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ID	Doc Type	Document Description	No of Pages	Doc Date	Restrictions
10174	PAPER	THE RECRUITMENT OF AMERICANS IN THE UNITED STATES AND ABROAD <i>D 3/16/2011 F2006-114/8</i>	8	7/1/1968	B1 B3
10175	PAPER	THE SOVIET "AMERICAN TARGETS PROGRAM" <i>D 3/16/2011 F2006-114/8</i>	12	5/9/1977	B1 B3
10176	PAPER	HOSTILE INTELLIGENCE SERVICES THREAT AND UNITED STATES COUNTERMEASURES <i>D 3/16/2011 F2006-114/8</i>	2	ND	B1 B3
10177	CABLE	USSR <i>D 3/16/2011 F2006-114/8; D UPHELD 12/27/2012 M554/1</i>	7	10/28/1985	B1 B3
10178	CABLE	USSR <i>D 3/16/2011 F2006-114/8; D UPHELD 12/27/2012 M554/1</i>	3	12/9/1985	B1 B3
10179	PAPER	KGB'S STEPPED-UP EMPHASIS ON US TARGET <i>D 3/16/2011 F2006-114/8</i>	5	1/1/1986	B1 B3
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ID	Doc Type	Document Description	No of Pages	Doc Date	Restrictions
10181	PAPER	SOVIET STRATEGY TOWARD THE U.S. IN 1986-88 PAR 3/16/2011 F2006-114/8; PAR UPHELD 12/27/2012 M554/1	14	1/7/1986	B3
10182	PAPER	USSR/UNITED KINGDOM D 3/16/2011 F2006-114/8; D UPHELD 12/27/2012 M554/1	13	1/27/1986	B1 B3
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Soviet Strategy Toward the US in 1986-88

SUMMARY

Gorbachev's operative foreign policy goals vis-a-vis the US now are to:

- Buy time and Western support for the rejuvenation of the Soviet economy so that it can better compete with the US in the 1990s and the Soviet defense budget can be restrained in the meanwhile.
- Minimize the damage to Soviet interests done by the Reagan Administration during its remaining years in office, most particularly the US defense buildup, SDI, anti-Soviet policy influence on US Allies, and actions against Moscow's Third World clients.
- Prevent the institutionalization of President Reagan's goal of reversing earlier Soviet gains and firm approach in dealing with the USSR, and prepare the ground for getting more out of his successor.

To these ends, Soviet policy will:

- Pursue this year and possibly until the Moscow Summit the policy of dialogue begun in late 1984 while continuing to attack the Administration's positions.
- Offer added inducements on offensive strategic weapons at Geneva, but hold a START deal hostage to US accommodation on SDI.
- Strongly turn on the Administration in 1987, and possibly just before the US Congressional elections, if it hasn't gotten what it wants by then, and denounce the President for making the world more dangerous and his policies toward the USSR as having failed.
- Attempt to capitalize on any favorable Allied government changes and otherwise pursue bilateral dialogues with the Allies to make new gains and get them to use their influence with the Administration in support of Soviet interests.
- Seek improved relations with China, try to regain the initiative in the Third World, and provide the military and economic assistance needed to keep in power its Third World allies that are fighting US supported insurgent movements.

This memorandum was prepared by [REDACTED] Assistant National Intelligence Officer for the USSR

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BY RW NARA DATE 3/16/11

Overview

Gorbachev's primary foreign policy objectives are to minimize the challenge to Soviet strategic interests presented by US national security policy during the remainder of President Reagan's term of office and to emerge from this decade with international trends once again favoring the USSR. Gorbachev also sees more skillful management of the US-Soviet relationship as supporting his primary domestic goal of achieving a revitalized economy, which in the longer run will better underwrite Soviet international ambitions. He also wants to take the initiative in dealing with US allies, China, and the Third World, both to make new gains in the superpower competition and to place further pressure on the US to change its policies.

