Summer 8-1995

Russia's China Policy Under Yeltsin and Its Effect on the Korean Peninsula

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RUSSIA'S CHINA POLICY UNDER YELTSIN AND ITS EFFECT ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA

by

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B.A. March 1986, Korean Military Academy.

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Old Dominion University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY
August, 1995

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ABSTRACT

RUSSIA'S CHINA POLICY UNDER YELTSIN AND ITS EFFECT ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA

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Old Dominion University, 1995
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This thesis studies current developments in Russia's China policy and their effect on the Korean Peninsula. This thesis asks these questions: how has the Russia's China policy changed since Gorbachev era, what are the determinants of Russia's current China policy, what is the effect of this policy on the Korean Peninsula, and what is the prospect for Russo-Chinese relations? Russia's China policy has been profoundly influenced by a series of domestic Russian institutional changes. Russia may be developing a political-economic system more consistent with "Eastern" notions of democracy and capitalism than those of the West. The result has been a policy of rapprochement. Russo-Chinese rapprochement seriously worsens the position of the North Korean regime. Deprived of their previous aid and assistance from the Communist world, the North Korean regime has experienced economic difficulties and diplomatic isolation. The change of international relations in East Asia implies that North Korea may need to make substantial political concessions to the West and South Korea. Materials used in this study are in English or English translation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Chinese President Jiang Zemin's five-day summit meeting with Russian President Boris Yeltsin in Moscow in September 1994 illustrated the improvement of Russo-Chinese relations that took place since the breakup of the USSR in 1991. The two leaders reached agreement in three important areas. First, they endorsed the new quality of Russo-Chinese relations -- to wit, their constructive partnership in bilateral and international affairs. Second, they agreed on a statement regarding mutual nontargeting of missiles. Finally, an agreement was signed on the western section of the Russo-Chinese border.[1]

The Russo-Chinese rapprochement achieved during 1992-1994 under Yeltsin contrasts vividly with the almost total breakdown in mutual relations during the Khrushchev era and the lingering hostility during the Brezhnev era. In the late 1980s under Gorbachev, Russo-Chinese relations took a turn for the better. For example, Gorbachev's four-day visit to China in May 1989 signaled the end of two decades of Russo-Chinese hostility. At this meeting Gorbachev and Deng

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[1]Smankovtsin, "Talk of the Day," Moscow ITAR-TASS, 6 September 1994, trans. in FBIS Daily Report, FBIS-SOV-94-172, (6 September 1994): 16.

Xiaoping proclaimed the beginning of normal state-to-state relations between the two countries.

But, on 25 December 1991, Gorbachev resigned as president of the Soviet Union and country broke into fifteen states. Russia, by far the largest of the Soviet successor states, laid claim to the rights and responsibilities of the former USSR in the world arena. When Russian President Boris Yeltsin visited Beijing in December 1992, it was clear that Russia was pursuing a China policy of seeking a constructive relationship that would meet the interests of both states. The 1994 visit of President Jiang Zemin to Moscow suggested that a new stage in Russo-Chinese relations was at hand.

Theoretical perspectives on Russo-Chinese rapprochement

There are three factors propelling one to search for a new paradigm to explain course of Russo-Chinese relations in the Yeltsin era. They are (1) the upturn in Russo-Chinese relations, (2) the profound domestic upheavals in Russia, and (3) the scholarly debate following the end of the Cold War in which previously dominant theoretical paradigms of international relations were severely criticized.

First, the positive trend in Russo-Chinese relations had proceeded sufficiently far by September 1994 to suggest the need for scholars to shift to a new analytical paradigm. What seems to be needed is a framework of analysis not focused solely on conflict. The new paradigm should

explicitly take into account the prospects for enhanced cooperation. The present study of Russia's China policy in the Yeltsin era is among the first attempts to employ such a paradigm for analyzing Russo-Chinese relations.

Second, Russia, one of the most important state actors in the Northeast Asia Region, is undergoing rapid and fundamental domestic change. Domestic factors may be key determinants of foreign policy. Where these are in flux in a major actor they suggest the wisdom of adopting a paradigm for explaining foreign policy that incorporates these domestic dynamics.

Third, the collapse of the Soviet state in 1991 fueled an already heated debate on the post-Cold War international order. Would it be an order of peace and cooperation or rather a disorder of war and conflict? What kind of foreign policies would be pursued by Russia: peaceful status quo polices or aggressive revisionist policies? In particular, these issues were vital for the Northeast Asia region. Northeast Asia faced a fundamental geopolitical realignment. The new Russia that bordered directly on Northeast Asia was neither territorially stable nor consolidated politically and economically on the path of democratic market reform.

In this light, it appears necessary that any analysis of Russia's policy in Northeast Asia take into account domestic change in Russia. This includes the advent of new values, dynamics, actors, and frameworks. Because of the

depth of change, the following analysis of Russia's China policy will begin by introducing the main scholarly positions concerning the post-Cold War order.

There are basically two competing interpretations: the optimistic, emphasizing the prospects of peace and cooperation, and the pessimistic, emphasizing the prospect of conflict and war. The argument of the optimists focuses on the impact of democratization, interdependence, and internationalization. This optimistic view includes Stephen Van Evera, Stephan Kux, and Celeste Wallender.

According to optimist Stephen Van Evera, offensive wars will become obsolete as a result of the development away from smokestack economies to the interdependent welfare economies of post-industrialism.[2] Alternatively, some early analysts of post-Soviet foreign policy tend toward optimism by emphasizing its conformity with the "New Political Thinking" of the late Soviet era.[3] Thus Stephan Kux considers that Russia has taken over the concepts and programs of the last years of Soviet foreign policy. Kux places post-Soviet foreign policy in the content of the

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[2]Stephen van Evera, "Primed for Peace: Europe after the Cold War," in The Cold War and After: Prospects for Peace, ed. Sean M. Lynn Jones (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991), 193-234.

[3]Stephan Kux, "New Political Alignments in the Former Soviet Union," Paper for the IISS Seminar, The Strategic Consequences of the Breakup of the Soviet Union, Barnett Hill, 6-8 May 1992.

global pluralist tendencies that characterized the international system of this century. Other post-Sovietologists, like Celeste Wallander, insist on the validity of "new institutionalism" in interpreting Russia's foreign policy, which is seen as cooperatively to the foreign policy of other advanced societies.[4]

The implicit methodological argument of these optimists is that there has been a real change in most of the independent post-Soviet states and, more importantly, that domestic developments are influential sources of foreign policy behavior. This assumption is challenged by one of the most famous of the pessimists or realists, John J. Mearsheimer. In his "Back to the Future," Mearsheimer states:

> . . . the keys to war and peace lie more in the structure of the international system than in the maturity of the individual states . . . domestic factors were less important than the character and distribution of military power between states.[5]

Mearsheimer is a structuralist "neorealist" comparable to Kenneth Waltz, but a realist nevertheless when stressing anarchy and conflict as the compelling conditions of international relations. Looking at the many conflicts and

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[4]Celeste A. Wallander, "International Institutions and Modern Security Strategies," Problems of Communism 41 (May-June 1992): 44-62.

[5]John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War," in The Cold War and After: Prospects for Peace. ed. Sean M. Lynn Jones (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991), 148.

realignments among the post-Soviet states one is easily persuaded by the logic of his argument that the end of the Cold War means a new era of instability, crisis, and perhaps even war. Specifically, he contends that multipolarity breeds more instability than bipolarity.

Nevertheless, Mearsheimer's skeptical assessment of multipolarity can be challenged. Stephen Van Evera, for instance, argues that the coalition politics of a multipolar world usually produce defensive coalitions that overmatch aggressors by a greater margin than is possible under bipolarity and that militarism is a greater danger under bipolarity than under multipolarity.

On the other hand, national interests are major factors that determine every country's foreign policy. But defining national interests is not easy. National interests will be defined differently on different issues, at different times, and by different governmental units. For example, both Russia and China have common national interests on economic issues. To pursue domestic economic reform, both Russia and China need external stability along their borders. Consequently, economic issues are major factors in the current Russo-Chinese rapprochement. Improved Russo-Chinese relations promise to lead to lower military costs and increased economic benefits. Considering only economic factor, the future of the Russo-Chinese cooperation would be optimistic.

But when one considers security issues, several constraints appear to limit the prospects for Russo-Chinese relations over the next decade. Russo-Chinese rivalry may not be dead, but instead could be transferred to other arenas, including attempts by each to maximize power and influence with specific countries in Asia. Russia prefers the status quo in Northeast Asia, but China wants new hegemonic power in Northeast Asia. Currently, Northeast Asia has established itself as a region of dynamic multipolar stability. It is a region rich in conflicts and tension, but also a region with a tradition of skillful diplomacy, Machiavelism, and pragmatism. Thus balance-of-power politics is an important ingredient of Northeast Asian affairs.

As a consequence, Russo-Chinese relations are so complex that it would be unwise to analyze them using a single analytical model. Under different conditions, different combinations of the models may provide the best explanation of the Russo-Chinese relations. Thus I will here present Russo-Chinese relations from a perspective located somewhere between the "pessimistic" and "optimistic" point of view.

Review of the Literature on Russo-Chinese Relations

Seen from the chronological point of view, the body of literature analyzing Russo-Chinese relations may be sorted

into three broad categories.[6] The first category seeks to explain the origins and causes of the Russo-Chinese dispute; the second focuses on the dynamics of the dispute; the third category seeks to explain the prospect of Russo-Chinese reconciliation.

The largest category of scholarly literature is that emphasizing the origin of the Russo-Chinese dispute. The two causal factors most typically emphasized in early works are ideology and national interest. Among the representatives of this early group are four monographs: namely, The Sino-Soviet Dispute, edited by G.F. Hudson, Richard Lowenthal, and Roderick MacFarquher; The Sino-Soviet Conflict, 1956-1961, by Donald Zagoria; The Sino-Soviet Rift, by William E. Griffith; and Survey of Sino-Soviet Dispute: A Commentary, by John Gittings.[7]

The majority of the analysts in this group treat ideology as a dependent variable, important yet essentially derivative from military/strategic or other national

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[6]In developing these three categories of the scholarly literature on Russo-Chinese relations, the writer has benefitted from the following analysis: Lowell Dittmer, Sino-Soviet Normalization and Its International Implications, 1945-1990 (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992).

[7]G.F. Hudson, Richard Lowenthal, and Roderick MacFarquher, eds., The Sino-Soviet Dispute (London: The China Quarterly, 1961); Donald Zagoria, The Sino-Soviet Conflict, 1956-1961 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962); William E. Griffith, The Sino-Soviet Rift (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1964); and John Gittings, Survey of Sino-Soviet Dispute: A Commentary (London: Oxford University Press, 1968).

interests. Hudson, for example, writing before the ideological quarrel had fully emerged, focuses on security issues, noting that Soviet rapprochement with the United States in the late 1950s, aroused People's Republic of China (PRC) fears of abandonment.

Although Lowenthal places greater emphasis on ideological factors, he roots ideology in security concerns. Thus revolutionary movements in the Third World were encouraged by the Chinese not only to validate Chinese ideological convictions, but also to foil the Soviet policy of peaceful coexistence within the United States. Griffith analyzes the Sino-Indian border dispute, the Cuban missile crisis, and the Soviet-American test ban treaty in terms of the interests of the nations involved, not ignoring ideology altogether but treating it essentially as an ancillary, complicating factor.

In contrast, Zagoria and Gittings are representative of the minority who tend to endow ideology with greater causal importance. For example, Zagoria seems to suggest that ideology was both an incendiary factor precipitating the dispute and an adhesive factor containing the cleavage and ameliorating tension between the two. Gittings, while arguing that ideology and national interest are inseparable, assumes the causal primacy of the former. For instance, Gittings implies that Chinese antagonism to Soviet-American rapprochement was based on ideological premises.

A second group of analysis in this first category tend to explain the Sino-Soviet dispute by reference to territorial issues and security. Given the armed dispute on the Russo-Chinese border in the late 1960s, it is understandable that territorial and security concerns received emphasis. Harrison E. Salisbury's War Between Russia and China, epitomizes this trend.[8] Salisbury adduces the Russo-Chinese dispute to deep conflicts of national interest. Moreover, he completely discounts ideology as an inhibiting factor in the dispute. Other analysts during this period trace the dispute either to insatiable Russian and Soviet land hunger or to Chinese territorial revanchism.[9]

The second major category of works focuses more on the dynamics, than the causes, of the Russo-Chinese dispute. Many of these studies were written during the 1970s and early 1980s. Scholars in this group usually assume that the Russo-Chinese dispute is self-perpetuating, and they seek to explain the persistence of the cleavage. For many, the independent variable is the "international structure." In other words, they argue that foreign policy makers in both countries are influenced more by the overall pattern of international relations than by domestic political

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[8]Harrison E. Salisbury, War Between Russia and China, (New York: W.W.Norton, 1969).

[9]For example, see Tai Sung An, The Sino-Soviet Territorial Dispute, (New York: Westminster Press, 1973).

exigencies.[10]

The attention paid to international structure to explain the Russo-Chinese dispute led to two interesting analytical devices. The first invention was the postulation of a "strategic triangle" caused by the entrance of the other superpower, the United States, into the relationship. Donald Zagoria, the Soviet scholar was followed by many others in the 1970s.[11] The other invention was to go beyond lateral relations among the powers to a more complex pattern that included the vertical relationships between each power and its respective client states. For instance, Robert Scalapino, in his "Containment and Counter Containment: The Current Stage of Sino-Soviet Relations," analyzes how the principal disputants sought to build containment or counter-containment networks around each other through cultivation of such clients as India, Pakistan, Vietnam, and North

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[10]Harold Hinton, The Sino-Soviet Confrontation: Implications for the Future, (New York: Crane, Russak, 1976; Kenneth Lieberthal, Sino-Soviet Conflict in the 1970s: Its Evolution and Implications for the Strategic Triangle, (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 1978); Harry Harding and Melvin Gurtov, The Purge of Lo Jui-ch'ing: The Politics of Chinese Strategic Planning, (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 1971); Melvin Gurtov and Byong-Moo Hwang, China Under Threat: The Politics of Strategy and Diplomacy, (Baltimore; Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980).

[11]Zagoria first coined the geometrical metaphor in his March 1965 congressional testimony, in which he defined the "triangle" as a pattern in which "change in the relationship of any two of the powers unavoidably affects the third."

Korea.[12]

Finally, the third major category of studies focuses on the prospect for reconciliation of the Russo-Chinese dispute. Written mostly in the late 1980s and 1990s, these studies reflect the shift in Russia's policy marked by Gorbachev's "New Thinking."

An outstanding example of this school is the Congressional Research Service publication "Sino-Soviet Relations after the Summit."[13] This work explains the Sino-Soviet rapprochement as due to the belief of each country that to improve relations would result in lower military costs and increased economic benefits. Each country was alleged to have calculated that better mutual relations would improve its chances of maximizing leverage over the West as each sought to join the Western economic system and participate in its benefits. Participants in the CRS study agreed that a number of constraints would limit the prospects for Sino-Soviet relations. For example, the Sino-Soviet rivalry was likely to be transferred to other areas, including attempts by each to maximizing power and influence with specific countries in Asia. Also cited were internal

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[12]Robert Scalapino, "Containment and Counter containment: The Current Stage of Sino-Soviet Relations," China, the Soviet Union, and the West, in Douglas Stuart and William Tow, eds. (Boulder: Westview, 1982), 173.

[13]Congressional Research Service, Sino-Soviet Relations After the Summit (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1990).

economic constraints and the lack of sufficient trade-related infrastructure.

The other outstanding work in this school is Lowell Dittmer's Sino-Soviet Normalization and Its International Implications, 1945-1990.[14] Dittmer insists that the Sino-Soviet rapprochement is quite real and therefore prospects for its continuance are excellent. Dittmer's work is a dramatic departure, because previously the study of Russo-Chinese relations had largely been the study of an enduring conflict.

The positions outlined above are evidence of the diversity of opinion about Russo-Chinese relations. Most of this literature is still worth reading, particularly as historical analysis, even though it is largely out of date for understanding the post-Soviet era. In view of the significant transformation in Russo-Chinese relations since the Gorbachev era, and particularly the most recent developments culminating in full normalization, a reassessment of the two countries' relations seems necessary.

Approach of This Study

Even though admitting dynamic trends in recent Russo-Chinese relations, the dominant paradigm in Western analysis of Russian foreign policy still suggests that we need not

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[14]Dittmer, Sino-Soviet Normalization.

take Russo-Chinese rapprochement seriously. In fact, a common assumption behind most Western analysis since the break-up of the former Soviet Union has been that, sooner or later, Russia and the other Soviet successor states will become Westernized.

