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Sino-Soviet Exchanges, 1969-84

A Reference Aid

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Sino-Soviet Exchanges, 1969-84

Summary

*Information available
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Monitoring Sino-Soviet exchanges provides important clues to the status and course of Sino-Soviet relations and the possible implications of these relations for the United States. This Reference Aid charts the background and evolution of the various forms of exchange that have developed in Sino-Soviet relations over the past 15 years to serve as a benchmark for evaluating future developments.

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Key Events in Sino-Soviet Exchanges

1969-73

Border talks start.

Soviets offer proposals to ease border tensions; pull back some troops from border; accept main channel to delineate frontier along border rivers; offer to sign nonaggression pact, and pact prohibiting the use of force; offer to treat China on basis of five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence; also propose revived diplomatic, trade, technical, scientific, sports, and cultural exchanges

China agrees to improve diplomatic and trade relations but limits other progress until USSR agrees to withdraw forces from disputed areas along border

1974-75

No progress in border talks; no significant Soviet proposal.

Chinese policies exacerbate Sino-Soviet friction

1976-78

Mao dies. Soviets renew proposals for improved relations—rebuffed by China. Border talks become moribund

China moves closer to the United States, Japan, and other Western nation

Sino-Vietnamese confrontation sets stage for increased Sino-Soviet tensions by 1979

1979-80

China compromises; proposes talks without precondition of Soviet withdrawal from disputed areas on border

Soviets respond cautiously

Talks open but make no progress; suspended after Soviet invasion of Afghanistan

1981-Present

Moscow renews overtures amid Sino-US friction over Taiwan and other issues

Beijing responds with unprecedented willingness to increase Sino-Soviet political, economic, scientific, sports, and cultural exchanges

No reported progress on fundamental "obstacles" to Sino-Soviet normalization concerning Soviet military involvement in Afghanistan, Vietnam, and Mongolia, and along China's border

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Sino-Soviet Exchanges, 1969-84

Impact of the Sino-Soviet Dispute

The Sino-Soviet dispute emerged into full view in the 1960s as relations steadily deteriorated from ideological bickering to armed clashes along the contested frontier; Sino-Soviet exchanges came to a nearly complete halt:

- By 1967 both sides had recalled their ambassadors; diplomatic relations were being conducted by charges d'affaires.
- During the period of 1967-69, government-organized demonstrations repeatedly besieged the other side's embassy.
- In 1966 China broke party ties.
- By 1967 media from both sides had ceased reporting on leaders' messages and receptions on national holidays.
- In 1967 cultural, scientific, sports, and other such exchanges ceased.
- Trade was still carried on, but the level fell rapidly. No trade talks were held from 1967 through 1969.
- Routine matters, such as the maintaining of navigation markers and dredging of border rivers were also affected; China refused to send a delegation to an annual border-river navigation meeting in 1968.

Typifying the state of Sino-Soviet exchanges, Chinese leaders refused to talk with Premier Kosygin when he phoned on 21 March 1969, presumably to discuss the Sino-Soviet border clashes. Perhaps the only channel of communication that worked well at that time was the propaganda machines in Moscow and Beijing, which turned out lengthy daily diatribes

The border clashes in 1969 marked a major turning point in the worsening dispute. Each power increasingly saw the other as a major security problem and strengthened long-term diplomatic and defense strategies accordingly. The Soviet Union continued to expand and modernize its forces along the Sino-Soviet border and to adopt diplomatic initiatives—sometimes backed with offers of economic and military aid—designed to isolate China and curb its influence in Asia

China not only reoriented its defense policy but undertook a basic geopolitical realignment toward the West. As a major counterweight to Soviet power, the United States has loomed large in Chinese calculations, establishing a compatibility of Chinese and US interests in checking the expansion of Soviet power. Overlapping strategic concerns remain at the core of the Sino-US reconciliation cemented by the 1972 Shanghai Communique and the 1978 Joint Communique establishing diplomatic relations.

Although China and the Soviet Union agreed in late 1969 to reduce the chances for military conflict along the frontier, to start talks on border problems, and to resume a modicum of governmental interchange, this did little to temper the strategic and political rivalry. Throughout the 1970s, China's firm demand for a pullback of Soviet forces from so-called disputed areas of the border impeded any significant improvements in the relationship.

Triangular Politics

Whatever accommodations have taken place over the past 15 years have largely reflected the determination on both sides to avoid military conflict, and to improve each country's tactical position within the US-Soviet-Chinese triangle

The Soviet Union has consistently promoted increased exchanges, largely to undercut perceived advantages the United States has derived from the Sino-Soviet

"Disputed areas" refers to all territory Beijing claims Imperial and Soviet Russia occupied beyond the boundary lines set by the 19th-century "unequal" treaties. The territory is estimated at about 30,000 square kilometers—mainly in the Pamir Mountains in the west and involving several hundred disputed border-river islands, including Zhen Bao (Damansky Island), the site of the bloody clashes of March 1969, and Heixiazhi (Big Ussuri Island), the large Soviet-held island at the confluence of the Amur and Ussuri Rivers, immediately opposite the strategic Soviet city of Khabarovsk (see the foldout maps following the main text)

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dispute and to persuade China to accept the territorial and military status quo in Asia. To retard Sino-US cooperation against them, the Soviets offered in the early 1970s to modify their territorial claims along the border, to sign nonaggression pacts and/or agreements prohibiting the use of force, to base Sino-Soviet relations on the five principles of peaceful coexistence, and to restore high-level official contact, including party ties, in the interest of common opposition to the United States.

China largely ignored these offers. It agreed in 1970 to restore ambassadorial relations and to resume normal trade talks, but otherwise rebuffed Soviet overtures on the grounds that they did not meet Beijing's demand for a Soviet withdrawal from disputed border areas. China focused instead on greater defense preparedness, diplomatic initiatives, and closer ties with the United States.

Weary of Chinese intransigence, Soviet leaders had decided by 1973 to await the death of their nemesis, Mao Zedong, then in declining health, before making new overtures to improve relations with China. When Mao died in September 1976, Moscow followed quickly with several gestures:

- Soviet media stopped criticizing China for four months.
- Brezhnev sent a Soviet party (CPSU) message of condolence on Mao's death—the first Soviet party message sent to China in a decade—followed by a CPSU message in October congratulating Hua Guofeng on his appointment as the new Chinese party chairman.
- Soviet media gave unusually prominent attention to China's National Day celebrations on 1 October 1976.
- In late November the Soviets sent their chief negotiator, Deputy Foreign Minister Ilichev, back to China to resume the border talks after a hiatus of 18 months.
- Privately, the Soviets offered to assist China in rebuilding factories destroyed in the massive North China earthquake of 1976.

China again rebuffed the Soviets. In February 1978, Beijing added new public demands, calling for Soviet military withdrawal from Mongolia and the reduction of Soviet forces in the Far East. In June the border talks were suspended. In addition, China's leaders continued to seek closer political and economic ties with the United States, Japan, and other Western countries, called for a unified front against "Soviet expansionism," and normalized relations with the United States. Beijing accelerated the improvement of its relations with the United States in an effort to temper the Soviet reaction to China's invasion of Vietnam.

During the same period, the USSR stepped up military activity around China's periphery:

- In March 1978, Brezhnev and Defense Minister Ustinov toured the Soviet Far East and viewed a Soviet military exercise not far from China's border.
- Moscow increased support for Vietnam, signing a friendship treaty in November 1978 and giving large amounts of aid in 1979 and 1980.
- Just before the Chinese invasion of Vietnam, it became clear that the USSR had established a new Far East command, the first since 1954.
- During China's action against Vietnam, Soviet border forces went on alert in an apparent effort to intimidate the Chinese.
- Finally, shortly after Chinese forces withdrew from Vietnam in March 1979, Moscow conducted—ahead of schedule—what the Chinese claimed was the largest military exercise ever held near the Chinese border. Two Soviet divisions, transferred to Mongolia for the exercise, stayed on after its conclusion.

To deflect Soviet military pressure, China dropped its demands that Soviet troops withdraw from disputed border areas as a precondition for improved relations and called for unconditional talks to better Sino-Soviet ties. Suspecting China was trying to use the

talks to drive a wedge between the USSR and Vietnam. Moscow responded cautiously. Only one session was held in late 1979 before China suspended the talks following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979.

Recently Increased Exchanges

As Sino-US differences over Taiwan and other issues reemerged in 1980-82, however, Chinese leaders began to reassess their foreign policy strategy. Hoping to reduce tensions with the Soviets and increase China's room for maneuver in the strategic triangle, Beijing proclaimed an "independent" foreign policy and agreed in 1982 to open "consultative talks" with Moscow. Subsequently, China has accepted on a limited basis a number of longstanding Soviet offers for more bilateral exchanges, especially in sports, cultural, and economic areas. Soviet leaders, and to a much lesser degree Chinese officials, have highlighted these exchanges—unprecedented in the past 20 years—as signs of improving relations:

The rivalry between the two powers has not abated, however. Neither side gives any sign of a willingness to compromise on basic issues affecting their security and political interests in Asia. Moscow has repeatedly rejected China's conditions that call for the Soviet Union to:

- Withdraw from Afghanistan.
- Stop supporting Vietnam's occupation of Kampuchea.
- Reduce its forces along the Sino-Soviet border.
- Withdraw its troops from Mongolia.

In early 1983, the Chinese added that Soviet intermediate-range SS-20 missiles deployed in the eastern USSR be included in any reduction of Soviet forces along the border.

