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The USSR

**REGIONAL AND
POLITICAL ANALYSIS**

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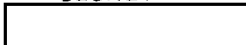
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Soviet Commercial Visitors for 1976--an Overview

Soviet commercial contacts in the US in 1976 held steady at about the 1975 level. The number of VIP business visitors (deputy minister level or higher), however, rose from 14 in 1975 to 24 in 1976. Approximately 1,150 bureaucrats, scientists, technicians, and skilled workers visited US companies and institutions for commercial purposes during the year. Representatives of the Soviet automotive industry were again the most numerous with the petroleum and petrochemical industries moving up to second place. Two important facilities still under construction in the Soviet Union--the Kama Motor Vehicle Plant and the International Trade Center sponsored by the Occidental Petroleum Corporation--accounted for many of the visits in these categories.

An analysis of bilateral commercial contacts during the last three years suggests that there is a pattern to them. Once a problem has been identified by Soviet bureaucrats (e.g., an area where technology or equipment is substandard), high level officials in the appropriate industry (deputy ministers, plant directors, institute heads) come to the US to see what solution their American counterparts have found for it. If a recommendation is made that funds be committed to a particular purchase, the number of such visitors decreases, and an upswing in American visits to the USSR ensues to complete the negotiations. When agreement is reached, the third phase begins--the dispatch to the US of lower ranking personnel to obtain equipment and training on how to use it.

The establishment in the US of Soviet economic agencies, such as Morflot and the Kama Purchasing Commission, might have been expected to reduce the number of business visitors on the theory that negotiations would increasingly be carried out by these organizations. But their existence does not seem to have lessened the need for American businessmen to meet with the end-users

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of the technology or equipment in question or for the end-users actually to see the product before a purchase is agreed upon.

Some Trends

The figures presented in the table below together with other information suggest a number of trends:

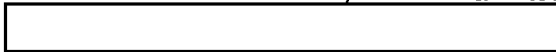
- Direct Soviet attempts to acquire sensitive US technology seemed less persistent in 1976 than in the preceding year. Licensing arrangements involving third countries as well as the Soviet and US participants, however, became increasingly common.
- Most 1976 Soviet business visits were made in connection with relatively routine Soviet projects, suggesting that financing is not available to undertake more sophisticated ones. This assumption is supported by the arrival last year of several Soviet bankers seeking credit.
- Many commercial delegations were again accompanied by representatives of the party apparatus who identified themselves as "employees," "senior experts," or "consultants" of various ministries. In some cases these party "apparatchiks" outranked the nominal head of the delegations they came with.
- The upswing in delegations concerned with mining and construction under extreme climatic conditions suggests a renewed Soviet interest in involving the US in developing resources in Siberia and the Far East.
- The continuing decrease in visits concerned with aviation reflected the uncertain state of US-Soviet relations in the field. Some negotiations have bogged down due to questions of Soviet intent and unwillingness to grant US industry access to plants to observe quality control procedures.

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- Continuing problems with Soviet pipelines and other petroleum-related equipment appeared to contribute to the consistently high number of petroleum industry visitors to this country.
- Expansion of Soviet shipping activities in North America continued into 1976 with the establishment in New Jersey of Morflot America, Inc. Because the Soviets are under constraints by the US to reduce their official presence in the US, Morflot may represent a way of avoiding direct US control over Soviet personnel.
- Preparations for the 1980 Olympics in Moscow may have generated the interest in selected consumer goods areas (fast food equipment, prefabricated housing, etc.)
- The Kama Purchasing Commission, which was established in 1972 to purchase equipment for the Kama Motor Vehicle Plant, continued to expand beyond its original charter by negotiating in areas unrelated to the automotive industry. For example, the Kama Purchasing Commission has been given permission to purchase for the Irkutsk natural gas project.

The chart shows a tally of commercial visitors in selected categories over the past three years, along with the ranking of each category from year to year. We recognize that numbers of visitors alone cannot accurately reflect Soviet priorities in the acquisition of technology and equipment. Often they reflect the status of a particular undertaking or identify topics of interest during various negotiating stages.



