

22265



Directorate of  
Intelligence

~~Secret~~

# The Sino-Soviet-US Triangle: Moscow's Tougher Tactics Toward China

An Intelligence Assessment

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM  
RELEASE AS SANITIZED  
1999

This paper was prepared by \_\_\_\_\_ of the  
Office of Soviet Analysis. Contributions were made by  
\_\_\_\_\_, SOVA, and  
\_\_\_\_\_, Office of East Asian Analysis. Comments and queries  
are welcome and may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

~~Secret~~  
SOV 84-10162  
September 1984

**Warning Notice**

**Intelligence Sources  
or Methods Involved  
(WNINTEL)**

**National Security  
Information**

**Unauthorized Disclosure  
Subject to Criminal Sanctions**

**Dissemination Control  
Abbreviations**

NOFORN (NF)	Not releasable to foreign nationals
NOCONTRACT (NC)	Not releasable to contractors or contractor/consultants
PROPIN (PR)	Caution—proprietary information involved
ORCON (OC)	Dissemination and extraction of information controlled by originator
REL...	This information has been authorized for release to...
FGI	Foreign government information
WN	WNINTEL—Intelligence sources or methods involved

A microfiche copy of this document is available from OCR/DLB (351-7177); printed copies from CPAS/IMC (351-5203). Regular receipt of DDI reports in either microfiche or printed form can also be arranged through CPAS/IMC.

Classified by:  
Declassify: OADR  
Derived from multiple sources

All material on this page  
is Unclassified.

~~Secret~~

### The Sino-Soviet-US Triangle: Moscow's Tougher Tactics Toward China

#### Key Judgments

*Information available  
as of 12 September 1984  
was used in this report.*

The Kremlin's cancellation of First Deputy Premier Ivan Arkhipov's visit to Beijing in May of this year may prove to be a watershed in Sino-Soviet relations. It is now apparent that the decision signified a stiffening of Soviet policy toward China. The Soviets have:

- Become more critical of Beijing's policies both in public and in private.
- Taken military and diplomatic steps to reaffirm support for their allies on China's border.
- Slowed their efforts to advance the Sino-Soviet dialogue.

Moscow's shift probably was precipitated by escalating Sino-Vietnamese hostilities and by Soviet displeasure at the warm reception that President Reagan received during his visit to China in late April. But it is fueled by more fundamental concerns over China's decision to strengthen security ties with the United States while standing fast on its policy toward the USSR.

The Soviets are frustrated with the continuing deterioration of their position in the triangular Sino-Soviet-US relationship, and they apparently have growing doubts that Sino-Soviet relations can be strengthened by conciliatory gestures toward Beijing at this time. We believe Moscow will adopt a tougher policy toward China over the near term, not make gestures to give new impetus to the dialogue. Nonetheless, the Soviets value the recent expansion of economic, political, and cultural contacts with Beijing and will continue to watch closely for signs of favorable trends in Chinese policy.

China anticipated that a period of greater Sino-Soviet friction would result from its decisions over the past year to solidify relations with the United States and Japan on an anti-Soviet basis. For the near term, Beijing seems willing to sacrifice some of the secondary benefits it derived from improved Sino-Soviet contacts to foster and protect more important security and economic interests with the West.

BLANK PAGE

~~Secret~~

## Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Key Judgments	iii
Introduction	1
Moscow Loses Ground	1
A Tougher Soviet Stance	3
Soviet Tactics	4
China's Calculus	4
The Most Likely Scenario	5
Alternative Scenarios	6
Carrots for Beijing	6
Beating Beijing at Its Own Game	6
Indicators	6
Appendix	
Chronology of Developments in the Triangular Relationship, September 1983-August 1984	9

~~Secret~~

~~Secret~~

## The Sino-Soviet-US Triangle: Moscow's Tougher Tactics Toward China

### Introduction

The Kremlin's decision in early May of this year to postpone First Deputy Premier Ivan Arkhipov's visit to Beijing has dealt the Sino-Soviet relationship its most significant setback since the current series of political talks began in October 1982. Arkhipov would have been the most senior Soviet official to visit China in 15 years, and the Soviets had intended to use his talks there to give fresh impetus to their flagging dialogue with the Chinese.

