Western Europe which was aimed against the U.S.S.R., were seen as representing major problems for Soviet foreign policy.

As the Soviets attempted to integrate these developments into their assessment of the correlation of forces, they refused to lapse into downright pessimism. Renewed imperialist attempts to reverse the direction of the correlation of forces, they argued, would at worst slow down the pace of the objective historical development in favor of socialism. But there was no doubt that, in the official Soviet view as it was enunciated in the 1980s, history had taken another zigzag which had set back the cause of socialism in the international arena.

The present chapter thus traces the evolution of Soviet perspectives on the correlation of forces during a period of uncertainty regarding the direction of international events and the pace of historical development. The first half of the 1980s also were years of change in the U.S.S.R. in terms of leadership turnover. Less than a year after the January 1982 death of Mikhail Suslov—the leading ideologist of the Brezhnev regime—the Brezhnev era itself ground to a close with the demise of the General Secretary in November 1982. Close on the heels of Brezhnev's passing, his successors to the Party leadership—Yuri Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko—died in February 1984 and March 1985 respectively.

In this chapter we shall first examine Soviet perceptions of the distribution of power in the final years of the Brezhnev era. Next, we
shall deal with developments during the Andropov-Chernenko interlude. Finally, we shall attempt to put Soviet views of the balance of forces into analytic perspective. There were no significant changes in verbal formulation during the time-frame under consideration in this chapter. By and large, Soviet writers in referring to the overall distribution of power continued the late 1970's usage of the neutral expressions sootnoshenie sil and rasstanovka sil, whereas the military balance was consistently spoken of in terms of an approximate equilibrium (ravnovesie sil), parity (paritet), or a balance of forces (balans sil).

SOVIET VIEWS OF THE "IMPERIALIST CHALLENGE": 1980-1982

The early 1980s, according to Soviet commentators, represented a stormy period in international affairs—a period of acute struggle between the forces of peace and progress and the forces of war and reaction. Razmerov captured the sense of discouragement expressed by most Soviet leaders and analysts when he wrote:

Intensified aggressive trends in imperialist policy had the effect of drastically straining the international situation. The positive elements achieved during the last decade in international affairs have been put in danger. . . . These negative trends stem, above all, from those [sic] pursued by the aggressive quarters of imperialism which have made armed force an imperative of their policy of expansion and are striving to use it everywhere in order to arrest social progress and regain their undivided rule of bygone days.  

In his report to the Twenty-Sixth Congress of the CPSU, Brezhnev alluded to the "adventurism" of the imperialist circles and their attempts "to set up a barrier to the progressive changes in the world, and to again become the rulers of the peoples' destiny." In the Soviet view, the characteristic imperialist response to changes in the
correlation of forces in favor of socialism was to build up its own military force and pursue an "aggressive, expansionist foreign policy." The Soviets argued that in its attempt to reassert its global role, imperialism employed military power as its primary means for combating the growing socialist influence in international affairs.

Soviet commentary on the military correlation of forces in the early 1980s was emphatic in its persistent repetition that an approximate parity existed between the military forces of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., and between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Soviet spokesmen were equally insistent on denying American charges of Soviet military superiority. Instead they accused the United States of aiming for military superiority—a goal the Soviets declared to be unattainable.

Thus, at the Twenty-Sixth Congress, while Brezhnev apprised his audience that the defense capability of the Soviet state had become greater during the period of the Tenth Five-Year Plan (1976-1980), he stated in no uncertain terms:

The military and strategic equilibrium prevailing between the Warsaw Treaty and NATO, objectively serves to safeguard world peace. We have not sought, and do not now seek, military superiority over the other side. That is not our policy. But neither will we permit the building up of any such superiority over us. Attempts of that kind and talking to us from a position of strength are absolutely futile.

This position was echoed by other Soviet leaders and analysts. As Andrei Gromyko reiterated in his speech at the United Nations in September 1981:

Who would believe that it is concern for peace that motivates the accelerated pace of the development of ever-new types of weapons, including MX intercontinental ballistic missiles, Trident submarine-launched missiles, the new strategic bomber, various types of cruise missiles and many other things. What is the purpose of all this? The purpose is to try to upset the established strategic balance, obtain military supremacy and, on this basis, impose one's will upon others.
The Soviet Union condemns this policy as adventurist. . . . The present balance of military power is fully in line with the interests of peace and international stability.

Our country has never sought, nor is it now seeking, military superiority. . . . But we shall not permit others to become superior to us. We shall of course adequately meet any challenge so as to maintain the balance of power.'

One Soviet analyst argued that the Reagan Administration was seeking a margin of safety in the military area, unlike the Soviet Union which proceeded from the assumption that the "existing strategic parity . . . [was] sufficient to safeguard its own security and that of its allies and friends." Bykov stated that militant circles in the U.S. and Europe, unhappy with the strategic equilibrium [ravnoyesie strategicheskogo] were seeking a return to the period when the United States enjoyed significant military advantages, but added that efforts to change the global balance [balans] of strategic forces was an unrealizable task.9

None of these themes—the insistence on parity, the denial of Soviet military superiority, the accusations regarding American attempts to achieve military supremacy—were particularly unique to Soviet assessments of the military correlation during the early 1980s. As we have seen in the previous chapter, these topics were a staple of Soviet commentary from the mid-1970s onward. What was different in the early 1980s was perhaps the sense of urgency felt by Soviet leaders and analysts in the face of the December 1979 NATO decision to deploy Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles in the European theater, as well as stepped-up U.S. military (strategic and conventional) programs launched first by President Carter and continued by President Reagan in the 1980s.
In the analytic section below we shall explore in greater detail the basis and substance of Soviet concerns in the area of the military correlation, as well as examine further the parity-superiority issue. Suffice it to point out at this stage that much of the Soviet discussion on the military balance until 1983 was partly aimed at exploiting differences between the U.S. and its alliance partners in an obvious attempt to forestall the deployment of the "Euromissiles."

At the Twenty-Sixth Party Congress, for instance, Brezhnev stated that a "'limited' nuclear war as conceived by the Americans in, say, Europe would from the outset mean the certain destruction of European civilisation." Arguing that "[d]espite the efforts of the enemies of detente, peaceful cooperation between countries of the two systems [was] . . . making good headway on the European continent," he simultaneously warned Europeans that the decision to deploy the Euromissiles represented "an obvious intention to tilt the existing military balance in Europe in NATO's favour." He went on to add:

It must be clearly understood: the deployment in the FRG, Italy, Britain, the Netherlands or Belgium of new U.S. missiles, targeted against the USSR and its allies, is bound to affect our relations with these countries, to say nothing of how this will prejudice their own security. So their governments and parliaments have reason to weigh the whole thing again and again.

The vital interests of the European nations require that Europe should follow a different path. . . .

And again, in November 1981, Brezhnev in an interview with a West German magazine declared:

Western Europe is being conditioned to another aggressive turn in the United States' nuclear doctrines at the price of colossal risks to the peoples dwelling there.

Soviet spokesmen also sought to undercut the effectiveness of new U.S. strategic programs through a barrage of arguments, aimed at
influencing public opinion, about the "mythical" nature of the Soviet military threat, the colossal expenditures involved in an arms race, and the dangers of overseas military entanglements following from the pursuit of a militaristic policy in world affairs.  

On the whole, Soviet discussions of the military correlation were geared toward stemming what the Soviets perceived to be a growing Western, especially American, challenge to the obtaining military balance. According to Soviet observers, the U.S.A. in "cherishing hopes of restoring its former position" and "disregarding the radical changes . . . in the correlation of world forces and in the international situation" had staked its prestige on a course of military predominance: Imperialist powers "now much more than in the past" regarded military force as the "main instrument in pursuing their foreign policy goals," and "as a means of stabilising the situation in the capitalist world and of preventing its further decay."  

In the 1980s, then, the Soviets expressed concern at the possibility of having their carefully planned and costly military advantages being vitiating by the military decisions of the Western powers. 

In so far as the economic correlation of forces was concerned, the Soviets argued that the "overall balance of the achievements of world socialism [was] hard to ignore." The "stable development of the Soviet economy," it was stated in an IA editorial, helped to "minimize the effects of crisis upheavals suffered by the world capitalist economy on the USSR and its allies," as well as to make the U.S.S.R. "a desirable partner for the Western business community."  

Beyond such casual and routine generalities, however, Soviet leaders and analysts were unable to gloss over the serious deficiencies
exhibited by the Soviet economy in the 1980s. Agriculture remained an area of concern. The first three years of the decade of the 1980s were dogged by bad grain harvests. According to Bond and Levine, the gap between the United States and the Soviet Union in aggregate agricultural output had been widening since 1975. Moreover, the steady deceleration of the rate of growth of the overall Soviet economy continued into the 1980s. The per cent annual rate of growth of industrial production also declined.

In his report to a plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee in June 1980, Brezhnev stated that the enhancement of the efficiency of production, the improvement of work quality, the speeding up of scientific and technological progress, the strengthening of labor and state discipline, and the ensuring of a steady increase in the productivity of labor represented cardinal economic tasks. Elsewhere, he referred to agricultural deficiencies and noted that "not all things went smoothly in the development of the national economy." He also cited "objective reasons," such as depletion of accessible mineral deposits and shortcomings in the work process, that held back the rate of economic growth.

