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Editorial Committee

Thomas H. Byers
Gian Ghuman

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THE SINO-SOVIET CONFRONTATION

Dr. Lawrence H. Harris
Professor of History and Political Science
Savannah State College

An analytical view of the relations of Communist China (C. P. R.) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) over the past two decades would confirm that these former allies and leading Communist powers are engaged in a fierce ideological, political, and economic struggle that has strategic overtones, which in time could lead to a major war. The positioning of Chinese armies and armored Soviet divisions¹ on the Sino-Soviet borderland and the reports of border incidents in past years near Mongolia and the Chinese northwest province of Sinkiang confirm the bitterness of the relations between these giant powers. In addition, countless vitriolic press attacks have been made by the Soviets against the Chinese, and the Chinese against the Soviets, each accusing the other of deviationism and other ideological heresies. The hostility of the Russians and the Chinese is manifestly both strategic and ideological in character.

History

The enmity between China and the U.S.S.R. has a long history, tracing back to the Sixteenth Century when Russian adventurers, Cossacks, and peasants claimed for the Czar thousands of square miles of Siberian territories, that were formerly part of the domain of Imperial China. Much of this "lost" Chinese territory is included as national territory on recent Chinese Communist maps—a grim augury of future relations between the countries. The Soviets, on their part, having determined to populate that vast area since 1939, have funneled Russians into Siberia in the greatest single population movement in the world.

The Russian drive toward the Pacific began about 1580 when the Tatar khanate of Sibir—giving its name to Siberia—was conquered by a Russian bandit chieftain. Between the Sixteenth and Eighteenth centuries, Russians lured by fur trade and land, expanded toward the Japan and Okhotsk seas. The largely-voluntary settlers were joined in succeeding centuries by

¹ John Erickson, "Soviet Military Power," *Strategic Review* (Washington, D.C.: United States Strategic Institute, Spring 1973) pp. xiii & 18. During the past decade Soviet ground strength in the Far East and Mongolia has doubled and now stands at 40-44 divisions, about 600,000 troops, with strong missile and tactical air power.

hundreds of thousands of involuntary householders, including political and criminal offenders exiled by the Czars.

In the course of its expansion, Russia acquired central Asia, inhabited in part by Moslem tribes and kingdoms; eastern Siberia, the home of the Mongols and Manchus; and, finally, the Amur Valley, Sakhalin Island, and a vital littoral on the Pacific coast that extends to the borders of Manchuria and Korea. The Russian adventurers did not stop at the Pacific but crossed the Bering Straits,² and under Governor Alexander Baranov exploited Alaska's resources and eventually established some 40 forts and trading posts in North America, including Fort Ross, north of San Francisco. The Russians, on the basis of a failing fur business and its exposed position, abandoned its North American entrepôts in 1844. The far-seeing U.S. Secretary of State, William H. Seward, disregarding the criticism that attended his initiative, negotiated the purchase of Alaska in 1876 for \$7,200,000, or two cents per acre.³ Russian territorial ambitions then were focused on the Maritime Province, that critical zone in eastern Asia where the interests of Russia, China, Korea, and Japan intermingle and collide.

The Chinese Communists frequently claimed large portions of Siberia that are now integral portions of the U.S.S.R. and asserted that old Russia robbed China of its landed possessions when the other Western powers were collectively despoiling her. Chinese, both Communists and Nationalists, allege that treaties consigning territories to Russia were signed during China's occupation by foreign troops, including Russian, French, German, English, and, sometimes, American.

The intensive confrontations between the Chinese and Russians began after the period of 1681-83, when the Russians under Vasili Poiarkov explored the Amur, which separates Manchuria from Siberia. Subsequently the Russians built a fort at Albazin and then mapped Siberia. The Treaty of Nerchinsk (1689)—the first formal Russian treaty with China—was virtually the only diplomatic success the Chinese had in their bleak and unwilling exposure to foreign penetration. As a consequence, the Russians abandoned Albazin and relaxed their military pressure, in exchange for a trading agent and a Russian Orthodox Church in Peking, the Chinese Imperial capital. Then in the Nineteenth Century, the Russians surged against the moribund Manchu Ch'ing Dynasty, already assailed on all sides by foreign warships and armies. The energetic explorer, Count Nikolai Muraviev, established Petropavlsk on Kamchatka

²Samuel Eliot Morison and Henry Steele Commanger, *The Growth of the American Republic*. Vol. I. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1942), p. 460.

³William L. Langer, *An Encyclopedia of World History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press, 1948), p. 798. Also see Thomas A. Bailey, *A Diplomatic History of the American People* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1946), pp. 395-99.