Indicate that the Soviets made it clear that their decision to postpone his trip at the last moment was precipitated by Sino-Vietnamese tensions and by President Reagan's successful visit to China less than two weeks before Arkhipov was scheduled to arrive. The Soviets, for their part, have offered us only transparent excuses for their abrupt move and evidently have yet to give the Chinese any idea when the visit might be rescheduled

In the absence of convincing Soviet comment, the decision initially seemed best explained by China's increased military pressure on the Vietnamese border and unusual Chinese naval activity in the South China Sea. China's harshest military measures against Vietnam since 1979 had begun in February and had reached a high point in April during President Reagan's visit. Beijing's actions were designed to punish Hanoi, show common cause with the United States and Thailand, and demonstrate that China would not be intimidated by Soviet support for Vietnam and the buildup of Soviet facilities there. It would have been extremely embarrassing for the USSR had China been seen as punishing Vietnam while the most senior Soviet visitor to China since 1969 was in Beijing.

Moscow probably calculated as well that the success of the President's visit to Beijing would cast a shadow on the relatively modest results anticipated from Arkhipov's visit. The visit was designed to discuss ways of increasing trade and to work out terms for limited Soviet assistance in the refurbishment of

Soviet-built factories in China. There was no expectation on Moscow's part of substantial gains, however, because the Chinese remained set on a long-term strategy oriented toward the West and Japan—which have the advanced technology and hard currency the Chinese seek.

### Moscow Loses Ground

Although tactical considerations contributed to the Soviet decision to put off Arkhipov's visit, the underlying cause of the stiffening Soviet policy is Moscow's growing pessimism about Beijing's current strategy toward the United States and the USSR. The Chinese have been moving with renewed determination to retain the United States as a strategic counterweight to the USSR and to purchase defensive weapon systems from the former. At the same time, they have made no secret of the fact that talks with the Soviets will not lessen basic differences between the USSR and the PRC

While the Soviet-American dialogue has gone from bad to worse over the past year, there has been an unprecedented exchange of visits between Washington and Beijing. The leitmotif of these visits (see the appended chronology) has been China's interest in US military technology and weapon systems. The Soviets appear to believe that the Chinese used these visits to revive a close dialogue with the United States on ways to counter Soviet strategy in East Asia and globally, and to identify the Soviet threat to China as one of several areas in which US and Chinese strategic interests converge. Soviet officials have expressed concern about US arms sales to China and Sino-US military cooperation, and public commentary has renewed attacks on alleged US efforts to create an anti-Soviet alliance in the Far East

~~Secret~~

---

### *Triangular Relations: The View From Moscow*

*The triangular relationship between the USSR, China, and the United States has loomed large in Soviet diplomacy since the establishment of the PRC in 1949. It has presented Moscow with both dangers and opportunities and with a changing set of problems*

*The Stalin Era. Moscow proved to be a clumsy practitioner of triangular diplomacy even when the salad days of the Sino-Soviet alliance gave it a position of potential advantage. The Soviets treated the Chinese as second-class partners in the maneuvering that preceded the Korean war, which galvanized the West against Soviet policy, and their assistance to Beijing during the conflict failed to match the heavy Chinese sacrifices.*

*Diplomacy Under Khrushchev. Moscow was the pivot of the triangle in this period as Khrushchev attempted to repair ties to the West while seeking to preserve and strengthen Moscow's alliance with Beijing. But Khrushchev was forced to defend his effort to move toward arms control and summit diplomacy with the West from rear-guard attacks by an increasingly assertive Beijing bent on challenging Moscow's revolutionary faith. The Sino-US leg of the triangle remained moribund, as Washington underestimated Sino-Soviet frictions and spurned contacts with Beijing*