We do not anticipate that the recent increases in Sino-Soviet trade and other exchanges will develop into a broader detente. There are, however, a number of

¹ By late 1983, Beijing and Moscow had established separate forums for talks at the level of vice foreign minister to deal with bilateral relations and "global" issues. Vice foreign ministers also conducted talks on Sino-Soviet border questions, but those talks have not convened since 1978. Beijing and Moscow also held talks on bilateral trade, border-river navigation issues, border trade, exchanges of sports teams, tourist delegations, economists, students, scientists, and technical personnel.

developments we would look for as signals for such a basic change in Sino-Soviet relations:

- Holding regularly scheduled summit meetings.
- Reestablishing cooperative party ties.
- Chinese acceptance of Soviet proposals for nonuse of force, nonaggression, or Soviet territorial claims along the border.
- Soviet withdrawal of several divisions from Mongolia or along Sino-Soviet border, or proportionately large cutbacks in military support for Vietnam or Afghanistan.
- Soviet provision of large amounts (several hundred million dollars) of technical and economic aid to Chinese economic development.
- Muted Chinese opposition to obvious signs of Soviet expansion abroad or direct Chinese political collaboration with the USSR against US policies.

The Sino-Soviet Border Talks, 1969-78

The Sino-Soviet border talks—held at the deputy foreign minister level—were the main channel of official contact between the Soviet Union and China for nine years, until they were suspended indefinitely in mid-1978. Developments in the talks fall into three distinct phases—each demonstrating strikingly divergent Chinese and Soviet objectives.

Soviet Proposals and Chinese Responses

1969-73. The border talks were an outgrowth of the escalating frontier clashes in the spring and summer of 1969. Fearing a full-scale conflict, both sides agreed to start the talks in order to ease tensions. In doing so, the Soviet Union backed away from its initial contention that, since the existing border treaties were "valid," only "consultations" were needed to delineate some "ill-defined" sectors of the frontier. The Chinese, in turn, dropped several preconditions for negotiations only to table them again as demands when the talks began in October 1969. The Chinese wanted:

- Soviet acknowledgment that the border was based on "unequal" treaties forced on China by czarist Russia.

Key Events in the Sino-Soviet Border Talks, 1969-78

1969

Soviet-Chinese forces clash along the border from March through August. Border talks begin in October—bog down almost immediately over Beijing's demand that Moscow withdraw forces from Chinese-defined disputed areas along border.

Moscow proposes nonaggression pact, differentiation of disputed and nondisputed sectors of border, and improved diplomatic, trade, and other exchanges.

1970

Moscow states its willingness to accept main channel as boundary line along border rivers. Soviets withdraw troops from some border-river islands.

Soviets make at least two offers for nonaggression pact.

1971

Soviets propose agreement prohibiting the use of force; reaffirm willingness to accept main channel as boundary line, and indicate willingness to accept a new agreement covering entire border.

1972

Moscow agrees to base Sino-Soviet relations on the Chinese initiated five principles of peaceful coexistence.

Soviets offer long-term trade agreement, to resume deliveries of full sets of industrial equipment, and to renew scientific, technical, and cultural exchanges.

1973

Soviets reiterate offer on main channel as river boundary marker. Again offer a nonaggression pact.

1973-78

No progress in talks. Soviet negotiator only infrequently in Beijing. Last meeting in June 1978.

1981-83

Soviets call for revived border talks, propose "confidence-building measures" along the border, and show willingness to consider mutual troop withdrawals.

- The return "in principle" of nearly all disputed territory to China.
- The withdrawal of Soviet forces from all disputed territory.

The agreement to start the talks was reached following a meeting in the drab halls of the old Beijing airport on 11 September 1969 between Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai and Soviet Premier Kosygin, who was on his way home from Ho Chi Minh's funeral.

[] Kosygin proposed that both sides regulate border tensions, begin frontier negotiations, restore ambassadorial ties, and resume talks on bilateral trade.

According to Chinese accounts, later denied by the USSR, Zhou and Kosygin reached an "understanding" to withdraw forces from disputed areas along the frontier. Since the areas were then under Soviet control, the reported accord amounted to Moscow's agreeing to a unilateral Soviet troop withdrawal. China's demand that the Soviet Union implement the Zhou-Kosygin understanding and withdraw its troops from disputed areas, and the Soviet refusal to do so, subsequently not only blocked progress in the border negotiations but also served as a brake on any significant improvement in Sino-Soviet relations over the next 10 years.

¹ Technically, Beijing was willing to accept the boundary line of the "unequal" treaties once Moscow met these preconditions, but this would have given China control of "disputed territory" along the border.

Between 1969 and 1973, Chinese and Soviet negotiators met frequently. In all, a Soviet deputy foreign minister spent 35 months at the talks in Beijing. Anxious to show forward movement in relations with both China and the United States at a time of perceived Soviet disadvantage in the US-Soviet-Chinese relationship, Moscow offered a series of proposals designed to promote an accommodation. Several were timed to coincide with high-level Chinese deliberations on foreign policy or Soviet negotiations with the United States on SALT and other questions.

The most significant Soviet initiatives during this period include:

- The USSR proposed to limit forward patrolling and propaganda exchanges along the frontier. According to one account, the USSR took several of these steps in late 1969 and the Chinese reciprocated. Both sides:
 - Avoided forward patrolling that would dispute the lines of control then maintained by Soviet and Chinese border guards.
 - Consulted on frontier issues instead of resorting to force to resolve them.
 - Took into account the interests of the civilian population living along the border (for example, by allowing herders to follow their flocks across the border in seasonal migrations).
 - Stopped propaganda exchanges with loudspeakers along the frontier.
- Soviet troops were withdrawn from some disputed border-river islands such as Zhen Bao (Damansky) Island, site of the bloody clashes of March 1969. The pullback was reported to have taken place by February 1970.
- The Soviet Union [] a willingness in January 1970 to accept the main channel, the "Thalweg Principle," as the boundary marker along the Amur and Ussuri Rivers. Moscow reiterated this position in early 1971 and again in March 1973. The Soviets had contended in 1969 that the border should run along the Chinese bank of these rivers.
- The new Soviet position, in effect, recognized China's claim to Zhen Bao (Damansky) and other disputed islands, with the notable exception of the strategically located Heixiazi (Big Ussuri) Island, opposite the Soviet city of Khabarovsk.
- Soviet propaganda attacks on China were cut back in late 1969 and early 1970.
- The Soviet Union reportedly offered to sign a nonaggression pact with China in late 1969. Variations of this proposal were offered on 11 February and 8 July 1970, and in June 1973.
- According to [] reports from Beijing that were later confirmed by Soviet and Chinese public statements, the USSR proposed a nonuse of force agreement with China on 15 January 1971. China refused on the grounds that such an accord would duplicate the existing 1950 Sino-Soviet treaty of alliance. Moscow then countered with an offer to add a protocol to the 1950 treaty, committing both sides to the nonuse of force and noninterference in border regions. China again refused, but offered one of its rare counterproposals—including provisions on nonuse of force in a new accord on maintaining the status quo along the border. The two sides then negotiated a mutually acceptable text only to have the whole exercise founder over China's insistence that the article on nonuse be tied to Soviet acceptance of the Chinese concept of "disputed areas."
- The Soviet Union offered several times during the first four years of the border talks to restore ambassadorial relations, improve trade relations—including the sale of whole Soviet plants—and to resume scientific, technical, sports, and cultural exchanges. (Ambassadorial relations and annual trade agreements were resumed in 1970.)
- The USSR offered to base Sino-Soviet relations on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence—a significant concession made public by Brezhnev in March 1972. In November 1970, China had declared that these principles should govern relations between all states, in sharp contrast to the Soviet

contention that relations between socialist states should be based on the principles of "proletarian internationalism." According to the Brezhnev doctrine, Soviet "principles" of international relations also included the right and obligation to interfere in the affairs of a fraternal state that strayed too far from the socialist path. The Chinese principles of peaceful coexistence, however, emphatically prohibited such interference.

• The Soviet Union proposed summit meetings, joint Sino-Soviet action in support of Vietnam against the United States, and the restoration of Sino-Soviet party ties:

- On 8 July 1970, the USSR proposed summit-level talks to discuss a draft accord on mutual nonaggression that would include a ban on using nuclear weapons.
- In October 1969 and August 1970, Brezhnev publicly disclosed Soviet interest in renewed Sino-Soviet party ties and cooperation against the United States.
- During February 1971, Soviet officials made private overtures for cooperation with China against the United States in Vietnam

China responded positively to only a few of these Soviet offers and made an occasional gesture on its own:

- It reciprocated Soviet efforts to reduce the chance of conflict by border patrols.
- It agreed in 1970 to restore ambassadorial relations and resume trade negotiations.
- It returned to the border-river navigation talks in 1969, but nothing was accomplished.
- It matched Moscow's pronaganda standdown for a few weeks in late 1969

During the first two years of the border talks, Moscow asked that the sessions alternate between Moscow and Beijing or that they be downgraded to the ambassadorial level. The Soviets may have hoped to use the veiled threat of downgrading the talks to prompt China to be more cooperative. Concerned about losing this "safety valve," China took steps to assure that the border talks continued as before. Most notably, Mao

Zedong took a rare personal initiative in 1970 by asking a Soviet official at the May Day reception in Beijing when the head of the Soviet negotiating team would return to resume the border talks. By then, the talks had been in recess for several weeks amid reports of Soviet dissatisfaction with the lack of progress.

July 1973-September 1976. After the summer of 1973 until Mao's death in 1976, meetings became much less frequent and shorter. China's defense program, successful diplomatic offensive, and establishment of ties with the United States by the time of President Nixon's visit in February 1972 helped offset Soviet military and political pressure in Asia. Under these circumstances, China presumably judged that it had little need to accommodate the USSR. Seeing the futility of further gestures toward China at this time, Moscow decided to wait until its principal nemesis, Mao Zedong, left the scene, hoping new Chinese leaders would be more responsive to Soviet overtures.