However, since the elections of December 1993, a different reality is beginning to wake many Western analysts from their deep analytic slumber. The West was shocked by the success of Vladimir Zhirinovsky's so-called Liberal Democratic Party and the speed with which President Yeltsin removed key reformers from his cabinet to accommodate the reshaping of the Russian Parliament. Chinese President Jiang Zemin's trip to Moscow in September 1994 further underlined an increasingly pro-China trend in Russian politics, still largely overlooked in the West despite evidence of rising trade, arms sales, and high-level state visits. As the pendulum of Russian reform begins to swing back from radical Western notions to more moderate reform concepts, the question of the reality of Russo-Chinese rapprochement must be reexamined.

This study suggests that Russia may be developing an overall political-economic system more consistent with "Eastern" notions of democracy and capitalism[15] than those

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[15]I use "Eastern notion of democracy" in contrast to "Western notion of democracy." Japan and South Korea developed their own democracy by mixing Western notion of democracy.

of the United States. Within such a framework, the Russian government is likely to resume its leading role in directing national economic development assuming a position similar to that of the state in present-day Japan, South Korea, and China.[16] Thus, instead of following the West, Russia may move closer to an East Asian model of mixing small-scale privatization with the marketization of state enterprises, using indicative-type central planning and channeled state investment to revive its economy and build new export industries.[17]

If this is so, then an examination of recent Russo-Chinese relations becomes not a purported "side show" to Russia's real negotiations with the West. Instead, it becomes a central topic in the study of trends in Russian foreign relations and domestic restructuring. This study examines the evidence for this shift in Russian policy from 1992-1994, focusing in particular on the Russia's domestic situation which is directly affecting Russia's China policy. In the rest of this paper, I examine the impact of Russo-Chinese rapprochement on the Korean peninsula.

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[16]Recognizing the unique characteristics of each of these economies, my point here is that they share certain commonalities that set them apart from the Western capitalist countries.

[17]On Russian interest in Chinese style economic concepts, see James Clay Moltz, "Commonwealth Economics in Perspective: Lessons from the East Asian Model," Soviet Economy 7 (September-December 1991): 342-63.

Chapter Two traces Russia's China policy from Brezhnev to Gorbachev. It places emphasis on the beginnings of Russo-Chinese rapprochement before the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Chapter Three discusses Russia's domestic development and its relation to Russia's China policy. This chapter discusses how domestic variables such as political, military, and economic developments affect Russia's China policy.

Chapter Four focuses on the implications of Russo-Chinese rapprochement for the Korean Peninsula. This chapter discusses Russia's and China's policies toward the Korean Peninsula, and then assesses the policy implications of Russo-Chinese rapprochement for Korea.

The final chapter summarizes the argument and infers the prospects for Russo-Chinese relations in the near future. This chapter cautiously posits three possible scenarios of Russo-Chinese relations.

CHAPTER II

OVERVIEW OF RUSSIA'S CHINA POLICY, 1979-1991

As the 1970s drew to a close, one political bright spot in a Soviet landscape of domestic stagnation and foreign policy setbacks was the outlook for Russo-Chinese relations. The fanaticism and anti-Sovietism of China's Cultural Revolution had been replaced in Beijing by pragmatic, reformist approaches. Frictions between Beijing and Washington were a source of encouragement to Kremlin leaders seeking better Chinese relations.

At the end of the Brezhnev era the USSR sought to improve relations with China. But Moscow's strategy consisted of a series of marginal adjustments that failed to address the basic issues. Consequently, little progress was made.

By 1985-1991, a reformist leadership in Moscow questioned the basic ideological premises on which rested Soviet aspirations toward hegemony in Northeast Asia. A learning process was soon reflected in Soviet foreign policy deeds. A new China policy would be only one outcome of Russia's questioning of past assumptions.

Before the Gorbachev Era, 1979-1984

Relations between the Soviet Union and People's Republic of China remained hostile in the decade following the Ussuri border conflict of 1969. Although Mao's death in September 1976 encouraged Moscow to seek a reconciliation, the Chinese rebuffed these overtures. Moreover four international events in 1978 (the conclusion of a Sino-Japanese Friendship Treaty, the normalization of Sino-American relations, the signing of a Soviet-Vietnamese Friendship Treaty, and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan) militated against genuine improvement in Russo-Chinese relations.[1]

With Mao gone, the Gang of Four under arrest, and the post-Mao leadership shifting away from the radical policies of the Cultural Revolution, Moscow hoped for a concomitant shift toward greater rationality in China's foreign policy. In other words, renewed efforts by Moscow to improve relations were based more on expectations of greater Chinese flexibility than on a Soviet willingness to modify Soviet policies. On the other hand, the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan added a third Chinese precondition for normalization to its two extant demands -- the reduction of Soviet forces in Mongolia and on the Sino-Soviet border, and the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from

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[1]Robert C. Horn, "Soviet Leadership Changes and Sino-Soviet Relations," Orbis 30 (Winter, 1987): 683-99.

Cambodia.[2]

Despite their serious differences, the two sides conducted exploratory talks from the spring of 1979 through early 1982. In March 1981 the USSR proposed confidence building measures in Northeast Asia, and twice sent Mikhail Kapitsa, Chief of the First Eastern Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to Beijing. In addition, in late 1981 and early 1982 Moscow made several proposals for border negotiations.[3]

At the same time China modified its approach toward the Soviet Union. In late 1981 the United States announcement that it was resuming arms sales to Taiwan encouraged the trend in China toward a less anti-Soviet foreign policy. A new line was made public by Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Chairman Hu Yaobang in the fall of 1981 and formalized at the 12th CCP Congress in September 1982. China's new policy was one of equidistance between the two superpowers. Chairman Hu expressed China's hope that relations with the United States and Japan would continue to develop, but expressed displeasure with America's Taiwan policy.[4]

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[2]Leslie Holmes, "Afghanistan and Sino-Soviet Relations," The Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan in Amin Saikal and William Maley, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989): 134.

[3]William E. Griffith, "Sino-Soviet Rapprochement?" Problems of Communism 32 (March-April 1983): 3-14.

[4]Gerald Segal, Sino-Soviet Relations after Mao (London: IISS Adelphi Paper No. 202, 1985): 6-15.

Recognizing the opportunity for better relations, Soviet leaders responded with signals of their own. The Soviet digest of anti-Chinese articles, Opasnyi Kurs (Dangerous Course), issued yearly since 1969, ceased publication after 1982.[5] In addition, Moscow sought to portray the Soviet Union as a more valuable potential partner for China than either Japan or the United States. Consequently, Brezhnev's speech in March 1982 at Tashkent supported the PRC's claim of sovereignty over Taiwan and acknowledged China as a member of the socialist community. In October 1982, Deputy Foreign Minister L. Ilychev was sent to Beijing to pursue talks on normalization.

When Brezhnev died in November 1982, Chinese Foreign Minister Huang Hua praised him as an outstanding statesman, and expressed China's hopes for a genuine improvement in Sino-Soviet relations.[6] Hua met with Gromyko in Moscow, and the two sides agreed to continue discussions. Progress in negotiations proceeded slowly but steadily. Early in 1983, Andropov sent a high-level unofficial representative to Beijing.

However, this modest detente ended when Andropov died. Konstantin Chernenko, the sickly and incompetent Brezhnev

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[5]R.A. Medvedev, "Kitae v Politike SSSR i SSHA," Narody Azii i Afriki, No. 1, 1990, 79-80, Foreign Policy and Eastern Asia: Learning and Adaptation the Gorbachev Era in Charles Ziegler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 62.

[6]Pravda, 16 November 1982, quoted in ibid.

protege who assumed the post of General Secretary in February 1984, presided over a static and uninspired thirteen months during which little progress in Sino-Soviet relations was made.

During the Gorbachev Era, 1985-1991

Unlike Brezhnev, General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev placed a high priority on improving relations with China. Gorbachev was willing to meet Beijing's demands regarding removing the three obstacles. At an extraordinary plenary session of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Central Committee held in March 1985, Gorbachev called for improved Sino-Soviet relations. In June Premier Zhao Ziyang acknowledged Gorbachev's speech and echoed his desire for better ties. That October Deng Xiaoping asked Romanian President Nicolai Ceausescu, who was visiting China, to pass on a message to Gorbachev proposing that "if the Soviet Union and China are able to reach an understanding and succeed in urging Vietnam to withdraw its troops from Cambodia, I am willing to meet Gorbachev."[7]

By 1986 Gorbachev was working on overcoming the Three Obstacles. This became clear in July 1986 when Gorbachev, speaking at Vladivostok, announced the withdrawal of six Soviet regiments from Afghanistan. Gorbachev further stated

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[7]FBIS Daily Report: East Asia, FBIS-CHI-89-34, 17 February 1989: 10.

that discussions with Mongolia were taking place concerning the withdrawal of "a considerable number" of Soviet troops from that country.

The Soviet Union initiated significant military force reductions in the Far East starting in 1987. In January, the Soviet Ministry of Defense announced plans to withdraw one motorized rifle division and several additional units from Mongolia. Whereas in 1985 the Soviet Union had approximately 75,000 troops, or four divisions, deployed in Mongolia, these forces decreased to 55,000 in 1988.[8]

In 1987 a joint Soviet-Chinese Commission began work on resolving the border dispute along the Amur and Ussuri rivers. In March 1987 Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze made a well-publicized swing through Southeast Asia. The Cambodian situation (the Third Obstacle) was the major topic of Shevardnadze's discussions in Thailand and Indonesia.

In 1988 Gorbachev instituted major changes that would revolutionize the Soviet political system and its foreign policy. "New Thinking" moved from the realm of cautious official pronouncements to concrete actions and more open public discussion. The Soviet decision to leave Afghanistan, announced by Gorbachev on 8 February 1988, was a turning point.

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[8]The Military Balance, 1985-1986 (London: The International Institute For Strategic Studies, 1985): 30 ; The Military Balance, 1988-1989 (London: The International Institute For Strategic Studies, 1988): 44.

At the beginning of December 1988, Chinese Foreign Minister Qian met with Gorbachev and Shevardnadze in Moscow. The two sides noted that border talks were proceeding satisfactorily, and agreed that their common tasks of reform and restructuring favored rapprochement. The time of competing power blocs and hegemonism, they concurred, was in the past; the economy, ecology, and other issues now commanded attention. Shevardnadze pointedly underlined Soviet fulfillment of its obligations toward Afghanistan under the Geneva Accords. Qian spoke favorably of the prospects for border trade and other forms of economic cooperation in developing the Soviet Far East. Finally, Shevardnadze was invited to visit China early in 1989 to prepare for a summit meeting between Gorbachev and Deng.[9]

With the Sino-Soviet border talks progressing and a complete Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan scheduled for 15 February 1989, Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia was the single most important obstacle still dividing the two countries. In late August 1989, Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Tian Zengpei and Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Rogachev met in Beijing for several days of talks on Cambodia. However, Moscow and Beijing failed, at this time, to resolve all their differences over the terms of a

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[9]BBC Summary of World Broadcasts (USSR), 6 December 1988, quoted in Charles E. Ziegler, Foreign Policy and East Asia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 76.

Cambodian Accord.[10]

Gorbachev's visit to Beijing in May 1989, the first Soviet-Chinese summit meeting in thirty years, was an event of great importance, marking as it did the normalization of diplomatic relations and the restoration of links between the two communist parties. In a speech to Chinese academics and international affairs specialists, Gorbachev commented on the common revolutionary heritage shared by the PRC and the USSR. He supported Deng's suggestion to "let the wind blow away what was, and look toward the future," putting hostilities behind them. Relations were to be "de-ideologized" -- neither party would seek to assert ideological primacy, as in the past, and each would respect the experience and sovereign independence of the other. Gorbachev praised the reduction in military tensions along the Sino-Soviet border, and announced further reductions of Soviet forces in the Far East. Thus, Soviet troops in Mongolia would be reduced by approximately 75 percent.[11]

The student demonstrations that took place in Tiananmen Square during Gorbachev's visit deflected attention from the summit, to the dismay of both leaders. The massacre and subsequent imposition of martial law in early June negated much of the public relations value both sides had Gorbachev

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[10]Pravda, 2 September 1988, trans. in FBIS Daily Report, FBIS-SOV-88-167, 4 September 1988: 11.

[11]Pravda, 18 May 1989, trans. in FBIS Daily Report, FBIS-SOV-89-87, 20 May 1989: 9.

hoped to reap from the summit.

In April 1990, Chinese Premier Li Peng visited Moscow in an effort continue the dialogue and expand cooperation. The Chinese leader was granted a warm, albeit low-key welcome. Agreements were concluded on economic and scientific-technological cooperation on building a nuclear power station in China. The two sides announced that approximately 90 percent of the disputed border area had been resolved. Military exchanges were planned, and the Chinese government agreed to extend the Soviet Union credits for the purchase of consumer goods.[12]

By 1991, the Soviet economic decline had progressed to the point that the Chinese, fearing the consequences of Soviet instability, decided to extend aid to their former enemy. A commodity loan was offered by General Secretary Jiang Zemin during a March 1991 visit to Beijing by V. Ivashko, Deputy General Secretary of the CPSU. The loan enabled the Soviet Union to purchase 1 billion Swiss francs (US $730 million) worth of Chinese grain, meat, milk production, peanuts, tea, textiles, and cigarettes. According to Soviet reports, the loan was repayable over a five-year period in manufactured goods and raw materials.[13] Western sources, however, suggested that repayment might be

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[12]Pravda, 24 April 1990, trans. in Beijing Review 33 (April 1990): 7.

[13]Pravda, 5 March 1991, trans. in FBIS Daily Report, FBIS-SOV-91-43, 7 March 1991: 15.

in the form of Soviet fighter aircraft, including MiG-29s, and Su-24s.[14]

As the USSR moved toward its denouement, some issues in Sino-Soviet relations remained unsettled. Although an agreement delineating the eastern border between the two countries was concluded in late June 1991, several border areas were still in dispute.[15] And economic cooperation became increasingly problematic as the Soviet economic crisis worsened.

Conclusion

Under Gorbachev, Soviet policy toward Northeast Asia focused on reversing the single greatest setback that had occurred in Soviet foreign policy during the post-World War era. Convinced the Russo-Chinese relationship was the key to strengthening the Soviet position in the Asian-Pacific region, Soviet leaders addressed each of the three major obstacles cited by China as impediments to better relations. Moreover, solving the Three Obstacles also provided Moscow with other rewards -- better relations with the West, Japan,

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[14]The Economist, 23 March 1991, 37-38. However, other reports suggest any arms deal may have been concluded during an early trip by Igor Belousov, chairman of the Soviet State Commission for Military-Industrial Affairs. Sophie Quinn-Judge, "Cannon for Fodder," Far Eastern Economic Review (28 March 1991): 11.

[15]I. Chernyak, "A Big Success for Soviet Diplomacy," Komsomolskaia Pravda, 25 June 1991, trans. in FBIS Daily Report, FBIS-SOV-91-121, 27 June 1991: 12.

South Korea, the ASEAN states, Pakistan, and others.

In deideologizing Soviet foreign policy, Gorbachev eliminated a key factor underlying Sino-Soviet hostility. When they competed for ideological primacy Beijing and Moscow had found it difficult to achieve a reconciliation. The Soviet Union's shift from an ideologically-based foreign policy toward a policy based on the concept of a "balance of interests" and acceptance of universal values -- a tolerant, pluralist approach to international relations -- made it possible for Russia to deal with China as a fully equal, sovereign state rather than an apostate vassal.

The foreign policy lessons Kremlin leaders drew from Russo-Chinese relations are readily discernable. Foreign Minister Shevardnadze on several occasions remarked that the Soviet-Chinese conflict had proved costly to both nations.[16] There were direct economic costs involved in deploying large standing armies along their common border, and in competing for influence in the developing world. The Soviet military build-up in the Far East threatened Japanese and American interests in the Western Pacific, and led to compensatory measures that negatively impacted Russia's national security. Both the USSR and China suffered significant opportunity costs as hostile political relations interfered with normal trade and economic cooperation.

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[16]"The 19th All-Union CPSU Conference: Foreign Policy and Diplomacy," International Affairs (Moscow) (October 1988): 3-42.

With the normalization of Russo-Chinese relations in 1989, Gorbachev's policy toward China achieved its greatest success. Soviet reforms had made a new relationship possible, one predicated on a fundamentally revised Soviet perspective toward the People's Republic of China.