The Soviets would like to persuade the Administration to change its policies, for example, to make concessions on SDI and to retreat from support for anti-Soviet resistance movements in the Third World. But they believe the probability of this is low. Their operative goal now is to create a political environment that will encourage some of the same effects through the combined influences of Congress, US public opinion, the Allies, and divisions within the Administration. These goals oblige the Soviets to pursue active diplomatic engagement with the United States, especially on arms control, and to adopt an external political and propaganda stance which stresses the promise of improved US-Soviet relations. At the same time, however, the Soviets do not want the President to be able to claim credit for materially improved US-Soviet relations without having made significant concessions to Soviet interests. This requires them to give equal stress to the fragility of positive developments in the relationship, to the need for real concessions from Washington, and to attack US policies and personalities that they do not like.

The Geneva summit probably convinced the Gorbachev regime of the President's physical stamina, his political conviction, and his political staying power. They may have hopes of using his interest to strive for an improved relationship to get him to alter his policies that challenge their interests. They believe, however, that no successor is likely to present so severe a challenge. They therefore want to prevent the anti-Soviet elements of Reagan Administration policy from becoming institutionalized beyond the President's term of office. For this reason, if major concessions from Washington are not forthcoming by the Moscow Summit, it is likely that in 1987 Soviet policy will shift toward "proving" by hostile propaganda and emphasis on US-Soviet tensions that the Reagan approach to managing US-Soviet relations has been a failure, so as to influence US behavior beyond 1988.

The Soviets don't have a quick fix that could get them back to the favorable international outlook they enjoyed in the mid-to-late 1970s. What they seek will require skillful foreign policy toward the US and its allies, an ability to defend and enlarge Soviet positions of influence in the Third World, and visible progress toward economic revitalization at home. Success for the Soviets also will depend on developments over which

Moscow has little direct influence, for example, the outcome of coming elections in Western Europe. As in the immediate post-Khrushchev period, the Soviets are now out to build positions of strength on which to capitalize somewhere between three years and a decade out. The key is to contain the political/strategic challenges of the Reagan Presidency, or at the very least, to assure that they do not survive him, while reenergizing Soviet foreign policy on other fronts in the meantime. The Soviets seem to believe that a more energetic diplomatic style, a reputation for activism, Western media coverage, and heightened expectations in the West for progress in US-Soviet relations will yield real dividends without the necessity for concessions on their part.

Revitalizing the Soviet Economic System

Moscow's strategic goals, management of its "America problem," and need to revitalize its economy are mutually dependent. Rejuvenating its ailing economy is crucial to the Kremlin's ability to militarily and otherwise compete with the US in the 1990s, but this cannot be done unless Soviet investment allocations now favor civilian investment more heavily, which likely means keeping the lid on military spending. To do this, Gorbachev has to have a relatively calm, predictable US-Soviet relationship and restrained US military spending. A relaxed international climate also is necessary to obtain from the US and the West at large support for the Twelfth Five Year Plan. Moscow wants to avoid dependency on the West, but there are some things it clearly would like to get. It also wants to keep open those options it has and broaden them for the possible future acquisition of Western technologies, production capabilities, concessionary credits, and other transfer of capital and skills that could be exploited.

The new Soviet leadership knows that irrespective of whatever favorable statistics they can produce in the short term, they will need years to get the Soviet economy on a sustained growth course and transform it from smokestack heavy industry to one of high technology. It is difficult to see how they can come anywhere close to achieving their Twelfth Five Year Plan goals without cutting military or consumer allocations in favor of greater investment, or significantly restructuring the economic system, or all three. The Soviet oil production turndown that forced cuts in oil exports to the West in 1985 and which likely will worsen is a further bad sign for Moscow. The Soviets will find it difficult enough to get close to their goals if the military procurement budget--which is the key--just grows at the moderate pace it has since the late 1970s. Moscow does not want to give the US cause to boost tensions and its defense spending in the meanwhile.

This is part of the reason why the Soviets are so anxious about US advanced technology efforts like SDI: not only does SDI present a potentially serious long-term military danger to the USSR; it also threatens, in the short term, to drain off significant incremental Soviet resources--financial, technological, and manpower. The Soviets have no cheap solution for overcoming SDI and strategically cannot afford to allow the US to go down this road at a faster pace. Hence Moscow wants to get the US to cancel or at least slow down or curtail SDI while the USSR gets into a better position to compete with it technologically and economically.

