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GLOBAL STRATEGY SOVIET POWER
AND THE GLOBAL CORRELATION
OF FORCES**

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Roger E Kanet and Daniel R Kempton
Program in Arms Control Disarmament
and International Security
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
330 Davenport Hall
607 South Mathews Street
Urbana, Illinois 61801

Roger Kanet is Professor and Head of Political Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Daniel Kempton is a recent Ph D in Political Science

WESTERN EUROPE IN SOVIET GLOBAL STRATEGY
SOVIET POWER AND THE GLOBAL CORRELATION OF FORCES

by

Roger E Kanet

and

Daniel R Kempton

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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In the last few decades Western political analysts and policy-makers have become increasingly concerned with the role of force and power in the international arena. Concepts such as superpower and middle-range power have been created to categorize the relative power position of states, and academic journals are filled with attempts to define, operationalize and measure such terms as power, force, and influence. Numerous studies have been carried out to determine whether power --defined in terms of economic, political or military capacity--yields influence which is usually viewed as the ability to bring about a desired change in the behavior of another state. Other studies have focused on the political uses of force. It is interesting to note that these academic exercises have occurred in virtual ignorance of the work being done by Soviet academics on related issues.

One of the centerpieces of Soviet international relations theory is the doctrine of the correlation of forces which refers to the military, economic, political, and moral factors that determine the course of history. In Marxist-Leninist thought, history consists of the playing out of the contradictions which exist in the world. During the current stage of history the central contradiction or conflict, is that between the socialist camp led by the Soviet Union and the capitalist camp which is dominated by the United States. The correlation of forces is not restricted to the intrinsic attributes of the two camps but also includes an assessment of other objective and subjective factors in the international system. For example, international movements and multinational corporations are also seen as actors which play critical roles within the correlation of forces. For Soviet theorists it is the correlation of forces which determines the outcome of all struggles, in times of both peace and war.¹

The purpose of the present paper will be to examine the meaning of the

concept of correlation of forces as it has been developed by Soviet political leaders and academic analysts. In addition, however, we are especially concerned with the relevance of the doctrine to an understanding of Soviet policy toward Western Europe. A study of the doctrine of the correlation of forces is valuable for a further understanding of Soviet international strategy for several reasons. First, it puts forth a number of propositions about the nature of the international system which might be empirically tested as a possible alternative theoretical framework for understanding international relations. Second, and more relevant to an understanding of the foundations of Soviet international behavior, correlation of forces is the conceptual tool employed by Soviet leaders and theoreticians to guide and explain the foreign policy of the Soviet state.² Thus, a better understanding of the concept may well provide insights into Soviet foreign policy itself.

I The Correlation of Forces

The concept of a correlation of forces is not unique to the Soviet understanding of international relations. In fact, the doctrine is derived from the notion that all conflict evolves into polarized struggle which was developed by Karl Marx and elaborated by V. I. Lenin. As Judson Mitchell notes, in their views, historical developments tend to reduce all social conflicts to a zero-sum struggle between two distinct groups.³ The outcome of any particular struggle is determined by the relative economic progressiveness of the combatants, for progressive classes always win.⁴ The correlation of forces refers to the struggle of classes in individual countries and on the international arena.⁵ Technically, Soviet theorists have never developed a theory of international relations per se for they do not acknowledge the

legitimate lasting existence of the state ⁶ But for all practical purposes the correlation of forces can be seen as a Soviet equivalent of a theory of international relations

The doctrine was transposed onto the international arena in 1921 when Lenin discussed the predicament of a still young and besieged Soviet state He argued

When we calmly weigh the sympathy felt for Bolshevism and the socialist revolution when we survey the international situation from the point of view of the balance of forces while being immeasurably weaker economically politically and militarily than the other powers, we are at the same time stronger ⁷

In the rest of this speech Lenin explained that this strength derived from their reliance on Marxist theory which enables Soviet leaders to assess correctly and thereby to exploit the contradictions within the imperialist camp As the Soviet academic Sanakoyev interprets this point the Soviet Union is morally stronger than its capitalist competitors ⁸

Typically Soviet analysts divide the correlation of forces into four major categories C Shakhnazarov, for example, identifies these components as economic, military, and political factors, as well as international political movements ⁹ In Sanakoyev's work military, economic, political moral and other forces are included in the correlation of forces ¹⁰ Given the Marxist-Leninist nature of this doctrine one might expect that preeminent weight would be given to economic forces historically, however this has not always been true

Michael J Deane has argued quite convincingly that the relative weighting of the elements within the correlation of forces has changed along with the changes in Soviet leadership ¹¹ The dominant ideological theme under Stalin was the evolution of the two-camp theory which foresaw an inevitable war between

the socialist and capitalist camps To prepare for this war Stalin emphasized the need to build up Soviet military and economic might as rapidly as possible

With Khrushchev's ascension to power came the development of the doctrine of peaceful coexistence, in which war was no longer seen as inevitable Thus military factors were assigned a secondary, but nonetheless important, place within the correlation of forces In Khrushchev's view economic factors were to play a preeminent role within the correlation of forces and subsequently he sought to redirect at least some Soviet investment funds from the military to the civilian economic sector Khrushchev also saw the Third World as an important arena for East-West competition therefore new significance was placed on international political movements--particularly on the non-aligned movement ¹²

According to Deane the Brezhnev leadership sought to broaden the front of systemic competition ¹³ Economic factors retained their preeminent place in Soviet views of the correlation of forces but greater efforts were made in other areas of competition as well--e g in the ideological and military arenas By the latter half of the 1970s, however the leadership emphasized more and more the importance of the military component in the pursuit of Soviet foreign policy objectives Although the prediction of trends in the Soviet assessment of the correlation of forces can be little more than guesswork continuing high levels of hostility in Soviet-U S relations could mean further strengthening of the place assigned to military factors in the correlation of forces

Deane also notes that Soviet analysts commonly identify three historic shifts within the correlation of forces ¹⁴ The first shift occurred in 1917 with the creation of the world's first communist state The second was marked by the defeat of fascism in 1945 and the spread of communism to Eastern Europe

and Asia in the ensuing years. The most recent modification occurred in at the beginning of the 1970s with the USSR's attainment of strategic parity with the United States. In the view of Soviet analysts, parity forced the United States to abandon its concentration on military force and to enter into strategic negotiations with the Soviet Union, thus ushering in the era of detente.¹⁵ It is important to note that military, rather than economic or political factors play the critical role in all three events identified by the Soviets as major shifts in the correlation of forces.