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Soviet Commercial Visitors
1974-1975-1976

	<u>Visitors</u>			<u>Rank</u>		
	76	75	74	76	75	74
Automotive Industry	145	194	92	1	1	1
Petroleum and Petro-chemical Industries	107	93	40	2	4	5
Chemical Industry	85	76	32	3	5	9
Agriculture	68	114	28	4	2	10
Metallurgy (both ferrous and non-ferrous)	55	45	54	5	9	2
Maritime Affairs	54	28	39	6	11	7
Construction	52	64	53	7	6	3
Mining	45	21	*	8	14	*
Machinebuilding	39	39	32	9	10	8
Electronics	26	48	*	10	8	*
Computers	22	54	*	11	7	*
Food Industry	21	28	40	12	11	6
Gas Industry	19	21	*	13	14	*
Foundry Technology	18	98	*	14	3	*
Aviation	14	24	45	15	13	4
Banking and Finance	12	11	*	16	19	*
Electrical Equipment	10	20	23	17	17	12
Radio, TV, Cinematography	4	21	22	18	14	13
Geology	0	16	16			

* No data available for 1974

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ANNEX

Moscow, Berlin, and East-West Detente

East German actions in Berlin since the turn of the year have given rise to a wave of rumors and speculation and have raised the specter of another East-West confrontation over the divided city. The two key questions are why the Soviet Union, which retains veto power over GDR actions, has chosen to permit the East Germans to act at this time, and whether the Soviets will permit further steps of a kind that could precipitate an East-West collision.

Background: The East German Actions

Over the course of the last two months, the Soviets have permitted the East Germans to accelerate their long-standing effort to assert their sovereignty over the eastern sector of the divided city. The East Germans removed border control points between East Berlin and East Germany on the weekend of January 1-2, and, as finally confirmed by party boss Honecker on February 17, gave notice of the discontinuation of a legal gazette, the *Verordnungsblatt*, which had served as a vehicle for applying East German legislation to East Berlin. (The publication actually appears to have been discontinued in September, some three months after steps had been taken to erase some of the remaining distinctions between East Berlin and East German delegates in the East German legislature.) The purpose of these changes was to eliminate some of the last visible reminders of East Berlin's status as an area formally under Four-Power occupation.

In addition, there are now reports that the East Germans intend to create a new district in East Berlin, and that, rumors say, it will include some territory from the neighboring Frankfurt District. This boundary alteration would reinforce East Germany's claim to sovereignty over East Berlin, but it would be a direct violation of the original Four Power occupation agreement of 1944, which barred any changes in the borders of Greater Berlin.

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All these actions gain in significance because they coincide with efforts to restrict foreign and West German travel into East Berlin. In a move apparently intended to choke off the heavy flow of pleasure- and bargain-seeking foreign laborers going from West Berlin into East Berlin, the GDR in January imposed visa requirements on foreign (non-German and non-Allied) visitors to East Berlin. At the same time, the East Germans have begun quietly to deny entry to selected West Berlin visitors, apparently focusing on former East Germans whose personal examples might inspire imitators.

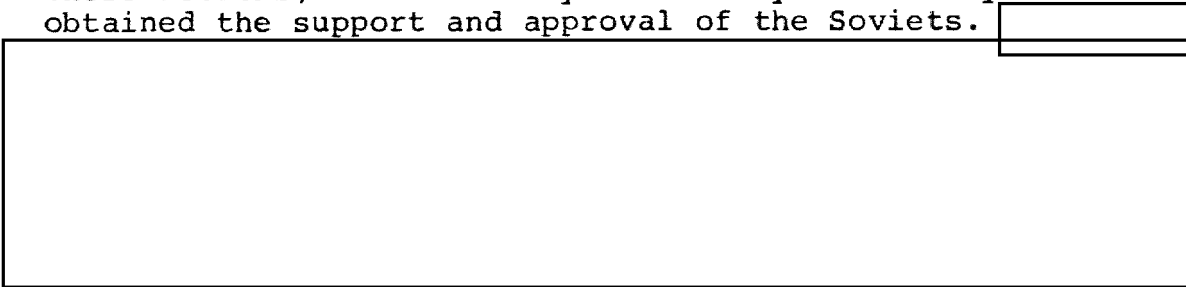
Most importantly, in December and January, the East Germans attempted to go beyond symbolic actions to deal directly with their most pressing problem, the mounting wave of interest in legal emigration. First they monitored and harassed East German visitors to the West German mission in East Berlin (beginning in December), then they barred entry to the mission (on January 11), and then, abandoning this tactic, assigned plainclothesmen to patrol the area and make spot-checks of visitors leaving the mission. These steps were more directly relevant than anything else the GDR has done to the central East German problem of controlling their restive population. They were in direct violation, however, of inner-German agreements linked to the Quadripartite Agreement of 1971, as well as the Helsinki accord.