It was a mark of the maturity of this new relationship that China and the Soviet Union openly acknowledged and accepted that their interests were not identical. Nonetheless, the two countries shared an interest in reducing military expenditures and the level of tension in East Asia; in continuing the process of internal reform, notwithstanding their widely disparate approaches; in developing trade relations and economic cooperation; and in supporting naval arms control and nuclear-free zones in the Western Pacific. Both nations favored a reduction, but not the elimination, of America's military presence in the region. Both were concerned about the possibility of a resurgent Japan, and both were anxious to avoid becoming involved in any conflict on the Korean peninsula.

CHAPTER III

RUSSIA'S DOMESTIC CHANGE AND ITS CHINA POLICY, 1992-1994

In the forty years following World War II, the international system was dominated by two superpowers anchoring two antagonistic political and socioeconomic systems. In 1991, one pole within this bipolar system collapsed. For the first time in the history of the modern world, the principal balance of power within the international system changed without a major war.

The collapse of the Soviet Union also contradicted a major tenet of the realist theory of international relations. Realist conceptions of international relations can be summarized a comprising three main tenets. First, questions of international system are decided by states. Second, stability within the international system is reflected in and maintained by the balance of power among states.[1] Third, change in the balance of power occurs only after a major war.[2]

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[1]Kenneth Waltz, Theory of International Politics (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979).

[2]Robert Gilpin, War and Change in World Politics (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

The Soviet Union's collapse contradicted this third tenet of realism. In fact, the disintegration of the USSR was mainly caused by internal forces. This epochal event suggests that -- contrary to realism -- not all issues of security are between states. Events within states can influence both domestic and international security arrangements.

Consequently, it is not unreasonable to propose that Russia's domestic affairs are major determinants of Russia's policy toward China. This study focuses on the dramatic thaw that has occurred in Russo-Chinese relations under Yeltsin. It investigates the motivations, prospects, and possible consequences of Russo-Chinese relations in their new stage. This study attempts to answer these questions primarily by examining of Russia's domestic political, economic, and military situation.

Political Reform and Russia's China Policy

After the collapse of Soviet Union Yeltsin initiated steps toward Western-style democracy. For example, he not only undertook institutional reforms but also encouraged political parties and coalitions. However, since the elections of December 1993, Russian reform has swung back from radical Westernization toward more moderate reform. The following section surveys Yeltsin's political reforms and also suggests that Russia may be developing an overall

political system more consistent with "Eastern" notions of democracy.

Institutions

Yeltsin tried to develop three institutional branches of government -- Executive, Legislative, and Judicial. However, Russia's weak democratic traditions hampered his political reform. The result was a subsequent "turn to the right" in Russian policy.

When the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union still existed, anticommunist forces represented by Boris Yeltsin and the political movement known as Democratic Russia could pledge their support to democracy and the market without any obligation to realize these revolutionary ideas. After the collapse of the USSR these slogans of opposition had to be translated into government policy. Elected as president of Russia in June 1991, Boris Yeltsin quickly moved to fill the political vacuum created by the destabilization of the USSR after the abortive coup in August 1991. Yeltsin's primary method was to strengthen the independent executive branch of the Russian government.

Yeltsin's strategy for enhancing executive power, however, was undemocratic. In the heady weeks immediately after the 1991 coup, Yeltsin asked for and received from the Russian Congress of People's Deputies the power to rule by decree. Soon thereafter, Yeltsin appointed heads of

administration and presidential representatives at lower levels of government to execute his presidential directives. Instead of seeking reform of the system of Soviets, Yeltsin hoped to bypass these remnants of the ancien regime by ruling by decree. True to their revolutionary mandate, Russia's new political leaders were seeking to undermine the old Soviet political system. Whether the system replacing it was democratic or not, however, was difficult to discern.

Among the Russian political elite, growing concern over the form and structure of the executive branch prompted major challenges against Yeltsin's executive rule during both Sixth and Seventh Congress of People's Deputies in 1992. Elections for seats in the Russian Congress of People's Deputies in 1990 had produced a parliament roughly split between "communists" and "democrats."[3] This dichotomy collapsed, however, after the August 1991 putsch, when the common enemy uniting the democratic forces disappeared. Disarray among the people's deputies formerly supporting Yeltsin, coupled with appointment of "democratic" deputies to positions in the executive branch, altered the balance of forces within the Congress. Under the new leadership of Ruslan Khasbulatov, the Russian Congress eventually coalesced into Yeltsin's principal foe. By the end of the

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[3]The label "democrat" in Russia's contemporary discourse does not refer necessarily to one who adheres to the democratic process. Rather, the term refers to those who oppose the Soviet system.

first year of Russian independence, the Congress had removed Yeltsin's Prime Minister, Yegor Gaidar, rescinded the president's power to rule by decree, and threatened to reduce the office of the executive to its previous ceremonial status.

Immediately after the 1991 coup, the Russian Congress of People's Deputies and the Russian president worked together to create a third branch of government, the Constitutional Court. In the absence of a new constitution, the Russian Parliament appointed the first court, though Yeltsin and his allies lobbied hard for several of their candidates. The Court's first few decisions demonstrated both the potential and the feebleness of this third force. The Court succeeded, for instance, in striking down a presidential decision to merge the Russian Ministry of the Interior and the KGB, and managed to make a political ruling regarding the highly politicized trial of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.[4] The Court failed, however, to enforce its decision about the constitutionality of a referendum on independence in Tatarstan. Again, the autonomous power of the Court as a third branch of

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[4] Immediately after the coup, Yeltsin banned the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The party responded by taking Yeltsin to court, claiming that his decree was unconstitutional. Yeltsin then responded by arguing that the CPSU was a criminal organization. After reviewing the entire history of the party, the Court ruled that the CPSU historically was an unconstitutional group, but the CPSU that existed by the time of the August coup had no direct role in the coup.

government was demonstrated during the highly volatile standoff between President Yeltsin and Chairman of the Congress of People's Deputies Rulan Khasbulatov in December 1992, during which Valery Zorkin, the Chairman of the Court, negotiated a temporary compromise. Two months later, however, Zorkin abandoned his neutral stance in this conflict, which suggested that the institutionalization of an independent court system would be a difficult and long process.

In September-October 1993 the Russian Executive-Legislative conflict finally exploded. President Yeltsin dissolved the Parliament; and the Legislature removed Yeltsin from office. The Constitutional Court proved powerless to resolve the matter. Yeltsin prevailed by convincing the military to drive the remaining legislators from the Russian White House. In December 1993, while electing representatives to a new parliament, Russian voters (by a slim, bogus majority) approved a new constitution drafted by Yeltsin's aides allotting more authority to the President.

In this development of governmental institutions, what is striking is the significant degree of change in two areas in a relatively short time. First, access to decision making increased. Indeed, a complaint one heard in the Moscow policy community was that too many people had access to policymakers such as Yeltsin and Kozyrev. This state of

affairs angered some of those who enjoyed privileged access under the Soviet system. Georgiy Arbatov, one of those with direct ties to top decision-makers under Brezhnev as well as Gorbachev, complained of the confusion resulting from this enhanced access. However, younger researchers in Moscow think tanks -- who were not privileged under the old system -- marveled at the degree of access to policy-makers they gained.[5]

Second, the foreign policy process became less centralized. This was seen most dramatically in the significant role the Supreme Soviet created for itself during 1992-93. It regularly demanded that Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev report to it on various issues, sent fact-finding missions to Serbia among other places, and attempted to subject the defense and foreign ministers to parliamentary confirmation. Of course, this assertiveness by the Supreme Soviet on questions of foreign policy was just one manifestation of a much larger debate over the division

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[5]Interviews with Arbatov, Vladimir Benevolenskiy, scientific secretary at the Institute of the USA and Canada (ISKAN), and Sergey Blagovolin, senior researcher and department head at the Institute of the World Economy and International relations (IMEMO), cited by Jeffrey Checkel, "Structure, Institutions and Progress: Russia's Changing Foreign Policy," presented at Workshop of the Russian Littoral Project sponsored by the Department of Government and Politics, the University of Maryland, and the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, 23 March 1994. The analysis presented above is indebted to Checkel's paper.

of powers between the executive and legislative branches.[6]

Boris Yeltsin has had the opportunity to become an historic builder of liberal democratic institutions. His Russian constitution, which came into force in December 1993, still has the potential of being the base for such a development. However, his actions, especially in Chechnya, demonstrate the authoritarian decision-making patterns formed during his long experience as Communist Party leader. As the "big boss," he overrides specific articles of the constitution, statute law, and the Civic Accord designed to establish a "rule of law" state. Yeltsin's actions have alienated a majority of the deputies in the new Russian legislature, just as comparable conduct alienated the Supreme Soviet he disbanded with tanks in October 1993.[7]

Political Parties and Coalitions

As already noted, the simplified poles of "communist" and "democrat" evaporated after August 1991, allowing Russia's post-communist politics to develop along new trajectories. Some parties and social movements that were

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[6]Robert Huber and Vladimir Savelyev, "Russian Parliament and Foreign Policy," International Affairs (Moscow) 3 (March 1993); and "Parliament votes to Check on Foreign Ministry Work," trans. in FBIS Daily Report, FBIS-SOV, 12 August 1993.

[7]James A. Duran Jr., Is Yeltsin Going to Undermine Democracy in Russia? unpublished paper, Old Dominion University Political Science Professor, Dr. Gillette's Possession, 13 January 1995.

very active during liberalized communism no longer played a role in the post-communist era, while other parties and social groups born prematurely in the communist era emerged as real forces. Still others sprang up to meet the specific conditions of a communist society in transition. All these political movements were highly volatile, with fragile social bases and constantly changing alliances and political orientations. These ambiguities surrounding Russia's unfolding civil society complicated and inhibited the formation and consolidation of a multiparty system in post-communist Russia.

After much reshuffling, three main political blocs coalesced after the August Coup. The first major political force was Democratic Russia. Although weakened by splits and attrition, it regrouped to become the most militant advocate of revolutionary political and economic change. Regarding political reform, Democratic Russia supported the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the creation of a new Russian Federation. Democratic Russia also pushed for the abandonment of a system of Soviets and the adoption instead of a new Russian constitution based on the division of power between the executive, legislative, and judicial power.

Democratic Russia's major strength during the Communist era was its major weakness in the post-communist period. From its creation in October 1990, Democratic Russia was a grass-roots anticommunist political movement that relied on

demonstration, strikes, and other mass actions. While effective in opposition, these tactics were inappropriate for the post-communist task of building a new state and economy. Russia needed competent bankers and civil servants, not rally organizers. A second weakness was that Democratic Russia had no social base. The group claimed to defend the interests of the middle class in a country where no middle class existed. A third vulnerability resulted from the fact that Yeltsin did not turn to Democratic Russia to staff his government or mobilize support for his reforms during the first year of his presidency. Consequently, Democratic Russia struggled to find its political niche in post-communist Russia.

The second major political force, and first political coalition to emerge after the coup, was the Civic Union. Initially, this coalition formed in June 1992 as an alliance between three parties: the Democratic Party of Russia, headed by Alexander Rutskoi, the Union of Renewal, and the political arm of the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, headed by Arkady Volsky. In forging this alliance, Civic Union claimed to represent a centrist and pragmatic alternative to the radical, liberal Democratic Russia.

Regarding economic policy, Civic Union declared its support for the general objective of creating a market economy based on private property. Civic Union, however,

disagreed with the strategy employed for achieving this end by Yeltsin's government. In particular, Civic Union pushed to slow down the pace of privatization, increase government credits to large state factories, accompany these credits with indexed wages, and disregard the fiscal and monetary recommendations of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank.[8]

In addition to economic reform, the second major unifying concept for the Civic Union coalition concerned the collapse of Soviet and Russian state power. Unlike Democratic Russia, Civic Union leaders lamented the collapse of the Soviet Union. As state power continued to devolve in 1992, Civic Union leaders protested that under no circumstances should autonomous republics be allowed to leave the Russia Federation. Civic Union also has supported a more assertive Russia foreign policy, both toward the "near abroad" where Russian minorities live and toward the West.

During first and second years of Russian independence, Civic Union was better situated to realize its objectives than Democratic Russia. First, regarding tactics, Civic Union had functioned more as a lobby than as a political party or mass movement. With major representation in both the Congress of People's Deputies and the executive branch,

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[8]Michael Ellman, "Russia: the Economic Program of the Civic Union," RFE/RL Research Report [hereafter as RFE/RL RR]1 (12 March 1992): 34-45.

Civic Union had access to government decision-makers that Democratic Russia lacked. Second, Civic Union sought to represent classes and social groups constructed during the Soviet era. Because little had changed yet in Russia's post-communist socioeconomic structure, these identities constituted an important social group that Civic Union professed to represent.

The third major force to solidify after the coup was the nationalist-communist bloc. For the first year after the August Coup, communist and nationalist forces floundered in the new political situation. Populist fanatics led almost weekly demonstrations to protest the collapse of the Soviet state and economy, but militant opposition to the Yeltsin government was unorganized and dispersed. In October 1992, however, several smaller nationalist and communist organizations joined together in the Front for National Salvation.[9]

This alliance between nationalists and communists was an uneasy one. When compelled to spell out their economic or political programs, neocommunists and nationalist organizations aspired to create very different societies. Nationalists advocated the creation of a national market, while communists sought maintain state ownership over the means of production. These differences, however, were

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[9]Several days later, Yeltsin banned this organization as anticonstitutional, but the group continued to function.

eclipsed by two unifying principles: hatred of Yeltsin and all other westernizing liberals, and a nostalgia for the past. Order, stability, and the achievement of Russian greatness were the Front's most important objectives. All other objectives, including democracy and a market economy, could be sacrificed for these more important ends.[10]

During 1992-1993 the alliance between nationalists and communists was led by a small minority of highly vocal legislators describing themselves as the "irreconcilable opposition." The alliance's social base appeared to be predominantly pensioners and youth. Its support among agricultural and industrial workers and the army was then unclear. However, the success of Vladimir Zhirinovsky's Liberal-Democratic Party in the December 1993 legislative elections showed that its inroads in the these segments of the electorate were considerable. The alliance's increased representation in the Russian legislature in 1994 would make it more difficult for the Russian government to proceed with effective political and economic reforms. Moreover, the alliance stood to benefit if the government failed to reverse Russia's economic decline, and if ethnic tensions in the country significantly worsened.

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[10]Wendy Slater, "Russian Communists Seek Salvation in Nationalist Alliance," RFE/RL RR 1 (26 March 1992): 8-13.

Russo-Chinese Political Relations

Under Yeltsin, the development of Russo-Chinese political relations lagged behind the development of Russo-Chinese economic cooperation. By mid-1993, however, the trends in Russian domestic politics increasingly became more conservative and less Westernizing. It appeared that Russia might be developing an overall political system more consistent with Eastern than Western notions of democracy.

Thus the early period of Russo-Chinese relations was characterized by a certain tentative character: economic progress went forward but political contacts lagged. The first post-communist government in Russia headed by Yeltsin looked at China with great suspicion as Beijing had practically welcomed the abortive coup d'etat in the USSR in August 1991 and did not particularly hide its negative attitude toward a democratic Russia. Yeltsin and his new team seemed to have sided wholeheartedly with the West, and many of them seemed to perceive China as simply a communist holdover.

This mood did not last long in the Kremlin. In a matter of a few months, democrats were pushed aside in the process of policy-making on China, and professionals in the Foreign Ministry and some influential assistants of Yeltsin with communist backgrounds activated Moscow's diplomacy vis-a-vis the PRC. Quite a few democrats by that time also realized the importance of stable ties with neighbors, especially

while Russia was experiencing so many troubles both on the home front and in foreign affairs. They had to admit that the Beijing regime was proving its durability and had the potential to move its economy ahead. It grew popular in Moscow's political circles to say it was a pity that "Chinese leaders had proven to be smarter in reforming their society than Soviet leaders." Calls to imitate the China model of development became very loud, and Yeltsin himself, during his December trip to the PRC, praised "the cautious, step-by-step, without repercussions for the population" method of reforms practiced by Beijing.[11]

The trends of Russia's politics became deeply conservative after mid-1993. The weakened position of the regions after Yeltsin's crackdown on the Russian parliament in October 1993 helped convince China that his government was not likely to go the route of Gorbachev's. The conservative direction of the December 1993 elections and of the changes in Yeltsin's cabinet in early 1994 discouraged Western governments, but not China. In fact, former communist bureaucrat Victor Chernomyrdin's appointment in December 1992 as Prime Minister, replacing reformist Yegor Gaidar, facilitated political cooperation with the like-minded Chinese.