*The Kissinger Era. Triangular diplomacy came into its own after the Nixon White House simultaneously opened a channel to Beijing while negotiating strategic and conventional arms control arrangements with the USSR, whose own relations with Beijing were at a low point. Following the armed clashes on the Ussuri River in 1969, Moscow was faced for the first time with the prospect of being "oddyman out" and quickened the pace and scope of its bargaining with both the Chinese and the Americans. Soviet-US*

*relations advanced while the Chinese brushed off Soviet overtures. The weight of Soviet diplomacy continued to be directed at Washington when Mao's death in 1976 brought no change in Sino-Soviet relations, despite the cooling of US-Soviet ties in the last half of the decade*

*Emerging Sino-US Cooperation. Moscow's apprehensions over the anti-Soviet thrust of a Sino-US rapprochement escalated following Zbigniew Brzezinski's visit to Beijing in 1978, China's moves to strengthen political and economic ties with Europe and Japan, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Brzezinski's talks with the Chinese raised the specter in Moscow of joint strategic cooperation against the USSR. By the early 1980s, with the collapse of the SALT II negotiations, Beijing's rupture of Sino-Soviet talks, and the imposition of sanctions following martial law in Poland, the Soviets found themselves in their worst position in the triangular relationship for two decades*

*Disappointed Expectation. Moscow's hopes for gaining ground were revived in 1982 by frictions in the Sino-US relationship over Taiwan and increased receptivity in Beijing to expanded contacts with the USSR. Rapidly expanding economic and cultural ties with the Chinese bolstered Moscow's conviction that the momentum was in its favor despite the continuing deterioration in relations with Washington. But the stalemate in the Sino-Soviet dialogue that has set in since last fall, and the expansion of Sino-US military ties since Secretary Weinberger's visit, have again undermined Moscow's position in the triangle and evidently prompted a reassessment in the Kremlin of diplomatic strategy and tactics. At this moment, Moscow appears to see little prospect for diplomatic steps that would advance its position in the triangular relationship*

---

Moscow probably is concerned also about the considerable progress that has occurred on a variety of hitherto sensitive matters between the United States and the PRC, such as US removal of discriminatory

restrictions on technology transfers to China and Washington's signs of willingness to conclude a nuclear cooperation agreement with Beijing. For its part, China has moderated its opposition to US policy over

~~Secret~~

Taiwan. Parallel US-Chinese interests in such vital areas as Indochina and Afghanistan reflect a continuing Sino-US understanding about Asia, the main element of which remains the containment of Soviet power and influence. Sino-Japanese cooperation is also growing—adding to the USSR's sense of isolation in East Asia.

Meanwhile, the Chinese appear to the Soviets as totally intransigent on the important issues dividing the two countries. The failure of the two sides to make any headway on these issues at the Moscow talks in March, C prompted Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko to warn the Chinese that it will be difficult for the two sides to make any further progress on secondary matters so long as they remain stalemated on the key issues dividing them. Now that the Chinese have demonstrated anew that they will ignore Soviet concerns about US arms sales to China and Sino-US military cooperation, the Soviets may perceive that their tactic of publicly wooing the Chinese while standing firm in private on what Beijing has termed "obstacles" to improved relations has been counterproductive. It certainly has not helped Moscow to achieve its aim of reasserting itself in the triangular relationship. The Soviets may also believe that their earlier expressions of interest in normalizing Sino-Soviet relations—and their upbeat assessments of the prospects of doing so—indirectly aided the Chinese in developing closer ties to both the United States and Japan.