At the Twenty-Sixth Party Congress, Brezhnev again observed that the "past few years [had] not been among the most favourable for the national economies of some socialist states." And while he appeared to take some comfort in the fact that "in the past ten years, the economic growth rates of the CMEA [Council for Mutual Economic Assistance] countries [had] been twice those of the developed capitalist countries," he probably was not unaware of the irony that 1980 was to have been the final year of Khrushchev's Party Program, by which time the "material
and technical basis of communism" was to have been fully established in the Soviet Union.  

As it was, however, the Twenty-Sixth Party Congress somewhat lamely called for a revision of the 1961 Party Program. The new Party Program, according to Brezhnev's report, would document the Soviet advance to communism through the stage of a developed socialist society which was a "necessary, natural, and historically long period of the formation of the communist system." Doubtless influenced by the failure of the U.S.S.R. to achieve the economic miracle specified in the twenty-year timetable in Khrushchev's Party Program, Brezhnev declared that the new program would only "specify long-term aims" and establish "basic principles," because "it [was] impossible and inappropriate to foretell particulars in it."  

That the Soviet Union would be faced with severe economic stringencies in the 1980s was openly admitted by Soviet spokesmen. The effect of the economic slow-down on defense spending was also noted by Soviet observers. Mentioning that "in recent years," the socialist countries "have had to deal with their constructive tasks in more complicated conditions," Brezhnev pointed out that "[t]he slowing of the process of detente and the arms race imposed by the imperialist powers are no small burden for us as well." A leading Soviet analyst, echoing this concern, wrote of the increasing difficulties that the U.S.S.R. faced in the 1980s in solving simultaneously its tasks in the areas of consumption, investment, and defense. Another scholar was even more explicit in his warning that "an excessive increase in military-economic might [could not] be allowed because in the final analysis this would slow the development of the very foundation of
military power—the economy—and do irreparable harm to defence capability." 28

At the same time, however, Brezhnev continued to caution the West against "dreams of ensuring military supremacy over the USSR." "If necessary," he underscored, "the Soviet people will find it possible to make any additional efforts, to do everything necessary to ensure their country's reliable defence." 29 Other Soviet scholars contended that "the level of Soviet economics, science and technology [had] reached such a level" as to make it "possible for the USSR to develop any type of weapon on which the enemies of peace would like to stake their bets." 30

On the whole, Soviet leaders and analysts were candid about the economic problems faced by the U.S.S.R. At the Twenty-Sixty Party Congress, Brezhnev called for a careful review and utilization of the economic reforms implemented in the "fraternal countries" in an effort to combat the chronic drawbacks of the U.S.S.R. economy. 31 It is noteworthy that Brezhnev's report to the Congress was short on the economic ills of capitalism, but long on the economic problems of the U.S.S.R. He pointed out the importance of resolving the "most acute, vitally important economic problems," stating that "the decisive sector of the competition with capitalism [was] the economy and economic policy." 32 The Soviet leadership the 1980s appears to have come to the realization that the U.S.S.R. was lagging in its attempts to bridge the economic gap with the United States. The leadership, no doubt also aware of the importance of a strong economic base for sustaining a vigorous defense effort, repeatedly called attention to the imperative for improved economic performance.
In formulating their assessments of the political correlation of forces, Soviet analysts catalogued a variety of developments which were unfavorable from their perspective: the creation of several capitalist "centres of strength"—the U.S.A., Japan, and the European Economic Community; the pursuit by China of a "'special' policy determined by its hegemonistic ambitions"; and the establishment with imperialist support of "anti-democratic military-police regimes" in countries of Latin America, Asia and Africa. The worsening international situation in the 1980s was attributed in large measure to the actions of "influential forces in the USA" which sought "to preserve the state of half-war or half-peace in order to prevent socialism from growing stronger and to neutralize the changes in the world that [were] unfavourable for the USA." As was stated in a Central Committee document marking the one hundred and tenth anniversary of Lenin's birth:

The positive changes going on in the world meet with fierce resistance of imperialist reaction. The militaristic and reactionary circles are stepping up their attacks against detente, are seeking to change the balance of forces in their favour, are building up the arms race, are attempting to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, and suppressing the liberation movements of the peoples. As the Soviets saw it, the main lines of the imperialist offensive of the 1980s consisted of attempts to crystallize an emerging encirclement of the Soviet Union, to work toward an erosion of the socialist alliance, to undermine the very foundations of detente by upsetting the approximate military-strategic equilibrium between East and West, and to arrest, by military means, the course of social progress in the world.

Soviet Defense Minister Dmitri Ustinov voiced concern about the military and political encirclement of the U.S.S.R. In addition to
various new U.S. strategic programs aimed against the Soviet Union, Ustinov stated that the NATO alliance, spurred on by the United States, was planning to deploy "near the borders of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries" medium-range weapons systems "intended to fulfill strategic tasks." He added:

Europe is no way an exception. The US military presence in Japan is growing. NATO is considering the possibility of supplying modern arms to China and is encouraging Peking's military preparations directed against neighbouring states. Under US auspices, attempts are being made in the Middle East to create a new aggressive alliance. . . . The formation of a 100,000-man "quick-strike" force intended to carry out "punitive functions" is going ahead at full speed. . . .

Brezhnev, in June 1980, argued that aggressive imperialist circles were "seeking well-nigh the isolation of the Soviet Union," and one analyst mentioned that "China could well be invited to join a common anti-Soviet front, including a triple alliance between the USA, Japan and China on an anti-Soviet basis." Another scholar, writing in May 1981, was even more explicit on the encirclement theme:

Significantly, plans have recently been hatched to set up a triple alliance between Washington, Peking and Tokyo. There have also been proposals to form a new military bloc targeted at the USSR from the South (Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf) in addition to NATO in the West and the Japan-China-US triangle in the East.

Soviet leaders and analysts also saw themselves as victims of subversive imperialist attempts to undermine the socialist alliance. According to Brezhnev, "mistakes and miscalculations in home policy" in the socialist countries opened the door for imperialism to drive a wedge in the alliance:

This is what has happened in fraternal Poland, where opponents of socialism supported by outside forces are, by stirring up anarchy, seeking to channel events into a counter-revolutionary course.
The Polish crisis, said one analyst, had to do "not only with subjective mistakes and miscalculations," but also reflected "an acute class struggle on the international scale." It demonstrated the resolve of imperialist circles to "undermine socialism from within." Soviet leaders and scholars were generally defensive about the political disturbances in Poland and portrayed the situation in that country as part of a world-wide imperialist offensive to discredit the socialist system, weaken the socialist commonwealth, and reverse the direction of the correlation of forces.

The struggle against detente, according to Soviet spokesmen, represented yet another assault by imperialist forces against socialism. Detente, in the official Soviet view, had had a catalytic effect on the course of revolutionary progress in the world, and opposition to detente was aimed at "reversing the course of history, sapping the positions of world socialism and putting down the national liberation struggle by armed force." Whereas in the 1970s the Soviets continued to argue that detente remained the dominant trend in international relations, in the 1980s their confidence in the strength of the process was shaken. Brezhnev, for instance, defined the main foreign policy tasks of the Soviet Union to be "to prevent the imperialist 'position-of-strength' policy from edging out detente; to keep the flywheel of the arms race from gathering a new very dangerous momentum." This position was echoed by Soviet analysts during the course of the 1980s.

Some measure of the pessimism extant among Soviet analysts is indicated in the questions that Tomashevsky felt constrained to ask in a May 1982 article in IA:
How relevant is Lenin's peaceful coexistence concept today? Can relations between capitalist and socialist states be turned back onto the path of detente and cooperation in the spirit of peaceful coexistence? While Tomashevsky upheld the long-term viability of detente and peaceful coexistence, he noted that because peaceful coexistence was a "two-way concrete political process," its development at particular points in time depended on how the "other side" accepted the realities of the changed correlation of forces. Thus, the principles of detente and peaceful coexistence were "largely impeded by the unwillingness of the reactionary imperialist circles to reconcile themselves to the strengthening of the forces of social progress and national liberation."

In all these developments the Soviets saw a growing imperialist challenge to the further progress of socialism. And while Soviet scholars spoke of the contradictions within the NATO alliance, the economic rivalry among the U.S., Japan, and Western European countries, and the growing peace movement in Europe, they argued that the "dialectics of the development of international relations" tended to "enhance the solidarity between the leading capitalist countries and the U.S.A., and their urge to rely on US support and protection in fighting their class adversary."