Although similar in some respects, the doctrine of correlation of forces differs significantly from standard Western methods of assessing capabilities. In an article that appeared in the Soviet journal, International Affairs, Sanakoyev compares the correlation of forces with the Western concept of balance of power.¹⁶ In his view, the balance of power theory suffers from two important flaws which do not characterize the doctrine of the correlation of forces. First, it ignores the inevitability of change and assumes a degree of stability in the international system that is unrealistic. Secondly, Sanakoyev maintains that the balance of power theory ignores the importance in international affairs of factors other than force. The correlation of forces model, he argues, does not overemphasize the role of force in international affairs; rather, it contends that victory will go to the side favored by the overall balance.¹⁷

However, this explicit denial of the dominant role of brute force, which is embedded in Soviet theory, stands in stark contrast to actual Soviet behavior and to the persistent Soviet military buildup. On this point, Seweryn Bialer has commented: Soviet writings on the role and use of military power in international affairs initially overwhelm the reader with the feeling of

unreality especially when they are compared with Soviet actions¹⁸ The only resolution of this apparent paradox is the fact that, in the Soviet view military force is a major but not preeminent determinant of the correlation and one in which the Soviets excel Thus the Soviet buildup changes the correlation of forces As Deane explains, Communism can attain its inevitable victory' even without war because the correlation of forces is shifting in its favor¹⁹

A major weakness of the doctrine of the correlation of forces stems from the fact that it tends to recognize only uni-directional shifts in force It cannot recognize or subsequently explain the setbacks and failures of communism--except by arguing that earlier assessments concerning the state of the balance were incorrect Although setbacks are often discussed and analyzed in great detail, this discussion usually occurs outside the context of the theory of the correlation of forces Obviously the doctrine is useless in the analysis of a number of major international events For example how can one adequately explain the Sino-Soviet split without acknowledging a major setback for the socialist camp It seems, therefore that the ideological components of the correlation of forces doctrine would significantly impair its utility as an analytical tool

How Soviet analysts actually calculate the correlation of forces is unclear As noted above there are four major components of the correlation--economic, military and political factors and international movements)--and the relative importance of these components seems to vary over time Obviously, the total correlation includes qualitative as well as quantitative factors therefore the total assessment can be only a rough approximation²⁰ As Deane argues the global correlation seems to constitute

an intuitive calculation of forces based on the Soviet leadership's feel for the direction of world events ²¹ Certainly this type of assessment does not automatically translate into particular foreign policy strategies. However, a clear understanding of the global correlation of forces would provide the Soviet leadership with a heightened awareness of areas of Soviet weakness vis-à-vis the West. Unlike their American counterparts, Soviet leaders have not suddenly discovered gaps in their forces which later turned out to be illusory. Instead Soviet leaders have generally focused on the long-term strengthening of areas of relative Soviet weakness.

Also, since the correlation of forces is seen as the determinant of the outcome of international struggle in times of peace, as well as during war, detente for the Soviet Union did not entail a lessened need to rectify Soviet weaknesses in relationship to the United States. Detente did not imply an end to struggle, but rather a new form of struggle.

This argument helps further to resolve the apparent paradox noted above. Because war between the two camps is no longer viewed as inevitable, military factors do not play an independent role, but must be viewed as merely a part of the larger correlation of forces ²². The Soviet military buildup changes the correlation which in turn effects world events. Therefore, victories can be won without the use of force, although the availability of military power is critical to those victories ²³.

Historically, the Soviets have made use of the correlation of forces on two levels ²⁴. It is used in a global sense to assess the general struggle between the socialist and capitalist camps. It is on this level that we have so far discussed the doctrine. However, the doctrine is also used to analyze events in a particular region of the world or in a particular struggle. It is on this

narrower level that the correlation of forces will be examined in the remainder of this paper, with particular reference to the United States and Western Europe

II The Correlation of Forces between the United States and the Soviet Union

Despite the rapid economic growth of the EEC countries and Japan during the past quarter of a century and the emergence of the People's Republic of China as a nuclear power, the world of the mid-1980s remains essentially bi-polar. Soviet perceptions and policies have persistently reflected this reality. No single state or even region is as much a focus of Soviet foreign policy as is the United States. Soviet leaders, as their American counterparts, often see conflicts throughout the world primarily in light of the U S -Soviet struggle. Thus, within the world correlation of forces, which matches the socialist camp against the capitalist, the most critical component is certainly the U S -Soviet correlation of forces. When Western analysts compare U S and Soviet forces, they usually discuss primarily military factors. Here, in keeping with Soviet usage in examining the correlation of forces, we shall examine military, economic and political-psychological factors in the U S -Soviet correlation. ²⁵

A The Military Dimension of Soviet Policy

In the immediate postwar period the American monopoly on atomic weapons left the Soviet Union in a vulnerable position. Yet, the USSR was not entirely without a deterrent to possible U S attack. The rapid U S demobilization immediately after the cessation of hostilities resulted in an expansion of Soviet superiority in conventional military forces in Europe. As Mark Miller has noted, "The core of the Soviet deterrent in the early postwar years was the

ability of the Red Army to overrun Western Europe ²⁶ The ability of the United States to utilize fully its atomic monopoly was also questionable First the short range of the bombers required access to forward bases around the periphery of the Soviet Union moreover the U S stockpile of atomic weapons was extremely small ²⁷ The Soviet position worsened considerably immediately after the Korean War despite the fact that in the meantime the USSR had developed nuclear weapons of its own for the war in Korea had stimulated major rearmament in the West Particularly important was the accelerated production of the B-2 bomber in the United States and the development of the hydrogen bomb ²⁸