The chief Soviet negotiator, Deputy Foreign Minister Ilichev, went back to Moscow in July 1973 saying that he would return to Beijing for only short periods unless there was a change in China's policy. China did not budge. The Chinese National Day message to the USSR on 6 November 1974 said:

It is necessary first of all to conclude an agreement on mutual nonaggression for nonuse of force against one another, on maintaining the status quo on the border, on averting armed conflicts, and on the departure of the armed forces of both sides from disputed areas, and then to proceed toward the solution of the border question as a whole by the way of talks

Brezhnev replied on 26 November that China's proposal for a preliminary agreement was:

Nothing more nor less than a demand for a withdrawal of Soviet Frontier Guards from a series of areas of our territory to which the Chinese have now decided to lay claim and have consequently begun to call 'disputed areas'

In June 1975, [

] China had limited its demand for a withdrawal of Soviet troops to 20 kilometers from the border, but this was still unacceptable to the USSR. At the same time, Soviet commentator A. Bovin said flatly that the border talks were "deadlocked."

September 1976-June 1978. After Mao's death, Moscow sent Ilichev back to Beijing on 27 November 1976 for a stay of three months. He reiterated Soviet interest in a nonaggression or nonuse of force treaty and in improved bilateral exchanges. The talks adjourned in February 1977 with Ilichev complaining about China's demands on the "unequal" treaties and the withdrawal of Soviet troops. A year later, Chinese Premier Hua Guofeng publicly reaffirmed Beijing's insistence on Soviet withdrawal from disputed areas. He added a new public demand that the USSR also withdraw its troops from Mongolia and reduce its forces along the Sino-Soviet border to the level of Khrushchev's time. Amid these bleak signs, Ilichev once again returned to Beijing on 26 April 1978. In May, Chinese Embassy officers in Moscow [

] saw Ilichev's return as a "joke." In late June, Ilichev left Beijing conceding [that the talks were "useless.")

Recent Developments. Although there have been no border talks since mid-1978, the USSR from time to time has shown interest in reviving them. Official guidance issued in late 1982 said that Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko, meeting Chinese Foreign Minister Huang Hua at Brezhnev's funeral in November 1982, indicated a Soviet willingness to withdraw some troops from along the Sino-Soviet border, while Deng Xiaoping [that a Soviet troop pullback was possible during the near future. "Confidence-building measures," such as giving prior notification and sending observers to military exercises in the border regions, were also raised by the USSR, most recently in Ilichev's discussions with Vice Foreign Minister Qian Qichen during talks in Beijing in October 1983.

¹ Ilichev, the chief Soviet negotiator during most of the border talks, was Moscow's chief negotiator at the 1979 deputy foreign minister talks and the recent Sino-Soviet "consultative talks.")

Vice Foreign Minister Talks, 1979 and 1982-83

As Sino-Soviet military tensions reached their highest point in 10 years following China's invasion of Vietnam in February-March 1979, Beijing moved to ease the situation by calling for unconditional Sino-Soviet talks. The Chinese overture came in a backhanded way—contained in the 3 April 1979 formal announcement of China's intention to allow the Sino-Soviet treaty of alliance to lapse in 1980. Once the talks got under way in late September 1979, Beijing hewed to a tough line, insisting that the USSR remove "obstacles" to improved relations. The Chinese specifically demanded that Moscow:

- Reduce Soviet forces along the Chinese border to the level of the early 1960s.
- Withdraw Soviet troops from Mongolia.
- Cease Soviet support for Vietnam's occupation of Kampuchea.
- Work to resolve the Sino-Soviet border dispute.

Moscow rejected the Chinese conditions, emphasizing that progress in the talks would depend on China and that improvement in Sino-Soviet relations would not occur at the expense of third countries. The Soviets also reportedly proposed a joint statement of opposition to "hegemony," an end to Sino-Soviet polemics, regular Sino-Soviet meetings, including summit meetings, and expanded trade, technical, and cultural exchanges. Three months later, in January 1980, China officially suspended the talks because of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

By mid-1982, however, China changed tack again—this time adopting a much more flexible attitude toward vice-ministerial talks with Moscow. And, unlike Beijing's previous strict insistence on restricting Sino-Soviet exchanges, the Chinese agreed to expand contacts in such areas as trade, cultural, and sports exchanges while continuing to insist that normalizing relations would depend on Soviet concessions in the security sphere.

Key Events in Vice Foreign Minister Talks

April 1979

China proposes unconditional talks on improving Sino-Soviet relations

September-November 1979

Sino-Soviet talks at vice foreign minister level held in Moscow. No progress reported as China insists Soviets address "obstacles" to improved relations concerning Mongolia and Vietnam. Soviets refuse to normalize Sino-Soviet relations at expense of third countries

January 1980

Beijing suspends Sino-Soviet talks on account of Soviet invasion of Afghanistan

October 1982

"Discussions" between Vice Foreign Ministers, Qian and Ilchev on normalizing Sino-Soviet relations held in Beijing. China stresses three "obstacles"—demands withdrawal of Soviet forces from Sino-Soviet and Sino-Mongolian borders, end of Soviet support for Vietnam in Kampuchea, withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan

Soviets refuse to deal with third-country issues.

March 1983

Round two of Qian-Ilchev talks. Detailed discussions regarding Soviet troops in Asia but no accord reached. Agreements reached on increased trade, revived student exchange

September 1983

Sino-Soviet discussions on "international issues" begin in Beijing between Vice Foreign Ministers Qian and Kapitsa. Little of substance accomplished except that Qian agrees to continue the talks later in Moscow

October 1983

Round three of Qian-Ilchev talks. Soviets offer "confidence-building measures" along the border, suggest raising talks to foreign minister level, propose 22 specific scientific or cultural exchanges. Expanded barter trade along the border is discussed. Agree that the talks will resume in March 1984

This adjustment paralleled China's new emphasis on an "independent" foreign policy—an attempt to rely less explicitly on the United States as a strategic counterweight to Soviet power and more on diplomacy as a tool to counter Soviet threats to China's security. It was more tactical than strategic in nature, reflecting the influence of several factors:

- China had become increasingly dissatisfied with US policies, especially regarding Taiwan, and presumably judged that reopening Sino-Soviet talks would prompt US leaders to pay more attention to Chinese interests.
- China also saw the Soviet Union bogged down with serious foreign and domestic problems—including leadership succession—that temporarily reduced the likelihood of a Soviet attack and possibly increased chances for Soviet concessions.

- Beijing had decided to give more priority to economic over military modernization. As a result, China was inclined to emphasize political negotiations, in tandem with a slow but steady military buildup, to deal with the Soviet threat.

- Close association with the United States was hampering China's ability to increase its influence with Third World countries and so-called progressive political parties that are traditionally suspicious of the United States.

Anxious to exploit an opportunity to drive a wedge between Beijing and Washington, the USSR offered to reopen talks and reduced criticism of Chinese policy

To date, renewed vice-ministerial discussions have occurred along two tracks.

Qian-Ilichev Talks

The first involves talks between Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Qian Qichen and Soviet Vice Foreign Minister Ilichev, a veteran of the Sino-Soviet border talks and Sino-Soviet talks of 1979. The first round occurred in Beijing in October 1982, followed by rounds in Moscow in March 1983, and in Beijing the following October.

The Chinese have characterized these sessions as "consultations." As best we can determine, they have firmly reiterated their preconditions for normalizing Sino-Soviet relations:

- Withdraw Soviet forces from along the Sino-Soviet border and Mongolia. Since 1983, this has included Soviet SS-20 missiles in Asia.
- End Soviet support for Vietnam's occupation of Kampuchea.
- Withdraw Soviet forces from Afghanistan.

The Soviets, in turn, have reiterated their refusal to discuss matters involving third countries. Moscow has tried to encourage forward movement—thus far without success—through proposals on a nonaggression pact, mutual force reductions along the border, and so-called confidence-building measures involving prior notification of military exercises and troop movements near the frontier.

The agreements reached as a result of these meetings have been in nonpolitical areas. For example, both sides agreed in principle during the October 1983 talks to increase bilateral trade in 1984 and to increase student, sports, and cultural exchanges. In addition, the Chinese accepted a Soviet offer to send technicians to help renovate a few Soviet-equipped industrial plants in China.

Kapitsa-Qian Talks

In September 1983 Soviet Vice Foreign Minister Kapitsa, a leading Soviet China specialist, paid an official visit to Beijing to try to open a separate channel for talks on "international issues"—perhaps in order to accommodate China's demand that issues regarding Mongolia, Indochina, and Afghanistan be discussed. He met twice with Vice Foreign Minister

Qian Qichen and once with Foreign Minister Wu Xueqian, reportedly to exchange views on recent developments in the Middle East, Central America, the Indian Ocean, Indochina, and on disarmament, including the deployment of SS-20s in Asia. He and the Chinese also discussed expanding trade and student exchanges.

Kapitsa had been trying to get an official invitation to China for three years but had only been able to travel there in 1980, 1981, and 1982 as a "guest" of the Soviet Embassy. The 1983 visit had been scheduled originally for May, but was reportedly canceled by China in April amid a flurry of sharp Sino-Soviet media exchanges regarding Sino-Vietnamese military clashes at that time. The Chinese finally agreed in July to allow Kapitsa to come, this time as an "official guest."

Perhaps the most significant result of the September trip was China's agreement to send Qian to Moscow for followup talks at a later date—

Coming on the eve of Secretary of Defense Weinberger's visit to Beijing, both the Soviets and the Chinese apparently hoped to use this agreement to their advantage in jockeying for position within the great-power triangle.

Exchanges on Other Border Issues

Since late 1969 the Soviets and Chinese have adopted measures to prevent clashes by border patrols. As a result, there have been no major clashes and only a few publicized incidents over the past 15 years.

The most dramatic incident occurred in March 1974 when the Chinese arrested and detained three members of a Soviet helicopter crew that made a forced landing in Xinjiang (see figure 1). The Chinese did not release the crew and the helicopter until 21 months later.

Key Events in the Exchanges on Other Border Issues

June 1969 -

China agrees to return to Border-River Navigation Talks after absence of two years; talks make no progress as China insists on raising territorial issues which the USSR holds as inappropriate for these talks.

October 1969

Sino-Soviet measures adopted which reduce chance of conflict by border guards

March 1974

Soviet helicopter and three-man crew captured and detained after making forced landing in western China.