Peninsula. Muraviev also founded settlements between the Amur River and Korea, the latter a Chinese vassal state. As a sign of China's decline, the Russians did not consider it imperative to inform the Chinese of their latest expansionist activities until 1851.

The Treaty of Aigun (1858) between Russia and China—following the humiliation of the Chinese by the Tientsin treaties (1858)—ceded to the Russians other Chinese territories on the left bank of the Amur, as far as the Ussuri River. In 1860, Russia violated its treaty obligations by founding the potentially great naval base of Vladivostok. Count Nikolai Ignatiev at the signing of the Treaty of Peking (1860)—taking advantage of overwhelming Western armies in China—obtained for Russia both banks of the Amur River to Korea. Russia was now in position to threaten or occupy Manchuria and Korea—and to begin new adventures against either China or Japan. The Treaty of Ili (1881) was a further debasement for China, ceding to the Russians a large area north of Sinkiang.

Other Bases of Sino-Soviet Difference

After the Chinese liberated themselves from the Manchu Dynasty in 1911, the Bolsheviks dispatched Michael Borodin and General Galen (V. K. Bluecher) to serve as Soviet advisors to Sun Yat-sen and the new Kuomintang Party. Soviet Russia, as friendly gestures, gave up extra-territoriality and its concessions at Tientsin and Hankow. However, the psychological advantages gained by the Soviets shortly disappeared, when, in 1927, Chiang Kai-shek and conservative members of the Kuomintang established a government at Nanking and drove the Russians and Communists from the party.⁴ Purges and a civil war followed. The Communist remnant fled to Kiangsi and Fukien provinces, where peasant reinforcements joined them. The "Ten Thousand Li March," of 1934-35, a strategic retreat, took the Communists to their final fastness in northern Shensi Province. In 1937, the Nationalists and Communists forged an uneasy alliance to fight the Japanese, who had pushed China into a war of survival. It is noteworthy that during much of the Sino-Japanese War that Joseph Stalin took an opportunistic position, sometimes favorable to the Nationalists, as opposed to the Chinese Communists. Stalin sought the attainment of Soviet long-range political objectives rather than the survival of the Chinese Communists.⁵

⁴Harold M. Vinacke, *A History of the Far East in Modern Times* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1967), pp. 448-453.

⁵Robert C. North, *Chinese Communism* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966) pp. 176-77. Also see Franz Schurmann and Orvill Schell, *Communist China: Revolutionary Reconstruction and International Confrontation 1949 to Present* (New York: Random House, 1967), pp. 238-40, 254-58.

After the Chinese Communists pushed the Nationalists from the Mainland in 1949-50, the Soviet Union cooperated with the People's Republic of China in its industrial and scientific recovery, until about 1960. At that time, Premier Nikita Khrushchev terminated his aid to the Chinese nuclear weapons program⁶ and may have considered (although it is not absolutely clear) destroying Chinese nuclear installations with a preemptive strike.⁷

Causes of the Split

The Western World, in particular the United States, was apprehensive about the close cooperation between the U.S.S.R. and Communist China—involving the second greatest industrial power and its Chinese partner, with the largest population in the world. In 1960 this alliance began falling apart and the at-first disbelieving world began breathing a sigh of relief. What had caused the rift between the two Communist monoliths? The answer is complex but could be simplified into three basic answers: (a) nationalism (b) a split in ideology, and (c) a divergence in national interests.

During the period 1949 to 1960, the Chinese regarded their alliance with the Soviet Union as their principal protection against the so-called "imperialist camp," as led by the United States. Yet, the alliance signed between Communist China and the U.S.S.R. in February 1950 was defensive in character, and, from the Soviet viewpoint, pointed against Japan, but Stalin was eager to curb the C.P.R. from any adventures that might lead to a war between the Soviet Union and the United States.⁸ During the Korean War, as a deterrent to the Americans spreading the war into Manchuria, Stalin ordered Russian troops to remain at Port Arthur beyond 1952, when normally they would have retired to the U.S.S.R. by 1950. All of this did not prevent Stalin from indulging in his own adventures in both Manchuria and Sinkiang.

Following the death of Stalin in 1953, his Politburo successors altered Soviet strategy. They permitted the Chinese to sign an unfavorable treaty with the United States and its allies of the Korean War. After the treaty was in effect, the Soviet leadership revealed that the U.S.S.R. possessed the hydrogen bomb, knowledge which could have been a trump card for the Chinese in the Sino-American negotiations. The year 1954 brought severe strains to the Sino-Soviet alliance: the Indo-China crisis became critical, and the United States con-

⁶Harold C. Hinton, *Communist China in World Politics* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966), p. 472.