The USSR's reaction to the U S nuclear monopoly developed fully only after the death of Stalin in 1953 In the following years a new consensus developed in the Soviet weapons procurement program which continues until today the Soviet Union has striven unceasingly to equal if not surpass the military might of the United States, particularly in the realm of nuclear weaponry Under the leadership of Nikita Khrushchev the Soviet Union exploded its first hydrogen bomb in 1953 by 1957 it had attained the ability to launch ICBMs The importance of nuclear forces was clearly demonstrated in May of 1960, when the newly-created strategic Missile Forces were elevated to the status of a separate military service In fact it soon was accorded primacy over all other branches of the Soviet military ²⁹ One reason for Khrushchev's strong support for a policy of peaceful coexistence was the need to calm U S fears of Soviet expansionism This, in turn was expected to slow the pace of the U S military buildup after the Korean War and to give the Soviet Union some hope of obtaining strategic parity with the United States Parity however was not attainable during the tenure of Nikita Khrushchev even though the Soviets were able to mitigate some of the effects of this strategic disparity by their more than

tacit perpetuation of the myth of an American missile gap at the beginning of the 1960s

Ironically, Khrushchev's eagerness to attain nuclear parity may have contributed to his eventual removal from power. Khrushchev's rationale for placing missiles in Cuba in 1962 was the argument that the missiles were needed to deter another American attack on Cuba similar to the aborted Bay of Pigs invasion of 1961.³⁰ However, whatever importance Cuba then held for the Soviet Union, it could hardly counter the high risks incurred in the attempt to place Soviet missiles in that island country. Furthermore, a U.S. invasion of Cuba could probably have been deterred with less expense and less risk through conventional means. A more plausible explanation of Khrushchev's motives, suggested by Graham Allison, is the fact that Khrushchev questioned the resolve of the new U.S. president and hoped to counter U.S. strategic superiority by the emplacement of Soviet missiles less than one hundred miles from U.S. territory.³¹

If the United States had failed to notice or react to the Cuban missiles before they became operational, almost all major U.S. cities would have been vulnerable to Soviet attack. By 1962, President Kennedy had discovered that, in fact, the United States retained nuclear superiority, particularly in the area of delivery systems. The Soviet IRBMs (Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles) and MRBMs (Medium Range Ballistic Missiles) which were situated on Soviet territory were incapable of reaching targets inside the United States. Thus, with the myth of the missile gap dissolved, the USSR again feared the possibility of U.S. nuclear blackmail. Soviet missiles in Cuba would have been capable of hitting most major U.S. cities with a substantial degree of accuracy; moreover, because of the proximity to U.S. targets of Soviet missiles based in

Cuba U S reaction time to a Soviet first strike would have been dramatically reduced Had the initial seventy-two Soviet missiles become functional the Soviets would then have been in the position to further tilt the correlation of military forces in their own favor by adding more missiles at a later time 32

Although the Soviet Union was unable to achieve strategic nuclear parity with the United States during Khrushchev's leadership the commitment to accomplish that goal was reaffirmed during the first year's of the collective leadership headed by Brezhnev The approach taken, however was new Rather than repeating Khrushchev's erratic challenges and dangerous attempts to attain parity virtually overnight Brezhnev pursued an extensive yet steady arms buildup The success of that program was clear, for by the early 1970s the Soviet Union had not only developed the ability to deliver its weapons to U S targets but also had more ICBMs than the United States The Soviet Union continued to lag behind in SLBMs (Submarine-launched ballistic missiles) and in long-range bombers, but a position of approximate parity had been achieved

Almost immediately President Nixon publicly acknowledged the fact that the Soviets had achieved parity--a fact that was formally recognized by the U S in the signing of the first strategic arms limitation treaty in 1972 33

Throughout the 1970s Soviet nuclear arms procurement continued at a rate considerably faster than that of the United States and by the late 1970s the Soviet arsenal was at least quantitatively superior However much of this numerical superiority resulted from the fact that the Soviets unlike their U S counterparts, did not routinely retire their outdated missile systems In addition, the technological superiority of U S systems at least partially compensated for Soviet numerical superiority in the number of delivery systems

A comparison of Soviet and U S conventional capabilities is much more

clearcut from manpower to tanks the Soviet Union has persistently maintained overwhelming numerical military superiority Soviet military strategists did not assume that the development of nuclear weapons lessened the utility of conventional weaponry Khrushchev had argued that an increase in nuclear firepower would permit a reduction of Soviet manpower ³⁴ This contention however was never accepted by the military or by the rest of the Politburo Under Brezhnev's leadership, the USSR continued to stress the preeminence of nuclear force, but instead of making conventional weapons obsolete the nuclear state with the U S that ensued in effect opened up an entire range of situations in which conventional weapons might prove to be critical

First, as developments in U S -Soviet relations during the past three decades have shown, the destructive power of nuclear weapons is so great that neither of the two superpowers has been willing to run the risks of their use in conflict situations The dangers inherent in escalating superpower conflicts has to date proven too great for either superpower Conventional forces however have been utilized on numerous occasions by both the United States and the Soviet Union, with little fear of direct nuclear confrontation Thus conventional military power has continued to play an important role in the global competition between the two superpowers

In addition the Soviet nuclear war strategy assigns a critical role to conventional weapons Major General Talensky, for example noted the following points First nuclear war is possible, but not inevitable second, if a nuclear war were to occur it should be fought to achieve victory third correct preparation and strategies make victory in nuclear war a possibility and, finally, adherence to a doctrine of mutually assured destruction would deprive the USSR of conventional forces of political and military utility and

would give the United States a free hand in the conduct of limited wars. Thus, for the Soviet Union conventional military strength continues to play a positive role within the correlation of forces.³⁵

At this juncture it is worth recalling that, in the Soviet view the correlation of forces is a continuously operative law of history. Military force, therefore, can determine outcomes even when not employed. That is, military force can be used for political ends. For example, the mere presence of massive military force along the borders of Finland has played a role in influencing that country's pursuit of a policy of neutrality. As we shall discuss in more detail later in this paper, one of the goals of the buildup of Soviet military power in Europe has been to change the political-psychological component of the correlation of forces in Western Europe. To a lesser extent Soviet leaders also hope to use the strength of their military to stimulate the growth of pacifist tendencies in the United States itself. Soviet leaders are aware of the fact that they were able to attain nuclear parity and conventional military superiority in large part because of domestic developments in the United States, including political-psychological factors, that resulted in lapses in U.S. military procurement.