Russia may be developing an overall political system

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[11]Eugene Bazhanov and Natasha Bazhanov, "Russia and Asia in 1992," Asian Survey 34 (January 1993): 94.

more consistent with Eastern than Western notions of democracy. Within such a framework, the Russian government is likely to resume its leading role in directing national economic development assuming a position similar to that of the state in present-day Japan, South Korea, and China. Thus, instead of following the West, Russia may move closer to the East Asian model of mixing small-scale privatization with the marketization of state enterprises.

Economic Reform and Russo-Chinese Cooperation

In early 1992 Yeltsin's Russia adopted the radical economic reforms favored by Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar. Gaidar advocated a rapid, Polish-style dismantling of socialism as the only means of expanding output to relieve severe shortages, especially of food, and to raise the standard of living. The Yeltsin-Gaidar program had three general dimensions: decontrol of prices, privatization of industry, currency stabilization and convertibility.

The ouster of the architect of Russia's radical economic policy, together with his replacement by Victor Chernomyrdin in December 1992, was widely interpreted as a step backward in Russia's transition to a market economy. There were indeed a number of reasons to fear such a reversal of direction. One reason was the new prime minister's excellent credentials as a Communist industrialist of the old regime. In 1989 Chernomyrdin

presided over a reorganization of the Ministry of the Gas Industry that was characteristic of the era of Mikhail Gorbachev in that the changes were superficial only. Chernomyrdin emphasized caution in reorganizing the industry further and argued against other much needed reforms.[12]

Chernomyrdin's appointment as prime minister facilitated trade with the like-minded Chinese. Western business, due both to its growing realization that the Yeltsin government was not "rationalizing" the Russian economy and that Western governments were not going to make the financial commitments expected to Russian economic development, began to scale back operations in many areas of Russia.

A examination of Russia's trading partners during the first half of 1993, for example, shows across-the-board declines with OECD partners. In comparison to the same six months in 1992, trade with France fell by 18 percent, with Japan by 32 percent, with Germany by 35 percent, with Canada by 42 percent, and with the United States by 61 percent.[13] Meanwhile, trade with less democratic, non-Western partners grew dramatically: with Iran by 22 percent, with Turkey by 25 percent, and with China by 24 percent. These figures show

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[12]Erik Whitlock, "New Russia Government to Continue Economic Reform?" RFE/RL RR 2 (15 January 1993): 25.

[13]Figures from Interflo (September 1993), cited in James Clay Moltz, "From Military Adversaries to Economic Partners: Russia and China in the New Asia," The Journal of East Asian Affairs 9 (Winter/Spring, 1995): 166-67.

a rerouting of Russian trade in the past year away from the West and toward new partners that may be more compatible with Russia's political and economic aims.

Decontrol of prices

Beginning January 2, 1992, Yeltsin allowed prices on most consumer goods to rise to their natural levels based upon supply and demand.[14] Producers could set whatever price they pleased on these goods, with distributors allowed to add another 25 percent. Prices on these goods subsequently quadrupled as food producers tried to make the most of the new opportunity for windfall profits. The Russian reformers hoped that by letting prices rise, all producers would soon take their products to market, ease shortages, and bring about lower prices.

The impact of price deregulation, nevertheless, was brutal. The Moscow Statistical Service announced in January 1992 that an individual now needed 1,944 rubles a month for a bare minimum of subsistence. But most Russian workers earned about 400 to 800 rubles a month. The skyrocketing prices for food and fuel provoked angry reactions from ordinary Russian people.

Yeltsin's expectation that, after an initial spurt of inflation, supply would catch up with demand and prices

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[14]Michael Ellman, "Shock Therapy in Russia: Failure or Partial Success?" RFE/RL RR 1 (29 August 1992): 41-49.

would level off was not fulfilled by the end of the first quarter of 1992. Indeed, scarcity and near hyperinflation continued. Production was still dominated by monopolies that were only minimally responsive to supply and demand, and methods of distribution were still inadequate and inefficient.

A climax of price decontrol came in mid-October 1993, when the government decided to end subsidies on bread that would cause at least a 100 percent increase in bread prices. The subsidy had escaped the initial phase of price decontrol in January 1992 because Yeltsin had been afraid of provoking opposition in the Parliament.[15] Yet the subsidy had been a tremendous drain on the impoverished Russian treasury, involving, for example, state purchases of grain at sometimes double the market price, imports of costly foreign grain, and payments to collective farms to keep them operating despite their inefficiency. The people likely to suffer the most from the inevitable rise in prices were pensioners.

Privatization of Industry

One of the most important aspects of Russia's move toward a free market economy was privatization. Privatization of consumer service enterprises proceeded

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[15]Minton F. Goldman, Russia, the Eurasian Republics, and Central/Eastern Europe (Guilford, Connecticut: Northeastern University Press, 1994): 84.

smoothly and quickly. But privatization of the huge state-controlled industrial sector proceeded very slowly, with 90 percent of Russian industry still under state control at the end of 1993.[16] Much of this industry was inefficient, unprofitable, and a tremendous drain on the national wealth.

Privatization of heavy industry was problematical because there was no investor class in the poverty-stricken Russian society except the ex-Communist enterprise managers. These were the only people with both the skill and the resources needed to buy out the firms. In other cases workers pooled their meager savings to join with management to buy out and control the enterprises that had always employed them, an effort to ensure job security. But these transactions affected only a very small part of the state-controlled economy. Foreign investors were potential buyers in cooperation with Russian partners, but foreign investment was very slow in coming to Russia, much slower than to Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. This low level was partly because of Russia's political instability, and partly because of the still formidable difficulties foreign investors encountered in dealing with the corrupt, inefficient, and conservative Russian bureaucracy.

Privatization of heavy industry was also slow because in many instance enterprise managers and their superiors in the local bureaucracies did not want to risk losing their

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[16]Ibid., 85.

jobs. They in turn had the backing of influential members of the Congress of Peoples' Deputes, such as Arkady Volsky, leader of the Civic Union. Volsky spoke for the interests of the military-industrial complex, a vast array of large industrial enterprises employing hundreds of thousands of people. At the same time, many in the Russian legislature and the executive branch opposed privatization for ideological reasons. The idea of tinkering with the economy to improve its productivity was accepted, but many people strongly condemned systemic change to free enterprise as impractical and immoral.

Nevertheless, under pressure from reformers in and out of his government as well as from potential foreign backers like the Group of Seven countries and the IMF, Yeltsin tried to move ahead with privatization of heavy industry in 1992 and 1993. For example, he tried to get ordinary Russian citizens interested in becoming small investors by giving them "vouchers" in October 1992 to buy shares in enterprises being privatized. Each voucher was worth 10,000 rubles at the time it was distributed by the government; but the vouchers lost more than 50 percent of their value within a 12 month period because many Russians did not understand what to do with them and sold or traded them for whatever could be gotten from speculators who realized how the vouchers could someday make possible inexpensive ownership of a government enterprise. Ordinary Russians simply had

little if any idea of the meaning of investment and ownership. Nevertheless, by July 1993, according to Privatization Minister Anatoli Chubais, much progress had been made in privatization of state-controlled industries.[17]

Currency Stabilization and Convertibility

In order to stabilize the ruble the Russian government sought to reduce the budget deficit. Government managed to reduce its spending, but the collection of revenues also fell. Ultimately, the ruble was neither made convertible nor stabilized.

In early 1992 the International Monetary Fund (IMF) requested that the Russian ruble be made convertible as one of several conditions that Russia would have to meet to qualify for financial assistance. This requirement had serious political liabilities for the Yeltsin government. The exchange rate of the ruble had risen in 1991 from 60 rubles to the dollar to 170 rubles by January 1992.[18] With this rate Russian assets could be purchased cheaply, a dangerous development, given latent Russian suspicions and fear of foreigners.

In addition, the ruble was still unstable. In January 1992 the government's decontrol of prices and its budget

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[17]Keith Bush, "Industrial Privatization in Russia: A Progress Report," RFE/RL RR 2 (12 February 1993): 32-34.

[18]Goldman, Russia, the Eurasian Republics, 85.

deficits started a process of near-hyperinflation. By the end of 1992 the ruble reached 415 to the dollar. It passed 1,000 mark on May 31, 1993, 2,000 on July 7, 1994, and 2,197 at the end of August 1994. On October 11 1994 (Black Tuesday), the ruble fell through the floor to 3,926 losing almost 28 percent of its value in one day.[19]

Russo-Chinese Economic Cooperation

The one economic bright spot for Russia in Asia was China. Economic cooperation was important to both Moscow and Beijing. Total turnover between the former Soviet Union and China increased from $3.96 billion in 1991 to $6.5 billion in 1992. Of the latter figure, $5.85 billion was exclusively Russo-Chinese trade. In 1993 Russo-Chinese trade soared to $7.7 billion, with Russia experiencing a $2 billion surplus. Illegal transactions not accounted for in the official statistics reportedly contributed another 25% to the total turnover.[20]

A significant proportion of Russia's exports to China consisted of weapons -- primarily Su-27 fighters, S-300 surface-to-air missiles, and reportedly Su-31 interceptors -

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[19]Vitaly V. Shlykov, Economic Reform and the Military in Russia, unpublished paper, Old Dominion University Political Science Professor Dr. Gillette's Possession, 11 September 1995: 7-8.

[20]Philip Hanson, "The Center Versus the Periphery in Russian Economic Policy," RFE/RL RR 17 (29 April 1994): 23-28.

- while China's exports to Russia consist largely of food and textiles.

Border trade was especially significant for the remote areas of northern China and the Russian Far East. Heilongjing Province alone conducted $1.5 billion in trade with Russia in 1992. Over 80% of all Russo-Chinese trade in 1993 was border trade.[21]

Visits to Beijing by President Yeltsin in December 1992 and Foreign Minister Kozyrev in January 1994 expanded Russo-Chinese economic cooperation, including plans for Chinese participation in developing Siberian and Far Eastern resources, the projected construction of a nuclear reactor in China, and other scientific, technical, and military cooperation projects. In 1994 China became Russia's second largest trading partner after the Federal Republic of Germany.

Russo-Chinese economic complementarity, however, had its limits. The Russian Far East became swamped with expensive food products, clothes, and other consumer goods from China. Russian citizens in the Far East resented shoddy merchandise and questionable business practices of Chinese entrepreneurs, and believed that Chinese were behind much of

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[21]This compares with a total of only $88 million in Sino-Soviet border trade during 1987. Beijing Review (31 May -6 June 1993): 18-19.

the crime wave in the Far East.[22] Estimates put the number of Chinese in the Far East between 300,000 and one million. Beijing became concerned about the negative response of many Russians to this population influx and promised to strictly control Chinese entrepreneurs.

Russo-Chinese relations became far warmer than was the case for much of the Soviet era. They received a great deal of attention from Russian policymakers for obvious reasons. Given the length of the land border between the two countries, each country was in a position to pose a range of security threats to the other, and the costs of coping with them could be considerable. On a more positive note, as the most populous country in the world, China beckoned as a growing export market for Russian goods as its economy grew. A great deal of private trade was already taking place between the two states.[23] Consequently, economic matters -- notably marine transport, the protection of natural resources, and fisheries -- were the focus of discussions when Russian Prime Minister Chernomyrdin paid a four-day visit to China in May 1994.[24].

On the other hand, constraints on the expansion of

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[22]Izvestiia, 7 December 1993, quoted in Charles E. Ziegler, "Russia in the Asia-Pacific: A Major Power or Minor Participant?" Asian Survey 34 (June 1994): 537.

[23]Bazhanov and Bazhanov, "Russia and Asia," 87-97.

[24]Stephen Foye, "Chernomyrdin Winds up Visit to China," RFE/RL News Briefs 3, No. 23 (30 May-3 June 1994): 2.

relations existed. For example, China's unexpected nuclear test in June 1994 was criticized by other nuclear powers, including Russia. At a deeper level, Russia's leaders were anxious about what direction China would take following the death of the Chinese paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping.

Military Reorganization and Russo-Chinese Cooperation

Russia inherited the bulk of the Soviet military -- and with it many of the old imperial obligations, entanglements, and ambitions of the Soviet Union. In dealing with this legacy, Russia faced several challenges in military policy. These included withdrawing large military forces deployed outside Russia's borders, particularly those in the "Near Abroad;" restructuring the military; and maintaining civil-military relations. These three challenges came about during a period of unprecedented economic and political instability. Further complicating the problem was the fact that a new, robust system of civilian control over the military had not yet been fully developed.

As a result the military in Russia faced stark alternatives: renewal or disintegration. The renewal planned by the Ministry of Defense would result in a smaller, more professional, and better-armed military force able to protect Russia's interests both within and outside its borders. Yet many social and economic factors hastened the opposite trend -- military disintegration. This chapter

examines the three challenges faced by the Russian military, and also examines how the domestic military factor affected Russo-Chinese military cooperation.

Repatriation of Military Forces

Perhaps the most immediate problem facing the Russian military was the need to rapidly repatriate units deployed in Germany and in the other Newly Independent States (NIS). The magnitude of the task was daunting. Between 250,000 and 400,000 Russian troops were deployed outside Russia at the beginning of 1992.[25] While the troop repatriation proceeded relatively rapidly, there were some troubling developments.[26]

Although redeploying all these forces was logistically possible, the problem of providing them with new bases and housing was impossible to solve quickly. At the end of 1992 Russian Minister of Defense General Pavel Grachev claimed that some 106,000 officers and their families were without

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[25]Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev claimed that 400,000 Russian troops had to be repatriated. Interfax, 28 November 1992, trans. in FBIS Daily Report, FBIS-SOV, 30 November 1992. This may include forces that were likely to remain in place, however, such as those in Central Asia, and it may include family members as well. The lower figure is from the Russian Defense Ministry, which noted that these forces are to be redeployed from the Western Group of Forces, Poland, the Baltic States, the Transcausus, and Moldova. Interfax, 3 December 1992, trans. in FBIS Daily Report, FBIS-SOV, 5 December 1992.

[26]John W.R. Lepingwell, "Is the Military Disintegrating from Within?" RFE/RL RR 25 (18 June 1993): 9-16.

proper housing, and estimated that this number could increase substantially as the withdrawal continued.[27] The German government provided funding for the construction of apartments for troops being withdrawn from Germany, but the total number of apartments provided reportedly would meet only half the demand.

A related problem stemmed from the low pay of Russian officers and soldiers. Russian officers and soldiers suffered economic hardship. Consequently, many officers and soldiers were driven to selling military equipment ranging from small handguns to sophisticated weapons. The corruption in the Western Group of Forces (WGF) stationed in Germany became a hot issue in 1994. The dimensions of the scandal were hard to measure, but by some estimates the state may have lost as much as $65 million due to illegal financial deals involving the sale of military property in Germany. To defuse public criticism, President Boris Yeltsin in December 1994 dismissed the former commander of the WGF, General Matvei Burlakov, from his post as Deputy Defense Minister.[28]

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[27]Interfax, 3 December 1992, trans. in FBIS Daily Report, FBIS-SOV, 5 December 1992. Grachev noted the problem of providing housing for returning servicemen in an interview on Russian TV.

[28]Time, 5 December 1994: 80.

Restructuring the Military

At the same time that the Russian military was repatriating its troops from abroad, it was restructuring and reducing its forces at home.[29] From a force of over 2 million men in early 1992, the military was expected to shrink to approximately 1.5 million by 1995. This force reduction would require the retirement of at least 40,000 to 50,000 officers per year until 1995.[30] This fact, combined with deteriorating living conditions for serviceman throughout the Russian military, appeared to result in significant morale problems in the officer corps.

Contributing to the morale problem within the military was the absence of a clear threat. The first attempt to redefine the threat, the draft Russian military doctrine published in mid-1992, was a compromise document that seemed to provide little concrete basis for force planning. It identified two quite different threats: a continuing threat from NATO, made even more difficult to counter after the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union, and a newly emerging threat on the borders Russia, where the

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[29]This section is in part based upon John W.R. Lepingwell, "Restructuring the Russian Military," Problems of Communism 3 (May-June 1992): 107-21; Stephen Wegren, "Private Farming and Agrarian Reform in Russia," RFE/RL RR 2 (18 June 1993): 17-24.