⁷Erickson, *op. cit.*, pp. 16 & 23. Russian Marshal M. V. Zakharov, Chief of the General Staff after 1964, reorganized Soviet defenses in the Far East, and is credited with advising against a preemptive attack on the Chinese nuclear installations.

⁸North, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

ducted important nuclear tests to maintain an overwhelming strategic superiority over the Soviet Union. Shortly thereafter, John Foster Dulles announced the doctrine of "massive retaliation."⁹ The Chinese strongly suggested to their Soviet partner that, as a counterpoise to American policy, it should work against American naval power near China and should support the "liberation" of Taiwan.

In the leadership battle in the U.S.S.R. between Nikita Khrushchev and Georgi M. Malenkov, following the death of Stalin, the Chinese Communist leaders rallied to Khrushchev when he advocated a stronger military posture for the U.S.S.R. and indicated that he would honor the Soviet commitments to Communist China. The political ascendancy of Khrushchev produced a welcome Soviet promise to withdraw its troops from Port Arthur. The Chinese in this period subordinated their defense programs to internal economic developments, largely relying for protection on their Soviet ally. Still the Chinese military structure was modernized and streamlined in a modest way, and some new equipment was received from the U.S.S.R.

Khrushchev's partial triumph over Malenkov in February 1955 brought warnings that if the Soviet Union was threatened from abroad, the U.S.S.R. might launch a preemptive attack against the United States. Subsequently this threat has been viewed as mirroring a lack of confidence by the Soviet Union to survive a first strike by the United States. At this historical juncture the Soviet Union strengthened its bomber force and missile programs. Despite his rattling of the sword, Khrushchev made no belligerent statements with regard to the Taiwan Straits crisis, which reached its peak in 1955.

Khrushchev, who had been exchanging exploratory messages with the Americans,¹⁰ made an admission that offended the militant wing of the Chinese Communists; he announced his willingness to work toward disarmament or even the discontinuance of thermonuclear testing.¹¹ This was an admission of heresy to the Chinese, who had proclaimed that they were not unduly fearful of a world war, for it would surely destroy imperialism but somehow would leave "Socialism" largely intact so that it would emerge triumphant. Stripped of the rhetoric, the Chinese apparently had meant to say that they did not believe in the *likelihood* of a thermonuclear war.

The Chinese, on the other hand, were concerned about their own small nuclear complex. This nuclear foundation was based upon one to three small nuclear research reactors given to China

⁹ Henry T. Simmons, "U.S. Strategic Power," *The Retired Officer Magazine* (September, 1974), p. 34.

¹⁰ Hinton, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

¹¹ North, *op. cit.*, pp. 210-11.

by the Soviet Union.^{1 2} China later built an extensive nuclear complex, with perhaps 40 nuclear reactors in operation.

The Soviet Union apparently had severe misgivings about contributing to any substantial Chinese Communist nuclear complex. This much was clear from Khrushchev's endorsing in 1957 of an atom-free-zone in Asia, which would have eliminated China as a nuclear factor and would have left Soviet and American strategic nuclear forces intact. The Chinese, which at that time had no nuclear plant, then advocated complete nuclear disarmament and the destruction of nuclear stockpiles, which would have left Communist China as the strongest conventional military power in Asia. While a Soviet-Chinese agreement on scientific and technical cooperation was signed in 1958, and, in all likelihood, the Soviet Union agreed to furnish military aid and some missiles, there is no suggestion that the Soviets wished China to have a nuclear or hydrogen bomb potential.

Chiang Kai-shek, from his fortress at Taiwan, announced that a conventional war in the Far East was for him the best means to defeat Communism. The United States Forces in Taiwan, aligned with Chiang, were armed with Matador missiles, capable of firing either conventional or nuclear weapons against the Mainland. The Chinese Communists were less secure and could not be certain what actions the Soviet Union would take in their behalf, even if the Nationalist Chinese undertook a landing on the Mainland coast with American support. Therefore, in 1959, Communist China hesitantly endorsed Khrushchev's proposal for an atom-free-zone in the Far East and the Pacific Basin, which would have relieved the U.S.S.R. of risky military commitments in that area.^{1 3}

One of the great curiosities of history was the Chinese experiment—"the Great Leap Forward," initiated in 1957—which ushered in "backyard furnaces," giant communes (each with 12 collective farms), and millions of peasants training as militiamen. Although this anomaly was an enormous failure, it may have been created, at least in part, with a motive of dispersing China's industrial capacity in the eventuality of an atomic war stemming from the Taiwan Straits situation.