B The Political Dimension of Soviet Foreign Policy

In the official Soviet view the political-psychological superiority of the Soviet system stems from its adherence to the principles of Marxism-Leninism. Socialism is viewed as a more equitable system than capitalism and, thus, attracts world-wide appeal and support. On a more practical level Soviet ideology has provided the Soviet Union with a constancy of purpose unknown anywhere in the West. Soviet policy initiatives are not reexamined and reversed

every four years nor is there evidence of substantial conflict in foreign policy priorities among the various departments of the Soviet government. Thus, the leaders of the Soviet Union face fewer impediments to the implementation of their foreign policy initiatives than do their U S counterparts. This is not to argue that Soviet foreign-policy decision-making is fully consensual for it is not. Divisions exist within the Soviet elite and as Alexander Dallin has noted one aspect of the distinction between the Soviet left and right concerns the identifiably different assessments of the correlation of forces.³⁶ But the foreign policy which emanates from Moscow whether the result of consensus or of compromise, clearly has not been subject to the same degree of fluctuation as has U S policy.

Moreover, in addition to the political factors which are seen by the Soviets as favoring the Soviet Union, the correlation of forces is progressively favoring the socialist camp because of the relatively great number of structural weaknesses within the capitalist camp.³⁷ The most obvious of these relates to the divisions among the states making up the capitalist camp. In recent years the Soviet leadership has attempted to utilize the existing differences of perspective on security policy between the United States and some of its European allies to slow the modernization of NATO military capabilities.

According to Sanokoyev, the real strength of the Soviet Union is derived from its leadership's understanding of Marxism-Leninism and thus the historical class struggle that is currently unfolding.³⁸ In other words the U S leadership fails to understand either the extent or the nature of the Soviet challenge.

There has been a tendency among Americans to see the Soviet threat strictly in military terms. U S policy--from containment to the Reagan policy of

rearmament and peace through strength--has been based primarily on a concern for military preparedness to respond to possible Soviet aggression. However, Soviet leaders and analysts are quite explicit in noting the role that non-military factors play in the historical struggle between the two world systems. In the words of Sanakoyev

speaking of the correlation of forces in the world, we refer, above all to the correlation of the class forces and the struggle of classes both in individual countries and on the international arena taking into account the real forces--economic, political, moral and others--which stand behind these classes. Defining the real forces in international relations, bourgeois scientists as a rule concentrate attention on military and economic factors.³⁹

Sanakoyev admits that economic and military factors are of tremendous importance because they form the material basis of the class struggle.⁴⁰ Yet, moral (political-psychological) factors are also explicitly mentioned. In many respects the East-West struggle is one of ideologies as well as one between the interests of states. Thus, one of the primary purposes of Soviet propaganda is to exploit what the Soviet leadership views as the moral weaknesses of the United States and the West in general. Throughout the Third World Soviet propaganda activities are meant to aggravate and focus real problems that exist in relations between the developing countries and the countries of the West. The purpose of these activities is not merely to worsen the West's relationships with the developing world, but also to create a sense of cooperation and thus closer ties between the Soviet Union and numerous Third World states. As Anatoly Gromyko, head of the African Institute of the Soviet Academy of Sciences and son of the Soviet foreign minister explains

The USSR and Africa's independent countries are closely cooperating to eliminate the vestiges of racism and colonialism and fight against neo-colonialism, and that brings notable results and promotes closer relations between this country and the young African states.⁴¹

In a similar manner the Soviets have attempted over the course of the years to influence domestic political developments in the United States. For example, the Soviet peace initiative that began in the late 1960s and culminated in the policy of detente had a number of objective--not the least important of which was the gaining of access to Western technology considered critical to dealing with the serious problems that faced the Soviet economy.⁴² The Soviet policy of normalization of relations with the West and the concurrent downplaying of overt hostility toward the United States and its major allies, also helped to reduce Western fears of the Soviet Union and subsequently to slow the U S armaments buildup. In recent years the Soviets have rejuvenated their peace campaign in an attempt to blunt U S efforts initiated already in the Carter Administration to rebuild U S and NATO military capabilities. The most important aspect of this campaign has been the attempt to support opposition in both the United States and Western Europe to the emplacement of both cruise and Pershing II intermediate-range ballistic missiles.

C The Economic Dimension of Soviet Foreign Policy

As previously noted, one would expect any doctrine based on Marxism to place paramount emphasis on economic forces. But the doctrine of the correlation of forces does not assign preeminent importance to economic factors. This is probably attributable to the fact that the economic component of the correlation of forces is the one category in which the Soviet Union has consistently lagged far behind the United States. Despite Khrushchev's boasts in the late 1950s and early 1960s about the USSR's catching and surpassing the United States in total production of goods, the

Soviet Union still lags far behind its major capitalist competitor in most important areas--especially in those based on modern technology. Moreover Soviet growth rates have fallen off substantially during the course of the past decade and the USSR actually faces the prospect of Japan's replacing it as the second largest economy sometime during the course of the 1990s.

Detente and the Soviet effort to import contemporary industrial technology from the West was the boldest Soviet initiative to date to deal with the problems still facing the Soviet economy. The Soviet leadership expected that with a major infusion of Western technology and capital the Soviet Union and its East European allies would be able to produce high-grade products and market them in the West. This expectation has largely proven to be unfounded, as the extensive hard currency debts built up by several communist states indicate.

Today the Soviet economy and the economies of its East European allies are beset with numerous serious problems. As a result of detente the ties between East and West have increased and subsequently, so has economic interdependence. To a degree even the Soviet Union depends on access to Western technology and food products (in particular for feed grains). It would now be difficult if not impossible for the Soviets return to the autarky of the 1950s. Contact with the West during the past decade also stimulated a latent consumerism in the Soviet Union. Although the Soviet standard of living has risen steadily until quite recently, it has not kept pace with rising demand and expectations. The resolution of these and other problems demands the type of far-reaching economic reform which is most feared by the Kremlin leadership.