[30]Rossiiskie Vesti, 4 January 1993, cited in John Lepingwell, "The Russian Military in the 1990s: Disintegration or Renewal?" in Russia's Future: Consolidation or Disintegration?, ed. Douglas W. Blum (Boulder; Westview Press, 1994): 114.

defense of Russian minorities and the need to mount peacekeeping operations were identified as the most likely contingencies.[31] Debate and approval of a revised draft doctrine was repeatedly postponed during 1993 before finally being approved in early November. Many details of the doctrine still remained unclear.

Despite the doctrinal uncertainty, the Ministry of Defense proposed a plan to restructure the Russian forces that would lighten the force mix by reducing its emphasis on armor and artillery. A heavy capability would be provided by the relatively modern units being withdrawn from the Western Group of Forces, while the light capability would be based on the existing airborne forces, with perhaps some other forces being restructured for mobile use.

The process of reducing the size of the Russian military may be complicated, paradoxically enough, by the declining conscription rate. The Russian military leadership complained of large draft shortfalls, with a subsequent drop in manning levels throughout the military. To a large extent this was due to the Law on Military Service, passed in February 1993, which included provisions exempting a large proportion of youths from the draft, provisions to which the Military of Defense had strenuously objected.[32] As a result,

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[31]Scott McMichael, "Russia's New Military Doctrine," RFE/RL RR 1 (9 October 1992): 45-50.

[32]RFE/RL Daily Report, 15 February 1993.

some sources reported that units were on average manned at only about 60 percent of their authorized levels.[33] While at first glance this would seem to hasten the force reduction, in fact it threatened to create a hollow army, with officers being left to close old facilities and to eliminate surplus equipment.

In an attempt to solve this problem, a volunteer-service system was slowly introduced. It was planned that by the year 2,000, half of the Russian forces would be conscripts and the other half volunteers.[34] Over the short term, however, it appeared that the number of volunteers would be quite small, and the military would remain dependent upon conscripts.

At the same time that the personnel resources of the Russian military were diminishing, the technological level of its arms was threatened with decline. The Russian (previously Soviet) military, having watched the Persian Gulf War closely, worried that Russian forces ran the risk of finding themselves at a substantial qualitative disadvantage in a future conflict. Russian military leaders complained that the most modern combat equipment of the former Soviet Union was located in the former western

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[33]Interfax, 14 December 1992, trans in RFE/RL Daily Report, 2 March 1993; Stephen Foye, "Rebuilding the Russian Armed Forces: Rhetoric and Realities," RFE/RL RR 2 (23 July 1993): 49-57.

[34]Rossiiskie Vesti, 4 November 1992, quoted in Lepingwell, "The Russian Military," 115.

military districts -- now in Ukraine. Providing some help to the Russian forces was the redeployment of the equipment of the Western Group of Forces to Russia. Nevertheless, even this equipment from the WGF would need replacement if Russia were to maintain rough technological parity with the West.

Technological modernization of Russia's military was hampered, however, by Russia's extremely difficult budget situation. In 1992, funding for defense procurement dropped by 67 percent from its 1991 level, and the defense budget had been reduced in previous years as well. Thus, the amount of new weaponry being purchased for the Russian army was proportionally much less than that for the Soviet army in its heyday.[35] Furthermore, given the extremely uncertain economic situation in the country, it was unclear whether the quality level of Russian research and development could be maintained, let alone increased. Even if research and development funding remained relatively stable, it was likely that some of the best researchers could be lured into the private sector or even out of the country.

Even in the best of times, the restructuring that the Russian military leadership was proposing would be an exceedingly difficult, perhaps unprecedented task. The number of problems that had to be solved concurrently was large, and much uncertainty remained in the plans. The task

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[35]Stephen Foye, "Rebuilding the Russian Military: Some Problems and Prospects," RFE/RL RR 2 (6 November 1992): 51-56.

was made all the more daunting by the fact that it was taking place in a state where the political and economic structures were also undergoing widespread changes and where the bases of civil-military relations were still being created.

Civil-Military Relations

Despite the turbulent political events of 1992-1994, Russian civil-military relations were surprisingly stable. While relations were strained at times, some of the worst-case scenarios that had been posited had not come to pass. During the crucial test of military loyalty to President Yeltsin in October 1993, the military demonstrated its support when it fired on the Parliament. Even so, the October crisis both underlined the potential political role of the military and focused attention on strains with the military. Over the longer term, the stability of Russian civil-military relations may again be tested by crises. Trends within the military may erode support for President Yeltsin. There is evidence that the military overwhelmingly supported Zhrinovsky in the December 1993 election.

The restructuring of the Russian military proposed by Yeltsin will take place in a strikingly different political, social, and economic situation than the one that existed in the former Soviet Union. Until the last years of the Gorbachev period, the Soviet military led a privileged

existence: officers were held in high esteem, and the many high-ranking officers had access to a range of perquisites and benefits. Even more important, there was a fundamental agreement between the civilian and military leadership over the crucial importance of military power to the state, and the role of that power in Soviet foreign policy. While there were some changes in the leadership of the new Russian Ministry of Defense, the bulk of the military remained suspended between the Soviet past and the increasingly uncertain democratic present.

Two fundamental factors will probably determine the stability of Russian civil-military relations: the professionalism or politicization of the military, and the legitimate authority of the government.[36] The Soviet military was always a relatively autonomous organization, and was never deeply involved in politics at the local or regional levels. This autonomy was an important factor in civil-military relations, for it allowed the military to devote more time to its professional concerns, and to develop a significant level of professionalism. In recent year, however, this professionalism has been threatened by military's poverty.

The other key to stability of civil-military relations is the legitimacy of the government as perceived by the

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[36]John W.R. Lepingwell, "Soviet Civil-Military Relations and the August Coup," World Politics 44 (July 1992): 539-72.

population as a whole, and especially as perceived by the military.[37] One of the principal reasons for the failure of the August 1991 coup attempt against Gorbachev was the existence of a strong, democratically elected president and parliament in Russia. Similarly, the military's decision to support Yeltsin in October 1993 was partly based on the perception that the president enjoyed greater legitimacy and popular support than the parliament and Vice President Aleksandr Rutskoi.[38]

Russo-Chinese Military Cooperation

Perhaps most surprising to outside observers, given the frosty relations between the Soviet and Chinese militaries until at least 1987, was the rapid warming of military ties and the development of arms sales between Russia and China during 1992-1994.[39]

Russian arms sales to China in 1992 alone totaled $1.2

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[37]Ibid., 559-61.

[38]Lepingwell, "The Russian Military," 109-26.

[39]According to Hong Kong-based journalist Tai Ming Cheung, Beijing turned its attention to Russia following the cutoff of US military cooperation in the immediate post-Tiananmen period. See his very insightful paper, "The Interaction Between Economics and Security for China's External Relations," presented at the Conference on "Economic and Security Relations in East Asia," Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, University of California, San Diego, May 1993.

billion,[40] giving strong evidence to the claim that the two sides feared each other less than either did any other regional power. As the Chinese Far Eastern military expert Tai Ming Cheung noted in 1993:

> Chinese military and military-industrial delegations visit Moscow and many other Russian cities on a virtually continuous basis today. The Chinese Embassy in Moscow has considerably expanded its military representation to be able to handle this heavy volume of traffic.[41]

In October 1993, to facilitate potential deals and to speed transactions, the two governments formed a joint Committee for Military-Technical Cooperation.[42] During Yeltsin's visit to Beijing in December 1992, these contacts were formalized in a "Memorandum of Understanding on Sino-Russian Military Equipment and Technology Cooperation."

Among the growing military-to-military contacts, certain official visits were noteworthy. In April 1993, Chinese Navy Commander Rear Admiral Zhang Lianzhong visited Russian shipworks in St. Petersburg and in the Far East.[43]

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[40]Patrick E. Tyler, "Russia and China Sign a Military Agreement," The New York Times (national edition), 10 November 1993.

[41]Tai Ming Cheung, "The Interaction Between Economics and Security Relations in East Asia," presented at the conference on "Economic and Security Relations in East Asia," Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, University of California, San Diego, May 1993: 12.

[42]ITAR-TASS Report, 15 October 1993, trans. in FBIS Daily Report, FBIS-SOV-93-199, 18 October 1993: 8.

[43]Radio Moscow, 12 April 1993, trans. in FBIS Daily Report, FBIS-SOV-93-074, 20 April 1993: 10.

China repeatedly stated its interest in purchasing military vessels from Russian yards and in engaging in coproduction deals. The two sides exchanged fleet visits to Shanghai and Vladivostok in 1993. These trips were supplemented by a ground forces delegation sent by China to Russian Far Eastern training facilities and military academies in December 1993.[44]

At the highest level, Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev's trip to China in November 1993 reportedly covered a wide range of bilateral military issues and included visits with Prime Minister Li Peng and Defense Minister Chi Haotian. An official agreement regarding regular exchanges on the military-to-military level and cooperation between the respective defense ministries was signed during the visit.[45] Notably, Grachev mentioned that arms sales were not discussed but that a trip by Russian Deputy Prime Minister Shokhin in the near future would "tackle questions of arms sales directly."[46]

Conclusion

To sum up, the weakly institutionalized basis of the

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[44]Moscow Mayak Radio, 9 December 1993, trans. in FBIS Daily Report, FBIS-SOV-93-236, 10 December 1993: 16.

[45]Izvestiya, 11 November 1993, trans. in FBIS Daily Report, FBIS-SOV-93-217, 12 November 1993: 16.

[46]Komosolskaya Pravda, 16 November 1993, trans. in FBIS Daily Report, FBIS-SOV-93-219, 16 February 1993: 6.

Gorbachev era's "New Thinking" along with fundamental changes in domestic environments of Russian policymaking stacked the deck against a continuation of an purely liberal foreign policy. While political leadership and domestic politics clearly mattered, their changing role and influence cannot be understood in isolation from institutional contexts.

In fact, Russian foreign policymaking was profoundly influenced by domestic political changes in Russia. The result, in the near-term, was a "turn to the right" in Russian policy. Yeltsin first tried reform using a Western model of democracy in both institutions and political parties. However, Russia's weak democratic tradition hampered these efforts. Following the elections of December 1993, President Yeltsin removed key reformers from his cabinet to accommodate the more conservative cast of the new Russia Parliament. The pendulum of Russian reform began to swing back from Western notions to more conservative Eastern concepts. Russia's new domestic environment provided important opportunities for domestic actors wishing to steer foreign policy in a more anti-Western and pro-Chinese conservative direction.

In the economic dimension, Yeltsin at first backed Prime Minister Gaidar's notion of Western-style economic reform in the direction of free-market capitalism. However, their efforts for economic reform appeared to falter because

of both domestic conditions and the lack of aid from the West. consequently, instead of following the West, Russia may move closer to the Asian model of mixing small-scale privatization with the marketization of state enterprise.

In the military dimension, Russia faced the tough task of repatriating and reforming its military forces. Hard financial conditions pressured Russia to increase the exports of military weapons. These circumstance provided favorable conditions for a significant increase in Russo-Chinese military cooperation and trade during the Yeltsin era.

Russia under Yeltsin had a number of problems that demanded solutions concurrently. Political democratization, economic reform, and military reorganization were on the policy agenda. Consequently, Russia desired stability in the Far East. The series of high-level visits between Moscow and Beijing in this period illustrated this orientation. Moreover, the interest in maintaining stability seemed mutual for Russia and China.

CHAPTER IV

THE RUSSO-CHINESE RAPPROCHEMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON KOREA

Since the mid-1980s, the traditional pattern of international relations in Northeast Asia underwent a profound change. For decades, the old pattern was characterized by military confrontation and ideological antagonism within the overall "big four plus two"[1] equation. This pattern was accompanied by competition between Beijing and Moscow over North Korea. As the Sino-Soviet dispute escalated in the early 1960s, Beijing and Moscow sought to strengthen their ties with Pyongyang. Consequently, North Korea enjoyed the strategic advantage of holding a Chinese card in one hand and a Soviet card in the other in its relations with China and Russia.

However, the dramatic disintegration of the Soviet Union, the relaxation of the U.S.-Russian confrontation, and the Russo-Chinese rapprochement -- all contributed to blurring the traditional "zero-sum" formula that had dominated international relations in the region. In the late

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[1]This means the former Soviet Union and China backing North Korea, and the United States and Japan supporting South Korea.

1980s and early 1990s a growing trend of mutual readjustment of policies among the nations concerned was discernable. In the new pattern, military and ideological factors, though not entirely absent, were eclipsed by a web of increasing economic interdependence and political accommodation. In the Korean Peninsula, Russia and China were more inclined to advance their national interests and influence through political and economic means. Both countries sought a peaceful, more stable situation there.

Many questions, however, remained unanswered. For example, what did Moscow and Beijing expect to gain from establishing official ties with South Korea? How did the international and domestic environments affect Russia's and Chinese foreign policy behavior toward the Korean Peninsula? What were the long-term prospects for their relations? This chapter explores these questions and suggests possible answers. It begins by examining Russia's Korea policy. Next it turns to China's Korea policy. This chapter concludes by exploring the impact of the Russo-Chinese rapprochement.

Russia's Korea Policy

After the failed August 1991 coup in Russia, Moscow's relevance as an external actor on the Korean peninsula declined. Traditionally, the Soviet Union had been the main supplier of arms and economic aid to North Korea. Even in the late Gorbachev period, the USSR was the only country

having diplomatic relations with both Koreas. Under Yeltsin, however, a radical reduction of military and economic aid diminished Moscow's influence in Pyongyang.

This evolution of Moscow's relations with the Korean Peninsula mirrored two profound shifts in Russian foreign policy. The first shift was from a Cold War, Marxist perspective to Gorbachev's "New Thinking" diplomacy that stressed the need to create an external climate conductive to domestic economic development. In this phase, Moscow reduced, but did not completely abandon its obligations to traditional Cold War allies and, at least on a rhetorical level, assumed new international obligations to promote arms control, environmental security, the resolution of regional conflicts, and other common objectives.

While Gorbachev's "New Thinking" was not explicitly rejected under Boris Yeltsin, it was modified in significant ways. In this second shift, Russian policy makers turned their attention toward their growing domestic and political crisis. Concomitantly, in foreign policy they emphasized international objectives that had the potential to bring economic benefit to Russia.

Russia's Policy during the Gorbachev Period, 1985-1991

In the first two or three years after Gorbachev's March 1985 accession to power, the change in Moscow's Asia-Pacific policy was minimal. Despite some talk of "New

Thinking" in diplomacy, Soviet behavior continued to reflect a Cold War perspective. For example, in the Asia-Pacific region, the Soviet military buildup continued.

On the Korean Peninsula, Soviet military and economic aid to Pyongyang was increased. Honoring commitments made during North Korean President Kim Il Sung's 1984 and 1986 visits to Moscow, the USSR sent Pyongyang Su-25 attack aircraft, MiG-29 Fulcrum fighters, Sa-3 and Sa-5 surface-to air missiles, M-2 helicopter gunships, and early warning radar, as well as advanced nuclear technology for power generation. In return for this aid, the Soviet armed forces were granted the right to fly over the North Korean airspace on the way to their military bases in Indochina, and Soviet ships were given the right to make calls at two North Korean ports.[2]

The USSR also provided substantial economic aid to North Korea. It assisted Pyongyang with the construction and modernization of industrial plants, which produced about 25% of the country's gross output: and Soviet oil and other products that Moscow could have sold for hard currency were sent to North Korea. Pyongyang paid for part of these goods by exporting shoddy products to the USSR and by sending North Korean workers to labor in Siberia. Other Soviet goods were provided on credit, most of which Pyongyang never

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[2]Byung-Joon Ahn, "South Korean-Soviet Relations; Contemporary Issues and Prospects," Asian Survey 31 (September 1991): 822.

repaid. These economic relations with the USSR were very important to Pyongyang, constituting approximately 60% of North Korea's total foreign trade.[3]

While Soviet behavior during this period continued to reflect Cold War thinking, there were some hints that a change in policy toward the Korean Peninsula was under consideration. In his July 1986 Vladivostok speech, Gorbachev expressed Moscow's interest in eliminating the dangerous tensions on the Korean Peninsula, and in January 1988 the Soviet Union announced its intention to participate in the Seoul Olympics despite North Korean objections. The next month, when Roh Tae Woo was elected President of the Republic of Korea, a Soviet commentator called the elections "the first peaceful transfer of power in many years" and welcomed Roh's call for "forming relations with states that have different ideology and sociopolitical systems."[4] In their May 1988 Moscow summit, Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev pledged to assist the two Koreas to find a peaceful resolution to their problems.

Soviet interest in South Korea was encouraged by the opportunities opened up by President Roh's July 7, 1988, speech declaring Seoul's support for "northward diplomacy."