All in all, the Soviets in the final years of the Brezhnev era evinced serious concern about trends in the areas of the military, economic, and political correlation of forces. In the 1970s, Soviet analysts had argued that imperialism was on the defensive globally. In the 1980s, on the other hand, in the opinion of Brezhnev and other Soviet spokesmen, imperialism had launched a counter-offensive aimed at regaining its world position. This clearly implied that the Western
powers had reacted to the "socialist offensive" of the 1970s during which the U.S.S.R. had actively supported the rise and consolidation of Marxist regimes in the Third World. According to Soviet commentators, imperialist powers were "looking for new foreign policy methods that would not only help them to adjust to present-day reality, but also make it possible to rechannel the changes taking place in the world along lines that would enable the USA to change the world balance of forces in its favour."\(^{50}\)

The U.S., in the Soviet view, had recovered from the trauma inflicted on the American psyche by the Vietnam conflict, and was seeking to reassert its former global predominance.\(^{51}\) The Soviets portrayed the international situation at the turn of the 1980s in terms of a "pitched political struggle" between the forces of detente and peace and the forces of aggression.\(^{52}\) On the whole, Soviet commentators expressed somewhat ambivalent opinions regarding the "imperialist challenge." While on the one hand they asserted that imperialism would be unable to change the correlation of forces in its favor,\(^{53}\) on the other hand they maintained that the "resistance put up by the forces of imperialism and reaction to the progressive development of mankind should not be underestimated,"\(^{54}\) and that "international imperialism [could] still inflict great suffering on people."\(^{55}\)

Migolatiev observed that the world revolutionary process would continue in spite of "temporary reverses" but underscored the dangers arising from the aggressive forces of imperialism.\(^{56}\) Another scholar argued against "oversimplify[ing] the picture of the general crisis of capitalism and the changing alignment of forces in favor of socialism," "ignor[ing] or underestimat[ing] the economic and scientific-technical
resources in the capitalist countries and the possibilities for increasing these resources," and warned that "the development of world socialism must not be imagined as continuous, unimpeded progress. . . ." 57

Soviet leaders and analysts, in the face of adverse international developments, acknowledged that a temporary deceleration in the pace of social progress had occurred. However, focusing on the long-term perspective, they argued in favor of the necessity for underscoring their historical optimism at a time when "certain elements in the West [sought] to turn the world back to the cold war period." 58 Shundeyev counseled equanimity in the face of setbacks:

... [E]ven in the periods when the international situation was at its worst and when many people became prey to confusion and panic, the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries . . . have taken an optimistic view of the future. . . .

In his report to the Twenty-Sixth Party Congress, Brezhnev summed up the element of hesitancy in the Soviet view when he stated:

Soviet people look to the future with confidence. But this optimism is not the confidence of favourites of destiny.

In the two years following Brezhnev's death, the international situation continued to worsen from the Soviet perspective, and in the following section we shall examine Soviet appraisals of the correlation of forces during the Andropov-Chernenko interlude.

ASSESSING THE CONTINUED IMPERIALIST OFFENSIVE: 1983-1985

As the conditions that underlay the rather somber early 1980 Soviet appraisals of the correlation of forces continued into 1980 and onward, Soviet commentary on the distribution of power remained generally
defensive in tone and content. The U.S.S.R. under the leadership of Yuri Andropov and later of Konstantin Chernenko was confronted with many of the same problems which plagued the Brezhnev team in its final years. Some of these problems—such as the tempo of U.S. military efforts and the degree of Sino-Soviet estrangement—waxed and waned in intensity, but none were resolved entirely to the Soviet advantage.

The year 1983 witnessed two developments in the military area which were unfavorable from the Soviet perspective. One was the announcement by President Reagan in March 1983 of U.S. plans to initiate work on establishing a space-based anti-missile defense shield, and the other was the deployment of American medium-range Pershing II and cruise missiles in Europe beginning in December 1983. The Soviets had in previous years worked hard to forestall the American deployment of the Euromissiles. With the failure of their endeavors in this regard, the U.S.S.R. abruptly withdrew from participation in the Geneva negotiations with the United States on intermediate range nuclear weapons. The Soviet leadership also announced a series of reciprocal measures designed to maintain military equilibrium in Europe.

Both steps initiated by the American administration were perceived by Soviet spokesmen in terms of continuing U.S. efforts to achieve military-strategic superiority over the U.S.S.R. The refrain of American striving for military superiority remained unchanged during the period under consideration as U.S. programs for military renewal gathered momentum.

The corollary to this theme—that the Soviet Union would under no conditions permit the United States to achieve the military superiority it desired—was also reiterated in innumerable speeches by Andropov and
Chernenko and in the writings of Soviet international relations scholars. In an interview with Pravda in March 1983, Andropov, in a characteristic response, emphatically stated:

Indeed, all attempts to achieve military superiority over the USSR will come to naught. The Soviet Union will never let this happen and will never find itself unarmed in the face of any danger. Let this be firmly remembered in Washington. It is time they stopped inventing ever new variants of the best way to unleash nuclear war in the hope of winning it. This is not simply an irresponsible pursuit, but sheer insanity.62

Similarly, Chernenko on many occasions upheld the necessity "to give up attempts to achieve military superiority." "Our country," he noted, "does not seek such superiority, but neither will it allow such superiority over it."63 Soviet analysts, too, consistently underscored these themes in their appraisals of the military correlation of forces.64

The importance of military-strategic parity in maintaining international stability and in limiting aggressive imperialist ambitions constituted yet another—by no means novel—topic of Soviet comment on the military balance. According to Bykov, "the balance of military forces between the world of socialism and the world of capitalism, between the states comprising the Warsaw Pact and the countries of NATO, between the USSR and USA," represented the "most important factor stabilizing the world situation."65 Razmerov declared the military-strategic parity between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. to be of "principal and historic importance in the struggle of socialist states against global nuclear calamity."66 On this subject Andropov opined:

The military strategic parity attained has deprived the United States of the possibility of blackmailing us with nuclear attack. This parity is a dependable guarantee of peace, and we will do everything to preserve it.67
Arguing that military superiority was not a Soviet goal, Soviet spokesmen maintained that the U.S.S.R. would work toward upholding military-strategic parity. In a new emphasis on this theme, Soviet analysts referred to the great cost at which this parity was attained by the U.S.S.R.:

Achievement of the military-strategic balance between socialism and capitalism exacted immense efforts and means from the Soviet and other peoples of the socialist community countries. This parity is a reliable guarantee of peace, and the socialist countries will never allow it to be upset.

In no uncertain terms, then, the Soviets underscored their determination to counter the Western military measures which would, in their view, upset the hard-won military-strategic equilibrium. Throughout 1983 and 1984, mutual recriminations regarding a military threat and a striving for military superiority issued forth from both sides of the Iron Curtain. Moreover, following the December 1983 Soviet withdrawal from the Geneva arms talks on medium-range nuclear missiles, a definite freeze set in in Soviet-American relations which was not to thaw until the subject of new bilateral arms negotiations was broached in December 1984.

For most of the period spanning the Andropov-Chernenko interlude, then, Soviet appraisals of the military correlation of forces concentrated on the various military measures undertaken by the United States to create an imbalance in the military correlation of forces, as well as Soviet attempts to redress the perceived imbalance. Soviet spokesmen also took great pains to underline their determination to maintain the East-West military equilibrium, which they perceived as the only effective safeguard of peace.
With regard to the economic correlation of forces, Soviet writers, after routine references to the "dynamism" of the Soviet economy, the growing socialist share in world industrial production, and the advantages of the crisis-free socialist economies, usually tended in their analyses to emphasize the imperative need to correct the chronic problems of the U.S.S.R. economy, and to discuss the causes for the secular slow-down in Soviet economic growth.

As Brezhnev did in his last years in office, Andropov, upon assuming the leadership of the CPSU, spoke of the importance of undertaking efforts "to advance the efficiency of the national economy," and accomplishing tasks "with a relatively smaller increase in material and labour inputs." Andropov's report to the November 1982 Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee was a veritable indictment of the way in which the Soviet economy functioned. He lashed out against the slow rate of growth of labor productivity, the "problem of discrepancy in the development of the raw materials and manufacturing branches," and the fulfillment of economic plans "at the cost of large spending and production outlays." He declared a war against "poor work performance, inaction, negligence" and stressed the need for creating "economic and organizational" conditions which would encourage "high-quality efficient work, initiative and resourcefulness."

Chernenko, in his turn, continued to underscore the need for qualitative changes and improvements in the Soviet economy and exhorted the Soviet people to make fuller use of the existing production potential and eliminate lags in several sectors of the economy.

Under the impact of the Andropov measures to stimulate the Soviet economy, economic performance in the U.S.S.R., according to Western
analysts, did improve slightly in 1983 and early 1984. But most Western scholars agreed that the nature of the efforts undertaken under Andropov to correct economic deficiencies were too superficial to post long-term gains for the Soviet economy. In fact, neither Andropov nor Chernenko lived long enough to implement any far-reaching reforms in this area.

As a general rule, Soviet analysts refrained from making any direct comparisons between the levels of performance of the U.S. and U.S.S.R. economies. In one of the rare exceptions to this rule, one Soviet commentator observed somewhat wistfully:

Socialism, it is true, has not yet succeeded in exceeding the level of productive forces reached by the most developed capitalist countries. However, within the limits of possibilities, it has given the peoples . . . considerably more . . . than capitalism has been able to give its peoples even in the most wealthy and developed Western countries.

Trends in the area of the political correlation of forces, too, were not particularly encouraging from the Soviet perspective. While the process of Sino-American rapprochement faltered a bit due to the initial Reagan approach to the issue of Taiwan, neither the U.S. nor the PRC allowed this particular disagreement to derail efforts to seek a closer relationship. The U.S.S.R., on the other hand, sought and failed to turn this circumstance to its advantage. Late in the Brezhnev era and during the Andropov period, the Soviet leadership toned down its invective against China. Andropov expressed the "need to overcome the inertia of prejudice" and declared that the Soviet Union would respond to every positive Chinese advance. But, as Chernenko was to acknowledge in March 1984:

The role of socialism in international affairs could be increased, of course, by the normalisation of relations with the People's Republic of China. . . . Political consultations
show, however, that there are still differences on a number of questions in principle.