A related problem concerns the high price that the Soviets must pay to

maintain superpower status After Castro's victory in 1959 for example they began subsidizing the Cuban economy at about \$400 million per year That cost has soared to approximately \$3 billion a year ⁴³ The Soviets' newfound friends in Vietnam and Ethiopia each receive an estimated \$150-450 million per year in economic aid alone ⁴⁴ Thus there is growing doubt whether the Soviet Union can expand let alone maintain its global economic commitments In addition the Soviet image in the Third World has been significantly tarnished by the invasion of Afghanistan, and demands for more economic aid from the USSR have grown stronger The Soviet Union however, has neither the will nor the ability to compete with Western economic assistance Even more problematic for the Soviet Union is the maintenance of stability in communist Eastern Europe In the words of Paul Marer, already by the mid-1970s Eastern Europe had become an increasingly large economic liability ⁴⁵ By 1980 it was estimated that economic and military loans and subsidies to Eastern Europe totalled over \$20 billion ⁴⁶

The weakness of the Soviet economy within the correlation of forces is itself a major concern for Soviet leaders Just as important however, is the impact of economic inferiority on the ability of the Soviets to fulfill their perceived military needs However, as Marshall Coldman points out, no economic system is better structured to cater to the requirements of a military establishment than is the Soviet planned economy ⁴⁷ In the past the military's privileged position in questions of resource allocation has allowed it to meet its needs and, in the 1970s at least, to exceed U S military expenditures Moreover, since most Western analysts are convinced that the productivity of the arms production industries far surpasses that of the consumer sectors of the economy, the expenditures have resulted in a

substantial increase in overall Soviet military capabilities. Finally, during the recent leadership transitions the bargaining power of the military-security coalition has increased considerably in the view of many Western analysts. Thus, despite the weaknesses of the Soviet economy it appears likely that the needs of the Soviet military will continue to be met throughout the remainder of the decade.

However, the requirements of the Soviet military put a tremendous strain on a troubled economy. Because of differences in national accounting it is difficult, if not impossible, to compare accurately U.S. and Soviet military spending. Yet it is clear that to maintain pace with the United States the Soviets must spend a much larger percentage of the smaller Soviet GNP. Western estimates of Soviet defense expenditures commonly range from ten to sixteen percent of GNP.⁴⁸ U.S. defense expenditures in recent years have consumed less than ten percent of GNP. In 1981 one Soviet economist warned that

an excessive increase in military economic might cannot be allowed because in the final analysis this could slow the development of the very foundation of military power--the economy--and do irreparable harm to defense capability.⁴⁹

The burden that the military places on the Soviet economy is undeniable yet the Soviet population remains passive enough that it would be an unwarranted exaggeration to speak of a Soviet debate on guns versus butter. Of the resources available in the Soviet economy, the military will certainly continue to get its share (at least in the range of 3-4 percent annual increases) despite some evidence of rising consumerism. Although the Soviet economy is beset with numerous problems it does continue to grow albeit at a significantly reduced rate than in the past. Thus there is no

foreseeable reason that the Soviet leadership will not be able to maintain or even increase its present level of military expenditures

It is the Soviet economy which represents the weakest link for the Soviet Union in the international correlation of forces. The Soviet economy cannot begin to match the enormous potential of the U S economy. Furthermore when West European and Japanese economic potential is added to that of the United States the economic capabilities of the entire Soviet-oriented communist world are dwarfed. This runs directly contrary to the Soviet claim that communism is a more productive as well as more equitable economic system. The substantial economic potential of the Soviet Union is unquestionable. Although its agricultural lands cannot match those of the United States its diversity and abundance of mineral resources surpass those of the United States. However the full development and utilization of these resources depends on access to Western technology and capital as well as on increased Soviet productivity. But the flow of Western technology is dependent on friendly relations with the countries of the West and also brings with it the likelihood of economic dependence on--or at least interdependence with--the West. In addition to increase productivity new incentives, as well as liberalization and decentralization of the economy are probably imperative. These will entail the loss of central control, which the present, conservative Soviet leadership is unlikely to risk. Thus in the near future the Soviet economy, will most likely remain the most significant weakness for the Soviet Union in the correlation of forces.

In summary from the Soviet perspective the changes in the U S -Soviet correlation of forces over the course of the past three decades have been largely favorable--at least up until about 1980. By the early 1970s the USSR

had achieved its goal of nuclear parity and currently although Soviet nuclear forces may be technologically inferior to those of the United States, the USSR has more missiles and megatons of destructive capacity than does the United States. In the area of conventional weapons the Soviet Union continues to maintain a substantial lead, in particular in Europe. Political-psychological factors appear to continue to favor the Soviet Union although recent developments in the Third World would indicate that the Soviets have lost some of their advantages in that part of the world. However, the Soviet position vis-à-vis the United States is far from secure. Its economic system is crippled with serious deficiencies, and increases in productivity lag increasingly far behind those of the United States and Japan. Moreover, recent shifts in attitudes within the United States have resulted in a substantial increase in commitment to refurbishing U S military capabilities. As Soviet leaders and political commentators have noted since approximately 1980, the Reagan Administration has committed itself to reversing the military trends of the past two decades or so. From the Soviet perspective this represents a direct challenge to the one area within the correlation of forces in which the Soviets have made the most significant gains. Although no authoritative statements have appeared that refer to the possibility of a reversal of the international trend in the correlation such a possibility is clearly implied in many Soviet writings 50

III Western Europe and the Correlation of Forces

To a very substantial degree Soviet policy toward the countries of Western Europe can be viewed as a function of the Soviet-American relationship. Throughout the past three decades the Soviets have measured

their relations with countries such as France and the Federal Republic of Germany in large part by the degree to which those countries pursue policies congruent with or different from the policies of the United States. This is not to argue that other factors specific to bilateral relations with Western Europe do not play a role in influencing Soviet policy. It means, rather, that the Soviets view Western Europe as an integral part of the capitalist alliance system which is headed by the United States and thus, as an extremely important component of the forces arrayed against it. Europe both East and West has remained over the course of the four decades since the conclusion of the Second World War the world region of greatest significance for Soviet security interests. It is in Eastern Europe that the Soviets have succeeded in extending most completely their own domination while in Western Europe they face the major concentration of NATO's military power.

Although the specifics of Soviet policy toward Western Europe have been modified over time, several long-term goals have remained constant. The first of these concerns the continuing Soviet effort to strengthen its own military position in relationship to the Western alliance system. Attempts to accomplish this goal range from renovating and expanding the military capabilities of the Warsaw Pact as has occurred over the course of the last decade to political-propaganda campaigns aimed at dividing members of the NATO alliance or at preventing the expansion of NATO's military capabilities. The major peace offensive launched in opposition to the emplacement of Cruise and Pershing II intermediate-range missiles is a recent example of such an attempt.