Strategy Toward the US

The current Soviet strategy of active reengagement with the US has been taking shape for roughly a year, after several years of largely unsuccessful belligerence and stiff-arming tactics. Through sustained dialogue--the Reagan-Chernenko letters, the Shultz-Gromyko Geneva meeting of January 1985, opening of Geneva NST talks, and now a series of Summits--the Soviets have sought to:

Shift the attention of the Administration and its various publics toward a promise of peace through arms control as the core of the East-West relationship, and to shift attention away from areas of continuing Soviet challenge to the West, especially its arms programs and its efforts to implant Leninist regimes in the Third World.

Undermine the political support of Congress, Western publics, and Allied governments for the Administration's more competitive policies toward the USSR.

Encourage a shift within the US Administration and the President's thinking toward the view that the main business of the second term is movement toward an improved US-Soviet relationship on the basis of arms control compromises.

Turnaround in the Past Year

The Soviets have reason to be pleased with the overall trends that have characterized the management of their America problem during the past year. The US defense budget has flattened and may decline in the next several years. Congressional support for key strategic programs has weakened. MX has been limited to 50 missiles and the Defense Department will not seek more in the FY 1987 budget, except for testing. Although increased substantially over last year, the President's proposed SDI budget was substantially cut by Congress. Further ASAT testing also has been blocked.

Also in 1985, the Soviets saw Congress restrict assistance to the Contras in Nicaragua, despite Moscow's heightened military support to the Sandinistas, economic assistance following the imposition of the trade embargo, and support for the Ortega regime's further moves toward a Leninist police state. Nor, despite repeal of the Clark Amendment, did the US act dramatically to prevent the Luanda government from making important military gains against the UNITA insurgency in Angola, which were made possible only by increased Soviet assistance. US plans in the works and in the press will temper Soviet conclusions about what this all means, but the Soviets are probably encouraged by recent developments.

Moscow also may now believe the President and his Administration are mellowing somewhat. The renewed arms control negotiations were accompanied by the President's decision not to go beyond SALT II limits, heightened US interest in bilateral and regional security discussions, and a proliferation

of official US delegations visiting Moscow. The Administration deliberately moderated its rhetoric about the USSR over the past year, and the Soviets perceived some shift of influence over US national security affairs toward those in the Administration they regard as more moderate. Since the Geneva summit, they have altered their propaganda line to portray the President as reasonable and sincere, but misguided and subject to influence by figures in the Administration who aim to torpedo progress in US-Soviet relations. Overall, the Soviets probably believe their policy of engagement has helped constrain the Administration and gone some way toward altering its proclivities, if not yet its actual policies.

Although their achievements are still largely atmospheric, the Soviets can take some satisfaction in their tactics over the past year. They were certainly more effective than during 1981-84 when Soviet belligerence and diplomatic disengagement were perversely supportive of Administration foreign and defense policies, highly ineffective in undermining allied support of the US, and alarming to Soviet domestic and East European constituencies.

Where Moscow Goes From Here

On the basis of the partial turnaround that they have achieved and experience of the Geneva Summit, the Soviets see their future course as a continuing contest with the Administration to influence constituencies on which the President's policies depend as well as the President's own priorities.

Moscow's tactical problem is to sustain an atmosphere of promise around arms control without making concessions that undermine its own strategic plans or legitimize US programs the Soviets want urgently to block, especially SDI. In addition to holding out a promise of progress, Moscow must generate a credible, but not counterproductively threatening, "or else" element--that is, an image of the dangerous environment which will ensue if the US does not bend on SDI and arms control, or if the US links arms control progress to Soviet concessions on regional issues. While avoiding concessions that undermine its own position in the key Third World contests, Moscow will also need to convey an image of reasonableness in discussing them.

The evolution of Soviet tactics will be heavily influenced by the political calendar of the next three years, a Washington Summit perhaps in the summer of 1986, followed by a Moscow Summit within a year, the US elections of 1986 and 1988, and elections in France, the FRG, and the UK in which East-West and alliance relations will be major themes.