Similarly, Soviet concern about the increasing American influence and presence in the Middle East, especially after the dispatching of U.S. Marines to Lebanon, was allayed to a degree when President Reagan withdrew American forces from that country in 1984. But the U.S.S.R., which had earlier suffered a net decrease in prestige in both the Arab and nonaligned worlds after its invasion of Afghanistan, was unable to expand significantly its influence in that region.

Thus, while Soviet analysts spoke of the failure of U.S. Middle East policy, they pointed to the dangers of a resurgent imperialism which pursued an international strategy that was "[a]gressive in content and venturesome in methods." According to Soviet commentators, the historic dispute between socialism and capitalism had, under President Reagan, assumed the character of a "total struggle" where cooperation was replaced by confrontation in all spheres of international life. Fedoseev characterized imperialist policy in terms of a "fierce struggle against socialism and other forces of the revolutionary process." Imperialism, above all U.S. imperialism, was vigorously seeking "to erode the unity of the socialist countries by various, at times treacherous, means." As Zagladin put it:

President Reagan's declaration of a new "crusade" against socialism, followed up by provocative actions against the Soviet Union, Poland, Cuba, and Vietnam, in fact against the whole socialist world showed once again that this was not just a temporary outbreak of aggressiveness but a well-considered and consistent policy of maintaining and heightening anti-Soviet and anti-socialist tensions.

Soviet writers also catalogued such American actions as "the sending of marines to Lebanon, the intervention in Grenada, the undeclared war against Nicaragua, the military interference in El
Salvador" and the economic policy of "boycotts, sanctions, discrimination and a virtual economic war against the USSR and the other socialist countries," as proof of the confrontationist foreign policy of the Reagan Administration. Reacting to what the Soviet leadership saw as an unrelenting American offensive in the global arena, Andropov observed:

We are . . . decisively against this historical rivalry [between socialism and capitalism] being geared to scaling down peaceful cooperation and all the more so to its becoming a possible ground for nuclear war.

Referring to Washington's "great power ambitions and its exaggerated notions of the role and place of America in today's world," Chernenko averred that the U.S. leadership, "obsessed by force," was "simply losing a sense of reality." In other words, imperialist forces led by the U.S.A. were, in the Soviet view, striving to change the correlation of forces in the world in their own favor. While Soviet analysts ritually declared such imperialist attempts to be futile, they nevertheless acknowledged that the positions of imperialism in many newly-free states were "still powerful" and that imperialism "strongly influence[d]" their policies.

Also, Soviet spokesmen on the one hand appeared to console themselves with the growing impact on international relations of the popular anti-war movement. But on the other hand, they declared that "[t]he main danger for the whole of mankind coming from the USA's adventurist foreign policy stem[med] from its urge to reverse the tide of history and to ride roughshod over the objective economic and social processes, even with the use of armed force, when no other means [were] available."
Soviet assessments of the overall distribution of power tended to reflect their rather defensive portrayals of the military, economic, and political correlation of forces. Zagladin, for instance, in his reiteration that the balance of world forces remained unchanged, appeared to be attempting to convince himself and his counterparts of the validity of his appraisal, as much as a world audience:

The analysis of long-term factors influencing the world historical process convincingly showed that the objective trends determining the world developments had not changed. Taking into account the heightened possibilities of the socialist community, revolutionary-democratic countries, the non-aligned movement, the working class and all antiwar forces, one must admit that the balance of forces has not changed. On the whole it has remained the same, and if there were certain changes, they, as before, were in favour of democratic and peaceloving forces.

Elsewhere, the same writer, in a moment of frankness, noted that the contemporary international situation offered "little reason for optimism." Another analyst, in speaking of the "uncertainty and pessimism" among people and social forces in the West in response to the "escalation of war hysteria and the constant emphasis on military might," was doubtless expressing Soviet concerns as well. Similarly, the 1983 Political Declaration of the Warsaw Treaty Member States argued that the "forces of peace are more powerful than those of war," but added the proviso that their impact on international relations was crucially dependent upon "unity and tenacity of purpose."

Some hint of Soviet fears that the international policies of the Western governments had in fact exerted considerable influence on the international situation is contained in Sovetov's remark that the Soviet Union and socialist countries along with other "progressive forces" were "fighting, vigorously and consistently, to . . . channel the course of world developments into a propitious direction."
Rather than arguing that social progress was developing rapidly "[i]n a situation where in the sphere of the economy socialism is confidently moving forward; when on the military-strategic plane an approximate equilibrium has been reached . . . ; when the general correlation of socio-political forces in the world is all the more changing against imperialism," Zagladin chose instead to emphasize that "in these conditions, ideological struggle, ideological efforts to weaken and undermine the positions of socialism represented . . . one of the chief concerns of the leaders of the contemporary imperialist world." 99

The first half of the 1980s, then, were characterized by very cautious and defensive Soviet formulations of the balance. The international situation, in the Soviet perspective, impeded the rapid development of the historical process. This, coupled with an extended period of transitional leadership in the Soviet Union, was not conducive to confident Soviet appraisals of the global distribution of power.

ANALYSIS

On the whole, Soviet appraisals of the correlation of forces during the period under consideration in this chapter were consonant with the tenor of military, political, and economic developments. A latent sense of pessimism and gloom ran as an undercurrent in Soviet discussions of the distribution of power, reflecting, in large measure, the influence of such negative trends as the acceleration of the arms race, domestic economic troubles, more effective American support of anti-Marxist
groups in such countries as Angola, Afghanistan, and Nicaragua, and more
determined U.S. resistance to the further spread of socialist influence.

By 1984, President Reagan in his January foreign policy address
felt assured enough about the success of his policies to assert:

Strength is more than military power. Economic strength is
crucial, and America's economy is leading the world into
recovery. Equally important is our strength of spirit and
unity among our people at home and with our allies abroad.
We're stronger in all these areas than we were three years
ago.

Even after discounting the rhetoric contained in the Reagan assessment,
it was clear that Soviet spokesmen in analysing international
developments within the Marxist-Leninist framework indirectly concurred
with the Reagan view, for in their analyses, they entertained no doubts
or illusions about what they termed the vigorous imperialist
"counter-offensive" in the world arena.

The policies pursued by the U.S.S.R. in the military, economic, and
political areas appeared to be in keeping with stated Soviet opinions of
the correlation of forces. In the military sphere, the Soviets
undertook, as they had repeatedly warned, to counter every American
attempt (from the Soviet perspective) to undermine the general East-West
military-strategic equilibrium. The importance attached to the military
correlation of forces was underscored by the very transparent concern
exhibited by the Soviet leadership at having the principle of
military-strategic parity repudiated by the Reagan Administration.

As we have seen in an earlier chapter, Soviet spokesmen in the
early 1970s, in rather defensive references to the parity concept, had
expressed overt relief at official American recognition and acceptance
of equal Soviet status with the United States in the military-strategic
area. Later in the 1970s, as the U.S., beset by various internal
problems, turned its attention inward, Soviet spokesmen had credited their elimination of U.S. nuclear superiority with the creation of favorable conditions for socialist advance. Toward the end of the 1970s and especially with the accession of Ronald Reagan to the Presidency of the United States, the Soviets found themselves on the defensive once again, as they struggled to force the new American administration to recognize parity as the principal concept underlying the superpower relationship.

During the 1980s, as the U.S. increasingly reasserted its global role, the Soviet Union appeared to display some caution in its attempts to expand its political influence in the international arena. While reasons such as economic stringencies, an old and decrepit leadership, the protracted and expensive Soviet engagement in Afghanistan, together with the lack of favorable political opportunities for exploitation, most certainly played a key role in dictating Soviet caution, it does seem plausible to argue that the militant attitude of the Reagan Administration convinced the Soviets of the wisdom of refraining from undertaking adventuristic actions that might lead to a superpower confrontation. But even while the U.S.S.R. may have abstained from any new global engagements in the 1980s, Soviet analysts consistently upheld the right of the U.S.S.R. to pursue an internationally-oriented foreign policy. Sovietov, for instance, wrote:

Some people in the USA are trying to make it look like "Moscow conducts a fully global foreign and military policy" as George Shultz put it in one of his statements. The question naturally arises here as to why indeed should the Soviet Union not pursue its foreign policy along all directions of world development.

In the sphere of the economy, the Soviet leadership, recognizing serious shortcomings, had stressed the need to improve economic
performance. But the Soviets also declared their determination to match all new American military programs launched by President Reagan even at great economic cost. Arguing that military-strategic parity was the "main factor of the balance of forces," Senin stated that the Soviet Union with the resources at its disposal could "manufacture defence products at least as sophisticated as American military hardware."102 In a similar vein, Lebedev warned "[t]hose who count on achieving . . . superiority by way of creating new types of weapons," that "Soviet economics, science and technology [had] reached such a level which makes it possible for the USSR to develop any type of weapon on which the enemies of peace would like to stake their bets."103

Soviet scholars also drew attention, however, to the immense costs of maintaining a military-strategic equilibrium. Sanakoyev wrote that "the Soviet Union and the fraternal socialist states [were] bearing the brunt of the struggle for the maintenance of world peace and [were] the material base for the world peace movement."104 Given Soviet awareness of the economic costs of the military build-up, it is worthwhile to explore the parity-superiority issue further.