The Soviet-Chinese Communist alliance was dying in 1960 and was buried in 1964. The demise of this alliance coincided with the loss of leadership by Nikita Khrushchev in the U.S.S.R. Coincidentally it also marked the switch from the Eisenhower-Dulles foreign policy to that of John F. Kennedy. When Khrushchev became First Secretary of the Communist Party in 1953, following the death of Joseph Stalin, he ushered in a

^{1 2}Hinton, *op cit.*, p. 129. Also see Hugo Portisch, *Red China Today* (New York: Fawcett Publications, 1967), p. 324.

^{1 3}Erickson, *op. cit.*, p. 20. Khrushchev matured in the view that a nuclear war would be a manifestation of insanity.

period of minimal coordination between the U.S.S.R. and the Chinese Communists on matters of foreign policy. After 1956, the Chinese challenged Khrushchev's "modern revisionism," that is accommodation to the United States for the sake of world security. Mao and his Chinese coterie also challenged Khrushchev for the primary leadership of world communism. This deterioration in relations continued, with 1957 bringing the end to Soviet long-term financial credits to China. In 1960, Soviet technical assistance to China finally ended.

The Cuban crisis of October 1962 brought charges by the Chinese that the U.S.S.R. surrendered its Communist principles and cravenly prostrated itself before the United States in removing ballistic missiles from Cuba. The placing of intermediate-range ballistic missiles in Cuba was a Soviet attempt to neutralize the American lead in strategic weapons. The Chinese reaction was to accuse the Soviet Union of "adventurism" for placing the missiles in Cuba and "capitulation" for taking them out.¹⁴

The embarrassment to the Soviet Union in withdrawing its missiles from Cuba produced further doubts about Soviet willingness to defend Mainland China. The ensuing fierce dialogue between China and the U.S.S.R. touched on Soviet defense obligations to China, which made it clear to observers that Moscow regarded its commitments to China to be purely defensive. Further, the Soviet Union would not use its forces to "liberate" Taiwan. In chagrin, the Chinese threatened to open again the question of its frontiers and to demand the return of Asian areas taken by the Russians over the centuries. The U.S.S.R.'s position was that it would react with military strength, only if Manchuria, North China, or cities near the Soviet Union were violated or an unprovoked general strategic attack against the Mainland was launched by the United States or Japan. Khrushchev bent the policy of the U.S.S.R. toward a detente with the West. Thus, he signed the Test-Ban Treaty, which the Chinese decried as a betrayal of the Soviet-Chinese alliance. The Cuban crisis of 1962, thus, lucidly marked the further destruction of the Chinese-Soviet partnership.

Reasons for Sino-Soviet Differences

The reasons for Soviet-Chinese differences are complex and involve the long histories of both countries: First, and of some considerable importance, is the sociological reason, which includes the clash between the European and the cruder Russian tradition versus the Asian and highly sophisticated Chinese tradition. It also involves the historical antagonism between the Russians and Chinese, nurtured by Russian acquisition of Chinese-claimed territory in central and eastern Asia, as well as

¹⁴ Irwin Isenberg (ed.), *The Russian-Chinese Rift* (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1966), p. 32.

the proud and competing nationalisms of the peoples in both cultural areas.

Second, there is a profound contrast between the respective historical experiences of the two Communist parties. The Soviet Party came to power during a period of civil war and foreign intervention. As a consequence of this and the Communist doctrines relating to world revolution, the Soviet Union developed a hostility toward the West, especially the United States, that in turn created a fear-inspired reaction around the world, and laid the basis of an Anti-Communist psychosis in Europe, notably Germany, that was one factor which led to World War II. Chinese Communism is Asian in character,¹⁵ moulded by its reliance on a peasant work force, and, since it had a long period to experiment with political and social models, adapted them uniquely for China. China developed no one-man vendetta, such as was devised by Stalin, although Mao did authorize the "kill the landlord" program which was a chilling aspect of Chinese Communism. The Chinese experience was more national than international in character and generally inward-looking. Only in 1953, during the Korean War, did China intervene militarily from its borderlands and become a major element in a war abroad. Later in 1962, it also invaded India, but this was an aberration in its foreign policy.¹⁶

Third, the divergent national positions and interests of the regimes are irritants in the foreign relations of the two powers. The Soviet Union, despite its agricultural and internal problems, is a largely self-contained power. At the present time, it is less interested in taking great chances that might lead to a world holocaust.¹⁷ China, on the other hand, is a relatively poor country and far more militant and irreconcilable. China, having the least to lose, has proven to be the most intractable.