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[3]Choung-Il Chee, "The Future of South Korea-Soviet Relations: A South Korean View," The Journal of East Asian Affairs 5 (Summer-Fall 1991): 318-25.

[4]Glen E. Howar, "Going for the Gold: Gorbachev's Asian Initiative and the Republic of Korea," Sino-Soviet Affairs (Seoul) 13 (Winter 1989-90): 121.

This policy line called for expanding South Korea's economic and other ties with socialist countries in the hope that this would help Seoul overcome its isolation from the Socialist bloc and act as a restraining influence on Pyongyang.

Seoul's overture to Moscow received a favorable response. In his September 1988 Krasnoyarsk speech on the eve of the Seoul Olympics, Gorbachev expressed an interest in developing economic relations with Seoul. Gorbachev also proposed holding multilateral talks on reducing naval and air forces in areas where the coastlines of the USSR, China, Japan, and the two Koreas meet. Unlike Washington, Seoul responded positively to Gorbachev's proposal for a multilateral approach to resolving Korean problems. When Roh addressed the United Nations General Assembly in October, he proposed a six-power consultative conference of the two Koreas, the United States, the Soviet Union, China, and Japan.[5]

Soviet behavior during the Seoul Olympics was further evidence of Moscow's interest in improving relations with South Korea. South Korean analysts stressed the positive impact of the Seoul Olympics on Soviet-South Korean relations, calling it an "epochal event." The USSR not only

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[5]When he visited Beijing in May 1989 Gorbachev again called for convening an international conference of the two Koreas and the four major power to discuss Korean problems. Shevardnadze reiterated this proposal in his September 1990 speech in Vladivostok.

sent more than 6,000 athletes and tourists but also the Bolshoi Chorus and the Moscow Philharmonic. The Korean people were favorably impressed and the Soviet visitors had an opportunity to observe firsthand the reality of two separate states on the Korean Peninsula, see South Korea's economic advances, and discuss areas of potential economic cooperation with South Korean businessmen.

After the Olympics, Soviet-South Korean relations rapidly improved. In January 1989 Chung Ju-yung, the founder and honorary chairman of the Hyundai Business Group, visited Moscow and signed an agreement to establish an economic cooperation committee with Vladislav Malkevich, chairman of the USSR Chamber of Commerce and Industry. In April, Malkevich's organization opened a semi-official trade office in Seoul, and the following July the Korean Trade Promotion Corporation (KOTRA) opened a trade office in Moscow. In February and March 1990, consular sections were established in these trade offices, although South Korean consular officials were not given permission to fly their national flag. To reflect the importance Seoul attached to relations with Moscow, a senior member of the diplomatic corps, Kong Roh-Myung, Consul-General in New York, was appointed the first head of the Moscow office.

This growth of official and semi-official relations was accompanied by a rapid expansion of economic ties, academic exchanges, tourism, and other unofficial exchanges. Starting

in late 1988, Soviet Koreans from Sakhalin began to visit South Korea with visas obtained through the assistance of the Soviet Embassy in Tokyo.[6] Soviet-South Korean two-way trade quadrupled between 1987 and 1989, increasing from U.S. $150.5 million to U.S. $599.4 million,[7] as South Korean trading firms began selling consumer goods to the USSR and importing Soviet coal, gas, petrochemicals, and machinery. Representatives of the top South Korean trading firms visited the USSR to discuss the establishment of joint ventures of various kinds, including hotels, a trade center, consumer goods factories, timber processing, ship repair, and petrochemical production.

During this period, Seoul pressed Moscow to agree to the establishment of formal diplomatic relations, claiming that economic relations would expand even faster if South Korean businessmen had the legal protection afforded by formal diplomatic ties. North Korea, on the other hand, expressed strong opposition to the establishment of formal Soviet ties with the South, arguing that this would help perpetuate the division of the peninsula. Responding to North Korean objections, some reform-minded Soviet Asian specialists and officials argued that Moscow should not move too quickly to establish official relations with Seoul on

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[6]Ahn, "South Korean-Soviet Relations," 824.

[7]Young-Koo Cha, "ROK-US Military Relations and ROK-USSR Relations," Sino-Soviet Affairs (Seoul) 14 (Summer 1990): 59.

the grounds that Moscow's consequent loss of leverage in the North would leave Pyongyang dangerously isolated.

In the end, Gorbachev moved more quickly than these Soviet Asian specialists and most foreign observers anticipated. In June 1990, Gorbachev met with President Roh in San Francisco. This first-ever meeting between the leaders of the USSR and the Republic of Korea was interpreted as a clear sign that Moscow intended to establish diplomatic relations with Seoul, a step that was formally announced in September 1990 and was followed by agreements on trade, investment protection, avoidance of double taxation, aviation, and exchanges in science and technology.[8] In December the two leaders met in Moscow and signed what came to be called the Moscow Declaration. It acknowledged the "inadmissibility of the threat or use of force" in international relations, committed the two countries to develop their relations in the "spirit of good neighborhood, trust and cooperation" and proclaimed that the development of Korean-Soviet relations contributes to the "strengthening of peace and security" and the "elimination of the Cold War" in Asia.[9] The following month, Seoul signed

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[8]Soviet officials originally intended to establish diplomatic relations with Seoul at the beginning of 1991. The date was advanced to September because Shevardnadze was angered by the rude reception accorded him when he visited Pyongyang in September 1990 to inform North Korean officials of Moscow's intention. SPAR Report, No. 10 (January 1991): 127.

[9]Korea and World Affairs 15 (Spring 1991): 131-33.

an economic cooperation agreement with Moscow providing for U.S. $3 billion in loans over a three-year period, a third of which was to be a cash loan and the rest to be used for the purchase of South Korean consumer and capital goods.

In April 1991, Roh and Gorbachev met on the South Korean island of Cheju -- a stop for Gorbachev on his way home from a long-planned visit to Japan. This was the first-ever visit by a top Soviet leader to the Korean Peninsula, and the third meeting between Rho and Gorbachev in less than twelve months. That Gorbachev had chosen to visit the South before visiting the North was of great symbolic importance.

At the meeting, Gorbachev accepted a number of South Korea's positions. He privately conceded that the USSR would support Seoul's entry into the United Nations even if North Korea continued to reject the simultaneous entry of two Koreas, a step that Pyongyang claimed would perpetuate the division. Gorbachev expressed support for the improvement of Pyongyang's relations with Tokyo and Washington and for the early resumption of the dialogue between the prime ministers of North and South Korea that had begun the previous fall. In a surprise move, Gorbachev called on Roh to negotiate a "treaty of good neighborliness and cooperation," a step that the South Korean president promised to consider after consulting with the United States and Japan. Gorbachev also publicly urged Pyongyang to agree to open its nuclear facilities to international inspection, and pledged to stop

supplying North Korean nuclear power plants with fuel until Pyongyang took this step. North Korea's failure to sign an inspection agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) within the requisite eighteen months after its 1985 signing of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty was alarming to a number of countries, including the Soviet Union, because satellite evidence suggested that Pyongyang was using its nuclear facilities to try to produce a bomb.

Russia's Policy during the Yeltsin Period, 1992-1994

This section focuses on diplomatic, military, and economic cooperation between Russia and South Korea from 1992 to 1994. The balance of Russia's Korea policy changed in this period from being pro-North Korea to being pro-South Korea.

When Russia replaced the USSR in 1992, a more sober phase in Moscow's relationship with South Korea commenced. For example, some Russian analysts appeared to caution Moscow not make a "one-side choice" in favor of Seoul. According to Izvestia, the reasoning inside the Russian Foreign Ministry on this account corresponded to the politico-strategic rationale:

> Now that we are the state to have diplomatic relations with both North and South Korea we have to have the understanding of first one, then the other.[10]

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[10]Izvestia, 31 July 1992, quoted in Mette Skak, "Post-Soviet Foreign Policy: The Emerging Relationship between Russia and Northeast Asia," The Journal of East Asia Affairs

Also it is safe to assume that some Russian military circles stressed the military significance of access to North Korean port facilities and overflight rights to support the Russian military presence in the Far East and Pacific. In late February 1992, following a visit to Beijing, the Chief of the CIS General Staff, General Samsonov flew to Pyongyang for negotiations with North Korean military leaders. A document providing for relations between the armed forces of the two sides was signed, a document that provided for the strengthening of ties between North Korea and Russian Far Eastern and Transbaikal military districts. Reportedly, the talks were "curt and formal," but they seemed to have taken place without the knowledge of the Russian Foreign Ministry and they deeply disturbed South Koreans.[11]

The most disturbing factor in the Russian-North Korean relationship from South Korea's point of view was the Soviet-North Korean Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance of 1961, which Russia inherited as the USSR's successor state. What worried South Koreans was the North Korean understanding of "armed attack" cited in the treaty as a condition for the extension of Russian military

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7 (Winter/Spring 1993): 176.

[11]Nezavisimaia Gazeta, 4 April 1992, trans. in RFE/RL Daily Report, 13 April 1992.

support. Their fear was that the heavily armed North Korean regime might decide to unleash a war itself in order to avoid reunification along South Korean prescriptions.

The first months of 1992 had been characterized by quite ambiguous signalling from Russia concerning the 1961 treaty -- to the discomfort of South Korea. In connection with Yeltsin envoy Ivan Rogachev's visit to Pyongyang in early 1992, Russia apparently decided to revise the 1961 treaty so as to take account of "the new reality."[12] This decision was confirmed by Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev's remarks, when he visited Seoul in March, that there were "too many ideological elements," and so the treaty needed revision. Russia especially planned to revise the military assistance clause so as to change the crucial proviso to cover only an unprovoked attack.[13] While no formal revision of the 1961 treaty actually occurred, Yeltsin assured South Korean Foreign Minister Lee Sang-ok on the occasion of his visit to Moscow in July that the treaty had "lost its effect and only retained the name."[14] Later that month, however, on the occasion of the anniversary of the treaty, Vice President Aleksandr Rutskoi and Deputy Foreign Minister Georgi Kunadze reassured the North Korean

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[12]Suzanne Crow, Kathleen Mihalisko, and Vera Tolz, "Weekly Review," RFE/RL RR 1 (7 February 1992): 63.

[13]BBS Monitoring Service/Far East, 20 March 1992.

[14]Izvestia, 31 July 1992, cited in Skak, "Post-Soviet Foreign Policy," 178.

ambassador in Moscow that the treaty was absolutely valid. In Kunadze's words:

> The treaty contains archaic expressions, but the main thing for us is the substance. . . . Russia and the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea are united by common interests. . . in the maintenance of stability. We reckon the treaty to contribute efficiently to this.[15]

Seoul's concern became public when the South Korean Defence Ministry revealed in July 1992 that a senior ministry official in April had asked a Russian general to cancel the treaty.[16]

The issue did not go away. When the South Korean President Kim Young-Sam visited Moscow in early June 1994, the issue of the 1961 Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Aid between Moscow and Pyongyang was raised. The Russian side explained that according to its understanding of Article 1, the Russian Federation would fulfill its obligations only in the event of an unprovoked attack on the DPRK. The Russian side also stated that the issue of extending the treaty would be decided in accordance with the situation that developed on Korean Peninsula by that time.[17]

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[15]Nezavisimaia Gazeta, 10 July 1992, cited in Skak, "Post-Soviet Forreign Policy," 178.

[16]Reuters, 18 July 1992, cited in Skak, "Post-Soviet Foreign Policy," 178.

[17]Moscow Diplomaticheskiy Vestnik, 22 July 1994, trans. in FBIS Report: Central Eurasia [hereafter as FBIS Report], FBIS-URS-94-104, 26 September 1994: 66-67.

One evident possibility for Seoul was to be open to military cooperation and arms purchases from Russia. This would be a great temptation for the Russian military and arms industry. Kozyrev raised the issue in March 1992 as something to be included in the South Korean-Russian Friendship and Cooperation Treaty, but Seoul initially reacted coolly. In June 1992 the newly appointed Russian ambassador to Seoul repeated the proposal of military cooperation adding that it need not be mentioned in the planned treaty.[18] Perhaps this was what inspired South Koreans to announce plans to buy four MiG-24s and T-76 tanks. However, these plans were vetoed by the USA.[19] It appeared that South Korea finally bought two Scud-missiles from Russia at a price far above the world market level (US$3 million).[20] Some weeks later a South Korean military delegation visited Moscow for the first time for talks at the Russian Ministry of Defence on military cooperation and assistance to the Russian arms industry.

On the question of North Korea's nuclear capability Russia and South Korea found a common language. Although North Korea had finally accepted international inspection of its nuclear facilities, it had not accepted international

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[18]Reuters, 17 June 1992, quoted in Skak, "Post-Soviet Foreign Policy," 178.

[19]Korea Economic Daily, 15 June 1992.

[20]The Independent, 10 July 1992.

control of those facilities. Russia pressured North Korea to permit real controls on its nuclear facilities. For example, Foreign Minister Kozyrev, when he visited Tokyo in March 1992 called for joint Russian and Japanese pressure on North Korea. The South Korean Foreign Minister expressed his appreciation of Russia's role. This was clearly a field where Moscow's dual relationship with Korea had a constructive impact from the perspective of peace and security.[21] In early June 1994, during the President Kim Young-Sam's Moscow visit, President Yeltsin also reaffirmed that Russia would continue to take an active part in efforts of the international community to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula.[22]

Economic cooperation was another area in the Russian-South Korean relationship that entered a more sobering phase. In 1991 South Korea extended a credit of US$3 billion to the USSR, but in May 1992 the credit was suspended by South Korea because the CIS countries, including Russia, failed to pay interest. There were various bilateral meetings at which South Korea demanded legal guarantees for the repayment of the debt as a precondition for releasing the rest of the debt facility (approximately US$1.5

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[21]Jurgen Glaubitz, "The Soviet Union and the Korean Peninsula," Aussenpolitik, No. 1, 1992, 82-91.

[22]Moscow Diplomaticheskiy Vestnik, No. 13-14, July 1994, trans. in FBIS Report, FBIS-URS-94-104, 26 September 1994: 11.

billion). The Russians, in return, complained that the South Korean press depicted Russia as a beggar nation.[23]

In June 1994, Russian and Korean presidents agreed to make joint efforts to combine Russia's high technologies with South Korea's potential for application and industrial production, and to encourage investments in the joint development of Russia's natural resources. In this connection, the two presidents expressed support for direct business contacts between the Russian Far East and Korea.[24]

In spite of the security and economic problems in the Russo-South Korean relationship sketched above, their overall cooperation grew and genuine political understanding and mutual interest was established. The Russo-Korean relationship was tilted toward Seoul, not Pyongyang. Moscow's orientation on Seoul was revealed in the relaxed Russian attitude toward the prospect of a reunification basically determined and administered by Seoul. For example, to the embarrassment of Pyongyang, Russian scholars openly advocated a Germany-type solution to the problem of Korean reunification.[25]

By contrast, Russia's relations with North Korea were

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[23]Izvestia, 31 July 1992, quoted in Skak, "Post-Soviet Foreign Policy," 180.

[24]Moscow Diplomaticheskiy Vestnik, No. 13-14, July 1994, FBIS Report, FBIS-USR-94-104 (26 September 1994): 37.

[25]Peggy Falkenheim Meyer, "Gorbachev and post-Gorbachev Policy Toward the Korean Peninsula," Asian Survey 32 (August 1992): 757-59.

strained -- as witnessed in Kozyrev's low-key visit to Pyongyang during his March 1992 tour of Northeast Asia. Russia's trade with North Korea amounted to an economic liability for Russia, with the North Korean debt running at US$4.6 billion in April 1991.[26] Nevertheless, this trade seemed to continue in the Yeltsin -- even including the peculiar repayment arrangements demanded by North Korea, namely the deployment of some 30,000 North Korean lumberjacks in Siberia.

Despite its pro-Seoul tilt, Russia wanted cooperation with both Koreas. For this reason, Moscow promoted a continuation of the dialogue between South and North Korea. This was illustrated during president Kim Young-Sam's Moscow visit in June 1994. In their discussions, the presidents of Russia and South Korea noted the need to continue the dialogue between South and North Korea for the purpose of easing tension and of strengthening peace, security and stability.[27]

China's Korea Policy

On the Korean Peninsula the principal objective of China's Korea policy during 1992-1994 was to enhance

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[26]Glaubitz, "The Soviet Union and the Korean Peninsula," 182.