September 1974

Protocol on Soviet-Chinese-Mongolian-North Korea-North Vietnamese border railway shipping signed—first such agreement noted since 1960s

December 1975

China releases Soviet helicopter crew

July-October 1977

China, in border Navigation Talks, reaches understanding with USSR on transit near Khabarovsk

May 1978

China protests Soviet border incursion along Ussuri River

August 1978

Sino-Soviet Railway Commission meets; fails to reach agreement on border transit

1978-79

Military tensions rise at time of Sino-Vietnamese confrontation in Indochina

July 1979

Sino-Soviet incident along western border.

April 1981

Sino-Soviet Railway Commission reaches agreement for first time since 1963

April 1983

Sino-Soviet protocol on frontier trade signed—first since 1960:

September 1983

October 1983

Chinese Foreign Ministry publicly states that issue of Soviet SS-20 missiles in Asia will be raised during talks on normalizing Sino-Soviet relations. Chinese officials had raised the issue at the March 1983 meeting

Beijing's reasons for detaining the crew so long and then suddenly releasing them remains a mystery. Because the release came shortly after what was from China's perspective an unproductive visit by President Ford to China, some observers have speculated that China wanted implicitly to warn the United States that it had a Soviet option if the United States remained unresponsive to Chinese concerns over Taiwan and other issues:

Another major publicized border incident occurred in May 1978 when Soviet Frontier Guards crossed the

Ussuri River into Chinese territory, allegedly in pursuit of an armed Soviet criminal. According to Chinese accounts, the Soviets fired at and wounded several Chinese. In response to a Chinese note of protest, the Soviets claimed their guards thought they were on a Soviet island, but Moscow—in a break with its past practice—expressed regret and promised to punish those responsible. The Chinese subsequently rejected the Soviet explanation as disingenuous.

Figure 1
Sino-Soviet Border Incidents, 1970-84



As military tensions continued to build between the two sides in 1978 and early 1979, another incident occurred in July 1979 along the Xinjiang and Kazakhstan frontier. Soviet forces captured and detained a Chinese veterinarian. Seven months later, the USSR released him—on 14 February 1980, the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Sino-Soviet alliance. Beijing responded negatively, organizing a rally in Xinjiang to protest the border incident. An incident also took place along the Soviet border with Inner Mongolia in October 1980

Subsequently, China held well-publicized military exercises in 1981 and 1982 in regions fairly near the frontier. These exercises were designed to demonstrate Chinese military preparedness. []

[] but did not publicize the []
[] Moreover, [] as of []

mid-1983, Beijing was planning an even larger exercise for 1984 postulating a Soviet attack in the northeast, but "officially" the training will not be based on a specific adversary

The Soviet response to Chinese concerns along the frontier has been to propose confidence-building measures, such as providing prior notification and sending observers to each other's military exercises in areas near the Sino-Soviet border. Beijing thus far has not responded positively to these overtures

Border-River Navigation Talks

The Sino-Soviet agreement on the Navigation and Construction of the Boundary Waterways, signed in Harbin in 1951, established a Sino-Soviet Joint Navigation Commission to deal with technical questions

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concerning river traffic. The commission has met most years, alternately in China and the USSR.

The Sino-Soviet dispute began to affect navigation cooperation in the 1960s. As early as 1964, the USSR began requiring Chinese boats to get approval from Soviet authorities before going to the confluence of the Amur and Ussuri Rivers (see figure 3). On 30 April 1965, the Chinese implemented regulations prohibiting Soviet vessels from loading or unloading people and goods without an inspection. On 19 April 1966, China adopted further measures, giving Chinese officials the right to board Soviet ships in Chinese waters and placed a number of new restrictions on Soviet vessels.

The Soviets in 1967 closed the Amur-Ussuri confluence to Chinese boats, forcing China to use the Kazakevich Channel instead, which the USSR claimed marked the border line. The channel was more shallow than the confluence and froze earlier in the fall.

During the 14th annual meeting of the Navigation Talks in July 1967, China raised territorial questions, but the Soviet delegate protested and the Chinese delegation walked out. China did not send a delegation to the next meeting of the commission, scheduled for May 1968, and broke off informal consultations between local Chinese and Soviet officials on changes in the course of the rivers and other navigational matters.

China agreed to resume the Navigation Talks in June 1969 after a two-year hiatus, but China continued to raise territorial questions, which the USSR judged inappropriate. The commission did not meet in 1975 or 1976. Meanwhile, the Kazakevich Channel began to silt up by 1974. The Soviets accused China of blocking Soviet dredging operations. In May 1974 the USSR offered to allow the Chinese access again to the confluence of the Amur and Ussuri, provided that China respected the Soviets' "sovereign rights." The USSR also suggested the creation of a joint Sino-Soviet project to dredge the Kazakevich Channel. China accused Moscow of "blackmail" and rejected the Soviet proposals.

In 1977, the Chinese called for a resumption of navigation talks, and the 20th annual session was held from 27 July to 6 October 1977. Chinese media reported for the first time since the 1960s that technical agreements were reached [] later told [] that an understanding had been reached, allowing Chinese boats to use the confluence when the Kazakevich Channel was unnavigable, provided Soviet authorities were "informed."

Complaints about minor navigational infractions and incidents have persisted in recent years, but exchanges between the two sides have become more cordial. Terse Chinese announcements of the annual Navigation Commission meetings have also been more positive in tone, stating without further explanation that a "larger" area of agreement has been reached than in the past.

Border Railway Developments

In August 1978, Chinese and Soviet negotiators met at Moscow's initiative in a vain effort to set an agenda for renewed meetings of the Sino-Soviet Joint Railway Commission, moribund since the early 1960s. Three years later, Beijing announced in April 1981 the signing of a protocol on railway transit, which Chinese officials [] said covered only "technical discussions." A more important railway agreement was reached as part of the 1982 Sino-Soviet trade talks, allowing containerized Chinese goods to travel to markets in Europe and the Middle East via the Trans-Siberian Railroad. A Chinese accord on rail transshipment with Mongolia was reached in September 1983.

Border Trade

Revived Sino-Soviet interest in border trade surfaced in April 1982 when Beijing reported that it had exchanged notes on frontier trade with the USSR. Moscow reported in November that informal border trade talks had been held in Khabarovsk and that state bank officials of the two sides had reached agreement in December on procedures for settling border trade accounts. In April 1983, a protocol was signed after the first formal meeting on Sino-Soviet

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Key Events in the Summit Meetings and Interchanges Between High-Level Officials

March 1969
Chinese officials rebuff Premier Kosygin's effort to reach them by phone.

September 1969
Zhou-Kosygin meeting at Beijing airport.

1970
Sino-Soviet "hotline" reportedly restored.

July 1970
Soviets propose high-level talks on a proposed non-aggression pact.

June 1973
Soviets again propose high-level talks on a non-aggression pact.

August 1977
Soviets reportedly consider asking Yugoslav President Tito to convey a message to China.

February 1978
Soviets call for higher level talks to negotiate a statement of principles to govern Sino-Soviet relations.

November 1979
Soviets call for Sino-Soviet talks at vice foreign minister level concerning the normalization of Sino-Soviet relations to be upgraded to the level of foreign minister.

November 1982
Chinese Foreign Minister meets with Soviet leaders at Brezhnev's funeral in Moscow.

February 1984
Chinese Vice Premier meets with Soviet leaders at Andropov's funeral in Moscow.

frontier trade since the 1960s. By July, five cross-border trading points had been opened—three along the Manchurian frontier and two along the northwestern frontier.

Over the past decade and a half, Soviet and Chinese leaders have communicated with each other mainly by public speeches, publicized "leaders' messages," and through diplomatic channels. □

Summit Meetings and Interchanges Between High-Level Officials

No top Soviet leader has visited Beijing since Premier Kosygin's impromptu meeting with Zhou Enlai at the Beijing airport in September 1969. Nor has any top Chinese party or government leader visited Moscow since Zhou traveled there in November 1964. Indeed, the only senior Chinese officials to pay an official visit to the Soviet Union in recent years were Foreign Minister Huang Hua in November 1982 for Brezhnev's funeral and Vice Premier Wan Li in February 1984 for Andropov's funeral—the first such higher level visits by Chinese officials in almost 20 years.

Brezhnev in particular was inclined to use public speeches to express Soviet concerns and to make overtures for improved relations. Andropov also used an interview in August 1983 to outline his position on some issues in Sino-Soviet relations. Chinese leaders were reticent in the past, but Deng Xiaoping, Hu Yaobang, and Zhao Ziyang have each affirmed China's stance on Sino-Soviet issues publicly in recent years.

Little is known about specific efforts of either side to use intermediaries to convey messages between Moscow and Beijing. [] indicates that the USSR at the time wanted Yugoslavia's President Tito to pass a message to China during his visit to China in 1977; the Vietnamese Communists were committed under terms of Ho Chi Minh's deathbed wish to bring the USSR and China together in support of the war against the United States; Romania's President Ceausescu has maintained good ties with China and the Soviet Union, providing a ready channel of communication; and Beijing has markedly improved relations with Soviet Bloc officials and leaders of pro-Soviet Communist parties—individuals who could also serve as a conduit between the USSR and China.

Trade Relations, and People-to-People and Other Exchanges

Sino-Soviet trade dropped sharply in value during the 1960s from a high point of \$2 billion in 1959 to a low of \$47 million in 1970. No Sino-Soviet trade agreements were signed during 1967-69 (see table).

After a new Sino-Soviet trade agreement was negotiated in November 1970, trade rose to \$154 million the following year. Since then, annual trade agreements have been negotiated. The value of trade has fluctuated, reaching \$524 million in 1980, but declining to \$248 million in 1981. Sino-Soviet trade rose again to \$308 million in 1982.

Trade doubled in 1983 and is scheduled to increase to a level of \$1.2 billion in 1984. Even with recent increases, China's trade with the Soviet Union in 1984 will represent only about 2 percent of China's total trade, and a much smaller share of Soviet trade. Indeed, China transacts about as much trade with Romania as it does with the USSR.