Fourth, there was undoubtedly a state of rivalry for authority and leadership between Mao and Khrushchev, following Stalin's death. This personal distaste extended to Mao's wife who told a visitor that she disliked Khrushchev because he had bad table manners and smelled bad, and Mao disliked Khrushchev's shoe-pounding at the United Nations. Mao reputedly regarded himself to be the world's senior Communist after the death of Stalin, and resented Khrushchev's efforts to

¹⁵North, *op. cit.*, pp. 200-204.

¹⁶North, *op. cit.*, pp. 208-9. North emphasizes that Soviet policy on the Sino-Indian border dispute was among the most abrasive causes for the destruction of the Chinese-Soviet alliance.

¹⁷Edward L. Warner, III. "The Development of Soviet Military Doctrine and Capabilities in the 1960's," *American Defense Policy* (Second Edition), edited by Mark E. Smith and Claude J. Johns, Jr. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), p. 318. Soviet aid and encouragement to insurgencies promoted by the Algerian F.L.N., Castro's Cuban rebels, and the Viet Minh have, to the Chinese Communist viewpoint, been both inadequate and timid.

give ideological and strategic guidance to the entire Communist International movement.

Neither Communist China nor the U.S.S.R. desire a general war to break out, but it is China that regards with lesser risk so-called brush-fire wars or wars of national liberation.¹⁸ In a religious war, the heretic is frequently hated more than the unbeliever, and both the U.S.S.R. and China have accused the opposing camp of ideological heresy.

Territorial Disputes

There is an undeniable rivalry between the two large states for influence in Asia. One key arena of conflict is Outer Mongolia. Here Chinese activity and influence have increased since 1952. While the Mongols are no longer direct subjects of the U.S.S.R., they have remained loyal to the Soviet Union during the Sino-Soviet dispute. In 1963, the Mongols expelled a large number of Chinese technicians for distributing anti-Soviet literature. The Mongols' attitude is attributed, in large part, to their traditional fear of Chinese imperialism. Thus, while Outer Mongolia is a buffer state between the U.S.S.R. and China, it is entirely feasible that Soviet troops are stationed in the country.¹⁹

While Soviet policy with other Asian countries, such as India, Indonesia, and Burma, is based in part upon countering the influence of the United States, it has a vital secondary purpose—the neutralizing of economic and propaganda programs initiated by the Communist Chinese. This partially explains the Soviet recognition of the claims of Indonesia to West Irian (Dutch New Guinea) and Soviet aid to India during the Sino-Indian border disputes. Americans were shocked when India and the U.S.S.R. entered into a defense pact, despite enormous American economic assistance to India. However, the Indians may have been over-reacting to fear of China (allied to Pakistan), rather than to America's "neutrality" with respect to the Pakistan-India wars, which coincided with the Chinese-Indian border confrontations.

As indicated, the early Sino-Soviet alliance suffered from Soviet fears of involvement in a Far Eastern war over Taiwan, Soviet reluctance to see China become a nuclear power, and Soviet exploration of disarmament and a detente with the West.

In the spring of 1969, the Sino-Soviet dispute resulted in a military clash between the two countries near the disputed island of Chen Pao Tao (Damansky Island), in the Ussuri River

¹⁸ North, *op. cit.*, pp. 209-10. Also see Davis B. Bobrow, "Chinese Views on Escalation," *American Defense Policy* (Second Edition), edited by Mark E. Smith and Claude J. Johns, Jr. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), pp. 327-8.

¹⁹ Erickson, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18. About 1967, the Soviet Union assisted in reorganizing the Defense Ministry of the Mongolian People's Republic.

along the Sino-Soviet eastern frontier. Hostilities then broke out at other points along the border. In October 1969, however, high-level talks on the border problems were held in Peking, localizing the problem.

Another source of friction has been economic. Some authorities believe that this aspect may have been the principal cause of the Sino-Soviet rift. The result has been that Sino-Soviet trade dropped from \$2.14 billion in 1956 to \$56 million in 1969.²⁰ Until 1960, the Soviets made a large and vital contribution to Chinese industrialization, sending to China over ten thousand advisers.²¹ The Chinese resented the ending of Soviet long-term credits in 1957, the withdrawal of Soviet assistance in 1960, and finally the refusal of the Soviet Union to give the C.P.R. special assistance. Petroleum exports were made to China, but recent studies would indicate that currently the Soviet Union is exporting little or no oil to the Communist Chinese.