In the previous chapter, we had discussed this subject at some length and concluded that the Soviet leadership was, in all likelihood, sincere in its protestations regarding the importance of parity in its nuclear relationship with the United States. Much of the debate on both sides of the Iron Curtain regarding the comparative military strength of East and West revolved around the issues of the greater numbers of accurate Soviet ICBMs (as compared with those in the American arsenal) as well as Soviet deployment of the Backfire bomber and the
sophisticated SS-20 mobile MRBMs in the European and Asian parts of the U.S.S.R.

The Soviets had begun deployment of the Backfire bomber and the SS-20 missiles in the mid-1970s, following their failure at the 1974 Vladivostok summit to gain Western acceptance of their demand to be compensated for the forward-based systems. The latter included British and French nuclear delivery systems and U.S. land- and carrier-based weapons in Europe. The SS-20 deployment thus represented a unilateral attempt on the part of the U.S.S.R. to neutralize what was perceived as a Soviet vulnerability (or perhaps even to improve the Soviet advantage). Undertaken during a period when the United States was in the throes of a domestic and foreign policy crisis, the Soviet leadership probably felt reasonably assured of presenting the West with a *fait accompli* in this area. They argued that with the SS-20 deployment, there existed a rough equilibrium between the forces of NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

When in the late 1970s and especially after the Afghanistan invasion, Western governments undertook to correct what they saw as a military imbalance both on the strategic level and in the European theater (which had been created at a time when the U.S. was distracted by internal crises), the Soviet Union was faced with the prospect either of undertaking counter-measures to neutralize the effect of Western military programs or losing any advantage they may have garnered through their own missile deployments. The Soviet leadership, in their stated views, unhesitatingly picked the former course, thus signalling their determination to maintain the military correlation of forces at a level
which they recognized as "parity," while vehemently denying any desire to attain military superiority over the United States.

When one takes into account the fact that it is by virtue mainly of its military power that the Soviet Union can lay claim to the status of a superpower, it is not difficult to understand the vested Soviet interest in perpetuating the very foundation of its superpower status. In spite of economic exigencies, some Western analysts have argued that while the pace of advance may slow down, the U.S.S.R. should not find it impossible to expand its rate of military procurement in the years to come.

Depending on whether one recognizes the presently obtaining military balance to be one of parity or one in which the Soviets enjoy a slight margin of superiority, one's conclusions with regard to Soviet motivations may differ. What is clear, however, is that the Soviets, recognizing the unattainability for the present of a definite military superiority over the West, do not seek to achieve any obviously superior military status.

To underscore the sincerity of their views, Soviet spokesmen since the late 1970s have argued against an escalation of the nuclear arms race because of the inherent dangers of a global holocaust and the impossibility of victory in a nuclear war. Rybkin and Kortunov, for instance, observed that if nuclear weapons were "used in their totality, they will destroy not only belligerents, but also human civilization and life itself." And a Pravda editorial declared that to put "one's stakes on victory in a nuclear war is adventurism."

By and large, one may aver that the scope of American military programs and the vast expenditures involved in any Soviet
counter-measures, had the effect of putting the Soviets on the defensive. At a time of mounting Soviet economic problems, the need to pump major resources into the military sphere could not have been a welcome prospect for the Soviet leadership. For another thing, American military programs challenged what the Soviets had come to see as their passport to equal status with the United States.

CONCLUSION

The 1980s represented for the Soviets a time of severe testing in international affairs, a period of intense confrontation between the capitalist and socialist systems. In the face of a vigorous American challenge in the military, political, and economic spheres, Soviet commentators on the correlation of forces abandoned the confident tenor of the 1970s and inveighed bitterly against imperialist attempts to undermine hard-won socialist gains.

Also, with the notion of military parity under attack in the United States, the Soviets expressed grave concern lest one of the major factors underpinning socialist international successes be vitiated. Only toward early 1985, as the Chernenko interregnum drew to a close, and the U.S. and the Soviet Union agreed to begin fresh negotiations along the entire gamut of strategic, medium-range, and space weapons, did Soviet spokesmen express a renewed sense of hope.

In our concluding chapter, we shall, among other themes, briefly touch upon Soviet appraisals of the correlation of forces during the period ushered in by Gorbachev's leadership.
NOTES


5. Brezhnev, Report to the XXVI Congress, p. 5.

6. Ibid., p. 39.


11. Ibid., p. 43.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Pair</th>
<th>Rate of Growth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1966-70</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-75</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976-80</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-82</td>
<td>2.1</td>
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</table>

19. The per cent annual rate of growth of U.S.S.R. industrial production between 1980-1982 was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rate of Growth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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24. Ibid.

25. Brezhnev, in his report to the Twenty-Sixth Congress, noted some of the economic constraints under which the Soviet Union would have to labor:

   A number of factors that tend to make economic development more complicated will, . . . operate in the eighties. One of them is a decline in the growth of manpower resources. Another is the growth of expenditures due to developing the East and the North, and also the inevitable increase in spending on environmental protection. To this must be added that there are quite a few old enterprises in need of cardinal reconstruction. Then, too, roads, transport, and communications are lagging behind the growing needs of the economy. . . .

   See Ibid., p. 66.

26. Ibid., p. 15.

27. See N. Inozemtsev, "XXVI c"ezd KPSS i nashi zadachi" [The Twenty-Sixth Congress of the CPSU and Our Tasks], MEMO (3) March 1981, pp. 4-24.


32. Ibid.


40. Brezhnev, Report to the XXVI Congress, p. 16.


45. See, for instance, O. Bykov, "V avangarde bor'by za uprochenie mira" [In the Vanguard of the Struggle for Strengthening World Peace], MEMO (10) October 1980, p. 13.

46. Tomashevsky, "Lenin's Concept of Peaceful Coexistence," p. 3.

47. Ibid., pp. 7-8.


52. Sovetov, "1980 in Retrospect," p. 3.


61. For details on Soviet countermeasures, see "Statement by Yuri Andropov, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet," in IA (12) December 1983, pp. 3-6.


No programmes of a further arms build-up will ever force the Soviet Union to make unilateral concessions. We will be compelled to counter the challenge of the American side by deploying corresponding weapons systems of our own—an analogous missile to counter the MX missile, and our own long-range cruise missile, which we are now testing, to counter the US long-range cruise missile.


65. O. Bykov, "Razum i otvetstvennost' (Imperativy iadernogo veka)" [Reason and Responsibility (Imperatives of the Nuclear Age)], MEMO (11) November 1983, p. 5.

66. V. Razmerov, "Zhiznennaia al'ternativa" [The Vital Alternative], MEMO (9) September 1984, p. 16. For a similar view, see also Iakovlev, "Istoki ugrozy i obshchestvennoe mnenie," p. 11.


71. See, for instance, V. Zagladin, "Leninizm i sovremennaia epokha" [Leninism and the Present Epoch], MEMO (1) January 1985, p. 11.

72. Ibid. See also Davydov and Berzin, "The Alignment of Forces," p. 66.


77. Ibid., p. 94. See also Bond and Levine, "The Soviet Domestic Economy," pp. 83-84.


81. As an example of Soviet views on this subject, note the following observation in an editorial entitled "Great Mission of Existing Socialism:

Having arrogated itself the role of a world policeman, the USA has stepped up its activities in the Middle East to strangle the Arab national liberation movement and undermine the progressive regimes there. It seeks to establish its hegemony in the region and turn it into a bridgehead for its aggressive actions against the socialist and developing countries. The US interventionist actions in Lebanon are part of the general imperial course pursued by the present US administration.

IA (1) January 1984, p. 7.

82. See, for instance, L. Tolkunov, "Detente Can and Must Be Restored," IA (2) February 1985, p. 23.


84. V. Linnik, "Reaganizm' kak iavlenie v politike amerikanskogo imperializma" [Reaganism as a Phenomenon in the Politics of American Imperialism], MEMO (10) October 1983, p. 23.


95. Ibid., p. 40.


CHAPTER X
SUMMING UP

In conclusion, we shall briefly touch upon the salient developments with regard to the Soviet perspective on the correlation of forces during the period ushered in by Gorbachev's leadership. We shall also note the important differences in Soviet treatment of the distribution of power between the Khrushchev and Brezhnev periods, review the validity of the hypotheses we had formulated in our introductory chapter, as well as attempt to relate our findings to the views of other Western scholars.

NEW HOPES? 1985-PRESENT

The advent of the Gorbachev era in March 1985 coincided with the beginning of superpower arms control negotiations in Geneva on strategic, medium-range, and space-based anti-missile systems. Chernenko's death marked a definite end to the phase of transitional leadership in Soviet history and perhaps instilled in the Soviet populace a greater sense of hope and confidence with regard to the domestic and international fortunes of the U.S.S.R.

Soviet commentary on the military, economic, and political aspects of the correlation of forces remained basically unchanged under Gorbachev. Soviet leaders and analysts inveighed against: the "aggressive designs of the U.S. ruling elite";\(^1\) sustained U.S. attempts to upset the military-strategic equilibrium;\(^2\) menacing U.S. plans for the militarization of outer space.\(^3\) Soviet spokesmen also continued to
uphold the principle of military-strategic parity as the linchpin of the superpower relationship and declared the determination of the U.S.S.R. to counter American measures aimed at tilting the military balance.  