The bulk of Soviet deliveries have been machinery and transport equipment, with steel products and timber making up much of the remainder. In exchange, China has supplied minerals, nonferrous metal ores (including tungsten and tin), textiles, and foodstuffs for the Soviet Far East.

Key Events in Trade Relations, and People-to-People and Other Exchanges

August 1970

Soviets disclose Sino-Soviet agreement on restoring ambassadorial relations.

November 1970

Annual Sino-Soviet trade accord signed, first since 1966.

March 1971

Zhou Enlai holds lengthy private meeting with Soviet Ambassador and head of Soviet border talks delegation.

January 1974

Five Soviet diplomats in Beijing arrested and expelled for spying.

March 1980

Vice Foreign Minister Kapitsa makes first of three annual "private" trips to China.

Late 1981-83

Exchanges of sports teams, economists, tourism groups noted. Student exchanges resumed on small scale. Moscow proposes 22 separate exchanges in cultural and scientific areas. Sino-Soviet trade increases from \$248 million in 1981 to a projected \$1.2 billion in 1984.

Soviet aircraft, electrical generating equipment, and trucks were major export items during the 1970s. The USSR also provided general machinery and spare parts for China's Soviet-designed industry. The aircraft were primarily turboprop medium transports and helicopters. China imported long-range IL-62 jets in 1971 and 1972 but was unhappy with their performance. For longer range jet aircraft and helicopters, the Chinese turned to the United States and West European suppliers. Beginning in 1971, the Chinese imported over a dozen Soviet 100,000- to 200,000-kilowatt steam turbine generators. Soviet technicians installed these units, one of the few

Sino-Soviet Trade

Form U.S. 5

	Total	Chinese Exports to the USSR	Chinese Imports From the USSR	Balance
1950	325	190	135	55
1951	750	305	445	-140
1952	965	415	550	-135
1953	1,165	475	690	-215
1954	1,270	550	720	-170
1955	1,700	645	1,055	-410
1956	1,460	745	715	30
1957	1,295	750	545	205
1958	1,515	881	634	247
1959	2,054	1,100	954	146
1960	1,665	848	817	31
1961	918	551	367	184
1962	749	516	233	283
1963	600	413	187	226
1964	449	314	135	179
1965	418	226	192	34
1966	318	143	175	-32
1967	107	57	50	7
1968	96	37	59	-22
1969	57	29	28	1
1970	47	22	25	-3
1971	154	76	78	-2
1972	255	134	121	13
1973	272	136	136	0
1974	282	139	143	-4
1975	279	150	129	21
1976	417	179	238	-59
1977	340	178	162	16
1978	499	257	242	15
1979	509	241	268	-27
1980	524	230	294	-64
1981	248	132	116	16
1982	308	143	165	-22
1983*	700	350	350	

* Estimated.

instances of Soviet technical presence in China since the break in Soviet assistance to China in 1960. In 1983, the Soviet Union and China agreed that Soviet experts would travel to China to study remodeling a few Chinese factories containing equipment supplied by the USSR in the 1950s. (1)

From the late 1960s until the late 1970s, sports, cultural, educational, and social exchanges were a rarity. But, over the past six years and especially since late 1981, when Beijing decided to broaden its dialogue with Moscow, such exchanges have expanded steadily. (1)

The Soviets, of course, have long advocated these kinds of contacts, ostensibly because they help to improve the atmosphere in the relationship. But the Chinese refused to respond to these overtures until after Mao's death. The Chinese Foreign Minister, for example, attended the Soviet National Day reception in Beijing in 1977 for the first time in 10 years, and in 1978 the Chinese Sino-Soviet Friendship Society sent its first National Day greetings to the USSR since 1965. (1)

Sports and cultural exchanges have picked up especially over the past few years:

- Chinese gymnasts in Moscow for an international meet in November 1981 were noted for the first time in over 10 years being feted by the Sino-Soviet Friendship Society.
- In June 1982, *Pravda* reported a Soviet track team visited China.
- During 1983, tourism delegations representing the Chinese and Soviet Friendship Associations exchanged visits, and China participated for the first time in the Moscow Book Fair and Film Festival

As a result of the Sino-Soviet vice-foreign-ministers' talks, an agreement was reached in 1983 to resume student exchanges involving an estimated 200 students in all. The Soviets subsequently proposed 22 exchange programs in cultural and scientific areas in the October 1983 round.

Party Relations and Proletarian Internationalism

Sino-Soviet party ties have been moribund since 1966 when Mao severed them because of the deepening ideological dispute. There is little likelihood that party

Key Events in Party Relations and Proletarian Internationalism

October 1969

Brezhnev publicly calls Zhou Enlai "comrade"—a gesture not seen since 1966 when the Cultural Revolution began and Sino-Soviet party ties were broken. (1)

August 1970

Brezhnev calls for Sino-Soviet unity against imperialism; suggests interest in restoring party ties. (1)

February 1971

Soviets privately propose joint efforts against the United States in Indochina. (1)

March 1972

Brezhnev reaffirms view of China as a "socialist" country. He reiterated this several times until his death in 1982. (1)

September 1976

Brezhnev sends party message of condolence on Mao's death. (1)



relations will be restored until Moscow is ready to accommodate Beijing on one of its key security demands. Similarly, the Chinese have turned a deaf ear to Soviet appeals for cooperation against US "imperialism" in accord with the Marxist-Leninist principles of "proletarian internationalism." (1)

The Soviets, especially Brezhnev, hinted strongly in speeches in 1969 and 1970 that Moscow was interested in restoring party-to-party ties as well as normalizing state-to-state relations. Brezhnev affirmed this interest by sending two party messages following

Mao's death. Foreign Minister Gromyko most recently proposed restored Sino-Soviet party ties to the Chinese Ambassador in July 1983.

Similarly, the Soviets made a strong pitch to China to join them on the basis of "proletarian internationalism" in support of the Vietnamese, following US-backed incursions into Cambodia and Laos in 1970-71. More recently, the Soviets have tried to generate concern in China over the US military buildup in East Asia and closer political and possible security cooperation among the United States, Japan, and South Korea, implying that this "alliance" is aimed at China as well as the USSR.

The Chinese have been much more flexible in handling their relations over the past few years with other Communist parties once considered too "revisionist" or "pro-Soviet"—including ruling parties in Eastern Europe. In an interview with correspondents accompanying French party chief Marchais on a visit to China in October 1982, Communist Party General Secretary Hu Yaobang defined Beijing's new ecumenical approach to party-to-party relations. He said China was ready to establish friendly relations with "any party, whether a workers' party, Communist party, or nationalist party," as long as it abides by the cardinal principle of noninterference in other parties' internal affairs.

Chinese leaders also moved to explore possible resumed party ties with Soviet Bloc nations. In June 1983, Premier Zhao Ziyang publicly affirmed that China views them as "socialist." The impediment now seems to rest more with the East Europeans, who are reluctant to get out in front of the USSR and who insist that China first restore party ties with Moscow.

Polemic Restraint

The Soviet Union at times has coupled its diplomatic overtures with a cutback in Soviet media criticism of

Key Events Regarding Polemic Restraint

1969-70

Soviets mark start of Beijing border talks by halting media attack on China, until March 1970. China reciprocates until the end of 1969.

1976-77

Soviets follow Mao's death with a cutback in media criticism of China, until March 1977. China's criticism of USSR is moderate for a few weeks in September-November 1976.

1979

Soviets begin clandestine radiobroadcasts critical of China via Radio Ba Yi.

1982-83

Soviet media cut back propaganda attacks on China. China cuts back criticism of Soviet domestic policy while continuing sharp attacks on Soviet foreign policies.

Late 1983-January 1984

Soviet media briefly attacks China for supporting United States—attacks triggered in part by Premier Zhao's visit to Washington.

China. Beijing media have only briefly reciprocated on two occasions during the past 15 years.

Moscow media muffled criticism of China for six months following the start of the Sino-Soviet border talks in October 1969. Chinese media reciprocated for a few weeks but quickly resumed at the turn of the year by launching scathing attacks on Brezhnev by name. The Soviets showed longer forbearance, not renewing high-level attacks on China until March 1970.

Chinese media attacks on the Soviets became especially virulent in 1974 and 1975, because of a Chinese domestic political campaign against former Defense Minister Lin Biao and his alleged "illicit" relations with the USSR, and strong Chinese opposition to

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Western detente with the USSR. The Soviets were portrayed in stark terms as "massively armed oppressive warmongers driven by an unslakable thirst for global expansion that posed an imminent danger of world war."

After the death of Mao, Soviet media muted anti-Chinese polemics for several months. China also toned down its anti-Soviet diatribes for a few weeks, until Chinese Vice Premier Li Xiannian revived Chinese attacks by accusing the USSR of trying to create a "false impression" of relaxation in Sino-Soviet relations.

The start of Sino-Soviet negotiations in 1979 on normalizing relations did not result in any significant reduction in polemics by either side. Moscow's failure to reduce media attacks was particularly noteworthy, given the Soviets' previous efforts to improve the atmosphere in Sino-Soviet relations at the start of the border talks in 1969, after Mao's death in 1976, and during the Sino-Soviet discussions of 1982-83 by toning down their propaganda. Moscow was particularly wary of China's intentions in the 1979 talks, coming as they did in the wake of Beijing's announced decision to terminate the Sino-Soviet alliance and China's military incursion into Vietnam

More recently, Moscow followed Brezhnev's call in March 1982 for improved relations with China with a halt in most authoritative Soviet statements critical of China. When Sino-Soviet discussions resumed in October 1982, Soviet media cut back sharply on criticism of China. And they have remained restrained on this subject, although occasional polemic exchanges marked Sino-Soviet coverage at the time of Premier Zhao Ziyang's visit to the United States in January 1984. Moscow has continued to be critical of China through the Soviet-based clandestine radio, Ba Yi. First heard in 1979, the radio claims to reflect the views of Chinese military personnel critical of the more pro-West orientation of recent Chinese policies. China, for its part, has continued criticism of Soviet foreign policy, although past attention to Soviet "revisionist" internal policies has all but disappeared since China's own economic policies have been significantly changed after Mao's death.