#### A Tougher Soviet Stance

Since the postponement of Arkhipov's visit, the Soviets have toughened their rhetoric on China—especially in their commentaries about the implications of President Reagan's visit to Beijing and their criticism of Beijing's actions on the Sino-Vietnamese border. Several Soviet articles noted that the Chinese leaders had acknowledged common interests with the United States, including the "containment" of the Soviet Union, and warned that the possible expansion of Sino-US "military and intelligence contacts" would arouse "legitimate concerns" among the PRC's neighbors. Other commentaries have fully aired the recriminations between the USSR and the PRC and put Beijing on notice that Chinese attempts to mollify the Soviets will not go unanswered

~~Source~~  
Soviet statements also suggest a growing perception that China is not prepared for any improvement in Sino-Soviet relations. C

has, over the past four months, repeatedly expressed this view to C

Other Soviet officials have indicated that Moscow—while forwarding documents to Beijing to keep the Arkhipov visit alive—is in no hurry to advance the diplomatic dialogue.

Moscow, at the same time, has shown that it is less concerned than at any time since late 1982 about papering over differences with Beijing. Soviet party chief Chernenko, according to press accounts of his meetings with Vietnamese and Laotian leaders in June, was sharply critical of China's "hostile moves" against Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea. This was Chernenko's first direct criticism of Chinese policy since becoming General Secretary last February and the sharpest high-level attack on the Chinese since Brezhnev's Tashkent speech in March 1982 introduced a new period of restraint in public polemics with Beijing. A photo exhibit on Chinese "atrocities" in Vietnam opened in Moscow in late June, only a few days before Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Qian arrived for talks with the Soviets on international issues. The Soviet media, since Qian's departure, have accused the Chinese of stepping up their anti-Soviet propaganda and have suggested that Beijing's "open-door" policy toward the West could compromise the PRC's "socialist orientation."

The Soviets also have taken steps to reaffirm their backing for third parties involved in the Sino-Soviet equation, most notably Indochina and Mongolia, in the face of warming Sino-US relations and Chinese pressure on Vietnam. Following the March talks with the Chinese, Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko met with the Mongolian Foreign Minister to reaffirm that any improvement in relations with Beijing would not be at the expense of third countries. Recently, the Mongolians have made several attacks on Chinese policies—most notably, China's "aggression" in Indochina



The Soviets meanwhile have reaffirmed their military support for Hanoi and have taken steps to further augment their forces at Cam Ranh Bay. In April, as Sino-Vietnamese clashes were heating up on the eve of President Reagan's visit to China, Soviet and Vietnamese forces participated in an unprecedented joint amphibious exercise. There are also indications that the Soviets may have decided this spring to further expand their naval and naval air presence and related support facilities at their Cam Ranh Bay military base.

The Soviets appear to have been at some pains to demonstrate that whatever progress they might make with the Chinese would not lessen Moscow's determination to stand firm against Beijing's demands on the Vietnam/Kampuchea question. Meetings between Soviet and Indochinese leaders in June and July were apparently timed to coincide with the few positive steps that Moscow took at that time—forwarding to Beijing one or two documents related to Arkhipov's visit, inviting Qian to visit Moscow in early July, and proposing a meeting between Foreign Minister Gromyko and Wu at the United Nations this fall—to get the Sino-Soviet dialogue back on track.

Moscow also has upped the ante in the competition for influence in North Korea by warmly welcoming Kim Il-song on his first official visit to Moscow since 1961. Soviet leaders attempted to play on Kim's fears of US and Japanese support for South Korea and to discredit China's tilt toward the West to solidify Soviet-South Korean relations. Kim, however, apparently remains committed to a policy of at least nominal independence and gives no sign of siding openly with either of his Communist neighbors against the other.

#### Soviet Tactics

The changing Soviet stance on Chinese policies and the escalating polemics with the PRC suggest that Moscow has decided to toughen its tactics in negotiating with China—signaling another watershed in the mercurial Sino-Soviet relationship. It is possible that Moscow believes that its new tactics will demonstrate that the Soviets cannot be pushed around and will ultimately evoke more flexibility in Beijing.