[27]Moscow Diplomaticheskiy Vestnik, No. 13-14 , July 1994, FBIS Report, FBIS-USR-94-1994, 26 September 1994: 37.

regional stability and promote China's influence. In this region China sought to protect its national security, secure a more advantageous political status, and establish better economic opportunities. Three major aspects of China's policy toward the Korean Peninsula were noteworthy: managing relations with North Korea, approaching South Korea, and encouraging a North-South dialogue.

Managing Relations with North Korea

Maintaining a close relationship with Pyongyang was one of the cornerstones of China's policy toward the Korean Peninsula since the 1980s. Solidarity with North Korea was regarded as essential, not only because it directly served China's security interests and ideological considerations, but also because it gave Beijing greater geopolitical leverage in dealing with other major powers and with South Korea. China in the 1980s shifted from its former policy of quasi-alliance with the United States against the Soviet Union to a new position of maintaining relations with Washington while easing tensions with Moscow. China's policy toward the Korean Peninsula, accordingly, underwent a significant change. Toward North Korea, China's new policy centered on maintaining peace and furthering regional stability in order to assure "a peaceful environment" for China's development. To do this, China, took a "dual track" approach -- one that also allowed it to actively but

cautiously promote its relations with South Korea.

Confronted by a military buildup in, and an enduring antagonism between the two Koreas, China sought to play a part -- mainly in the North -- in preventing military conflict on the peninsula. Traditionary an important weapons supplier for Pyongyang, beginning in the early 1980s Beijing adopted a more cautious tack in its military relations with North Korea. For example, Beijing declined to help Pyongyang's nuclear program,[28] made clear that it advocated a nuclear free zone on the Korean Peninsula, and supported efforts to resolve the nuclear issue through consultation with all concerned parties. Beijing was unhappy about the Rangoon explosion[29] in 1983 and the bombing of a South Korean airliner in 1987 -- incidents that heightened tensions between the two Koreas. While choosing not to condemn North Korea publicly, neither did China defend it.

Until the early 1980s China's economic relations with the Korean Peninsula were centered on the North. These relations were characterized by a huge, lopsided economic aid program and barter trade for Pyongyang's benefit -- with almost all economic transactions based exclusively on

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[28]Far Eastern Economic Review, 6 June 1991: 5-16.

[29]The Rangoon explosion occurred in October 1983. This was an action ordered by the North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il. The North Korean regime wanted to kill South Korean President Chun Doo-Hwan, but many South Korean former followers died including South Korean Foreign Minister Lee Bum-Suk.

political and ideological considerations. As the Moscow-Pyongyang relationship faded, China continued to rank as a leading economic partner of North Korea. However, China tried to ease the economic burden of aid to Pyongyang, and the bilateral trade volume declined from $562 million in 1989 to $483 million in 1990.[30] Beijing also worked hard to persuade the North Koreans to adopt an approach similar to China's reform and opening policy, particularly toward developed countries such as Japan and the United States. Finally, developments indicated that Beijing now put more weight on its own economic interests. For instance, after the Soviet Union eliminated barter trade and demanded that Pyongyang pay hard currency in their bilateral trade starting in 1991, Beijing followed suit and asked North Korea to start doing the same in 1992 in trade with China.[31]

Mutual support in the domain of ideology and domestic politics had for years been an important element in Sino-North Korean relations. Similarities between the official ideologies stemmed, to a large extent, both from shared political cultures and decades-long ties between the revolutionary leaders of the two countries. The latter were

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[30]Statistical Yearbook of China, 1991 (Beijing: Chinese Statistical Press, 1991), 620.

[31]Asked about this development after North Korean President Kim Il Sung's visit to China in October 1991, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman neither confirmed nor denied it, but the new payment practice was included in the Sino-DPRK trade agreement of 1992, World Journal, 18 October 1991, 28 January 1992; also New York Times, 23 August 1992.

forged mainly during the anti-Japanese war in the 1930s and 1940s and the Korean War in the early 1950s. For these reasons the leadership in both countries frequently stressed their affinity for each other in ideology and domestic policy, and tended to solve differences between them through private consultation rather than by exposing them to the public as Moscow often did.

An example in this regard was Beijing's handling of its diplomatic normalization with South Korea. After years of delay and serious (although unsuccessful) attempts to get recognition of both Koreas by all major powers, China finally moved to conclude the process of establishing relations with South Korea. During the process, Beijing kept Pyongyang informed and arranged for both South Korean President Roh Tae Woo and North Korean top leaders to visit China after the announcement of the final agreement.[32] It is not surprising, therefore, that the North Koreans, who publicly denounced the Soviet Union when it recognized South Korea, said little that was negative about China's move.[33]

In its pursuit of economic opening and reform in the 1980s, the importance of ideology in China's foreign policy had generally (not without turns and twists) been declining.

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[32]UPI reported from Tokyo on 24 August 1992, that China had invited North Korean President Kim Il-Sung and heir apparent Kim Jong-Il to Beijing late in the year to reconfirm its commitment.

[33]See North Korean Foreign Minister Kim Young Nam's comments on the matter, Washington Post, 30 September 1992.

Yet, the effect of ideology on Chinese policy toward the Korean Peninsula was far from disappearing. For instance, when pressed by North Korea on the surging trade relationship between China and South Korea in 1980-81, Beijing issued strict official regulations that caused South Korean trade to decline significantly in 1982-83.[34] In 1986, yielding to North Korea's protest again, Beijing suspended for almost a year the construction of a plant for the first Sino-South Korean joint venture -- the Fuzhou Refrigerator Company. Moreover, the Tiananmen Square incident of 1989 and the subsequent sea changes in the former Soviet Union and East European countries for a time served to bring Sino-North Korean political and ideological ties closer. While Pyongyang publicly endorsed the Chinese government position, Beijing once again strengthened its control over Chinese local governments' economic and other contacts with South Korea, stressing that in developing trade with the latter, the principle of maintaining friendly contacts with North Korea must be upheld.[35]

It is worth nothing that, in essence, China's policy toward Pyongyang was now being pursued in a more flexible manner. Its new pragmatism was reflected vividly in the dramatic developments surrounding Korean U.N. membership.

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[34]Los Angeles Times, 14 June 1985.

[35]Ming Bao(Hong Kong), 1 April 1990, cited in Jia Hao and Zhuang Qubing, "China's Policy Toward the Korean Peninsula," Asian Survey 32 (December 1992): 1144.

For decades, Seoul's suggestion of simultaneous participation with North Korea in the United Nations was vehemently opposed by Pyongyang as an intrigue to perpetuate national division, in contrast with North Korea's proposal for joint U.N. membership. Pyongyang's announcement on May 28, 1991, of its decision to apply for a separate membership was made in the immediate wake of a Chinese leader's visit. While publicly China had stressed that the best way out of the impasse was to seek a consensus through consultations between the two Korean sides, Beijing privately made it clear to the North Korean leadership that it would no longer support Pyongyang's position by vetoing Seoul's membership application in the U.N. Security Council.[36]

China's new approach was based upon the consideration that the old stand would not only hurt its relations with South Korea, but would also isolate China vis-a-vis the pro-Seoul position of all other permanent members of the Council. Beijing's shift gave Pyongyang no choice but to make an about-face turn and apply for separate membership. China also took a similarly flexible stand on normalizing its diplomatic relations with South Korea and on North Korea's nuclear program as well.

Approaching South Korea

Since the early 1980s, the development of relations

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[36]Washington Post, 29 May 1991.

with South Korea signified an important shift in China's Korea policy. By extending relations to the entire peninsula, China discovered new opportunities to pursue its national interests in the region, not only benefitting economically but also strengthening its regional political and strategic position in dealing with other powers and Pyongyang. Finally, this also created a wedge between the South Koreans and the Taiwanese.

The progress of Sino-South Korean relations resulted, to a large extent, from South Korea's desire to strengthen its position vis-a-vis North Korea.[37] As South Korean President Roh Tae Woo emphasized on the eve of his recent trip to China: "The main goal of my northern policy was to open formal relations with North Korea's friends and allies, and through them to influence North Korea itself."[38]

In the 1980s and early 1990s South Korea's northern policy scored significant victories. Under it, Seoul established formal diplomatic relations with almost all former socialist countries in Eastern Europe. Moreover South Korea made overtures toward the Soviet Union, previously one of North Korea's principal allies -- a campaign that

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[37]As indicated as early as Park Chung-Hee's declaration in June 1973, followed by President Chun Doo-Hwan in the early 1980s, and formally named the "Northern Policy" (nordpolitik) in 1983 by the late South Korean Foreign Minister Lee Bum-Suk and again in the 7 July 1988, statement by Roh Tae-Woo.

[38]New York Times, 18 September 1992.

culminated in three summit meetings between the two states within ten months and the opening of diplomatic relations in late 1990. Finally, the President of South Korea, Roh Tae Woo, dispatched prominent figures to Beijing as his special envoys in order to establish mutual trade offices and, finally, diplomatic relations.

Seoul's overtures toward China were also motivated by its long desire to open economic relations with a country with huge market, ample labor, and rich natural resources. Beginning in the early 1980s, the export-oriented South Korean economy encountered serious difficulties due to a global trend toward protectionism, and the South Korean government was forced to depreciate its currency, further open its domestic market, and purchase more foreign merchandise. This new economic policy served as impetus for Seoul to diversify its foreign markets by expanding economic cooperation with China.

Sino-South Korean trade, which amounted only to $40,000 in 1978, steadily and significantly increased after 1984 evidence that by the mid-1980s Pyongyang's protests no longer affected it. In 1985, China's trade with South Korea ($461.6 million) already exceeded its trade with North Korea. After China's participation in the 1986 Asian Games in Seoul, this bilateral trade increased even more remarkably. In 1987 Sino-South Korean trade ($1.49 billion) was almost three times that between China and North Korea

($520 million) and constituted 80% of Seoul's total trade volume with all socialist countries at the time.[39] Despite Tiananmen, this two-way trade surged to $3.8 billion in 1990 and to $5.8 billion in 1991.[40] In 1992, South Korea ranked as China's eighth largest trading partner, surpassing even France and Italy, and it was expected that two-way trade in 1992 would reach $10 billion making China South Korea's third largest trading partner, after the United States and Japan.[41] In addition, China became the third largest country for investment by South Korea. By the end of 1991, 185 South Korean enterprises had gained permission to invest in China, and 110 had already done so with a total investment of more than $900 million.[42] Travel between the two countries also showed a dramatic increase. Starting in 1992, China planned to begin exporting a large number of skilled laborers (about 20,000) to South Korea.[43]

Although not publicly announced at the time, Beijing's approach to Seoul in the 1980s had been characterized by

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[39]Liou To-Hai, "Sino-South Korean Relations: retrospect and Prospects," Journal of East Affairs (Winter/Spring 1991): 70-71; and Jonathan D. Pollack, "China's Changing Perceptions of East Asian Security and Development," Orbis 26 (Winter 1986): 786.

[40]Beijing Review (18-24 May 1992): 12.

[41]Figures given by Roh Jae-Won, South Korean trade representative to Beijing, Korea Herald, 4 March 1992.

[42]Beijing Review (18-24 May 1992): 40.

[43]Shijie Ribao, 16 January 1992, cited in Hao and Qubing, "China's Policy Toward Korean Peninsula," 1146.

"separating politics from business" and by "provincialization" of contacts, particularly in the early stages.[44] In contrast to Moscow's about-face in advancing political and economic ties with South Korea, Beijing focused its ties with Seoul at first on incremental expansion of "substantial" relations (mainly economic), coupled with sports, cultural, and personnel exchanges. Meanwhile, China deliberately retarded the process of establishing official relations. In pursuing its policy toward the South, Beijing paid great attention to safeguarding its traditional links with North Korea. Beijing's policymakers tried hard to strike a balance in policies toward both sides on the peninsula, endeavoring to avert any action that would cause a sudden shock to Pyongyang.

Economic factors grew in importance in Beijing's external relations in the 1980s. China, a developing country with an enormous supply of low-cost labor and abundant natural resources, and South Korea, a newly industrialized nation with a booming economy and low-cost technology-intensive industries, were natural partners in economic cooperation. In addition, South Korea's capital was a potential source of foreign investment in China. Beijing's efforts to develop economic ties with South Korea were not

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[44]Chung Jae-Ho, "Sino-South Korean Economic Cooperation: An Analysis of Domestic and Foreign Entanglements," Northeast Asian Studies 9 (Summer 1990): 66-67.

only aimed at immediate trade benefits but were also intended to allow China to diversify its economic partners and thus reduce its economic and technological dependence on a few foreign sources.

Geographically, China's Liaodong and Shandong peninsulas and Bohai area are just across the Yellow Sea from South Korea's west coast. The Liaodong Peninsula is among the most industrialized areas in China, with the largest iron and copper deposits in the country. The Liadong and the Shandong Peninsula are rich in coal, petroleum, and gas. Such geographic features provided convenient transportation and significantly reduced shipping costs -- a solid advantage for Sino-South Korean trade and other economic cooperation.

In the wake of international repercussions from the Tiananmen Square crackdown of June 1989, China's foreign policy focused on strengthening relations with peripheral states.[45] In October 1990, based on the previous low-profile yet rather extensive exchanges, China and South Korea agreed to establish trade offices in each other's capitals (with quasidiplomatic status and functions). In 1991, using its position as host of the annual meeting of the Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation Conference (APEC), South Korean

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[45]Li Peng, Report on the Outline of the Ten-Year Program and of the English Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development, report to Seventh National People's Congress, March 25, 1991, Beijing Review 34 (15-21 April 1991): 21.

authorities helped bring about China's membership in APEC, along with Taiwan and Hong Kong. By the end of that year, the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) and the Korea Trade Promotion Corporation (KTPC) signed a joint trade pact in Beijing granting most-favored-nation status to bilateral trade and covering forms of payment and arbitration of trade disputes. The two countries also concluded treaties on investment and engaged in negotiation on direct commercial flights. The above developments brought about visits of high level officials and further exchanges between Beijing and Seoul and culminated in the establishment of Sino-South Korean diplomatic relations in August 1992 and President Roh Tae Woo's trip to Beijing a month later.

In late March 1994, South Korean President Kim Young-Sam visited China. During both summits, the Chinese leadership reiterated its previous stance on the North Korean nuclear problem, while showing great interest in economic cooperation. In 1994 China responded positively to a proposal to form a joint governmental industrial committee with South Korea for the joint development of automobile, aircraft, digital switching systems and high-definition television sets. Also, agreements eliminating double taxation and providing for cultural exchange were signed.[46]

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[46]Ahn Byung-Joon, "National Interests Reflected in President's Visits to China, Japan," Korea Focus 2 (May-June 1994): 130.

These growing Sino-South Korean ties also had an important effect on relations across the Taiwan Straits. Apparently reflecting the normalization process between Beijing and Seoul, Taiwan's international standing and domestic morale suffered a major blow. Not only did Taiwan lose its most powerful remaining political ally, but South Korea also became its economic competitor in mainland China. Judging by the interplay among the three parties in recent years, Beijing's approach to Seoul has helped accelerate both economic exchange and political accommodation between Taiwan and China.[47]

Encouraging a North-South Dialogue

The third ingredient in China's Korea policy was to encourage a North-South dialogue -- emphasizing that the pending issues should be solved by the Koreans themselves. While China publicly endorsed Kim Il Sung's reunification goal of establishing a confederated Korea, Beijing also emphasized peaceful means and the necessity of a long process to solve this highly complicated issue. China made clear that it supported only the reasonable suggestions on peaceful reunification put forward by Pyongyang. Beijing even joined with Moscow in calling for both Koreas "to

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[47]Zhang Jinbo and Guo Tiexuan, World Economy (May 1989): 62, 65-66. The volume of Taiwan-China trade increased so rapidly that in 1989($3.8 billion). It surpassed that of South Korea-China trade ($3.1 billion).

refrain from taking any acts that might impede detente on the peninsula and a peaceful reunification of Korea."[48] Finally, Beijing also stressed its interest in seeing that the final result of Korean reunification should be that neither side "devour the other." China indicated its preference for a single Korean state with two governments "in the form of a confederation" and based upon mutual recognition of each other's ideology and social system."[49]

Beijing's persistence in encouraging North-South dialogue stemmed from several considerations. First, reunification had long been desired by the Korean people on both sides of the border. As long as the North-South dialogue and consultation on reunification continued, tension on the peninsula would be ameliorated--which in turn would better serve China's geopolitical and economic interests. Second, China increasingly faced the problems of taking sides between Pyongyang and Seoul on such matters as U.N. membership and the North Korean nuclear issue. China's choice became more difficult after the development of Sino-South Korean relations. China therefore encouraged dialogue in order to avoid a direct and publicized conflict with either Pyongyang or Seoul. Third, a peacefully unified Korea

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[48]Sino-Soviet Communique, Beijing Review, 27 May-2 June 1991.