A second, and closely related Soviet goal in Europe concerns Soviet opposition to the strengthening of West European integration. Although

reality has forced the Soviets in recent years to grant de facto recognition to the existence of the European Communities, the Soviet leadership has strongly opposed West European unification, most likely because of a concern that a unified Western Europe closely allied with the United States would reduce the possibilities for the Soviets to bring pressure to bear against individual countries and to continue to try to take advantage of differences dividing members of the Western alliance

A third set of Soviet goals has concerned Eastern Europe. Until the early 1970s the Soviets devoted substantial efforts to gaining from the West recognition of the status quo in Eastern Europe--including the postwar territorial boundaries, the existence of communist political systems, and also the dominant Soviet position in the region. With the signing of the Helsinki accords in 1974 these goals were largely achieved. However, the Soviets are still concerned with the attraction that the West exercises on the populations of Eastern Europe. Events in Poland since 1980 and the more recent Soviet pressures against the German Democratic Republic to cancel a scheduled meeting in West Germany present examples of the continuing Soviet fear of the possible erosion of their dominance in Eastern Europe.

Since at least the beginning of the 1970s significant economic goals have assumed an importance in Soviet policy much greater than they had earlier had. The moribund state of Soviet technological development and an ingrained fear of running the risks inherent in substantial economic reform and decentralization led the Soviets to pursue an economic strategy based on expanded trade with the West. The purpose of this trade has been, in large part, to gain access to modern technology with which to improve the performance of the Soviet economy. Even though they are now less sanguine

about the likely success of this policy Soviet leaders are still committed to attempts to modernize their economy by importing Western technology

In line with their views of the comprehensive nature of the correlation of forces the Soviets--much more than their Western competitors--make serious efforts to develop an approach to their foreign policy in which political military, economic, ideological and cultural elements are joined in a comprehensive whole In the remainder of this analysis we shall attempt to examine, albeit quite briefly the various aspects of Soviet policy toward Western Europe in the recent past The purpose of this examination will be to determine the ways in which the Soviet leadership has attempted to accomplish the goals outlined above and the place that Western Europe holds in the Soviet view of the international correlation of forces

A The Military Dimension of Soviet Policy in Europe

Over the course of the past three decades the Soviets and their Warsaw Pact allies have continued to expand and modernize their military capabilities so that by the middle of the 1980s there is no doubt that the Warsaw Pact enjoys significant military superiority in the area of conventional weapons and superiority in theater nuclear weapons as well Between 1965 and 1980 for example, overall force ratios between the WTO and NATO increased from 1.5:1 to 2.0:1 for major equipment such as main battle tanks artillery, and anti-tank guns the ratio reached more than 2.5:1 in favor of the WTO 51 Since the late 1960s the Soviets have not only continued to expand the total number of the major conventional weapon systems devoted to the European theater they have also introduced advanced technological systems into their deployed armaments For example, they have replaced older anti-aircraft weapons with

modern surface-to-air missiles and with sophisticated self-propelled guns that are far more efficient than their predecessors. More than 8,000 third- and fourth-generation main battle tanks superior to most of the equipment in the Western arsenal, were added to the older tanks--only half of which were withdrawn from service.⁵²

The expansion and modernization of conventional weaponry within the WTO occurred largely independent of developments within NATO, for no comparable modernization drive occurred in the West during the 1970s. However, as Phillip Karber has argued, the WTO states appear to have aimed at mirror-imaging the organizational structure of NATO. In the mid-1960s NATO divisions were stronger in manpower and armament than even the strongest WTO divisions, although the WTO comprised substantially more divisions. The Soviets and their allies increased and modernized the weaponry available to each division and by the beginning of the 1980s the modernization drive resulted in divisions that, with few exceptions, were substantially stronger in conventional weaponry than were most NATO divisions.

In addition to the significant increase in conventional armaments available to the Warsaw Pact by the 1980s, the Soviets also introduced an entire new generation of intermediate-range ballistic missiles, beginning in the mid-1970s. The SS-20 mobile MIRVed IRBM provides significant improvements in survivability, range, accuracy and number of warheads in comparison with the SS-4 and SS-5 missiles that they have supplemented or replaced. The Soviet decision to deploy these new intermediate-range missiles has, in effect, resulted in a major shift in relative nuclear capabilities within the European theater. By 1985, for example, the Warsaw Pact possesses approximately 5,700 TNF delivery vehicles (with about 8,000 warheads) in

comparison with 2 600 NATO delivery vehicles (and 5,500 nuclear warheads) 53

Closely associated with the actual buildup of Soviet military power in Europe have been the various campaigns mounted by the Soviet leadership to forestall the modernization of NATO military capabilities. At the time that the United States was considering the introduction of the B-1 bomber and the neutron bomb for example the Soviets mounted major propaganda campaigns targeted in large part on the citizens of Western Europe and the United States. Although there is virtually no evidence to support the argument that the Soviets were instrumental in the creation of various peace movements active in the West, they clearly have been interested in supporting these movements and in providing them with verbal ammunition 54

After the NATO decision to deploy Cruise and Pershing II missiles in response to the earlier Soviet deployment of SS-20s Brezhnev and other Soviet leaders made clear efforts to divide the members of the Western alliance on the entire issue of security in Europe and the implications of the NATO missile deployment 55 They argued that the deployment of U S intermediate-range missiles in Western Europe represented an attempt by NATO to shift the balance of military capabilities in Europe in favor of the West. Gerhard Wettig has argued that Soviet intransigence in the negotiations on intermediate-range missiles and the decision to rely heavily on a propaganda campaign against the deployment of the NATO missiles resulted from their assessment of the role that pressure and propaganda had played in bringing about a U S decision not to go ahead with the production and deployment of the neutron bomb 56 However political conditions in the West were different by the early 1980s--especially in the United States. Moreover despite the ability of opponents of missile deployment to bring out thousands of

supporters for demonstrations in West Germany Great Britain, and even the United States, the decision to go ahead with deployment was never reversed