While seeking to make Beijing think twice about the price it will have to pay for drawing closer to Washington and Tokyo, the Soviets do not want to close the door to better bilateral relations. Over the past two years, the Soviets have established a series of exchanges with the PRC that they will not dismantle overnight, regardless of their deteriorating position in the Sino-Soviet-US triangle. Routine Sino-Soviet contacts and exchanges, for example, have continued over the past few months, and all signs are still "go" for Deputy Foreign Minister Ilichev's return to Beijing in October for another round of consultations on bilateral issues. In fact, recent Soviet behavior makes it clear that Moscow recognizes that it cannot opt out of triangular diplomacy and has no intention of completely abandoning its efforts to keep a Sino-Soviet dialogue going. The Soviets would, in any event, want to avoid breaking off all contact with the Chinese because they reportedly anticipate a post-Deng regime in which leaders advocating better ties with the USSR could play a more prominent role.

#### China's Calculus

Beijing is unlikely to moderate its present course in the face of a tougher Soviet stance. China has set a course to protect its security and economic interests in the face of increasing Soviet-US competition in Asia by building closer ties with the United States and Japan. Chinese leaders have repeatedly emphasized that they expect no gestures from the "rigid" Chernenko leadership that would cause Beijing to reassess its plan. On the contrary, they anticipate continued Soviet intransigence, reinforcing China's interest in closer ties with the West.

Chinese media continue to give tit for tat in sharp polemical exchanges with the USSR on a wide spectrum of sensitive issues, including Soviet policy in Vietnam and Afghanistan, Soviet missile deployments in Europe, and relations among Communist parties. Also, an article in a mid-July issue of *Liaowang*, an important Chinese policy journal, indicated that Beijing now expects in the months ahead to move forward even more vigorously in relations with Washington while remaining firm in opposition to Moscow.

Nevertheless, the Chinese do not want Sino-Soviet tensions to get out of hand, and they continue to value the vice-ministerial talks as a useful diplomatic safety valve. Beijing has reportedly told Moscow that it would welcome Arkhipov when he has finished his "preparations," and it readily agreed to a meeting between Foreign Ministers Gromyko and Wu at the United Nations this fall.

China also has attempted to sustain Soviet interest in the dialogue by hinting at possible Chinese flexibility over the bilateral border dispute and economic relations. [

] that the Chinese leadership had changed its view of the Sino-Soviet border issue and now saw it only as a "minor problem" that should not stand in the way of improved relations. China signed its first border delineation agreement with Mongolia in July—underlining an image of Chinese flexibility on sensitive border questions.

Meanwhile, Foreign Economic Minister Chen Muhua signed agreements in June and July setting up separate joint economic committees to promote trade and economic exchanges with Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. Moscow has long sought the establishment of a similar Sino-Soviet commission, and the issue was to have been discussed during Arkhipov's visit.

### The Most Likely Scenario

A harsher tone in relations is likely in the coming months, as the Soviets seek to remind the Chinese that they are fully prepared to accept a worsening of Sino-Soviet relations if Beijing avidly pursues a rapprochement with Washington that Moscow has been unable to achieve:

- Polemical exchanges are likely to become more frequent and heated.
- Diplomatic exchanges may be delayed further as Sino-Vietnamese border clashes continue and as Sino-US exchanges on weapons and nuclear technology move forward.

- The Soviets could adopt a tougher position at the October talks, making secondary exchanges contingent on progress on political issues. It is possible but less likely that Ilichev could walk out of the talks if China raises issues like Afghanistan, Indochina, or Soviet military forces in Mongolia.
- The Soviets could introduce delays or small-scale cutbacks in scheduled exchanges or trade, ostensibly for "technical" reasons.
- Moscow may intensify its complaints about Chinese aid to the Afghan insurgents.
- The Soviets could press their East European allies to turn a deaf ear to Chinese offers of increased trade or exchanges to signal Moscow's refusal to accept Chinese interference in its sphere of influence.