[49]Jiang Zemin's remarks during talks with Kim Il-Sung on the latter's 39th visit to China, Beijing Review (14-20 October 1991): 7.

would be a more important and energetic long-term economic partner to China, and a more effective support for China's political and strategic position in Northeast Asia.

The Impact of Russo-Chinese Rapprochement on Korea

During 1992 Russo-Chinese competition on the Korean Peninsula greatly diminished. Moscow, overwhelmed by domestic political and economic problems, was no longer interested in competing with China for poor North Korea. Instead, Russia improved its relations with prosperous South Korea whose economic assistance, in Moscow's view, was worth the cost of sacrificing its long time ally in the north. Moscow and Seoul finally established diplomatic relations on September 30, 1990.

Beijing's policy toward Korea was profoundly influenced by its relations with Russia. The disintegration of the USSR in 1991, the subsequent removal of remaining military forces to China from Russia, and the development of Russo-Chinese cooperation exemplified the broad changes in China's relations with Russia. As a result, North Korea's strategic importance to China declined sharply, removing a major obstacle to Sino-South Korean normalization.

Meanwhile, the changing of the triangular relationship between Moscow, Beijing, and Seoul had an effect on China's policy toward Korea. Like Russia, China energetically sought economic partnership abroad, and the opening of Russian-

South Korean economic relations prompted China to seek the attention of South Korean business interests. Gradually, a policy of economic rationality eclipsed ideological considerations, and China's overall policy toward the Korean Peninsula underwent a shift that deemphasizied the importance of its relations with Pyongyang. Although Chinese leaders were aware of Pyongyang's displeasure about China's approach toward South Korea, they reckoned that Pyongyang could not afford to break its ties with China -- North Korea's last ally and on which it had become more dependent for political, military, and economic support. Furthermore, North Korea would need China's support in pursuing diplomatic and other goals vis-a-vis South Korea, Japan, United States.

In fact, Beijing had no incentive to abandon Pyongyang. It appeared against China's interest to isolate North Korea. The North's leadership, fearing isolation, might become desperate and resort to military adventurism that would benefit no one. Moreover, political instability on the Korean Peninsula could impede China's modernization drive. Consequently, while moving close to Seoul, Beijing maintained high-level contacts with Pyongyang. In persuading North Korea to accept the two Koreas formula, Chinese leaders have repeatedly emphasized their intention to maintain friendly relations with North Korea. Continuing good relations with North Korea also gave China more room to

maneuver with Seoul, which was eager to exchange its economic favors for Chinese assistance on the issues of Korean reunification and denuclearization. Beijing could only be effective in this tactic if its ties with Pyongyang remained reasonably close.

On the other hand, the radical change in Russo-Chinese relations made it easier for China to establish formal ties with South Korea. Thus both Russia and China opened diplomatic relations with South Korea.

Consequently, there was a radical reduction of Russia's and China's economic and military aid to North Korea. These parallel trends propelled Pyongyang to develop its arms industry and to sell Scud missiles and other advanced arms to Iran, Syria, Libya, and other Middle East countries in return for desperately needed hard currency and oil. These trends also appear to have encouraged North Korea to develop nuclear weapons.[50]

On 12 August 1994, the U.S. and North Korea, meeting in Geneva, reached an agreement on Pyongyang's nuclear program after two years of high-level talks. The United States agreed to help North Korea build 2,000 megawatt light-water

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[50]Andrew Mark, "Signs of a Thaw?" Pacific Research 3 (November 1990): 17. Mark cited a September 19, 1990, statement by the DPRK Foreign Ministry made as a warning of how North Korea would react to the establishment of Soviet diplomatic relations with Seoul. It said that Pyongyang would have "no other choice but to take measures to provide for ourselves some weapons for which we have so far relied on the alliance."

nuclear reactors, and to exchange diplomatic representatives. In return North Korea promised to deactivate its radiochemical laboratory and to rejoin the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.[51]

High expectations were generated by the 1994 Geneva Agreement on North Korea's nuclear program. In part, this was because the agreement came at a time when Kim Jong-Il had risen to power following the death of Kim Il-Sung.

Because of increased uncertainty about North Korea's political scene after Kim Il-Sung's death, it was unclear that Pyongyang would continue to adhere to this seemingly more moderate course. Nevertheless, it is clear that the Pyongyang regime faced a cruel dilemma. If North Korea allowed the development and expansion of unofficial exchanges with South Korea, and opened up its economy to foreign investment, it risked undermining the regime of Kim Jong-Il by making its citizens more aware of their economic backwardness. On the other hand, if North Korea failed to take these steps, its economy would continue to experience a serious crisis. It is not all clear which path Pyongyang will finally choose.

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[51]Jung Yong-Suk, "Problems Left Behind by U.S.-North Korean Nuclear Accord," Korea Focus 2 (September-October 1994): 5-7.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this concluding chapter is to summarize the trends in Russo-Chinese relations under Yeltsin, and their effect on the Korean Peninsula. This chapter also addresses the future of the Russo-Chinese relations.

Summary of the Argument

The primary purpose of this study was analyze developments in Russo-Chinese relations during 1992-1994 and their impact on the Korean Peninsula. This assessment attempted to emphasize the possibilities for cooperation in Russo-Chinese relations. The relationship between Moscow and Beijing has been strained longer than it has been friendly, but this is also true of the relationship between Berlin and Paris.

Russian foreign policy was profoundly influenced by a series of domestic institutional changes during 1992-1994. By 1993 Russian domestic policy took a "turn to the right." In September 1993 President Yeltsin dissolved the Russian Parliament. After the December 1993 legislative elections, Yeltsin removed key reformers from his cabinet to

accommodate the more conservative composition of the new Russian legislature.

The conservative shift in Russian politics and Russian economic policy has many explanations. Following the breakup of the Soviet Union, many Russians were disillusioned by the failure of promised Western aid packages to materialize. The conditions placed on loans, credits, and grants, proved too onerous, with the result that the aid fell sharply or was not delivered. In response, the Russian government adapted an attitude of greater independence from the West, because the "carrots" for conforming to Western dictates were exceedingly small. Trends in Russia's foreign relations signaled a growing focus on the former Soviet republics, the so-called "Near Abroad."[1] China too became a central player rather than a peripheral actor in Russia's foreign economic relations. China appeared to offer the market and technological niche Russia required in order to stabilize its economy with or without Western aid. As one commentator observed when Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev's return from his January 1994 trip to Beijing: "Russia's foreign policy has been attaching -- previously and currently -- top priority to Russian-Chinese relations."[2]

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[1]For a discussion of this shift, see Alexei G. Arbatov, "Russia's Foreign Policy Alternatives," International Security 18 (Fall 1993): 5-43.

[2]Moscow Radio Commentary, 1 February 1994, trans. in FBIS Daily Report, FBIS-SOV-94-022, 2 February 1994: 10.

In turn, China also had domestic and international reasons for seeking an improvement of Russo-Chinese relations. For example, Russia appeared to China to be a reliable source of high technology, deliverable without the threat of sanctions concerning human rights on "destabilizing" arms sales.[3] In a possible resurgence of the triangular politics characteristic of the Cold War era, Russia appeared to become for the first time a "pivot" between China and the United States.[4] That is, if U.S.-Chinese trade tensions worsened, and if the United States continued to fear Russian instability more than Russia's resurgence as a superpower, Russia might find itself with a new hand to play in these triangular politics. For Russia, this role would allow it to reap the benefits of attention from both the OECD and from China.

Russo-Chinese rapprochement offered symmetrical advantages. Each country saw the other as preoccupied with domestic issues and consequently as less of a military threat. Each state calculated that improved relations would result in lower military costs and increased economic

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[3]As Foreign Minister Kozyrev summed up Russian policy on Chinese human rights after his January 1994 visit: "We are not making this subject a taboo, but nor do we plan to kick up a fuss about it." Quoted in Izvestiya, 1 February 1994, trans. in FBIS Daily Report, FBIS-SOV-94-021, 1 February 1994: 11.

[4]Lowell Dittmer, Sino-Soviet Normalization and Its International Implications (Seattle: University of washington Press, 1992): chapter 14.

benefits. Finally, each side sought in this way to increase its leverage in order to join the global economic system and reap its benefits.

Some analysts pointed to the possible broad political and strategic consequence of Russia's economic move eastward toward China. As one leading Russia academic warned:

> Russia, consequently, will become more dependent on economic ties with China. In turn, economic dependence will feed pro-Chinese and anti-Western sentiments in the Russian establishment.[5]

Tendencies such as these were plausible given the victory of the opposition in Russia's December 1993 elections.

Nevertheless, the further improvement of Russo-Chinese relations faced potential obstacles. First, Russo-Chinese rivalry might not have completely died. Instead, the rivalry seemed likely to be transferred to non-military arenas, including attempts by each to maximize power and influence with specific countries in Asia. Second, internal economic constraints, including budget constraints and lack of sufficient trade-related infrastructure, might continue to hamper trade expansion. Third, serious bilateral problems were presented by the activities of Chinese gangs in Russia's Far East, and by Russian mafias in Chinese cities near Russia's border. Police forces on the two sides of the border began to cooperate against these activities. Joint

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[5]Alexei D. Bogaturov, "The Yeltsin Administration's Policy in the Far East: In Search of a Concept," The Harriman Institute Forum 6 (August 1993): 5.

border controls and the establishment of a more effective Russian judicial system will be needed to reduce these illegal activities. Finally, border questions of another sort, namely, conflicting territorial claims, were also a potentially serious obstacle to an improvement of relations. Serious questions exist over the final status of hundreds of islands in the Amur and Ussuri rivers.[6]

China's policy toward North Korea was dualistic. On political and security issues China basically supported North Korea, on economic and cultural matters China promoted cooperation with South Korea. This phenomenon arose from the two competing currents of Chinese politics: the political current that insisted on maintaining socialism and nationalism, and the economic current that promoted openness and mutual interaction with other countries.

China's policy toward the Korean Peninsula also reflected its practice of maintaining the regional balance of power through its traditional diplomacy of controlling peripheral countries by pitting them against one another. Thus China emphasized the need for inter-Korean dialogue, and even volunteered to mediate between South and North Korea. These actions could be viewed as an attempt to maximize China's influence over both halves of the Korean Peninsula.

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[6]Izvestiya, 10 February 1995, trans. in FBIS Daily Report, FBIS-SOV-95-028, 10 February 1995: 9.

South Korea began to seek an expansion of relations with China, and sought to institutionalize a security consultative body with China. However, it was probably unrealistic to expect South Korea and China to forge a political partnership going beyond that level. What one might realistically expect from China was an effort to persuade North Korea to give up nuclear weapons and to engage in sincere dialogue with South Korea in order to achieve peace and unification. One should be wary of China's offer to play a mediator role in order to help dispel "distrust" and "misunderstanding" between the two Koreas. Filling such a role would not be easy for any third party because of the inherent distrust between South and North Korea resulting from conflicting goals and political systems.

Thus South Korea's diplomacy probably should concentrate on advancing Korea's national interests. In doing so, South Korea must also consolidate its relations with existing allies with whom it shares common values and can cooperate for mutual benefit.

The Future of Russo-Chinese Relations

While domestic issues connect domestic disintegration and foreign policy, the question is how they are perceived by important elements of the Russian elite, and what approaches are advocated for managing them. Without

recklessly oversimplifying, it is possible to distinguish several distinct ideological orientations in Russia at present: liberal, statist, and national patriotic.[7]

As a caveat, it should be noted that in reality these alternative perspectives are not mutually exclusive, and not all individuals are locked into a given world view. Instead, the relative prevalence of one or another perspective reflects the overall mix of values, operational assumptions, and policy priorities within the elite at any time.

It is important to describe the general assumptions and values associated with the liberal, statist, and national-patriotic perspectives on Russia's foreign and China policy. The question is how proponents of each outlook react to various internal and external developments, and how such developments might affect on Russia's China policy. Political, economic, and military reforms in Russia are three important variables which effect Russia's China policy. The start of economic, political, and military reform in Russia after the Soviet Union's collapse suggests three possible scenarios.

The liberal scenario posits a concomitant democratic consolidation and economic reform. However, Russia's initial

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[7]In developing these three categories of the scholarly literature on Russo-Chinese relations, the writer has benefitted from the following analysis: Douglas W. Blum, "Disintegration and Russian Foreign Policy," Russia's Future: Consolidation or Disintegration? in Douglas W. Blum, ed. (San Francisco: Westview Press, 1994), 133.

flirtation with democratic procedures for deciding political outcomes so far bears little resemblance to similar political contestations in Western democracies. Although low, the level of pluralism achieved in Russian politics is already greater than at any other time in Russian history.[8] But the maturation of these seeds of democracy will require the some minimal level of political consensus, both between the executive and legislative branches of government and between the radical democrats (e.g., Democratic Russia) and more conservative forces (e.g., Civic Union).

The consolidation of democracy in Russia would result in greater integration of Russia into the international capitalist system. Domestic stability would encourage foreign investment and support a capitalist class. Political stability followed by economic integration with the West would establish Russia as the principal regional power in Eastern Europe and Far East. In this scenario, Russia would be unlikely to reemerge as a world superpower for the foreseeable future. Democratic and capitalist consolidation at home, however, would make Russia a natural ally for China. Relations between them might be expected to prosper greatly, based not only on trade complementarity but also on the sharing of different experiences in realizing a common vision.

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[8]Anders Aslund, Post-Communist Economic Revolutions : How Big a Bang? (Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1992).

The initial difficulties encountered in creating both a democratic polity and a market economy suggest that the first scenario may be the most ideal, but the least likely. A conservative swing of the political pendulum already portends a different kind of transition for Russia than so far witnessed in East Central Europe.[9]

The second scenario is a statist perspective. If liberal market reform generates hyperinflation, falling industrial productivity, bankruptcy, and unemployment, while democratic reform paralyzes effective central governance and foments independence movements in the republics, advocates of order and stability will gain increasing popularity. In this scenario, the liberal wing of Russia's political spectrum (Democratic Russia) will collapse, conservative forces (Civic Union) will assume center stage, and all major political debates will take place between the conservatives and proponents of even greater order and stability, on the far right (Front for National Salvation).

If this dynamic unfolds, it might be necessary to protect Russian enterprises from total collapse. Russia would impose greater restrictions on foreign investment and imports while providing increased credits and financial support to Russian industry. Regarding political reform,

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[9]For elaboration of the comparison, see Michael McFaul, Post-Communist Politics: Democratic Prospects in Russia and Eastern Europe (Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1993).

Russian state would move to arrest the devolution of power. If necessary, secessionist movements would be quelled by force, while independent regional governors would be replaced with more loyal representatives of Moscow. When necessary, civil liberties and political rights would be suspended in the name of order and stability.

Relations between Russia and China under this scenario would become less ideological and more realistic and pragmatic, less humanistic and more nationalistic. This means that Russo-Chinese relations might alternate between conflict and cooperation depending on specific events.

The third scenario is a national-patriotic perspective. If Russia's economy collapses entirely and ethnic conflicts within the federation escalate into civic wars, pleas for moderation, caution, or political "centrism" will fall on deaf ears. Just as Gorbachev unsuccessfully tried to carve out a center position in conditions of revolutionary crisis, an acute acceleration of economic and political chaos could mobilize militant political forces on both the left and the right. If this implication unfolds, lines of political struggle would be drawn starkly, between those for democracy and the market, and those against.

Under this scenario, Russia would become a vast Yugoslavia with nuclear weapons. The presence of nuclear weapons, coupled with the still vast military potential of Russia, would make Russia's civil war a security threat for

China. Relations between Russia and China under this implication would include significant elements of conflict and friction. Russia might claim the disputed borders in both the eastern section and western sections of the Russo-Chinese border. Insofar as political order might emerge -- and political chaos be avoided -- Russia's political system might resemble a fascist dictatorship.

All things considered, it seems likely that Russo-Chinese relations will continue to improve for the foreseeable future. This likelihood may be enhanced by the prospect of socioeconomic convergence or troubled divergence. Closer mutual relations appear to give Russia and China more freedom to act in ways to achieve their national interests. If Russia and China continue to maintain or enhance their cooperative bilateral relationship, it is probable that both Moscow and Beijing will seek to further a sincere dialogue between the two halves of the Korean Peninsula.

These changes in international relations in the Northeast Asia imply that North Korea may well need to make substantial political concessions to the West and to South Korea.

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