The most important scheduled event on the Soviet political calendar, the 27th CPSU Congress, will occur at the beginning of this period. Building on personnel and policy moves well in train by then, Gorbachev is likely to emerge from the Congress with as strong a political base for the conduct of foreign policy as any post-Stalin Soviet leader has enjoyed. His freedom of maneuver in dealing with the West will be more constrained by the inevitable

uncertainties he and his close associates face in deciding what policies will work than by disputes over foreign policy within the leadership. The major constraint on Gorbachev's foreign policy will be the difficulty of achieving convincing, sustainable progress toward meeting his goals for economic revitalization. The more successful he is on that score, the more credible will be the "or else" dimension of Soviet policy toward the West, and the more the West will be seen by Moscow as in the demandeur position. Conversely, to the extent economic progress appears sluggish, the more pressure will be on Gorbachev to assure by political means, including some concessions on arms control and regional issues, a relaxed US-Soviet relationship in the 1990s; but at the same time, the more likely is his internal political position to be challenged and his foreign policy maneuver room to be limited.

Arms Control and Summits.

By projecting an image of reasonableness, the Soviets hope to maneuver the Administration into compromising its positions or suffering a loss of domestic and international support for failing to produce an arms control agreement and missing an historic opportunity. Pursuing the process now in train, the Soviets will likely make some new arms control proposals and offer additional elaborations in Round Four of the NST talks; they will pursue the various other bilateral negotiations going on--the CDE talks in Stockholm perhaps leading to an agreement this year; they will participate with the US in another round of regional discussions; they will continue to extoll the potential economic and political benefits of increased trade; and they may extend their nuclear testing moratorium. This will allow them the best position for manipulating the forthcoming Washington and Moscow Summits, each of which will be preceded by a series of ministerial level meetings. Spliced in with this will be a certain amount of tough talk and veiled warnings that the process is getting nowhere and breaking down. If Moscow decides to cancel its nuclear testing moratorium, it will claim the US failed to follow suit. While this scenario failed to get concessions at the Geneva Summit, the Soviets may believe that time and political pressures are now on their side. They anticipate that the Administration will face far greater pressure to produce an arms control agreement at the next Summit than it did in Geneva.

The crux of Soviet tactics in the near term will be management of the relationship between SDI and offensive nuclear arms control. How the Soviets do this cannot be predicted in detail. Their general approach is apparent, however. When the NST talks resume in January 1986, they will facilitate impressive, but tentative progress toward the outlines of a farreaching offensive agreement involving major reductions, compromise on issues currently dividing the sides, and a ceiling agreement on INF. They will stipulate, however, that this progress cannot be formally agreed--either in a Vladivostok type accord at the Washington Summit or a final agreement later--without a substantial concession by the US on SDI. Thereby they will seek to make SDI the only real obstacle to the greatest arms control agreement in history.

The nature of the concession on SDI they will demand will be some mix of formal constraints and politically calculable side effects. They probably know now that they will not get this Administration simply to stop and ban the SDI program, which is their current formal position. At the same time, the Soviets cannot depart so far from this position that SDI becomes legitimized within the context of arms control. At a minimum they are likely to insist that the implementation of any offensive force reductions will depend on formal and predictable constraints regarding SDI testing and deployment, and also seek to get agreement on language regarding strategic defenses that can be used politically by US publics and political figures to brake the program's funding and technical progress. At the same time, they are likely to press for greater freedom to deploy ground-based ABM systems they are developing both to enhance their strategic options and to increase political pressure against SDI. The Soviets will not take the lead in defining a compromise on SDI. Rather they will hold as long as possible to their formal position, encourage influential figures in the US to develop and lobby for compromises, and send out occasional unofficial hints about their interest in such ideas. Currently they profess that some reaffirmation of the ABM Treaty is the best path to such a compromise.

The Soviets will try to take advantage of the 1986 Congressional elections, believing that they will increase the political pressure on the Administration to produce substantive results at the Washington Summit and to avoid the impression of a failure or deadlock. Moscow would prefer this summit to come shortly before the November elections rather than in June or even July. Although they may threaten to do so, it is highly unlikely that the Soviets will cancel or walk out on the Washington Summit even if they do not see US concessions on SDI. The logic of their political game requires that it be played out in the last years of the President's term; the political pressures on the President for closure on arms control will be the greatest between now and 1988. The Soviets will expect the President to go as far as he possibly can to take advantage of his last chances for an historic legacy. At the same time, they see certain political advantages in striking a farreaching bargain with this President, who would have an uncommon ability to deliver ratification, before the uncertainties and delays of a new administration appear. Detente in terms acceptable to Moscow would be legitimized for years to come.