Post-Mortem Analysis

In 1960, unity between the Soviet Union and the Chinese was almost non-existent. During this phase of the struggle, the Chinese appear to have had a psychological advantage, for they were more orthodox and seemed more willing to see unity killed than compromised. Both sides intervened with key figures in the opposing country. The Chinese had contacts with Vyacheslav Molotov, Ambassador to Outer Mongolia from 1957 to 1960, and also with Frol Romanovich Kozlov, First Deputy Chairman of the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers in 1958, who retired in 1963.

China's Nuclear Development

If we disregard all the devious terminology in the dialogue between the Soviet Union and Communist China, there appears no doubt that China did not desire a general war. Secret Chinese papers, dating from 1961, prove that the Chinese Communists had given much thought to the effect of a thermonuclear attack.²² Even if the thermonuclear attack was against the U.S.S.R., China's principal installations, its population, and agricultural land would suffer fatal damage. If the Chinese people survived, Communism of the Chinese variety assuredly would not.

Hugo Portisch, editor of the Vienna *Kurier*, stated that the U.S.S.R. released an unknown quantity of enriched uranium to China and possibly three reactors.²³ The U.S.S.R., nevertheless,

²⁰"Peoples Republic of China," *Department of State Background Notes*, Publication 7751 (August 1971), U.S. Department of State.

²¹Irwin Isenberg (ed.) *op. cit.*, pp. 22-23, 53, 55.

²²Hinton, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

²³Portisch, *op. cit.*, p. 325.

opposed the concept of a separate nuclear complex with a military character for China. Since 1956, the world knew that Communist China was working on the development of an atomic bomb. Great help was rendered by Chinese scientists trained in America and Europe, including Dr. Shien Hsueh-shen,²⁴ who conducted research at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and California Institute of Technology. In addition, some idealists that defected to the U.S.S.R. helped create the Chinese nuclear complex, including the famous Italian nuclear physicist, Pontecorvo. Men of Pontecorvo's type felt that the occurrence of a world war would be deterred by the wide diffusion of nuclear knowledge. Even the United States had distributed parcels of 13 pounds of enriched uranium to various world powers, whereas it required only 55 pounds to make an atomic bomb.

The Chinese have developed both atomic and hydrogen bombs and have conducted at least 13 experiments on the surface, underground, and in the air. The first atomic detonation was in 1964. The Chinese assembled their scientists and initiated their programs in remote Sinkiang Province, where there was available both uranium and thorium and the expertise to create hydroelectric installations. The Chinese constructed a missile range at Lop Nor, which at first was about 500 miles long, but probably has been enlarged to accommodate experimental models of an ICBM that ultimately may have a range of 6000 miles. Chinese technology is far in advance of early predictions, as evidenced by a Chinese earth satellite launched in April 1970. Military estimates in the United States calculated that the Chinese Communists should have 80 to 100 Medium-Range Ballistic Missiles in the mid-1970's, with a range of 1,000 miles.²⁵ The ICBM's will be ready by 1975, according to some estimates.

The major weakness in the Chinese armament may be the limitations in its delivery system. China was given some rockets by the Soviet Union, and, apparently these were used in the early tests. China also has at least one Soviet G-type diesel-powered submarine capable of firing a Polaris-type missile, but this reportedly is unarmed. The Chinese possess few planes, among them British four-engine turboprop Vickers Viscounts, and Russian two and four-engine Ilyushins. China has a limited number of TU-16 Badger jet medium-range bombers and reportedly is able to produce four or five of these a month. The TU-16 has a range of 1,600 miles and can deliver a three-megaton thermonuclear warhead, which China currently may be producing.

²⁴ Niu Sien-Chong, "Red China's First Earth Satellite," *NATO's Fifteen Nations*, (June-July, 1971), pp. 78-81.

²⁵ Alice Langley Hsieh, "China's Nuclear Missile Program: Regional or Intercontinental," *The China Quarterly* (March, 1971).

The Chinese showed an amazing capacity for mastering space and nuclear technology in overcoming sophisticated hurdles of the greatest difficulty. In spanning the gap between the atom bomb and the development of a hydrogen bomb, the Chinese required only two years and eight months, as compared with the U.S.S.R.'s six years, and America's seven years and four months.²⁶ Although Chinese capability in the realm of the ICBM still is to be proved, there is no question about their development of Medium-Range Ballistic Missiles.²⁷ This achievement became more significant in 1970, when the People's Republic placed a 173-kilogram (381 pounds) satellite into orbit, which demonstrated that the Chinese soon would be able to deliver a nuclear warhead to any place on earth. Of course, the spectacular development of a space satellite was accomplished at a prodigious cost, which if compared with the \$500 million paid by the Japanese for their satellite, cost the Chinese \$4 billion, computed on the basis of the satellite's weight.²⁸ The elation of the Chinese population produced by the news of its atomic explosions and the launching of a satellite showed a profound satisfaction with the narrowing of the gap between the technology of the Chinese and their two great adversaries.

Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird noted on February 20, 1970,²⁹ that the Chinese had been producing U-235 since about 1963 and were believed at that time to be producing plutonium. Plutonium use was reported in the Chinese test in December 1968 of a thermonuclear device. The Chinese also demonstrated in these tests that they could produce enriched lithium and heavy water. In 1970 it was estimated that the Chinese had only sufficient quantities of U-235 to produce a few dozen weapons. If a second U-235 plant were built, three years would be required before production could begin.

China undoubtedly places the utmost importance on its advanced weapons program. While it is difficult to tell what restraints China's scarce economic and skilled manpower resources have placed on the development of advanced weapons, it is certain that research and development in this field have been given the highest priority. Regardless of whether China's annual growth is GNP 3 or 4 percent, its economy is able to support a modern military capability, though one far from being in the league with that of the United States or the Soviet

²⁶ "New Achievements in China's Science and Technology," p. 34, in *Translations on Communist China*, Joint Publications Research Service, Washington, D.C., No. 116 (8 September 1960).

²⁷ Niu, *op. cit.*, p. 32. The destructive power of the hydrogen bomb warhead is caused by the fusion of hydrogen atoms in a thermonuclear reaction and is about nine times as powerful as the splitting of atoms in an atom bomb.

²⁸ Niu, *op. cit.*

²⁹ Hsieh, *op. cit.*

Union. As the research and development continue and emphasis is shifted to production and operational deployment, costs are bound to rise and a broader scientific and industrial base will be required. This will undoubtedly give rise to debates, such as took place in 1965, initiated by Lo Jui-Ch'ing, as to what degree national programs should be sacrificed to develop a sophisticated nuclear delivery program.³⁰

The launching of China's first earth satellite on April 24, 1970 indicated that a two-stage booster was used, the first element most likely a Soviet SS-4 or a copy of it, but the lopsided orbit of the Chinese satellite suggests that guidance was at a minimal.³¹ However, this considerable feat does not compare with the launching of an ICBM, which does require a complicated guidance system. There is good evidence that the Chinese are engaged in the development of solid-fuel missiles and that an appropriate test site for an ICBM is nearing completion or has already been completed.

The Chinese may be developing a regional strategy, in which she is giving priority to a nuclear mix of Medium-Range bombers, Medium-Range Ballistic Missiles and Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles, as well as tactical nuclear weapons. Although such a force may invite an attack, particularly in its incipient stages, the Chinese viewpoint is that the gamble is worthwhile if it produces the gaining of political prestige, serves to deter the Soviet Union, Japan, and the United States, and induces Asian countries to exert pressures to prevent an outbreak of general war.

Conventional Forces

The Chinese have given no indication that they will downgrade their conventional forces, despite their nuclear development. The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) is at least 2.3 million men strong,³² garrisoned in 13 military regions and 23 districts. The Chinese Air Force, embracing 2500 planes, while perhaps the world's third largest, is largely obsolete. The Navy is small but may include some 40 conventional force submarines.³³ This compares with the Soviet force of about 3,375,000 troops—divided into an Army of two million; an Air Force of 550,000; a Navy of 475,000; and, a Strategic Rocket Force of 350,000.

Do these forces, conventional and unconventional, pose any great threat to world peace? Apparently there are many students of China and the U.S.S.R. who are genuinely worried

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Hsieh, *op. cit.*

³² Sin Min Chiu, "China's Military Posture," *American Defense Policy*, (Second Edition), edited by Mark E. Smith and Claude J. Johns, Jr. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), p. 320.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 320-21.

over the mounting difficulties of these major powers. Two well-known reporters, Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, in a column from Washington, D.C., stated that some experts for months have said that the odds are 50-50 in favor of a Soviet strike against the growing Chinese nuclear arsenal.^{3 4} In my opinion, if the Soviets seriously considered such a drastic step, this would have occurred during the period of Khrushchev. Most experts discount the likelihood of a Sino-Soviet war. But one of the disclaimers is Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who only half-jokingly told a group of scholars that he had two nightmares: one, that Moscow and Peking would make up; the other, that they would fight a war.^{3 5} Such well-seasoned politicians as Senators Strom Thurmond and Stuart Symington have reportedly expressed astonishment over the announcement of Admiral Thomas Moorer that China could have ICBM's ready for production as early as 1975-76,^{3 6} the warhead to carry to all major targets in the United States and the Soviet Union. It was with a background of these solemn warnings that President Richard Nixon made his historic journey to Mainland China in February 1972, seeking to open a new era of peaceful relations, after two decades of recriminations between Peking and Washington.