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Appendix

Chronology of Sino-Soviet Exchanges, 1969-84

1969

11 May. China agrees to a Soviet proposal to reconvene the Sino-Soviet Commission on border-river navigation. The commission, which was supposed to meet annually, did not meet in 1968. The 1969 meeting took place from June to August. (C)

11 September. Soviet Premier Kosygin and Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai meet for several hours in Beijing airport to discuss border problems and bilateral relations. (C)

October. The Soviet Union and China adopt measures to reduce the chance of further clashes by border guards. (C)

7 October. China agrees officially to Soviet proposal to start talks at the vice foreign minister level on Sino-Soviet border issues. (C)

20 October. The Sino-Soviet border talks open in Beijing. The sessions bog down over China's demand that the USSR withdraw forces from Chinese-defined "disputed areas" along the border. (C)

During the first series of meetings, the USSR reportedly proposes a nonaggression pact with China, differentiation of disputed and nondisputed sectors of the border, and improved diplomatic, trade, and other exchanges. (C)

Soviet and Chinese media begin muting polemics against one another. (C)

27 October. Brezhnev makes a conciliatory speech to ease Sino-Soviet tensions. He calls Zhou Enlai "comrade"—a fraternal gesture suggesting Soviet interest in revived party ties with China. (C)

14 December. The chief Soviet negotiator at the Beijing border talks departs the sessions for Moscow amid press reports that no progress was made in the border discussions. The talks will resume in January.

1970

1 January. China issues its first authoritative media attack on Brezhnev since the start of the Beijing border talks. (C)

February. Soviets propose a mutual nonaggression pact with China. (C)

Soviets also reportedly are willing to accept the main channel of border rivers as the boundary line along most of the eastern frontier. (C)

Soviets also reportedly have withdrawn troops from some disputed border territory, including border-river islands like Zhen Bao (Damansky), site of the March 1969 armed clashes. (C)

[]
19 March. *Pravda* commentary attacks China's policy toward USSR, signaling a revival of authoritative Soviet polemics against China. (C)

April. Soviet chief negotiator departs Beijing border talks for a few weeks. Soviets are reported interested in moving the talks to Moscow or downgrading the talks to the ambassadorial level. (C)

1 May. Mao asks Soviet diplomat in Beijing when the USSR intends to resume the border talks in Beijing.

10 June. Soviet Premier Kosygin publicly blames China for the lack of progress in the border talks. (C)

13 June. Zhou Enlai sends a conciliatory message to Kosygin over recent floods in the USSR. (C)

30 June. The chief Soviet negotiator is officially withdrawn from the border talks, reportedly for reasons of health. (C)

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Summer. Low-level Sino-Soviet barter trade talks are held between local Chinese and Soviet economic units in the Far East

Children of Soviet diplomats return to Beijing after an absence of several years

8 July. Soviet officials suggest holding a high-level Sino-Soviet meeting to formulate a joint declaration on nonaggression that would ban using nuclear weapons, war preparations, and warlike propaganda against one another

8 August. Premier Kosygin discloses that an agreement has been reached on an exchange of Sino-Soviet ambassadors

15 August. Vice Foreign Minister Ilichev, the new chief Soviet representative to the Sino-Soviet border talks, arrives in Beijing

28 August. Brezhnev, in a speech, is conciliatory toward China, calls for forward movement in the border talks, and indicates Soviet interest in broader accommodation with China, including possible restoration of party ties

October. Tolstikov, the newly appointed Soviet Ambassador to China, arrives in Beijing

November. China's newly appointed Ambassador arrives in Moscow

22 November. The annual Sino-Soviet trade accord is signed for the first time since 1966

1971
January. Soviet Union offers China a draft accord on mutual nonuse of force

Soviets reaffirm a general willingness to accept the main channel of border rivers as the boundary line of the eastern frontier

They also indicate a willingness eventually to accept a new agreement covering delineation of the entire border

February. Soviet officials reportedly approach China to join in "combined efforts" to support the Vietnamese Communists against the United States in Indochina. China refuses the proposal

21 March. Zhou EnTai receives the chief Soviet negotiator in the border talks and the Soviet Ambassador for a lengthy private discussion. Subjects discussed include border issues and Soviet request for joint action in support of North Vietnam

15 July. President Nixon announces he will visit China.

September. Chinese Defense Minister Lin Biao and much of the Chinese high command disappear from public view

November. Sino-Soviet trade negotiations reportedly involve the sale of Soviet jet transports and helicopters to China

December. The Indo-Pakistani conflict in South Asia brings Sino-Soviet polemics to their highest level since 1969

The Soviets are reportedly still attempting to move the Sino-Soviet talks to Moscow or to lower them to the ambassadorial level

1972
23 January. China arrests a few Soviet soldiers who strayed on the Chinese side of the border with Mongolia. The event is not reported in Sino-Soviet media

February. President Nixon visits China, signing the Shanghai Communiqué

February. The Soviet Union proposes that long-term economic contracts be concluded and Sino-Soviet border trade be resumed

20 March. Brezhnev publicly states Soviet willingness to improve relations with China and to establish relations with China on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence

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By this time, the USSR is reported to have offered China a long-term trade agreement, resumed deliveries of full sets of industrial equipment, and resumed scientific, technical, and cultural exchanges

March. Soviet negotiator Ilichev returns to the Beijing border talks after an absence of several months. He will stay until July

April. [

]

May. Following the US mining of Haiphong harbor, the USSR asks China for permission to unload ships, then under way, in China. The Soviet ships carry cargo destined for Vietnam. China refuses on the grounds that its ports are already overloaded

1973

6 March. The Soviets propose a review of the eastern frontier, generally accepting that the main channel of border rivers would mark the boundary

14 June. The Soviets propose a draft treaty on mutual nonaggression. They also propose a summit meeting to discuss the treat

16 July. China and the USSR sign a civil air protocol which inaugurates direct Beijing-Moscow flight

19 July. Soviet media report the departure of Vice Foreign Minister Ilichev from Beijing. (He will not return to the border talks for almost one year.

15 August. Brezhnev publicly blames China for the impasse in the Sino-Soviet talks

24 August. Zhou Enlai publicly castigates the "Brezhnev renegade clique" in a report to China's party congress

24 September. In a public address, Brezhnev pledges to settle the Sino-Soviet border issue free from threat.

14 November. Kosygin publicly demands that China reply to Soviet proposals for improved relations

1974

19 January. China reports that five Soviet diplomats were expelled from China for spying

23 March. China captures a Soviet helicopter and crew that had landed in China.

25 June. Soviet negotiator Ilichev returns to the Beijing talks after an absence of almost one year

18 August. Ilichev departs Beijing for Moscow

7 September. China, the USSR, Mongolia, North Korea, and North Vietnam sign a protocol regarding railway shipping for 1974-77. This is the first such accord noted since the 1960s

1 October. A Soviet message on China's National Day refers to a Soviet offer to sign a nonaggression pact with China.

6 November. A Chinese message on Soviet National Day notes Chinese insistence that the USSR agree to withdraw troops from disputed border areas.

26 November. In a public address, Brezhnev criticizes China's demand for a Soviet withdrawal from disputed border regions.

1975

2 February. Soviet negotiator Ilichev returns to the Beijing border talks after an absence of six months.

5 May. Ilichev departs the Beijing border talks

2 June. Soviet commentator Bovin says that the Sino-Soviet border talks are deadlocked and there is no way out in sight

27 December. China releases the Soviet helicopter crew it captured in March 1974

1976

September. Mao dies. Soviet media mute criticism of China for four months. Brezhnev sends a Soviet party message of condolence on Mao's death. It is rebuffed by China

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October. Soviets reportedly offer to rebuild some Chinese factories destroyed in mid-1976 earthquake in North China

Brezhnev sends a party message congratulating Hua Guofeng on his selection as Chinese party chairman. It is rebuffed by China

15 November. Vice Premier Li Xiannian publicly rebukes the USSR for creating a "false impression" of relaxation in Sino-Soviet relations.

26 November. Soviet negotiator Ilichev returns to the Beijing border talks after an absence of over one year. He reaffirms Soviet offers of nonaggression, nonuse of force, and economic and technical exchanges

1977

11 January. *People's Daily* carries China's first authoritative criticism of the USSR over the border issue in two years. It reaffirms China's view that no progress has been achieved because the USSR refuses to withdraw its troops from disputed border regions.

22 January. Ilichev meets with China's Foreign Minister. The meeting is not reported in Soviet or Chinese media

25 February. Ilichev departs the Beijing border talks. Soviet media resume attacks against China

19 May. USSR privately protests China's "slandorous" treatment of USSR

1 July. China requests resumption of border-river navigation talks with Moscow. The usually annual meetings had not been held in 1975 or 1976

August. Soviets reportedly attempt to use Tito to convey a Soviet message to China

6 October. The border-river navigation talks end with Chinese media noting for the first time in eight years that agreement is reached on issues discussed

Later, Chinese officials indicate that an understanding was reached that allowed Chinese boats to pass north of Big Ussuri (Heixiazhi) Island, opposite Khabarovsk, without jeopardizing conflicting Sino-Soviet

territorial claims to the Soviet-occupied island. Dispute over the island had blocked Chinese navigation around it for many years.

9 November. China's Foreign Minister attends the Soviet National Day reception in Beijing for the first time since 1966.

1978

24 February. The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet sends a message to China proposing high-level discussions on reaching an agreement concerning principles governing Sino-Soviet relations

26 February. Chinese Premier Hua Guofeng publicly links progress in Sino-Soviet relations with Soviet willingness to withdraw from disputed border regions, withdraw forces from Mongolia, and reduce the overall level of its forces near China to the level of the early 1960s

March. Brezhnev and Defense Minister Ustinov tour Soviet Far East

1 April. *Pravda* authoritatively refutes China's position on an alleged understanding reached between Zhou Enlai and Kosygin at Beijing airport in September 1969 that required a Soviet pullback from disputed border regions

26 April. Soviet border negotiator Ilichev returns to Beijing after an absence of over a year

May. China protests a Soviet border incursion along the eastern frontier. Moscow officially apologizes for the incident

June. Soviet Ambassador Tolstikov departs Beijing at the official end of his eight-year tour.