The Kremlin will want to test this possibility even if it doubts this scenario will happen. This could lead them to make their strategic force cut proposals as tempting as possible prior to the Washington Summit, while at the same time they might adopt harsher rhetoric, threaten to recess the Geneva talks, or even hint at a cancellation of the Washington Summit to pressure the Administration. However, the Soviets are likely to continue to have difficulty building an "or else" factor into their policy line toward the US, because a pugnacious, threatening approach failed so badly recently and does not appear to have any greater credibility now. Moscow may conclude because of this that its best stick--and carrot--lies in publicly advertising and moving ahead on its offensive forces procurement plans, which mean increased weapons numbers, accuracy, and survivability, while it puts elements of it on the negotiating table to induce the President to compromise SDI and US offensive systems.

It is unlikely that the Soviets will decide any time soon to sign up to a major offensive arms agreement that is not tied to a US agreement to curtail SDI. While Moscow might hypothesize that, even in the absence of formal limits on SDI, the Congress would not fund SDI if the USSR agreed to a major mutual cut in strategic forces, this would be a risky gamble. The Soviets might accept US reaffirmation of the ABM treaty for some period of years together with new definitions to their satisfaction, or other agreement that would effectively delay the SDI program, but it is highly doubtful that they would accept only a figleaf US agreement that would not accomplish this.

Whatever the outcome of the 1986 elections, but particularly if the President's party fares badly, the Soviets probably will see the Moscow Summit as their last and perhaps greatest opportunity to get something out of this Administration. They will try to bring great pressure to bear on that event to achieve as its outcome either US accommodation finally on SDI or the President's policies being discredited for having led to nothing conclusive after six years of intermittent negotiations, a major US defense spending effort, and three Summits.

Discrediting the Administration.

Thereafter, the Soviets probably would seek to paint the Reagan Presidency as an abject failure and a negative lesson to its successor. In the absence of a major arms control agreement, they will assert in their public diplomacy that this Administration, after spending so much on defense and rejecting an arms control agreement, has gained no additional security for the US and provided a legacy of larger nuclear stockpiles and a more dangerous world, which SDI threatens to make even more so. They will calculate that conventional force improvements the Administration has procured will not count for much in internal US politics. The Soviets will further seek to show that by failing to face "realities," the Administration's initiatives aimed at policies in the Third World neither prevented the consolidation of Soviet clients nor stabilized continuing conflicts. Their bottom line will be that they are prepared to wait for a new Administration which will have to approach things differently if it wants a more stable US-Soviet relationship.

The Soviets cannot afford to continue a positive dialogue with the Administration indefinitely if the President does not accommodate them because the President might then get credit for having successfully managed the USSR during his stewardship through a tough, no-nonsense posture. This is the opposite impression the Soviets want to give the US and the next President and the downside of the poker-game policy they are now pursuing. For Moscow to pursue a positive dialogue, nevertheless, it would have to judge that constraints imposed by the Congress and independent actions of the Allies could not be sustained otherwise and were even more important. At the same time, the Soviets will probably appreciate that a relapse into the tactics of pugnacity and disengagement pursued in the early 1980s would tend to strengthen hard-line influences on the critical politics of 1987 and 1988 in the US, which they want to avoid.

Special Significance of the Regional Arenas

To weaken the Administration politically and get it to adopt positions more preferable to the USSR, the Soviets also want to regain the initiative and stronger positions in regional arenas--with US allies and China, and in the Third World generally. The Soviets want those that have influence on the US to pressure Washington on arms control and trade issues, they want to divide the US from its friends, and they want the latter themselves to accommodate Soviet interests in the way of lesser defense effort, more favorable trade policies, and weaker resistance to Soviet efforts at subversion. Moscow's ability to manipulate third parties against the US will depend significantly on how the Soviets deal with the US directly; its reengagement with the US and curtailment of rhetorical belligerence toward the West tends to make it more difficult for the US to maintain alliance discipline and leverage over China.