The View from Moscow

The East Germans have long wished to take some of these actions, but evidently acted only after they had obtained the support and approval of the Soviets.

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The East German motives in promoting such actions are easy to assess. The GDR remains in many ways an artificial creation. The loyalties of many of its citizens are questionable, and the recent wave of emigration has evidently alarmed the regime. Any actions that

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might widen the gulf between East Germany and West Germany, bolster GDR claims to legitimacy, and slow down East German emigration, are obviously to the GDR's advantage.

Moscow's motives are more complex. On the one hand, the Soviets not only share the GDR's nervousness over its vulnerability to ideological "subversion" from the West, but also see the rise of intellectual dissidence and popular unrest in East Germany as part of a general phenomenon that threatens to weaken their position throughout Eastern Europe. Moreover, Moscow is concerned about the latent appeal of German nationalism in the GDR. These multiple concerns were undoubtedly behind the Soviet decision to support the East Germans in their most recent efforts to buttress their position in Berlin and to restrict the flow of travel across their borders.

On the other hand, the Soviets also have a political and economic stake in the preservation of good relations with the West. It is not likely that the Soviet leaders have forgotten how central the Berlin agreement was to the other achievements of Moscow's detente diplomacy. Moscow's interest in supporting the East Germans in their current efforts is therefore likely to be balanced by a comparable interest in avoiding any direct confrontation with the West over Berlin.

In fact, the latest East German initiatives appear to have been launched with an eye to avoiding a direct conflict with the Western Allies. In contrast to past flare-ups over Berlin, this time there has been no effort to interfere with land or air access to the city, or with Allied (as distinct from West German) rights there. The actions initiated by the East German regime, presumably under Soviet guidance, have instead probed at the gray areas of the existing agreements and made only changes that do not directly involve the Western Allies. The Soviets themselves have done their best to play down the significance of the East German moves, treating them and Allied protests of them as "technical" questions, and passing assurances that they have no interest in a dispute over Berlin.

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There are other signs of caution in the East German approach, which again presumably reflect the guiding hand of the Soviets. The East Germans in some cases like the *Verordnungsblatt* carefully left themselves a line of retreat. In other instances they have not followed up on provocative actions, notably the blockade of the West German mission. It would appear that this move in particular provoked second thoughts in East Berlin or--more likely--Moscow, because of the attention it drew in the West. Indeed, one Soviet diplomat in East Berlin claimed that the Soviets had been "surprised" by the blockade of the mission.

The Soviets, meanwhile, have stayed discreetly in the background, although they have staunchly defended East Germany's claims to sovereignty over East Berlin. Their most authoritative public pronouncement appeared in a lead article in *Pravda* on February 12, in which they backed East German steps to defend their "legitimate" rights. This, of course, is a position of long standing--one the Soviets maintained throughout the negotiations on the Quadripartite Agreement--and it would be surprising indeed if they were to give it up now.

Insofar as the Soviets themselves have played an active role in Berlin, it has been to oppose West German efforts to strengthen their ties with West Berlin. Thus, the Soviets have protested virtually all visible West German activities in the city, including *Bundestag* committee meetings, the establishment of Federal German offices, and visits by West German government officials. In November, they also protested plans to permit West Berlin to participate in elections to the European Parliament on the grounds that this would be a violation of Berlin's special Four-Power status. These protests have been coupled with a persistent effort to assert a larger role for themselves in West Berlin, both through legalistic arguments and through quiet efforts to expand the overall level of Soviet activity in West Berlin.

Prospects

The apparent care the Soviets have taken to control the East Germans and to bar dramatic or unduly provocative actions suggests that it is unlikely that there will

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be any sharp escalation of East German actions in and around Berlin. Certainly the prospect of military action directed against West Berlin or the access routes to it is remote under the present circumstances. The Soviets today want to achieve a new SALT agreement with the US, and to maintain and expand Soviet access to the technology and goods of the West. A major crisis over Berlin would threaten both objectives, and could bring about other untoward results, such as the strengthening of West European interest in the NATO alliance.