29 June. Soviet negotiator Ilichev departs the Beijing border talks for the last time; Soviet officials privately characterize the sessions as "useless."

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August. At Soviet initiative, Soviet and Chinese negotiators try but fail to formulate an agenda for a resumed session of the Sino-Soviet joint railway commission. The meetings of the commission were suspended since the mid-1960s.

October. The newly appointed Soviet Ambassador is officially received in Beijing.

November. China and the USSR quietly exchange prisoners evidently captured during earlier border incidents.

7 November. China's Sino-Soviet Friendship Society sends its first reported greeting message to its Soviet counterpart since at least 1965.

Late 1978-Early 1979. Sino-Soviet military tensions rise at the time of Sino-Vietnamese confrontation in Indochina.

1979

February-March. Sino-Soviet talks on aviation reach an agreement to end preferential tariffs for Soviet Bloc countries on flights between China and the USSR.

3 April. Although notifying the USSR of its intention to end the Sino-Soviet alliance in accord with the terms of the treaty, China proposes negotiations with the USSR on improving Sino-Soviet relations.

24 July. China protests to the USSR over a border incident along the western frontier.

26 July. The USSR protests to China over the border incident along the western frontier.

September-November. Sino-Soviet talks at the vice-foreign-minister level concerning improving Sino-Soviet relations are held in Moscow. No progress is reported as the Chinese demand—and the USSR refuses—that the USSR reduce Soviet troops along the Sino-Soviet border, withdraw troops from Mongolia, and cease support for Vietnam's occupation of Kampuchea.

The Soviets reportedly make an offer calling for a statement in opposition to "hegemony," an end to Sino-Soviet polemics, the conducting of regular Sino-Soviet meetings—including summit meetings, and expanding trade, technical, and cultural exchanges.

1980

20 January. China suspends talks on improving Sino-Soviet relations because of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

14 February. Soviets release a Chinese captured during the border incident of July 1979.

20-28 March. Kapitsa, a Soviet Foreign Ministry China specialist, makes the first of three annual visits to China as a guest of the Soviet Embassy.

7 April. An authoritative *Pravda* article calls on China to reopen talks on Sino-Soviet border issues or on improving Sino-Soviet relations.

20 April. China's new Ambassador to the USSR departs China for Moscow, filling a post left vacant since the previous fall.

April. Soviet officials **C** tell the Chinese that the USSR would be willing to take certain steps to improve Sino-Soviet relations, including:

- Admitting errors in previous Soviet policy toward China.
- Rendering assistance to Chinese industrial projects begun with Soviet help in the 1950s.
- Reducing Soviet forces along the Sino-Soviet border.

Beijing strongly rebuffs Soviet overtures for improved relations, citing Sino-Soviet differences over Vietnam, Afghanistan, Mongolia, and the Sino-Soviet border.

30 April. A publicized Chinese rally is held in Xinjiang to protest the Sino-Soviet border incident of the previous July.

21 July. Three people accused as spies for the USSR are sentenced in China

25 August. Beijing protests the alleged Soviet harassment of Chinese diplomats in the USSR

5 October. A border incident is noted along Soviet border with Inner Mongolia

1981

23 February. Brezhnev speaks at the CPSU Congress; he is generally conciliatory regarding relations with China.

30 April. A Sino-Soviet Railway protocol is signed—the first since 1963.

22 July. Beijing protests that the conclusion of a Soviet-Afghanistan border treaty impinges on Chinese interests

August. An article in the Soviet journal *Kommunist* complains that China has "deadlocked" the talks on the normalization of Sino-Soviet relations and on the border issues, and that Beijing "shows no desire to resume them."

10 August. USSR officially proposes to the Chinese Foreign Ministry the adoption of "confidence-building measures" in the Far East

18 September. China protests alleged Soviet slandering of Chinese diplomats in the USSR

25 September. The Soviets privately propose that China agree to resume the Sino-Soviet border talks.

20 November. Chinese gymnasts performing in the USSR are feted by the Sino-Soviet Friendship Society—the first such reported festivities in over a decade

16 December. The Soviets privately propose regular scientific and technical exchanges with China

25 December. Beijing reportedly agrees in principle to resume regular scientific and technical exchanges with the USSR

1982

19 January. A Sino-Soviet agreement on book trade is initiated.

3 February. The Soviets again propose a resumption of the Sino-Soviet border talks

9 February. The Soviets propose exchanges of language students and teachers with China

March. Chinese ambassadors to USSR and Eastern Europe are reportedly recalled to discuss upcoming Chinese policy in the region.

5 March. Chinese economists are reported visiting the USSR

9 March. Chinese media note that a "larger area of agreement" is reached in the annual meeting of the border-river navigation commission

21 March. Chinese gymnasts are reported visiting the USSR

24 March. Brezhnev makes a speech in Tashkent that is conciliatory toward China. He confirms the Soviet view that China has a "socialist system," proposes resuming the Sino-Soviet border talks, and discusses publicly for the first time Soviet interest in unspecified "confidence-building measures" regarding the Sino-Soviet frontier

Following the speech, authoritative Soviet statements generally avoid direct criticism of Chinese policies on occasions that in the past would have required such statements

16 April. At the conclusion of the annual Sino-Soviet trade talks, it is noted that the two sides "exchanged notes on frontier trade"

16 June. *Pravda* reports on a Soviet track team visiting China. This is the first reference in the Soviet central press to such revived exchanges

August. Yu Hongliang, Chinese Foreign Ministry Soviet specialist, visits Moscow

September. Soviet media cut back sharply on criticism of China. ""

26 September. Brezhnev speaks at Baku, is again conciliatory toward China, and claims that the Soviet objective is normalization and gradual improvement in Sino-Soviet relations. ""

October. The first round of Sino-Soviet discussions on bilateral relations is held at the vice foreign ministerial level in Beijing. Little agreement is noted except to meet again in March. ""

17 October. Chinese party leader Hu Yaobang says China is ready to establish relations with other Communist parties, provided they do not interfere in other parties' internal affairs. ""

November. Brezhnev dies. Chinese send their Foreign Minister to the funeral and send a conciliatory condolence message. ""

1983

March. The second round of Sino-Soviet discussions on bilateral relations is held in Moscow. Agreement is reportedly reached on expanding trade and student exchanges. No agreement is reached in reported discussion of differences over Soviet deployments in Asia.

10 April. A Sino-Soviet protocol on border trade is signed—the first such accord noted in over 10 years.

7 May. Beijing media authoritatively express China's concern over deployment of Soviet SS-20 missiles in Asia

3 June. China protests the expulsion of Chinese citizens from Mongolia.

[]

27 August. Soviet party leader Andropov publicly calls for improved relations with China. ""

6-12 September. China participates in the Moscow book fair for the first time. ""

8-16 September. Soviet Vice Foreign Minister Kapitsa makes his first official visit to China for talks with his Chinese counterpart on Sino-Soviet views regarding "international" questions. China agrees to continue the talks later in Moscow, thereby setting up a new channel of communication at the vice foreign minister level in Moscow-Beijing relations. ""

17 September. *People's Daily* identifies Soviet SS-20s in Asia as part of the "obstacles" China says must be removed before Sino-Soviet relations can be normalized. ""

October. The third round of Sino-Soviet talks on bilateral relations is held in Beijing. Agreements are reportedly reached on increasing trade and on provision of Soviet experts to study possible rehabilitation of a few Chinese factories. The Soviets also propose over 20 specific scientific and cultural exchanges with China, and they mention Soviet interest in possible "confidence-building measures" along the Sino-Soviet border. No movement is seen in Sino-Soviet disputes regarding Afghanistan, Mongolia, and Indochina. China also reportedly raises the issue of Soviet SS-20s in Asia as part of the obstacles to improved Sino-Soviet relations.

December 1983-January 1984. Moscow briefly loosens polemic restraint to attack Chinese foreign policy on the eve of Premier Zhao's visit to the United States.

1984

February. Andropov dies. China sends a senior vice premier to the funeral.