Western Europe and Japan

The new Soviet leadership has sought to project a more appealing diplomatic image toward the West over the past year and create the impression that the world is changing, that "cooperation should replace conflict", and that European and Japanese interests will be best served by persuading Washington to alter its positions. Moscow will continue to urge the Allies--through Soviet bilateral diplomacy, public diplomacy, and active measures--to pressure the US to compromise SDI and on offensive weapons. It also wants the Allies to break ranks with the US on technology and credit policies in ways supportive of the Twelfth Five Year Plan and Gorbachev's high technology goals.

The Soviets have put considerable effort into numerous meetings with Western leaders in which they have shown themselves to be more vigorous and personally engaging than their predecessors. Gorbachev turned in impressive personal performances in Britain last December, in Paris in October, and at Geneva. Politburo member and RSFSR boss Vorotnikov got similarly good reviews for his visit to Canada, and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze, who will go to Japan later this month, has been more appealing to Western leaders than Gromyko. Soviet leaders are likely to maintain an active schedule of foreign travel to Western countries. It is, however, arguable whether this diplomatic new look toward the Allies will yield more than headlines flattering to Soviet leaders personally. The French media, for example, made a clear distinction between Gorbachev's individual abilities and the positions he represented, which they took to task. In broader terms, this was the general picture presented by Western media about Gorbachev's performance in Geneva.

So far, the Soviets have had relatively little success in dividing the Allies from the US, especially compared with the detente era of the 1970s, which they want to recreate. But after taking a tough line toward the Allies earlier, the Soviets have now changed their posture toward all but West Germany. They continue to excoriate Bonn over its support for INF and SDI, while taking a softer line toward the UK and Italy which are hardly

less culpable in these respects. Nor do Gorbachev or Shevardnadze have current plans to visit the FRG, the only major Western country that has not yet been visited by the new leadership. The answer may lie in Moscow's fear that improved relations with West Germany now would threaten loss of Soviet control over the inner-German dialogue, would help the Kohl government in the national elections that must be held by early next year, or both. As with the Reagan Administration, the Soviets don't want the Kohl government to get credit for successfully managing the USSR through hardline policies. The Soviets could switch to a policy of actively courting Bonn, if the political opposition in the FRG looks hopeless.

Moscow's best hopes in Europe and Japan probably lie in government changes later in the decade, in which new governments might come to power in the United Kingdom, West Germany, and Japan and perhaps elsewhere that are less anti-Soviet, less pro-defense, and less supportive of the US. The roughly concurrent appearance of conservative governments in the key Western nations and others in the early 1980s was unique in recent times. At the same time, the Soviets believe President Mitterand, though a Socialist, has moved France closer to the US and that Franco-Soviet relations have weakened. The Soviets hope that the problems these governments have failed to solve and new ones together with an inclination of Western publics to give the other crowd a chance will catch up with their conservative protagonists in the next several years. Moscow would anticipate that a Labor government in the UK, an SPD government in the FRG, a couple of other similar changes in Western Europe, and a leader other than Prime Minister Nakasone in Japan would significantly improve Soviet prospects both bilaterally and for dealing with the US. The Soviets probably believe that their revised diplomatic posture since last year will make it easier for such governments to get elected and, if they are, more likely that they will be amenable to Soviet diplomacy. Related to this, the Soviets know how badly the West European Peace Movement has fared in the last several years. They could place less emphasis on its more aggressive manifestations in the next several years in order not to frighten West European middle classes away from the socialist parties.

China

The Soviets expect that Beijing will pursue a more balanced position in the US-Sino-Soviet triangle out of China's interest to obtain greater leverage over the US and to attenuate the strategic threat presented by the USSR. That strategic threat has led the Chinese to adopt the posture they have, and Moscow remains unlikely to compromise its position on any of the "three obstacles" Beijing has set down as markers for significantly improving relations with the Soviets. If Moscow did decide to act on one of them, it probably would offer some gesture related to its military presence on the Sino-Soviet border rather than pressure the Vietnamese over Kampuchea or weaken its own position in Afghanistan. If the Soviets did act to curtail the drain Afghanistan represents by adopting a more accommodating stance on negotiations or by withdrawing troops, the spillover could work to their advantage with the Chinese.