For the same reasons, we are not likely to see any open challenge soon to Allied prerogatives in Berlin, despite suggestions made by Soviet Ambassador Abrasimov in East Berlin on January 19 that Allied military patrols in East Berlin were provocative and should be scaled

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down. The relatively tough tone taken by Abrasimov may reflect

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both the personality of the man--a former party *apparatchik* with a well-deserved reputation as a hard liner--and a desire to probe for differences in the resolve of the Western Allies. In responding to Allied protests against East German actions on January 11, Soviet officials in Moscow took a notably tougher line with the British and French than they did with the Americans. To the former they asserted that Greater Berlin was no longer in existence, a claim they did not advance to US diplomats. But while there is no reason to doubt that the Soviets would be delighted if they could bluff the Allies, or some of them, into scaling down their activity in East Berlin, this is very different from an attempt to bar entry to military patrols.

Another reason to doubt that the Soviets would deliberately choose to precipitate a major crisis over Berlin is at least modest success of the "nibbling" tactics they have permitted the East Germans to undertake. In the absence of an Allied decision to make a major issue out of the East German moves, we are likely to see further such nibbling. A likely move in the near future would be a unilateral revision of the borders of East Berlin. Like the other small steps so far taken, this would not directly impinge on Allied rights and the Soviets might see it as an acceptably low-risk gamble. This year the Soviets have made no

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effort to deny that such a move is in the offing, in contrast to their posture two years ago when rumors of similar possible action first surfaced.

The Continuing Problem

Despite Moscow's caution and evident unwillingness to risk a major crisis, the Berlin situation is still potentially explosive. This is because the relatively low-risk actions Moscow has been willing to approve do little to solve the real problem in East Germany--the lack of legitimacy of the East German state and the failure of the regime to make its citizens more Communist than German. If the present discontent in East Germany should continue to grow--and with it the pressure for East German emigration--the possibility cannot be excluded that the Soviets would eventually support an East German move drastically to reduce contact with the West, despite the fact that such actions would violate existing agreements. They might, for example, reimpose their blockade of the West German missions. In an extremity, they might even seal off the border to all East-West travel. If the East German regime were to appear seriously threatened, it is almost certain that the Soviets would support such action, as they did in 1961, when they endorsed the building of the Berlin Wall. Similarly, if serious disturbances should erupt elsewhere in Eastern Europe, the Soviets might conclude that they had no alternative but to take preventive actions in East Germany.

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Moscow's Initial Probe for Changes in Post-Mao Attitudes
Is Foundering

The first major Soviet probe for any change in Peking's attitude toward the USSR since Mao's death appears to be drawing to a close with very little to show for the effort. Cracks are beginning to appear in the propaganda standdown Moscow has maintained since Mao's death over five months ago, Soviet diplomats are beginning to leak word to their associates of the "reasonable" proposals spurned by the Chinese at the current round of border talks in Peking, and Soviet media are again citing earlier Soviet proposals on non-use of force and nonaggression that Peking turned down in the past. The Soviets, in short, seem to be preparing for the cessation of this round of border talks.

It is unlikely that Moscow expected any quick change in Chinese attitudes after Mao and, indeed, most Soviet officials indicated just that. Nevertheless, the Soviets were clearly prepared to take some new initiatives after Mao departed.

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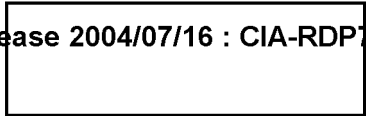
[redacted] The quick action of the new Chinese leadership against the "gang of four," whom the Soviets clearly believed to be Mao's spiritual heirs, apparently encouraged the Soviets to begin to probe for changes. Their initiative to start the new round of border talks probably should be seen in this light. With no Chinese ambassador in Moscow (since March 1976) and with the Soviet embassy in Peking enjoying little access to Chinese officials, the border talks conducted at the deputy foreign minister level provided the highest possible direct level of contact. After Deputy Foreign Minister Ilichev arrived in Peking on November 30 to reconvene the talks, various Soviet officials expressed optimism, claiming that the Chinese did not seem as intransigent as before. The Chinese for their part have sought to discredit this line, viewing it as a Soviet effort to worry the US. They apparently have not yielded an inch in their basic positions.