Figure 2: Western Border Sector

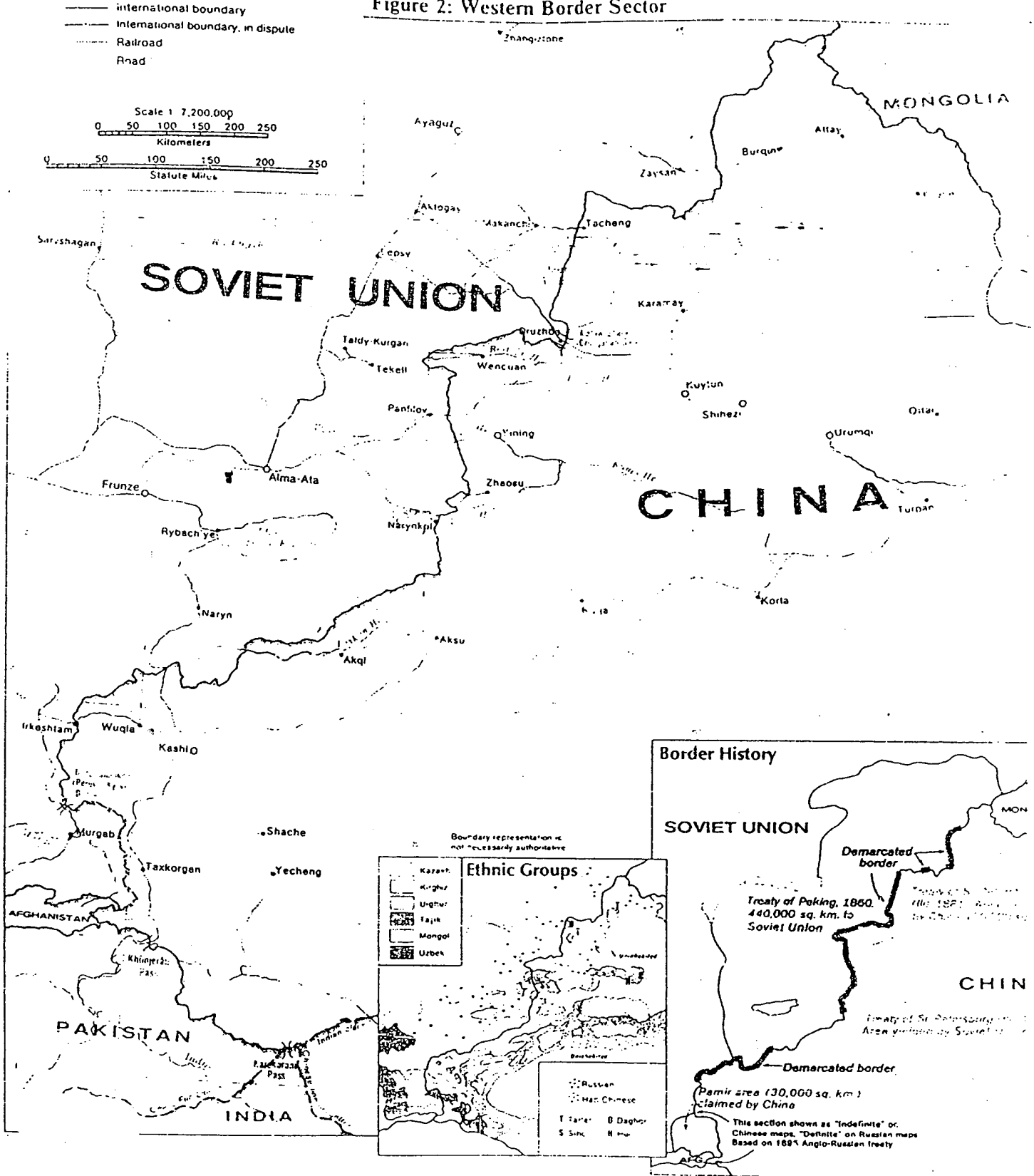
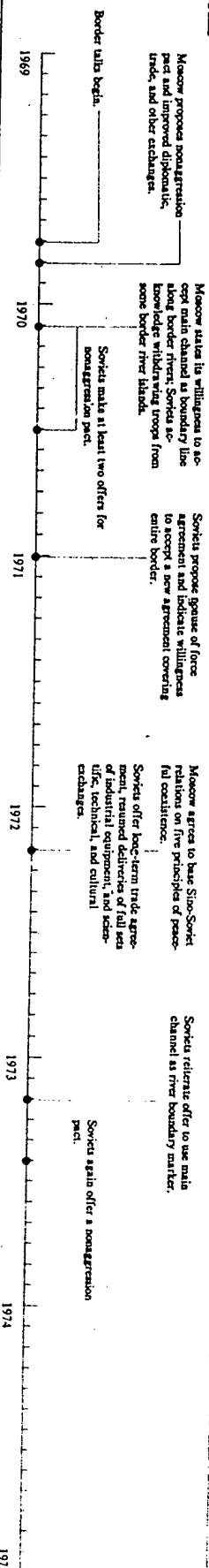


Figure 3: Eastern Border Sector

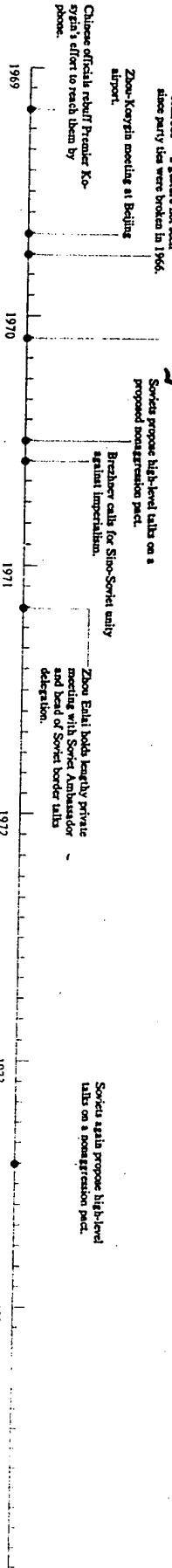


Figure 4
Sino-Soviet Exchanges, 1969-84

Vice Foreign Ministers' Talks



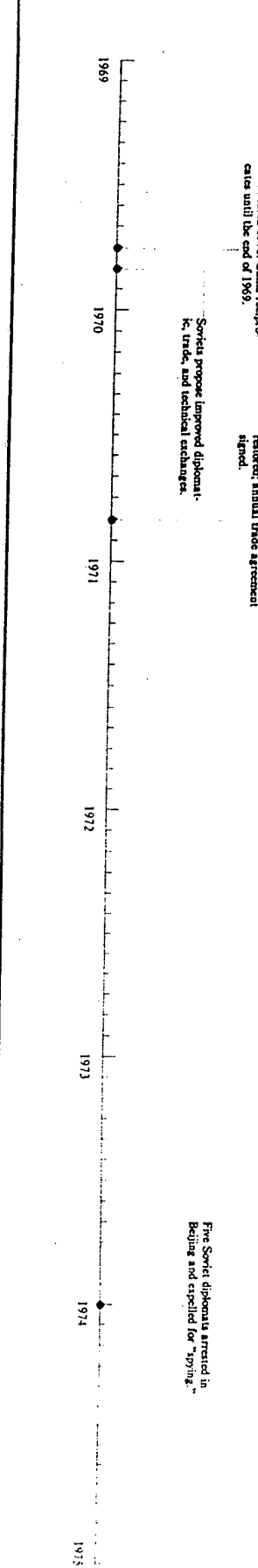
Higher Level Official Exchanges



Other Border Issues



Trade, Diplomatic, Popular, and Media Exchanges



1976

1977

1978

1979

1980

1981

Beijing suspends talks because of Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

China proposes unconditional talks on improving Sino-Soviet relations.

Last meeting of border talks.

Talks held on improving Sino-Soviet relations, but no progress reported.

1976

1977

1978

1979

1980

1981

Breaker sends party message of condolence on Mao's death. Rebuffed by China.

Soviet call for higher level talks to negotiate a statement of principles to govern Sino-Soviet relations.

Soviet urge that rise foreign ministers' talks be upgraded to the foreign minister level.

China protests Soviet border incursion along Ussuri River.

Sino-Soviet Railway Commission meet but fail to reach agreement on border transit.

Chinese forces enter Vietnam.

Sino-Soviet incident along western border.

Border incident noted along Soviet border with Inner Mongolia.

Sino-Soviet Railway Commission reaches agreement for first time since 1963.

1976

1977

1978

1979

1980

1981

China releases Soviet helicopter crew.

In border negotiation talks, China and USSR reach understanding on transit near Khabarovsk.

China protests Soviet border incursion along Ussuri River.

Sino-Soviet Railway Commission meet but fail to reach agreement on border transit.

Chinese forces enter Vietnam.

Sino-Soviet incident along western border.

Exchanges of sports teams, or matches, tourism groups noted.

1976

1977

1978

1979

1980

1981

Following Mao's death, Soviets cut back media criticism of China, until March 1977.

China moderates criticism of the USSR for a few weeks.

Soviet media do not moderate criticism of China at start of vice foreign ministerial talks as they had in the past.

Soviet specialist on China, Karpina, makes first of three annual "private" trips to China.

Exchanges of sports teams, or matches, tourism groups noted.

Soviet

Last meeting of border talks.

China proposes unconditional talks on improving Sino-Soviet relations.

Beijing suspends talks because of Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Talks held on improving Sino-Soviet relations, but no progress reported.

"Discussions" between Vice Foreign Ministers Qian and Hlibker held in Beijing. China demands Soviet withdrawal of troops from the border area, and support for Vietnam in Kampuchea, and withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan. Talks resume in deal with issues affecting third countries.

Round two of Qian-Hlibker talks reach agreement on increased trade and revived student exchanges.

Qian and Kujava begin discussions on "strategic" issues.
Round three of Qian-Hlibker talks. Soviets offer "confidence-building measures" along the border and begin post-trading talks to foreign media.

1978

1979

1980

1981

1982

1983

1984

Soviet call for higher level talks to regulate a state visit of Premier Qian to govern Sino-Soviet relations.

Soviet urge that vice foreign minister talks be suspended to the foreign minister level.

China's Foreign Minister meets with Soviet leader at Brezhnev's funeral.

China's Vice Premier meets with Soviet leader at Andropov's funeral.

1978

1979

1980

1981

1982

1983

1984

China proposes Soviet border incursion along Ussuri River.

Sino-Soviet Railway Commission meets but fails to reach agreement on border transit.

Border incident noted along Soviet border with Inner Mongolia.

Sino-Soviet Railway Commission reaches agreement for first time since 1943.

Sino-Soviet protocol on frontier trade signed—first since 1960s.

Large Chinese military exercise held in western China—valley previous reach exercise held in 1981 and 1972, this exercise is not published.

Chinese Foreign Ministry publicly states that issue of Soviet SS-20s in Asia will be raised during talks on normalizing Sino-Soviet relations.

1978

1979

1980

1981

1982

1983

1984

Soviet media do not moderate criticism of China at start of rice foreign ministerial talks as they had in the past.

Soviet specialists on China, Kapsia, make first of three annual "private" trips to China.

Exchanges of sports teams, economic, tourism groups noted.

Student exchanges resumed on a small scale.

Soviet call back propaganda attacks on China. China call back criticism of Soviet domestic policy but continue sharp attacks on Soviet foreign policies.

Sino-Soviet trade increases to a projected \$1.2 billion in 1984, up from \$248 million in 1981.

1978

1979

1980

1981

1982

1983

1984