In the area of the economy, the Soviets held up the achievement "within a short period of time" of the "highest levels of productivity, quality and efficiency" as a prime economic goal. Such an aim signalled the changed Soviet emphasis on the importance of qualitative rather than quantitative measures of economic performance.

As far as the political correlation of forces was concerned, Soviet analysts saw both clouds and silver linings. One commentator stated that "the assertion of peaceful coexistence as an unquestionable law of international relations [was] still far from complete" and foresaw "protracted and complicated" struggle ahead. Sanakoyev and Kapchenko noted that "[t]here was an obvious reluctance [among Western ruling circles] to reckon with present-day realities" and added that "the imperialists and their stooges [were] frequently able to create hotbeds of crisis and tension in various parts of the world." On the other hand, Soviet writers perceived a favorable development in the "anti-U.S." character of the anti-war movement and the possibilities it offered for frustrating the implementation of American military programs.

In much of Soviet commentary, however, a faint ray of hope of a better future was emerging under Gorbachev. According to one scholar, "a return to confrontation [by imperialist circles] failed to yield results" because socialism "disrupted the attempts to tip the balance of military forces and prevented the military-strategic equilibrium from being upset." The same writer averred that the "counter-offensive
launched by imperialism provoked a broad mobilization of social forces by peace." And this development in turn "made the US Administration first change its political vocabulary and then accept the Soviet proposal to begin contacts that would pave the way to negotiations."  

Soviet analysts credited a certain amelioration in the international situation and a favorable turn in the correlation of forces with having made possible the initiation of arms control negotiations in Geneva in March 1985, followed by the U.S.-Soviet summit in the same city in November 1985. Gorbachev's widely touted January 1986 "peace plan," which outlined stages during which nuclear weapons would be gradually reduced and completely eliminated by the year 2000, represented a major Soviet initiative aimed at influencing the anti-war movement. After several years during which the U.S.S.R. was headed by a succession of physically moribund leaders, the accession of Gorbachev appeared to pave anew the way for a more vigorous Soviet role in international affairs.

At the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress in February 1986, Gorbachev declared:

We look to the future with confidence, since we have a good picture of our tasks and the ways of accomplishing them.

And the tasks that Gorbachev outlined were formidable ones: resolving the chronic problems of the Soviet economy; overcoming imperialist resistance "to make a sober assessment of the realities of the world and its prospects"; maintaining military-strategic parity; and promoting social progress. He foresaw "the basic struggle in the years to come" as being "over questions of the actual content of a policy capable of preserving peace" and declared the success of such a policy to depend upon "the alignment of forces in the world arena, the
growth and activeness of the potential for peace, ... its ability to effectively counter the threat of nuclear war," as well as "the degree of realism shown by Western ruling circles in assessing the situation."16

Even as Gorbachev emphasized the difficult nature of the tasks faced by the U.S.S.R., he underscored the Soviet ability to tackle them: "We are convinced of socialism's ability to accomplish the most difficult tasks facing it."17 And of the future prospects for the cause of peace and social progress in the world, Gorbachev was at once cautious and hopeful:

Looking back at the past year, one cannot help seeing that, from all indications, preconditions for an improvement in the international situation are beginning to take shape. But the preconditions for a drastic change still are not that change itself. The arms race is continuing and the threat of nuclear war remains. However, the international reactionary forces are by no means omnipotent. The development of the world revolutionary process and the upsurge of the mass democratic and anti-war movements have significantly broadened and strengthened the enormous potential of peace, reason and goodwill. This is a powerful counterbalance to the aggressive policy of imperialism.

In brief, then, Gorbachev reasserted his support of the long-standing Soviet goals of maintaining the Soviet position in the military competition with the United States, and of aiding the progress of the revolutionary process in the world. He also stressed the importance of the dynamism of the economic development of the socialist system in order to improve the people's well-being, to counter the danger of war, and to demonstrate the possibilities of the socialist way of life. One may posit that while the new leadership's view of the correlation of forces is not entirely sanguine, it appears hopeful that the international situation contains the potential to turn in a direction favorable to the socialist cause.
Gorbachev has fashioned an entirely new foreign policy team and it is rather premature to speculate on the specifics of the international policies that the new leadership will pursue. But in general, based on the tasks and goals that Gorbachev has outlined in the domestic and international areas, one may argue that even though domestic economic development appears high on the list of Soviet priorities, the U.S.S.R. will keep its armed forces "at a level that rules out strategic superiority for the forces of imperialism" and, short of provoking a direct confrontation with the U.S., will resort to all means to exploit opportunities for the spread of socialist influence in the world.

THE CORRELATION OF FORCES AS VIEWED UNDER KHRUSHCHEV AND BREZHNEV

Important areas of contrast between the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras surfaced in the course of our analysis of the evolving Soviet perspective on the distribution of power: the position of the military aspect of the correlation of forces in the Soviet hierarchy of values changed from the Khrushchev to the Brezhnev years; the portrayal of optimistic and pessimistic assessments of the balance reflected the style and proclivities of the leaders; and finally, changes in verbal formulations of the correlation were, in the first instance, introduced by Khrushchev himself, whereas Brezhnev never served as his own point man in this area. We shall explore the substance and the significance of these differences below.

Khrushchev's rocket threats and his inflated claims with regard to Soviet military superiority tended to cloak his abiding belief in the
prime importance of the economic correlation of forces in furthering the cause of socialism in the international arena. According to Khrushchev, worldwide victory for socialism would come only when the U.S.S.R. surpassed the most developed capitalist countries in per capita production. Khrushchev's proclivities led him, during times of economic downswings in the U.S.S.R., to attempt to cut the defense budget in order to promote economic growth.

The urgent necessity of catching up with and surpassing the productive potential of the U.S. economy was a constant refrain in Soviet analyses of the Khrushchev years. In fact, in the Party Program promulgated by Khrushchev in 1961, a definite economic timetable was specified and the Soviet leadership voiced the confident expectation that the material basis for a communist society of plenty would be established in the U.S.S.R. by the year 1980. Khrushchev may have made his exaggerated claims about military preponderance in part to protect the course of economic development in the U.S.S.R. from rapacious defense expenditures, as well as to secure immediate political gains on the strength of a general perception abroad of invincible Soviet military might. Ironically, however, the failure of Khrushchev's policy of deceit and the subsequent exposure of Soviet military weakness may have helped trigger the eventual Soviet tilt toward the military aspect of the correlation of forces.

The Brezhnev team reversed the style and substance of Khrushchev's policies and concentrated on an ambitious and all-round build-up of Soviet military forces. Under Brezhnev, the defense budget was held to be sacrosanct. After the mid-1970s, when the rate of economic growth in the U.S.S.R. slowed down, defense expenditures grew at the expense of
the rest of the economy. While the Brezhnev leadership continued to pay
lip-service to the importance of the economic aspect of the correlation
of forces, it eschewed the idea of setting economic timetables for
catching up with capitalist economies and, for the most part, refrained
from engaging in direct comparisons of the overall level of the
capitalist and socialist economies. The change of course was reflected
in the stress on the military aspect of the correlation of forces during
the Brezhnev period. While the portrayal of the military correlation
under Brezhnev was circumspect in formulation, the decisive influence of
the military factor in the distribution of power was both implicitly and
explicitly acknowledged. Soviet spokesmen, moreover, credited Soviet
attainment of military-strategic parity with the United States with
having ushered in a qualitative change in the correlation of forces in
favor of socialism.

Soviet leaders and analysts take as axiomatic the notion that the
correlation of forces is moving in favor of socialism. They also treat
as an axiom the idea that imperialist powers attempt to use military
means whenever possible to reverse the direction of the correlation in
their own favor. It is in their respective responses to this perceived
imperialist challenge that one can discern a significant difference
between the Khrushchev and Brezhnev periods. This difference lies in
the degree of stress placed upon the role and importance of Soviet
military might.

Khrushchev held that the imperialist challenge could be met
adequately only by making the Soviet Union the greatest economic power
and relying on the attraction of the Soviet model to win new adherents
to socialism. He saw military strength as useful in serving as a
deterrent against an American attack on the U.S.S.R. and in gaining political advantages for the Soviet Union in the short run. While he did not repudiate the importance of the economic factor, Brezhnev, on the other hand, appears to have held the view that it was chiefly through countervailing military strength that the Soviet Union could best meet the imperialist challenge and actively help in promoting socialist influence in the world.

The following two statements from the Khrushchev and Brezhnev periods respectively will, when considered in juxtaposition, highlight the differing emphases on the economic and military factors of the correlation:

The victory of a social system will be decided not by rockets, not by atomic and hydrogen bombs, but by the system that provides man with greater material and spiritual benefits. 21

The Soviet Union and other socialist countries, by virtue of their increasing military potential, are changing the balance of forces in the international arena in favor of the forces of peace and socialism. This is exerting a very sobering effect on extremist circles in the imperialist states and it is creating favorable conditions for achieving the Soviet foreign-political goals in the international arena. 22

The significance of this change in emphasis from the economic to the military aspect of the correlation of forces lay in the fact that during the Brezhnev era, military power in its conventional form was extensively used to further the socialist cause in the Third World. In the official Soviet view, strategic parity effectively neutralized American attempts at "nuclear blackmail" of the U.S.S.R. With its vastly improved power-projection capabilities, then, the U.S.S.R. felt free to proffer direct and indirect military support to its client states in various areas of the globe. In the words of Defense Minister Marshal Grechko:
At the present stage the historic function of the Soviet Armed Forces is not restricted to their function in defending our Motherland and the other socialist countries. In its foreign policy activity the Soviet state purposefully opposes the export of counter-revolution and the policy of oppression, supports the struggle for national liberation and resolutely resists imperialist aggression in whatever distant region of our planet it may appear.