Despite the "three obstacles," though, Sino-Soviet relations have noticeably improved over the last several years and will probably continue to do so, notwithstanding the web of Sino-US relations that exists. The Soviets, who would like a Chinese delegation or at least observers to attend the 27th Party Congress, are out to develop this process as much as they can on the cheap and probably hope that at some point China's place in the triangle may alter enough politically to favorably impact on Soviet-US relations. The Soviets probably also hope that the economic reforms China has inaugurated will fail or otherwise produce an adverse political reaction which will undermine Chinese leaders who have also been most pronounced in their anti-Sovietism and desire for good Sino-US relations.

The Third World

The Third World is vital to Soviet policy toward the US because it is a fluid political battleground of the superpower competition and because in the past half decade the Soviets have been more on the defensive than the offensive for the first time since Khrushchev's forays following Stalin's death. Moscow wants to consolidate old gains and make new ones for the currency these developments might be worth directly to weaken the US in the superpower competition, and to show that the Reagan Administration's foreign policy writ large has failed. More immediately, it wants to reassert its global status by playing a greater role in Third World affairs.

Gorbachev shows every sign of sticking to the assertive Soviet policies of the 1970s. He seems determined to defend the Leninist regimes that Moscow assisted or placed in power during the 1970s and desirous of making new gains through incisive political support (for example, the Philippines), active diplomacy (Asia at large), arms sales, and subversion. At the same time, he wants to reengage the US in discussions about regional issues to inhibit US interventionism and better assert the USSR's superpower status, particularly in the Middle East, but elsewhere as well. From the Soviet perspective, such a dual approach likely bears hope of newly favorable developments while requiring minimal risks or new economic costs.

Gorbachev has shown little concern that Moscow's fundamentally aggressive posture in the Third World will throw off his America game plan, probably because, as the Geneva Summit showed, the US has had great difficulty linking the central US-Soviet strategic relationship to favorable Soviet behavior on regional issues. The Soviets see the US complaining and denouncing its policies but believe that Administration interventionism in the Third World is politically circumscribed and inhibited, possibly on the wane, and, at any rate, not increasing. While the Soviet approach represents a continuing gamble, Gorbachev probably sees no reason to change course at this stage.

As with Western leaders, Gorbachev has sought to make the most of his appealing diplomatic style in numerous meetings in Moscow with Third World leaders; and Soviet emissaries have sought to learn what the USSR can obtain cheaply or at no cost in the regional arenas in discussions as far flung as with the Israelis in Paris, with the Indonesians, at the United Nations, and

elsewhere. Gorbachev has benefited from such Third World moves like Oman's decision to establish diplomatic relations with the USSR, and he sees no reason yet to take the risk of significantly compromising any Soviet position in the Third World that might represent a tactical concession intended to obtain some more dramatic strategic gain. Nevertheless, a string of possibilities exists that could work to Soviet advantage with the US.

For example, the Soviets could:

Allow increased Jewish emigration directly to Israel or establish diplomatic relations with Israel.

Orchestrate a better diplomatic effort with the ASEAN countries that might lead the latter to accept Vietnam's and Moscow's positions in the region as a fait accompli, and normalize relations.

Make a serious move to obtain a diplomatic solution to the war in Afghanistan; or escalate the war either in Afghanistan or against Pakistan, or both.

External events also could work to Moscow's advantage. For Example:

The death of Ayatollah Khomeini could be followed by a less anti-Soviet government.

The violence in South Africa might further expand and make the ANC increasingly powerful and dependent on the Soviets.

Soviet allies in Angola, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, or Kampuchea could consolidate their positions.

Domestic pressures in Pakistan to accommodate the Soviets in Afghanistan might increase.

The Marcos regime in the Philippines could be succeeded by one less friendly to the US.

The Soviets also have other important equities that they want to retain in the Third World besides their allies fighting insurgencies. Moscow has long supported an infrastructure of international terrorism and provided support to particular countries (for example, Libya) that practice terrorism for their own ends but which serve well Moscow's interest in undermining US positions and credibility. The Soviets appear to have made a calculated gamble that the US will not take military action to overthrow a Third World regime engaging in terrorism, which might evoke a credibility that Moscow wants to avoid, and that anything less than this would be of modest consequence.