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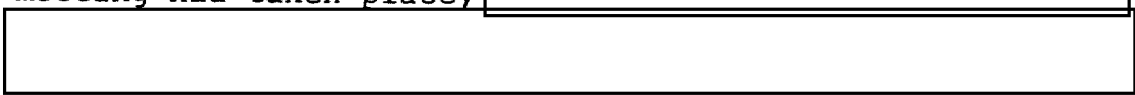


The first break in the Soviet propaganda standdown came about two weeks after Ilichev was received by Foreign Minister Huang Hua on January 22, indicating that the meeting only confirmed China's unwillingness to move ahead. In a domestic broadcast on February 4, *Izvestia* commentator Bovin, who is known to have ties with General Secretary Brezhnev, accused the new Chinese leadership of carrying on "the old anti-Soviet line," even though he commended it for changing Mao's domestic policies.

The Ilichev - Huang Hua meeting took place without publicity or official announcements, apparently at Chinese insistence because of concern over the propaganda use Moscow would make of it. By February 7, however, the Soviets began leaking the word in Peking that the meeting had taken place,

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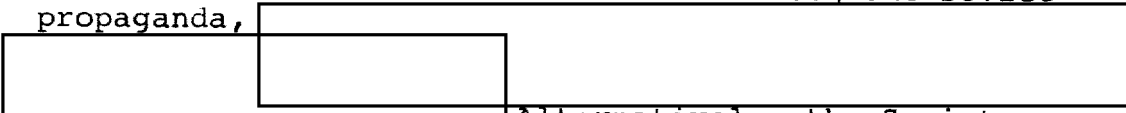
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The highest level Soviet polemical statement to date was a *Pravda* "Observer" article on February 10. In addition to criticizing "anti-Soviet attacks" on China, it recounted Soviet non-use-of-force and non-aggression proposals of 1971 and 1973, and Soviet proposals for high-level or summit meetings made in 1969, 1970, and 1973. It also cited an unspecified "initiative to improve relations" advanced in recent months. This "initiative" has also been mentioned in subsequent Soviet propaganda,

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Alternatively, the Soviets may simply be referring to their initiative to reconvene the border talks, or to the gestures they have made since Mao's death, including the propaganda standdown.

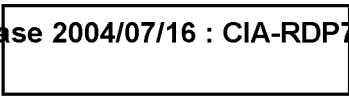
The timing of the "Observer" article could have been determined by an interview which Ilichev's counterpart, Vice Foreign Minister Yu Chan, gave to the managing editor of the Japanese *Mainichi Shimbun* on February 5. Among other things, Yu Chan termed the recent Soviet approach to China a fraud intended to deceive international opinion. Concerning the situation at the border talks, he accused Moscow of continuing to talk "nonsense" while taking "practically no measures whatsoever." It is likely that Moscow, which has had to endure a stream