For Khrushchev, the principle of peaceful coexistence primarily embraced the sphere of East-West economic competition and ideological struggle. Khrushchev tended to be of the opinion that local wars of any stripe contained an escalatory potential and should therefore be avoided by both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. at all costs. Peaceful coexistence under the Brezhnev conception, however, stressed East-West economic cooperation (rather than direct competition) while allowing for the spread of Soviet global influence even (and perhaps primarily) through military means.

Both during the Khrushchev and the Brezhnev eras, Soviet assessments of the correlation of forces went through several distinct phases—starting with caution, building up to a highpoint of optimism, and subsiding to confusion under Khrushchev and to mild pessimism under Brezhnev.

In a political and economic sense, one may argue that Khrushchev had cause for some optimism, but the basis for Khrushchevian confidence in the military sphere was weak or nonexistent. Under Brezhnev, on the other hand, there was a stronger basis for military and political optimism. Soviet military power during the Brezhnev years grew significantly, often at the cost of Soviet economic progress. As we have noted earlier, however, victory in economic competition with capitalism was not accorded the pride of place by Brezhnev that it held under Khrushchev. So long as Soviet economic performance posted modest
gains annually, the Brezhnev regime, with its emphasis on the aspect of military competition, continued to protect Soviet defense expenditures.

It is interesting to note that while a concrete and objective basis for Soviet military optimism (reflected as it was in claims of military superiority during the Khrushchev years and assertions of military parity during the Brezhnev period) was absent under Khrushchev but very much present under Brezhnev, the United States reacted similarly in both cases to a perceived Soviet military threat. It raised defense expenditures and initiated a concerted rearmament program. Such a reaction to the putative Soviet military superiority under Khrushchev largely triggered the change in Soviet emphasis from the economic to the military correlation of forces—a bias which is likely to continue in the future, mainly because military gains are more immediately translated into political gains.

One other point of contrast between the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras relates to the process of introduction of new verbal formulations to depict the correlation of forces. Khrushchev, always in the forefront, constantly expounded his views of the balance and was usually the first to introduce new terminology to describe the distribution of power at different points in time. Thus, he began to characterize the correlation in terms of a preponderance of forces in 1959, asserted the notion of military superiority in 1960, and in 1962 led Soviet analysis into a morass of confusion by voicing conflicting opinions on both the military and the overall correlation of forces.

Brezhnev, on the other hand, was much less exuberant in his formulations and analyses of the distribution of power. With the notable exception in the early 1970s of beginning to characterize the
superpower military balance in terms of parity, Brezhnev, for the most part, used only the generic formulation, sootnoshenie sil, in describing the distribution of power. When in the mid-1970s the term preponderance of forces (pereoves sil) gained limited currency in Soviet analyses, it was at first rather tentatively floated by Soviet scholars and then underscored by Andrei Gromyko in September 1975.

Even after Gromyko's introduction of the alternative formulation, the majority of Soviet commentators opted to use the neutral expression sootnoshenie sil in their expositions of the correlation of forces. This is not to suggest that the Soviet optimism of the mid-1970s with regard to the distribution of power was not a generally shared sentiment. As we have seen above, Soviet analysts and leaders, including Brezhnev himself, confidently spoke in terms of an accelerated historical process of forward movement in favor of socialism. The reluctance to resort to alternative verbal formulations of the correlation with more favorable overtones perhaps reflected the circumspection characteristic of the Brezhnev era in general.

CONSIDERATION OF HYPOTHESES

Both ideological and pragmatic considerations play a role in Soviet assessments of the correlation of forces. We had posited above that on a higher level of abstraction, we expected no variation in the Soviet appraisal of the balance. In other words, Soviet scholars would, given the ideological imperative, always assert that the correlation of forces was moving in favor of socialism. On a lower level of abstraction, when leaders and analysts referred to more immediate circumstances, we
expected to find considerable variation in formulation and evaluation of the distribution of power.

Our analysis has sufficiently borne out these hypotheses. We did not find a single instance where Soviet spokesmen argued that the correlation of forces was not moving in favor of socialism. In their treatment of the concept as a dynamic process of historical movement, Soviet commentators invariably repeated the standard formula that the correlation of forces was moving in favor of socialism. On the other hand, based on Soviet interpretations of specific events, we were able to identify periods of optimism and pessimism in Soviet views of the correlation of forces.

We also discerned a relationship between Soviet formulations on the correlation of forces and the choice of aggressive or cautious policies in international affairs. At times when Soviet commentary portrayed a strong and vigorous U.S.S.R., the Soviet leadership was usually aggressive in its pursuit of advantages in the global arena. On the other hand, during periods of defensive formulations of the distribution of power, the Soviet Union was in process of redressing a perceived weakness in the political, military, or economic area.

We had also hypothesized that leaders' personalities have a significant impact on the conduct of Soviet foreign policy. While basic Soviet foreign policy goals remain invariable from one period to another, the method of attaining these goals vary from one individual to another. We did find that the differing styles and proclivities of Khrushchev and Brezhnev influenced, to a considerable degree, both the conduct of foreign policy and the nature of Soviet assessments of the correlation of forces.
Khrushchev's economic bias combined with his military bluff resulted in a foreign policy which, while it stressed the role of economic factors in furthering socialist influence globally, appeared confrontational and dangerous in a military sense. Similarly, Khrushchevian assessments of the correlation of forces reflected the leader's style and method of conducting foreign policy. Brezhnev's emphasis on the military aspect of the correlation of forces, coupled with his generally cautious approach, was mirrored in rather reserved formulations of the distribution of power and a more militarily activist international policy.

WESTERN SCHOLARS ON THE CORRELATION OF FORCES

In our introductory chapter, we pointed out that there have been, to date, no Western works which have systematically examined long-term trends in Soviet treatment of the correlation of forces concept. Most analyses so far have dealt with this notion either within the context of general Soviet international relations doctrine or of Soviet perceptions of American foreign policy. As a result of the rather cursory treatment of the concept, certain inaccuracies have emerged and been perpetuated—a topic we shall address in this section.

One of the more insightful but brief investigations of the evolving Soviet perspective on the correlation of forces during the Khrushchev years is contained in a chapter in William Zimmerman's 1969 study of Soviet perspectives on international relations. 24
One of the shortcomings of Zimmerman's analysis of Soviet views on the distribution of power is his failure to consider adequately the implications of distinctions between Soviet depictions of the overall correlation of forces (embracing as it does political, economic, and military aspects) and descriptions of the military factor in isolation. As we have noted earlier, and as Zimmerman acknowledges in his book, Soviet leaders and scholars see the correlation of forces in a broad sense to include the facets of economic, political, and military power. Having stated this, however, Zimmerman's own examination of Soviet pronouncements on this subject tends toward an interpretation of the evidence primarily from a military perspective.

For instance, in reviewing an article by Korionov, Zimmerman cites two statements contained therein which suggest an apparent contradiction in the views expressed regarding the correlation of forces:

(i) "In past years imperialist politicians have needed to learn to speak, for them, decidedly unusual words: the equality of the forces of socialism and capitalism militarily."

(ii) "The world socialist system, as emphasized in the Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the Twenty-Second Congress, has become a reliable shield. . . . And the fact that the preponderance of forces is on the side of the socialist commonwealth of peoples is a great happiness for all mankind."26

Zimmerman notes that these two observations demonstrate "[h]ow the use of the phrase 'favorable balance of power' can become blurred into the concepts of equilibrium, . . . even in Russian. . . ."27 However, this apparent discrepancy does not appear as a contradiction when one realizes that in the first instance Korionov was referring to the
military correlation of forces, whereas in the second place he was alluding to the overall correlation of forces. This interpretation appears even more plausible in the context of Korionov's subsequent observation that the correlation of forces is not determined solely by the military factor and that the correlation of economic forces was steadily moving in favor of socialism.

On this point, it is noteworthy that when Khrushchev first referred in 1959 to the idea of preponderance of peace-loving forces, it was in the context of such non-military factors as "territory, size of population and availability of natural resources." Moreover, when in the mid-1970s, Foreign Minister Gromyko spoke of the "preponderance of the forces of peace and progress" and other Soviet analysts referred to the preponderance of the forces of socialism, Soviet spokesmen consistently depicted the East-West military correlation of forces in terms of parity.

In the course of his analysis, Zimmerman rightly notes the progression of Soviet thinking from cautious confidence in the distribution of power between 1957 and 1958, to optimism from 1959 to 1961, and finally to a lowering of expectations from 1962 onward. He connects this progression to changes in verbal formulations of the distribution of power from the generic phrase sootnoshenie sil to the notion of favorable balance expressed in terms of pereves sil (preponderance of forces) to ravnovesie sil (equilibrium of forces).

Of the final period Zimmerman writes:

Rather than assert claims of a military pereves sil Soviet commentators in mid-1962 fairly consistently described the military position of the two camps as being in equilibrium.
As we have seen in our study, Soviet spokesmen, including Khrushchev himself, continued to assert Soviet military superiority in mid-1962 and onward, and even in the years after the Cuban missile crisis. They simultaneously depicted the East-West military relationship in terms of an equilibrium. Thus, the uniformity of opinion that Zimmerman ascribes to Soviet analyses of the military correlation of forces during this period is clearly not sustained by the evidence.