Moscow also has important stakes in a number of non-radical countries which confer Third World legitimacy upon the USSR and regional

influence--for example, India. Whereas Indira Gandhi's leadership in the past served Soviet interests well, Rajiv Gandhi's succession threatens a less close relationship with Moscow and somewhat closer ties with the West. The Soviets do not have the technologies that India wants and cannot afford all the concessionary assistance New Delhi would like. Soviet arms sales and political support will remain high cards with India as with others in the Third World, but in a number of instances the Soviets will have to work hard to stay even.

Key Variables of the Soviet Gameplan

Probably the most important factor affecting Moscow's ability to get where it wants to be is the growth and qualitative developments affecting the Soviet and US economies. The US anticipates solid growth and lessened budget and trade deficits in the next several years. Soviet leaders also are optimistic about what they can achieve; they also believe the US economy is in difficult straits and is unlikely to improve. How our respective economies do perform will imply much for images abroad, the foreign relationships and assistance each can provide, and the strength and burden of our defense budgets.

A second major factor will be how well our respective leaderships do manage and hold their constituencies. Gorbachev is likely to emerge from the 27th Party Congress with a Politburo and Central Committee more supportive of his leadership than probably any of his predecessors after only one year in power. Nevertheless, Gorbachev's policies will have to inspire continued confidence and broad consensus if he is to truly lead and not fall victim to greater policy resistance and plots to oust or undermine him. The danger almost certainly does not lie in the machinations of Brezhnev-era holdovers in the Party, government, or military apparatus. More likely, it is closer to home--in new leaders like Ligachev and Ryzhkov, and the doubts and uncertainties that attend policies that cannot pay off quickly.

Gorbachev can make a strong argument to his colleagues in favor of his current course with the US and other plans to revise the "correlation of forces" in the USSR's favor. But if he is unable to show significant progress on the economic front and fails to get his hooks into SDI in the next year or so, he may come under increasing pressures at home to alter course. His position that the USSR has a one option choice because the other way has failed demonstrably may not remain persuasive if the President holds fast to his policies and gets the support he needs from his constituencies. Gorbachev, himself, moreover, could become frustrated enough to adopt a nastier and more aggressive approach toward Washington, even if this proved a miscalculation.

Gorbachev already may be suffering some internal criticism over his recent arms control proposals and will be under considerable pressure if he has called for lessened military spending in favor of greater investment in civilian machinery. A number of Soviet statements in the wake of the Geneva Summit, by both leaders and observers, connote some reserve about how

Gorbachev did personally and what the Soviets got out of the meeting. It is doubtful that Gorbachev would be turned out of power because his foreign policy toward the US did not pay off, but failure of his America policy could be used against him, as was done against Khrushchev, by those who might be out to get him because of their dissatisfaction with his domestic policies or their economic results. While the Soviets may calculate that President Reagan can sell atmospherics for only one summit, and at the next one will be under greater pressure to sign an agreement, Gorbachev may feel increased criticism at home if he fails to extract something substantive soon, even if he himself has a longer term view.

Moscow's ability to score new gains in and to manipulate the regional arenas will largely depend on the compromises it is willing to make, the resources it is prepared to expend, and major events over which the Soviets can exercise little control. Elections in Western Europe and Japan will bear importantly on the success of Soviet policy toward the US, but will be minimally influenced by the USSR. As to tactical concessions, the Soviets would be taking significant risks if they eased up on East Europe to gain greater Western European support, allowed a major increase in Jewish emigration to Israel or reestablished diplomatic relations with the latter, withdrew from Afghanistan, lessened their military presence on the Sino-Soviet border, gave the disputed islands back to Japan, etc. Any such move would mark a major policy departure; more than a couple over the next several years is highly unlikely. Meanwhile, Moscow has little economic ability to buy new influence with anyone, although the Soviets will likely expend the resources necessary to prevent any client from being turned out of power. Arms sales and political support in crises are likely to be considered most remunerative. Finally, there is always the possibility that a Third World conflict or act of terrorism might draw in the US, the USSR, or both in a way that could significantly affect the US-Soviet relationship. Coincidentally or causally, every summit since the Second World War has been followed shortly by a major conflict affecting the superpower competition.