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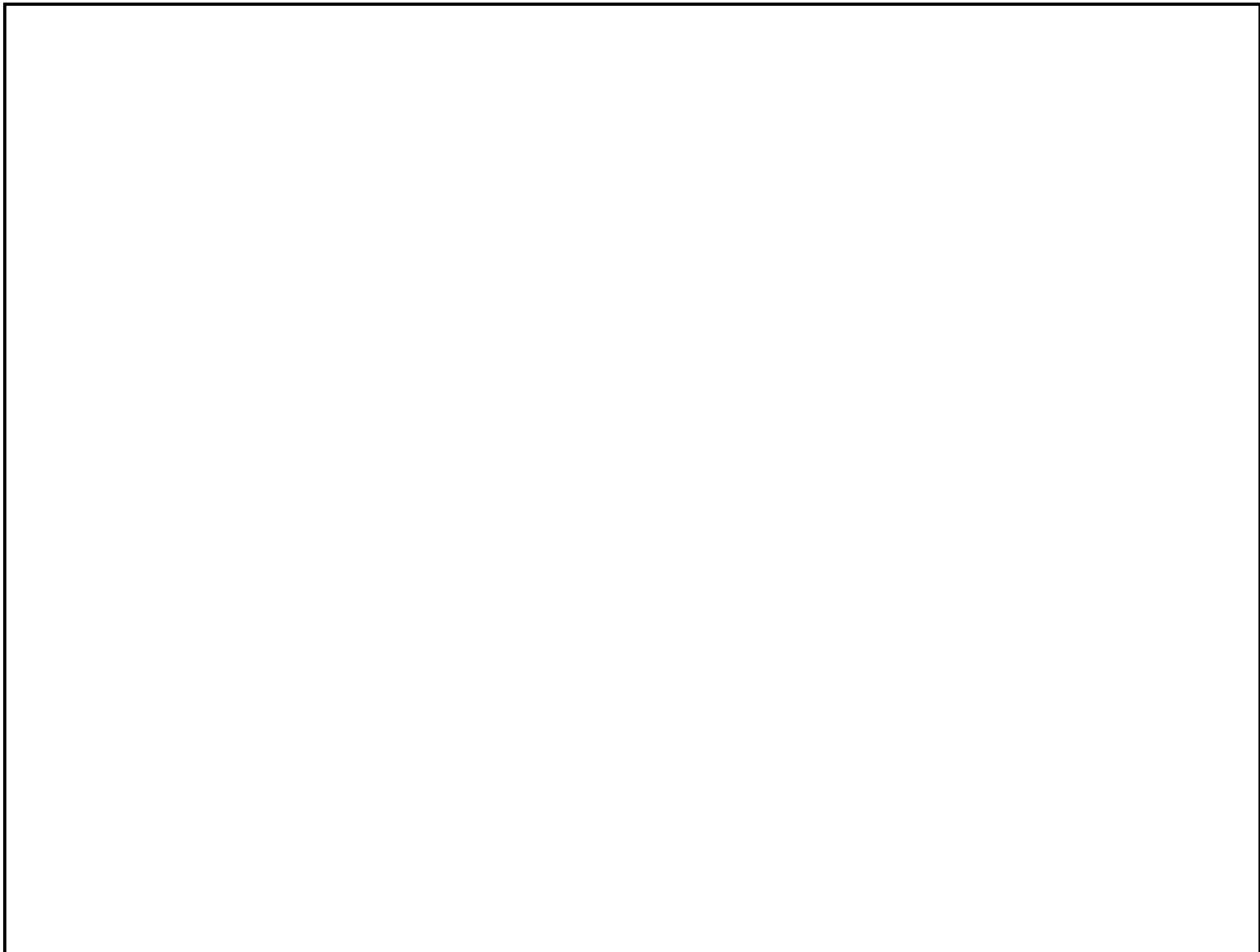
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of Chinese polemics during the standdown, felt that this sort of public attack by the chief Chinese negotiator merited a riposte, and that there was little risk in giving it. However, these scattered Soviet criticisms of China still fall far short of a full-scale resumption of Soviet polemics, and serve primarily as indicators that Moscow has not been satisfied with the results of its gestures to Peking.



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Chinese Refuse To Back Off "Unjust Treaties" Issue

At the same time, the Soviets have claimed that the Chinese continue to insist that Moscow admit the "injustice" of the early treaties on which the Sino-Soviet border is based before formal negotiations can begin.

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The Soviets claim that the negotiations stalled on this point before they ever got started. An article in the PRC-controlled Hong Kong press rebutting the *Pravda* "Observer" article has also indicated that the Chinese continue to demand this admission. This demand was one of the difficulties on which the abortive border discussions of 1964 foundered. Although the Chinese had never explicitly renounced it, they apparently had placed much less stress on it in recent years. If they are indeed holding firm, it would seem that Soviet pessimism is well-founded, particularly in light of the two other tough Chinese proposals which have been raised at this round--calling for Soviet withdrawal from Mongolia and reduction of border forces to the 1964 level

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If Peking saw it in its interest to keep the talks alive, it could presumably do so with very little effort. Moscow is not anxious to concede to the world that relations are at the same old impasse, and some modest gesture by Peking would probably keep Ilichev there. At the moment, however, the main impression is that of two sides preparing their positions publicly and privately for Ilichev's return.

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The Ustinov-Ryabov Conundrum

The responsibilities as party secretary of the CPSU Central Committee assumed by Yakov Ryabov last October are still not clearly discernible, despite several intriguing official appearances on his part. The ambiguities surrounding his role and that of Minister of Defense Ustinov raise questions for which we have no good answers.