The Soviets will probably intensify their propaganda campaign against China and step up overt and covert actions to counter what they perceive as the growing threat of Sino-US military collusion in Asia. Possible steps include:

- Increased propaganda aimed at the ASEAN nations, depicting Chinese "hegemonism" and Japanese "militarism" in the service of US "imperial ambitions" in the Pacific as the chief "threat" to Asian security.
- Efforts to mount a more intensive antinuclear campaign in the region in conjunction with leftist and pacifist parties and groups in Japan, Australia, and New Zealand.
- Disinformation activities designed to lend credence to Soviet charges.

If the Soviets are genuinely concerned over the threat of Sino-US military collusion against them, they could hint at the possibility of more wide-ranging steps, including an additional buildup of their military forces in East Asia. They also could:

- Provide more military assistance to North Korea, hoping this would force the United States to increase its aid to South Korea, and thus highlight differences between the United States and China over the Korean question.

~~Secret~~

- Patrol more aggressively the straits off the coast of Japan and/or intrude more frequently into Japanese airspace.
- Harden their facilities at Cam Ranh Bay and expand their naval and airstrike capabilities in the South China Sea.
- Provide increased support for anti-US elements throughout East Asia—especially in Japan and the Philippines—with the aim of increasing pressure for a US military withdrawal from the area.

#### Alternative Scenarios

We do not expect that Moscow will simply withdraw into a "fortress" posture but instead will actively try to alter one or another leg of the triangular relationship in its favor

#### Carrots for Beijing

The Soviets still act as if they regard the Sino-Soviet-US relationship as fluid, and we cannot rule out the possibility of a Soviet move this fall to give new impetus to the Sino-Soviet dialogue:

- The Soviets could make new economic offerings to the Chinese, putting together a rather attractive—by their standards—package of proposals involving: trade on favorable credit terms, offers of assistance in plant modernization on a trial basis (with a minimal number of Soviet advisers), and the provision of assistance for China's nuclear energy program.
- Moscow could announce the withdrawal of one or more of the Soviet divisions stationed in Mongolia to probe for Beijing's willingness to reciprocate by addressing Ulaanbaatar's security concerns. The recent replacement of Mongolian party chief Tsedenbal—who had publicly aligned himself with stridently anti-Chinese policies—may ultimately facilitate movement on this issue.
- Moscow could probe for flexibility on the Sino-Soviet border dispute (where talks have been recessed since 1979) by offering to compensate China for Heixiazi Island (which the Soviets have occupied since the 1930s)

#### Beating Beijing at Its Own Game

Alternatively, though less likely, the Soviets could move to strengthen the Soviet-US leg of the triangle while delaying any moves to conciliate the Chinese. Although the Soviets to date appear determined not to let tensions with China force them into making overtures to the United States or its Asian allies, growing frustration with the Chinese could lead Moscow to conclude that unorthodox gestures are necessary. The Soviets could attempt to reopen a dialogue with the United States with new proposals for confidence-building measures (CBMs) in the Pacific involving Soviet and US forces. It is extremely unlikely, however, that any such gesture would occur before the November elections. The Soviets also could try to achieve better relations with Japan by agreeing to a Gromyko visit to Tokyo—a visit that the Japanese have sought for several years and would welcome at this time.

#### Indicators

The Sino-Soviet relationship will undergo several litmus tests in the coming months:

- The most important will be the amount of progress that the two sides make in getting an Arkhipov visit to Beijing back on their agenda.
- The extent to which Foreign Ministers Gromyko and Wu have a dialogue at the United Nations this September, rather than just talk past each other, will provide a clearer picture of where the Sino-Soviet relationship is headed and at what pace.
- Another test will be progress the two sides make, if any, on contentious issues when Illichev goes to Beijing in October for the fifth round of talks on bilateral issues