Another aspect of Soviet policy toward Europe has been the attempt to gain U S agreement to exclude direct West European security interests from various discussions on arms control or limitation The Soviet insistence for example that both French and British nuclear weapons be included in Western calculations of NATO nuclear strength has been aimed in effect, at ignoring the legitimate separate security interests of Western Europe On the other hand, Soviet leaders have also attempted to convince the Europeans that the latters' security interests diverge from those of the United States and that Soviet and West European interests overlap and differences between them could be worked out if only Western Europe could reduce its dependence on the United States

Despite the fact that the Soviets have managed to establish overall military superiority in Europe this does not mean that the Soviet leadership is likely to initiate military operations in Europe First of all the Warsaw Pact's military advantage is not large enough to ensure military victory in particular when one takes into account the global military balance between the USSR and the United States Secondly, the buildup of Soviet military capacities in Europe over the course of the past two decades can be explained in part at least by the traditional Soviet approach to security which emphasizes the ability of the Soviet Union (and earlier Tsarist Russia) to match or exceed the military capabilities of all potential opponents simultaneously However no matter how one explains the rationale for the recent Soviet buildup, one factor is quite clear--the Soviets have gained a military advantage in Europe This advantage has political as well as

military implications for the members of the Western alliance system. The Soviets have demonstrated in the past that they are well aware of the political advantages that can be gained from the possession of superior military power. Some evidence exists that the growth of Soviet military power has had a degree of influence already on Western policies. In 1975, for example, President Giscard d'Estaing of France stated that West European defense integration should not be pursued because of likely Soviet opposition.⁵⁷ Moreover, Norway has pursued a policy of unilateral good will by excluding military installations from areas close to its border with the Soviet Union.⁵⁸ Walter Laqueur has argued most strongly that Western Europe has already lost the will to defend itself and is on the verge of capitulating to the demands of the USSR.⁵⁹

However, much stronger evidence exists to argue that, despite the extension of Soviet military capabilities in Europe, the Europeans are not in the process of giving in to Soviet demands.⁶⁰ Recent deployment of intermediate-range missiles in Western Europe in the face of strong Soviet pressure, is but the most recent indication that the NATO alliance is not moribund.

B The Economic Dimension of Soviet Policy in Europe

Although the Soviet Union has managed to establish overall military superiority in Europe and has the military capabilities with which it can attempt to pursue some of its interests, the situation in the economic area differs substantially. Here, as we have already noted above, the Soviets find that they are increasingly unable to compete effectively. The Soviet economy continues to suffer from serious structural problems. Attempts to import

Western technology have not proven to be the panacea that Brezhnev and Kosygin apparently hoped they would be when the Soviets expanded commercial relations with the West at the beginning of the 1970s. The Soviet Union in the mid-1980s is still unable to sell much more than natural resources (especially energy), gold and military equipment on the world market. It has been estimated for example that in 1981 these items comprised a full seventy-five percent of total hard-currency merchandise exports of the Soviet Union up from about sixty-five percent in 1977.⁶¹

Since Soviet economic relations have been discussed in great detail by a substantial number of analysts in both Western Europe and the United States our treatment of this topic here will be quite brief. What is important to note as we have already pointed out above, is the fact that the Soviet economy continues to lag behind the Western economies. One of the factors that induced the Soviets to pursue a policy of detente during the 1970s was the expectation that improved economic relations would enable them to import Western technology (and to gain the credits necessary to import that technology) as a means of solving some of their long-term economic problems. Although they were successful in obtaining the credits and in importing a much greater array of modern technology they have since discovered that their economic problems remain. Moreover changes in the international political environment since the end of the 1970s have brought with them increased problems in expanding trade. The efforts of both the Carter and Reagan Administrations to impose sanctions and to strengthen restrictions on trade with the USSR in the wake of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the imposition of martial law in Poland have had a negative impact on the continued growth of Soviet trade with the West. Moreover, the drop in world

prices of petroleum over the course of the past three or four years has cut into the Soviets' ability to cover the costs of imports

In addition to the economic goals that have motivated Soviet commercial relations with the West foreign trade is also meant to accomplish a number of important political goals As Angela Stent has noted the Soviets pursue at least three sets of political objectives in their economic relations with Western Europe ⁶² The primary political objective is to continue to strengthen the West European commitment to detente and if possible to induce the Europeans to be more accomodating toward the interests of the USSP--in return for expanding export markets for Western Europe in the USSR A second probable objective emphasized by those who oppose the continued expansion of East-West trade, is the creation of Western economic dependence on the USSR--e g in the area of energy--which the Soviets might later be able to use to exert political pressures on Western Europe

A third objective relates to the long-term Soviet interest in dividing the Europeans from their U S allies Since East-West trade has become far more important for the economies of Western Europe than it is for the United States, differences in perception have emerged in Europe and the United States concerning the benefits of East-West trade and the rules under which such trade should take place In recent years the U S officials have taken a position that calls for greater restrictions on that trade while the West Europeans have emphasized the overall benefits that expanded trade with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe has brought ⁶³ In the early years of the Reagan Administration divisions over East-West trade represented an important source of tension within the Western alliance system

Although trade with the Soviet Union has become important for most of the

major countries in Western Europe, in no case does the Soviet Union take more than a small percentage of the exports of a West European country. Moreover overall West European dependence on the USSR for energy supplies remains modest particularly among the major NATO countries. By 1990 only six percent of the primary energy requirements of France, West Germany and Italy will be met with Soviet sources.⁶⁴ It must also be kept in mind that were the Soviets to attempt to use economic pressure against Europe would likely result in retaliation. Although Soviet dependence on the West is not great enough to permit the latter to exert substantial pressures on the USSR they would be able to have an important impact on the economies of the Soviets' allies in Eastern Europe. Given the poor state of the economies of most of the East European states and their substantial dependence on the West for spare parts, semi-processed raw materials, and technology, it is likely that Western economic pressure would result in serious economic deterioration. Since the Soviets are already providing substantial subsidies to most of Eastern Europe,⁶⁵ the result would be a major increase in the economic drain on the Soviet economy--unless the Soviet leadership were willing to run the political risks inherent in permitting economic collapse in one or more East European countries.