This misreading of the evidence is an especially significant one, for it tends to obscure the degree of confusion and turmoil that Soviet commentary on the correlation of forces was thrown into under the impact both of the American questioning of Soviet assertions and of the Cuban missile crisis. It underestimates the tenacious streak in Khrushchev's personality—a tendency which led him to refuse to give up entirely on his earlier claims of military superiority. Moreover, in glossing over what may have provided an important impetus for continued assertions of military superiority—the protection of Soviet budgetary resources from undue military demands—it ignores the prime significance attached by Khrushchev to the economic correlation of forces.

A final point to note in this connection is that Zimmerman's observation regarding the alleged uniformity of Soviet views on the military correlation in the final years of the Khrushchev era has been picked up by later scholars. For instance, in his work on Soviet perceptions of U.S. foreign policy, John Lenczowski, in discussing Soviet formulations of the distribution of power under Khrushchev, merely restates Zimmerman's thesis. Further, Lenczowski observes that since the mid-1960s, the consistent use by Soviet spokesmen of the term correlation of forces (sootnoshenie sil) "despite such real changes in
the balance of power as the attainment of strategic parity between the United States and the USSR" has rendered it difficult "to ascertain just how the Soviets view the balance of power." However, as we have seen in our study of Soviet perceptions of the correlation during the Brezhnev era, the Soviets did in fact begin in the late 1960s and early 1970s to depict the military correlation of forces in terms of parity and equilibrium, and specifically connected this development with having ushered in a qualitative change in the balance of forces. Also, Soviet depictions of the correlation of forces under Brezhnev did go through identifiable periods of optimism and pessimism, as we have demonstrated in earlier chapters.

In his study, Lenczowski posits the prevalence in the Soviet Union of two schools of thought on the balance of power. The "realist" school, as he terms it, perceives a "distinct shift" in the correlation of forces. Its adherents, he notes, "explain the change by pointing to the rise of Soviet military power and the growing weakness of the United States." The "traditionalist" school "is less sanguine about the shift in the correlation" and analyses of traditionalist scholars "reveal an increased wariness of the United States and its 'imperialist' policies." Our contention is that many of the statements that may be grouped under the "realist" or "traditionalist" rubric can be explained in terms of the ideological exigencies under which Soviet scholarship is required to function. In our own analysis, we have cited numerous scholars who have over time shifted their emphasis on various aspects of the correlation of forces, and even in the course of a single article expressed both the "realist" and the "traditionalist" viewpoints.
Moreover, Lenczowski's subsequent observation that both realists and traditionalists "agree . . . on the notion that a favorable shift has occurred in the world correlation of forces," renders his distinction between the two schools somewhat irrelevant for the purposes of our study. By and large, we have found a basic congruence of views on the correlation of forces at any one point in time. One of the major exceptions is the 1962-1964 period, when Soviet analysts, echoing the leadership, proffered oscillating claims with regard to the correlation of forces.

Lenczowski's work, focusing as it does on Soviet perceptions of U.S. foreign policy during the Nixon-Ford years, lacks both longitudinal perspective and depth of analysis of Soviet perceptions of the correlation of forces. This is also a problem with Gibert's analysis of the correlation of forces concept in his study on Soviet images of America. Thus, Gibert's observation that the thesis of the correlation of world forces shifting continually in favor of socialist states "first emerged in the mid-1950s" ignores the fact that this Soviet view represents a fundamental Marxist-Leninist assumption and was first advanced by Lenin. Gibert also notes that Soviet analysts in discussing the favorable shifts in the correlation of forces "look at long-term trends, and are not distracted by isolated events which by themselves might constitute a setback for their side." This observation is true only in so far as that Soviet analysts, during good times and bad, consistently hold that the correlation of forces is moving in favor of socialism. As we have explained in our introductory chapter, this ritual optimism is dictated by Soviet adherence to a Marxist-Leninist framework of analysis and the view of the movement of
the correlation in terms of a historical process. In the short run, however, as we have amply demonstrated in our study, Soviet spokesmen are influenced by the impact of specific events—favorable or unfavorable from their perspective—on the correlation of forces. As one Soviet analyst succinctly put it:

Both long-term and short-term changes in the balance of forces influence the general course of world affairs. This influence, however, manifests itself in complex and often indirect ways. For example, it would be an error to try to explain specific events in the world only by long-term trends in the change of the balance of forces even though in the final analysis it is these trends that determine the course of events.

As the above examples illustrate, Western scholarship on the subject of Soviet perceptions of the correlation of forces has been lacking in depth and has been highly fragmentary in nature. This is obviously due to the fact that the concept has not constituted the central focus of inquiry in any previous Western scholarly study.

CONCLUSION

The United States and the Soviet Union, as the two nuclear superpowers, occupy center stage in the fundamental issues of global war and peace. An analysis of Soviet perceptions of the world correlation of forces is thus significant for the United States, both in understanding past misjudgements in policy and providing a framework within which to evaluate Soviet conduct. American policymakers in their response to Soviet policies often have tended to overlook the internal and ideological constraints faced by the Soviet regime.

Such an oversight was particularly evident in the American response to Soviet statements of military strength during the Khrushchev period.
When President Kennedy in 1961 realized that a "missile gap," if it did exist, favored the United States, officials of his administration sought publically not merely to refute Soviet assertions but to claim that the United States had such superior strength that it could, even after absorbing a Soviet first strike, lash back at the Soviet Union with its remaining strategic forces (e.g., Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric's speech of October 1961). Concurrent with such verbal challenges, the administration increased the United States defense budget.

These actions had the effect of pushing Khrushchev into a corner in the domestic debate over his military budget-cutting stance and his policy of rapprochement with the United States. It also wrecked any chance of a meaningful arms control agreement between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. at that time. Dobrynin perhaps had this circumstance in mind when he confided to Henry Kissinger in 1969 that "great opportunities had been lost in Soviet-American affairs, especially between 1959 and 1963," and that "Khrushchev seriously wanted an accommodation with the United States."  

It is quite easy in retrospect to fault President Kennedy for policies that he pursued vis-a-vis the Soviet Union early in his administration. But when one considers the impetus that these policies provided to the start of a prolonged nuclear arms race between the two countries, one is justified in arguing in favor of the need for evaluating Soviet assertions in terms of the intended audiences toward which they may be directed.

Khrushchev himself, through his saber-rattling and his ultimatums over Berlin, perhaps crucified the chances of a successful rapprochement.
with the United States. But American policymakers did have the option of calling Khrushchev's bluff through private diplomatic channels rather than in public forums, at least initially.

The Brezhnev team embarked on an all-round military buildup in the nuclear and conventional power-projection areas in order to redress the publicly exposed Soviet military weakness. Simultaneously, the leadership came to emphasize the greater importance of the military aspect of the correlation of forces.

Concerted Soviet efforts in the military field soon resulted in the attainment by the U.S.S.R. of strategic parity with the United States and vastly improved power-projection capabilities. The latter, especially, made possible a militarily activist Soviet international policy when opportunities for revolutionary advancement arose in the mid-1970s. It was actions such as the Soviet-Cuban involvement in Angola and Ethiopia that first sparked American fears of a Soviet military threat. Ironically, however, these fears were primarily channeled into concern about Soviet strategic might. This in turn has resulted in U.S. adoption of long-term and expensive strategic programs which the Soviets are determined to counter, in the interests of maintaining parity.

The current Soviet stress on the military correlation of forces may be expected to continue. The reason for this lies in the fact that it is chiefly by virtue of its military strength that the Soviet Union can claim equal status with the United States. The Soviets will seek to maintain an approximate parity with the United States, even at great economic cost. Thus any American policy aimed at attaining an edge over the Soviet Union in strategic arms is not likely to succeed, because it
is contingent upon Soviet arms acquisition policy. On the other hand, a recognition of the constraints that the Soviet leadership labor under with regard to competing demands on economic resources will help keep the Soviet strategic "threat" in perspective.
NOTES


12. Ibid., p. 5.

13. Ibid., pp. 11-19.


15. As Gorbachev put it, "The Soviet Union does not lay claim to greater security, but it will not settle for less." See Ibid., p. 28. Emphasis in original.

16. Ibid., p. 7.

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17. Ibid., p. 30.


19. Of the individuals who would have some impact on the process of Soviet foreign policy are the following:

Eduard Shevardnadze—Foreign Minister (replacing Andrei Gromyko);
Anatoly Dobrynin—Secretary of the Central Committee and head of its International Department (replacing Boris Ponomarev);
Vadim Medvedev—Secretary of the Central Committee and head of its department responsible for relations with Communist countries (replacing Konstantin Rusakov).

For these and other personnel changes under Gorbachev, see Archie Brown, "Change in the Soviet Union," 64 Foreign Affairs 5 (Summer 1986), pp. 1049-1050.


28. See pp. 91-92 above.

29. See pp. 224-236 above.


31. See pp. 127-144 above.
32. For details, see pp. 127-146 above.


34. Ibid., p. 17.

35. Ibid., p. 261.

36. Ibid., p. 266.

37. See pp. 127-146 above.


40. Ibid., p. 46.


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