A decision to proceed with the Arkhipov visit within the next month or so would be a positive sign, suggesting a Soviet desire to get the dialogue with Beijing back on track as soon as circumstances permitted. A Soviet decision to speed up the pace of the

~~Secret~~

~~Secret~~

preparations for the visit—by forwarding additional documents giving the Chinese a better idea of the specific projects that Moscow has in mind—could strike a responsive chord in Beijing, even if the trip were to be delayed for a few more months. Continued stonewalling on a date for the trip, however, would indicate that the Soviets are in no hurry to get things back to where they were before the postponement. Further Soviet moves to link the delay publicly to the Sino-Vietnamese situation—

—or to the recent improvement in Sino-US ties would mean that the Soviets have indeed imposed a new set of preconditions for continuing the Sino-Soviet dialogue and have no interest in rescheduling Arkhipov's visit any time soon.

The Gromyko-Wu meeting at the United Nations this September is not likely to produce much, if anything, in the way of substantive results, but the atmospherics should reveal something about where Sino-Soviet relations are heading. Upbeat assessments of the value of the talks, accompanied by an agreement to meet again next year or perhaps even sooner, would be a positive sign. Anything less would suggest that the two sides still face a period of retrenchment.

On bilateral issues, the track record at the first four rounds of talks and the decision to have Ilichev (whom the Chinese view as a hardliner) again head the Soviet delegation does not augur well. The Soviets could, however, display a greater willingness than they have at past sessions to hear the Chinese out on Afghanistan, Indochina, and the Soviet forces stationed in Mongolia. A more forthcoming Soviet attitude on discussing at least one of these three "obstacles" raised by the Chinese would be a strong indication that Moscow has decided to force the pace of political dialogue. On the other hand, the Soviets could signal their continuing determination to play hardball by instructing Ilichev to adopt an even stiffer posture on third-country issues at the October talks—for example, by instructing him to walk out of any session at which the Chinese tried to bring up these issues.

~~Secret~~

BLANK PAGE

## Appendix

### Chronology of Developments in the Triangular Relationship, September 1983–August 1984

- September 1983      Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Kapitsa, in Beijing, opens a second diplomatic channel for talks on "international issues."
- US Secretary of Defense Weinberger, in Beijing, holds talks on arms sales and technology transfer. Two sides agree on an exchange of visits between President Reagan and Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang.
- October 1983      Third round of Sino-Soviet consultations held in Beijing achieves no new agreements.
- January 1984      Premier Zhao Ziyang, in the United States, confirms Chinese interest in improved ties and desire to obtain US arms and related technology.
- February 1984      Chinese Deputy Premier Wan Li attends Andropov funeral and holds talks with Soviet First Deputy Premier Aliyev—highest level Sino-Soviet discussions since Kosygin-Zhou meeting in 1969.
- Chinese start shelling Vietnamese positions along the Sino-Vietnamese border, taking the initiative before the annual dry-season increase in Vietnamese military operations in Kampuchea.
- March 1984      Fourth round of Sino-Soviet consultations held in Beijing breaks no new ground.
- April 1984      USSR and Vietnam hold joint amphibious exercise in the South China Sea.
- Sino-Vietnamese border fighting escalates to highest levels since 1979.
- President Reagan visits China.
- May 1984      Soviets postpone Arkhipov's visit to Beijing.
- June 1984      Chinese Defense Minister Zhang Aiping visits the United States for further talks on defense cooperation.
- Soviets forward to Beijing documents related to Arkhipov's visit, set a date for Deputy Foreign Minister Qian's visit to Moscow in early July, and propose a meeting between Foreign Ministers Gromyko and Wu at the United Nations in September.

~~Secret~~

July 1984

Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Qian in Moscow for talks with Gromyko and Kapitsa. Two sides talk past each other on issues but agree on a Gromyko-Wu meeting at the United Nations in September.

August 1984

US Secretary of the Navy Lehman, in China, raises the possibility of US port calls.

~~Secret~~