In sum, despite the fact that the USSR possesses the world's second largest economy, the Soviet leadership has had little success in using its economic potential for foreign policy purposes--in particular in its relations with the industrial states of the West. As we argued in some detail above, it is in the economic dimension of the correlation of forces that the Soviets are the weakest. At present there is little indication that they will be able to improve their position significantly in the near future. Moreover they face

serious problems as they attempt to pursue goals which, in part at least, appear to be mutually contradictory. As they continue to build up their military capabilities they are likely to find that security concerns will increase in both the United States and Western Europe. These concerns, in turn, will likely make it more difficult for them to continue to pursue policies aimed at expanding commercial relations with the industrialized West.

C The Political Dimension of Soviet Policy in Europe

Actually many of the political goals of Soviet policy toward Western Europe have already been treated in our discussion of the military and economic dimensions of Soviet policy. These include, most importantly, the attempt to weaken the relationships between Western Europe and the United States. A second, extremely significant, political goal of the USSR has been the desire to gain acceptance by the governments of Western Europe of its dominant position in Eastern Europe. To a substantial degree this goal was accomplished in the first half of the 1970s with the signing of a series of treaties culminating in the Helsinki agreements, which provided Western recognition of the postwar boundaries in Central Europe and committed the West, in particular West Germany, not to consider the use of force to change those boundaries.

During the Polish Crisis of 1980-81 one of the major charges leveled by the USSR concerned alleged Western interference in internal Polish affairs. The Soviets, and their major East European allies, were strongly critical of Western monetary and political support for Solidarity. They reiterated the

point made most clearly at the time of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, that change in the domestic political systems of the communist states of Europe would not be permitted ⁶⁶ More recently strong Soviet pressure against the government of Erich Honecker of the CDR that resulted in his cancelling a scheduled visit to West Germany in summer 1984 indicated that the Soviets are still concerned about the extension of West European relations with the smaller states of Eastern Europe and the possibility that such relations would lessen their own dominant position in the region

In another area Soviet confidence about trends in domestic political developments in Western Europe appear to have waned during the course of the past decade In 1974-1975, after the establishment of democratic rule in Portugal and the rise of the Portuguese Communist Party as a powerful force in domestic politics, the Soviets attempted to play an active role in influencing the policies of the PCP ⁶⁷ They called upon the Portuguese to learn the lessons inherent in the recent overthrow of the government of Allende in Chile With the defeat of the communists in Portugal, Soviet views for the likely success of revolutionary change in Western Europe appear to have been tempered

However the CPSU was already facing a new challenge from Western Europe in the evolution of what came to be called Eurocommunism Both the Italian and the Spanish communist parties began publicly challenging the Soviets Throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s they increasingly refused to accept Soviet ideological tutelage, criticized Soviet attempts to dominate Eastern Europe, and refused to accept the Soviet model as the only one appropriate for revolutionary change ⁶⁸ Throughout the Polish crisis for example, both the Italian and Spanish communist parties blamed the situation on the pyramidal

and totalitarian political organization of Soviet-style socialism and called for the immediate development of democracy and participation.⁶⁹ By spring 1981 the Soviet and Italian parties were engaged in open polemics on the issue of Poland other West European communist parties joined in support of political reform within the Polish party and warned the Soviets against military intervention.⁷⁰

Despite periodic Soviet statements concerning the coming crisis in capitalist societies, it is clear that they do not expect the West European communist parties, or other elements within the political left for that matter to have a major impact on developments in the near future. Nor for that matter, can they any longer be sure that left-oriented political movements are likely to perceive the Soviet Union as the model for the future. To a very large extent the Soviets have lost the political advantages once thought to reside in the existence of communist parties in the West. As Adomeit has noted: "The primary challenge of Eurocommunism is that posed to the legitimacy, validity and relevance of Soviet ideology and the Soviet Union."⁷¹ The Soviets can no longer consider communist parties in the West as automatic allies or as instruments of their own policy preferences.

III Some Tentative Conclusions

What is evident from the foregoing discussion is the fact that the Soviets have managed to extend significantly their military capabilities in Europe and, thus, in this area of the correlation of forces they have strengthened their position relative to that of the West. However their relative strength on other dimensions of the correlation has, if anything, weakened over the course of the past decade. They and their East European

allies continue to suffer from serious economic problems--of systemic nature that far surpasses in long-term significance the current economic difficulties facing the countries of Western Europe. They can no longer rely on the support of West European communist parties and are viewed as largely irrelevant to the concerns of other leftist political movements in Europe. In Europe, as in virtually all other areas of the world, the Soviets find themselves in the position of what Paul Dobb has referred to as an incomplete superpower, which can rely only on military capabilities in an attempt to gain important foreign policy and security goals.⁷² Yet even on the military dimension the Soviets currently face a new challenge--both in Europe and globally--as the United States builds up its overall military capabilities and the members of NATO respond to the Soviet military challenge with the deployment of a new generation of nuclear weapons.

Contrary to Soviet claims that history is on their side and that the correlation of forces is moving irrevocably in their favor, developments during the past decade have been, from a Soviet perspective, at best mixed. NATO appears to be involved in a process of renewal. France under the socialist government of François Mitterand has cooperated with NATO more fully than at any time during the past twenty years. As we have noted throughout this discussion domestic economic problems continue to plague the Soviet leaders. Soviet influence among both reform and radical groups in the West has continued to weaken. In other areas there is evidence that the Soviet position among the developing countries has also weakened, both as a result of the invasion of Afghanistan and of the inability of the Soviets to provide any effective solution to the problems of economic development facing Third World governments.

This does not mean that the USSR no longer represents a serious challenge to Western interests. The growth of Soviet military power in Europe and worldwide and the likelihood of an extended armaments race between the two superpowers do not present an environment that is conducive to peace and security either in Europe or on a global scale. The members of the Western alliance must continue with their efforts to develop an integrated approach to their relations with the Soviet Union--whether in the military, the economic or the political realm. If such cooperation can be established, and general long-term Western interests, rather than short-time gains for individual countries can become the basis for the foreign policies of the Western states then what the Soviets view as the inexorable change in the international balance in their favor can be reversed. Such a development might help to induce a future Soviet leadership to recognize that the state interests of the USSR will be better served by joining the international community of nations as an important actor and attempting to resolve its differences peacefully, rather than by continuing to be committed to radical change and the dissolution of the current international system.

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