Remarks

I would now like to deviate from doctrines and fairly-accurate reports on the Soviet-Chinese political and military situations and policies to make a few speculative remarks. In my opinion, the "opening" of China stems as much from China's basic needs as from the initiative of former President Nixon. I believe that the Chinese are apprehensive about their own isolation and frightened by the intensity of their confrontation with the Soviet Union. If we disallow North Korea and North Vietnam, China has only one close ally in the geographical sense, namely Pakistan, and that state has already been dismembered by India, and is separated from China by the most rugged terrain in the world, and furthermore, is harassed by its own hunger and poverty. Many Chinese still regard Japan as a greedy Samurai, who hungers for space and economic domination, and who in times past took Manchuria, northeast China, Shantung Province, Formosa, and Korea, all possessions or former dependencies of China. The Chinese have few reliable friends and none of them of any significant power—exemplified by such minor entities as Albania in Europe, and Guinea and Tanzania in Africa.

^{3 4} *Savannah Evening News*, February 20, 1973.

^{3 5} *Newsweek*, February 21, 1972, p. 55.

^{3 6} *Savannah Morning News*, January 17, 1973.

The Chinese desire to have their rear protected, while they are obliged to confront the Soviet Union over serious border³⁷ and ideological problems. The most formidable enemy of the C.P.R. for 20 years was the United States—which in the spirit of *real politik* and desire for trade and a more harmonious relationship, now seeks a detente and a resumption of full diplomatic relations. Of course, Taiwan remains the thorn in the relationship—and to Chiang Ching Kuo's island-fortress there is an important U.S. security commitment. However, with the reduction of the United States military force in Taiwan, the American presence will be minimal. The Nationalists on Taiwan do not have the ability to successfully attack the Mainland, even with a tough Army and Air Force,³⁸ and the Chinese Communists appear to have no immediate plans to take Taiwan by force.

The greatest danger for the Chinese Communists is their growing nuclear capability. While a mature nuclear complex will give the Chinese prestige and the status of a major power, it poses the most tantalizing target for the Soviet military forces. If the Soviet Union could destroy this incipient threat with a preemptive strike, China would be humbled and the fangs extracted. My own view is that the Soviet Union (since Khrushchev's leadership), has a ripe appraisal of world realities and would not embark on such a drastic action, unless it foresaw that the United States and China were forging a military pact against the Soviet Union, rather than framing peaceful agreements for an exchange of commerce and culture. The American Government has gone to great pains to explain to the Soviet Union that a rapprochement with China is not directed against the Soviet Union, and that American efforts will bring a greater assurance of world peace.

If the Soviet Union, in disregard of America's peaceful intentions, should recklessly destroy China's installations, it could obliterate in one blow all the bridges of amity that have been constructed. The reaction in America would be to prepare for war with the Soviet Union, possibly bringing in the wake of such development the immense expense of a complete Anti-Ballistic Missile System, new weapons, and the psychological conditions of the old "cold war." The tension produced by such an irresponsible action could easily spark a conventional or nuclear war.

While I do not anticipate an immediate war between the Soviet Union and China, I do perceive that border incidents will continue, and, in the future, the U.S.S.R. may return some

³⁷North, *op. cit.*, pp. 208-9.

³⁸The Nationalist Air Force in skirmishes with the Communist Chinese over the Taiwan Straits has shown its superiority, with a kill-ratio better than ten to one. See Sin Min Chiu, *op. cit.*, p. 321. Chiang Kai-Shek died in 1975, succeeded by his son Chiang Ching Kuo.

limited areas in Asia to China.³⁹ As the Chinese nuclear complex becomes more formidable, I foresee that China's restraint, so admirably applied to her foreign policy, will also be applied to her propaganda. Ultimately China and the Soviet Union will resume a taut respect for each other, based upon the realities that each has the ability to destroy the other, and with it, much of the world. If peaceful solutions are not attained, the results will be too terrifying to dwell upon.

³⁹ *The Times of India*, July 12, 1974, quoting Soviet publications, indicated that talks between Chinese authorities and Soviet delegate, Mr. Leonid Ilyiche, on the subjects of territorial and political claims, are again deadlocked. The Chinese are reportedly engaged in a renewed propaganda campaign against Moscow, claiming that the Soviet Union is demanding as its price for normal relations the relinquishing of Chinese territory, even up to the Great Wall of China.

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