At their center is the unknown of Kirilenko's current stance in the leadership--loyal deputy to Brezhnev or increasingly impatient "heir." Brezhnev and Kirilenko have different personal styles and, to the extent that these styles are reflected in policy areas, their relative political strengths are and will continue to be significant. At the Central Committee plenum last October, the fortunes of their respective clients presented a striking contrast. Kirilenko succeeded in getting his protege, Ryabov, seated on the Secretariat. Brezhnev failed to get his client--First Deputy Premier Tikhonov--seated on the Politburo. Since then, however, Ryabov's responsibilities as secretary and Kirilenko's access through him to additional sectors of party work have remained murky.

A "vacancy" on the Secretariat was created last April when then party secretary Ustinov became minister of defense. Ustinov has not been referred to in the Soviet media as party secretary since that time. The job is as demanding and time-consuming as that of minister of defense, and few Western observers believe that he can handle both positions indefinitely. Thus, it was widely expected that Ustinov would be formally released from his Secretariat duties at the Central Committee plenum in October. The promotion of Ryabov to the Secretariat at that time suggested that he might be slated as Ustinov's replacement. In the event, however, the plenum failed to announce Ustinov's release from the Secretariat.

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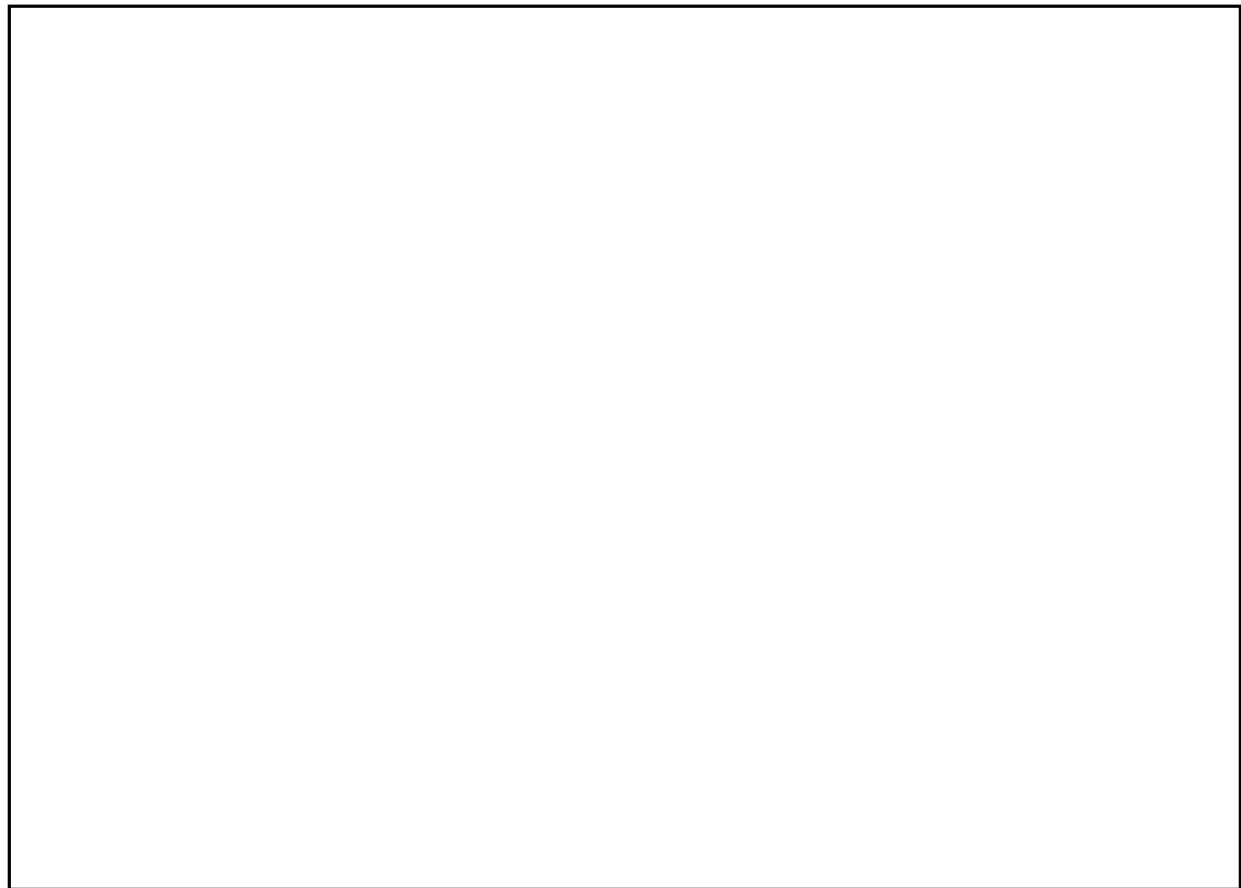
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Defense Industry in the Secretariat

As party secretary, Ustinov's major responsibility was the coordination of defense industry, a package that seems to have been designed to match his special expertise. There is no overriding precedent for a separate portfolio in the Secretariat, and defense industries in the past have been handled by the secretary for industry--one of Kirilenko's current responsibilities. Since Ustinov's appointment as minister of defense there have been only infrequent reports of contacts between him and defense industry principals, and we lack sufficient details concerning these contacts to discern whether they were of the type to be expected between defense industries and their primary customer--the minister of defense--or whether Ustinov has tailored his new job to fit his own particular strengths and has taken coordination of defense industry with him to his new assignment.

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Obituary signatures, sometimes useful in defining responsibilities within the Secretariat, have also been inconclusive. Ustinov, but not Ryabov, signed the obituary in November of a retired defense industry official. Obituary signature protocol is based in part on actual official contacts, however, and since the deceased was retired, Ryabov may have been too newly installed to have had any contact with him. Both Ustinov and Ryabov signed the obituary of a worker at the Baltic shipbuilding plant in Leningrad, but the other signatories were neither military nor defense industry, leaving the reason for Ryabov's signature ambiguous. He attended the funeral of an aircraft designer this month, but so did Moscow party boss Grishin and Kirilenko, as well as Ustinov and L. V. Smirnov, chairman of the Military-Industrial Commission.

The Administrative Organs Function

If access through his protege to defense industry decisions is important to Kirilenko, so is access to another, less clearly defined responsibility of Ustinov's. There is fragmentary evidence that as party secretary, he had achieved some supervisory responsibility for the Central Committee's Administrative Organs Department which checks on the armed forces, the KGB, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (the uniformed police).

In 1972, he addressed a seminar of regional Administrative Organs officials convened to discuss strengthening socialist legality, law and order, and mass defense work. In 1974, accompanied by the head of the Administrative Organs Department, who was making a rare public appearance, he received the deputy chairman of the Hungarian Council of Ministers responsible for the military and security police (but not defense industry). This is not to suggest that he had replaced Brezhnev as "most responsible" secretary in this field, or even that he had blocked the activities of other secretaries, but that he seemed to be playing an expanded role.

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Control of the Administrative Organs Department is an important political lever for a Soviet leader. It is a measure of the sensitivity of this department that when its head--a Brezhnev client--was killed in a plane crash shortly after Khrushchev's ouster, it took the leadership four years to agree on a replacement. During this period Brezhnev moved quickly to retrieve his loss and by 1966 was exercising effective control over the headless department. In the end, the leadership's solution was as nearly apolitical as it could manage; the first deputy head, a career apparatchik, was finally promoted to head.

In his first solo public appearance following his promotion to the Secretariat, Ryabov was the ranking political figure to attend the Militia Day ceremonies in November. Kapitonov alone in 1970 and with Polyansky in 1971, Kirilenko and Shelest in 1972, Mazurov in 1973, and Ustinov and Tikhonov in 1974 had successively represented the leadership on this occasion. In 1975, no major leaders were listed as attending. Ryabov's sudden emergence into the spotlight on Militia Day hinted at a possible link with the Administrative Organs Department. This hint was slightly strengthened in January when Ryabov represented the leadership at the All-Union DOSAAF Congress. At the last congress in 1971, the head of the Administrative Organs Department had performed this function.

Questions but No Answers

We are left, then, with some troubling questions. Has Ustinov been left on the Secretariat at least in part to block Kirilenko from further successes and to maintain the balance among the seniors on the Secretariat? Or is Ryabov simply too junior and too inexperienced at the national level to allow him to do more than understudy the overburdened Ustinov? How real is Kirilenko's access through his protegee to the sensitive areas of the defense industry and the Administrative Organs Department? Finally--to return to first causes--what sort of trade-off was involved in Ryabov's promotion in the first place?

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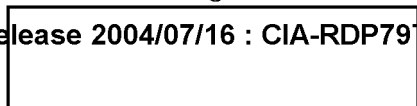


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