

Russia secures the future, China the distant future

by Konstantin George

Next month, Chinese and Soviet representatives will meet in Moscow to sign a five-year trade accord. The occasion will mark the highest level diplomatic exchange, at the deputy prime minister level, in more than 20 years. The significance of the occasion is unmistakable: Peking and Moscow are together again.

The deans of the U.S. "Asia hand" community are looking the other way. Their tea leaves read differently. On April 18, former Carter State Department employee Leslie Gelb wrote in the *New York Times*, "Ten years after the defeat of South Vietnam, there is widespread agreement among policy analysts that the position of the United States in Asia is stronger now than at any time since the end of World War II." According to Gelb, that "strength" is premised on the unmitigated success of Henry Kissinger's notorious "China Card" policy, in which the United States made a deal to allow China to run amok in Asia, so long as Peking provided political and military cover for a steady U.S. strategic retreat from the region.

Never in the postwar period, have such dangerous delusions so threatened the strategic future of the United States, nor so jeopardized the national security of our regional allies in Asia.

Gelb insists that his view is the ruling consensus among Eastern Establishment and Berkeley mafia "Asia hands," from Kissinger's former national security assistant Winston Lord, now president of the Council on Foreign Relations, to the State Department's Michael Armacost and Paul D. Wolfowitz, to Carter appointee Richard C. Holbrooke, Berkeley Prof. Robert A. Scalapino, and Donald S. Zagoria.

This delusion dominates Reagan administration policy thinking toward Asia to this day. "It is clear that the whole condition of East Asia is today far better than the most optimistic would have predicted 10 years ago. Even compared to the end of World War II, it is far better because the countries of Asia are far more self-reliant, don't look to us as much as they did before," said Paul D. Wolfowitz, Assistant Secretary of State for Asia and Pacific Affairs. Wolfowitz, and the others, openly deny the overwhelming evidence of Sino-Soviet rapprochement. Were they to do otherwise, would

necessitate an overhaul of U.S. policy assumptions, namely, dumping the China Card.

The Soviet drive for a strategic accommodation with China has been made explicit in recent statements by the Soviet leadership. At the Kremlin, on the occasion of the Warsaw Pact's 30th anniversary, Soviet Central Committee Secretariat member, Konstantin Rusakov, called for a "broad anti-imperialist front, together with China," against the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative. Soviet leader Gorbachov himself, speaking at the April 23 Central Committee Plenum, tacked on, at the end of a sentence in which he praised the "increasing unity of the Socialist Community," the goal of a full accommodation with China.

One day earlier, on the occasion of Lenin's 115th birthday, First Deputy Prime Minister and Politburo member Geidar Aliyev, the crowning figure of the Turanian-Muslim Division of the Soviet Empire, hailed the "increasing unity of the Socialist Community," stressing the need to reach agreement with China.

Reconciliation between Moscow and Peking exposes Kissinger's China card as having been, from the outset, a strategy of U.S. strategic retreat that only benefits the Soviet Union. Despite Leslie Gelb's self-delusion, the ruling consensus in Asia is that Moscow, not Washington, is the dominant superpower. Peking, Kissinger's "ace," obviously shares this view.

The June meeting in Moscow signals that Soviet-Chinese, post-Brezhnev "normalization" of relations, is in full, irreversible, swing under the Gorbachov collective leadership. The Five-Year Soviet-Chinese Trade Accord, covering the 1986-90 Five-Year Plan period, will inaugurate the next qualitative leap in Soviet-Chinese economic, and political, relations. It will "mesh" the Soviet and Chinese planned economies, not only for the 1986-90 period, but, through the standard automatic renewal clauses, will continue this process into the 1990s.

The first surge in improved Sino-Soviet relations occurred when Yuri Andropov came to power. In 1983, Soviet-Chinese trade more than doubled, to \$600 million. In 1984, it doubled again, reaching a value of almost \$1.2 billion. The

1985 minimum goal, decided upon during the two weeks of talks which began in Moscow on April 9 between Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Qian Chi Chen and his Soviet counterpart, Leonid Ilyichev, is \$1.6 billion, a 35% increase over 1984. Those talks also prepared the agenda for the June deputy prime minister talks in Moscow.

News, "in between" the scheduled talks, betrayed the determination of both sides to accelerate the "normalization" process. On March 25, the Chinese ambassador to Moscow, requested, and got, a private meeting with Ivan Archipov, the Soviet deputy prime minister who will host the June talks, to discuss, according to *Pravda* of March 26, "the further development of trade and economic relations."

Gaining time

For the Soviets, "reconciliation" with China is required to secure Russia's Eurasian "rear," in this decade when all confrontationist posture will be directed at the United States and Western Europe, with the strategic goal of severing Western Europe from the U.S.A., and bringing all Europe into a satrapial arrangement with the remaining world power, the Soviet Union. The Russian Empire thus desires no Asian imbroglions or entanglements.

Russia, to handle China, is building up Asiatic military power, backed by a Soviet nuclear umbrella, to cope with any contingency. Before the 1985 "normalization" with China, 1984 saw the biggest Soviet military build-up in post-war history, in the Soviet Far East, Sakhalin, and the Kuriles, facing China and Japan. Parallel to that, Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam was turned into a permanent Soviet naval and air base for long-range nuclear-capable bombers. In December 1984, Soviet Marshal Vasili Petrov, then Commander in Chief of Soviet Ground Forces, and since then, promoted to first deputy defense minister, visited Vietnam, departing on December 23. Two days later, in an unmistakable demonstration to China, Vietnam launched its biggest offensive ever in Kampuchea. For the first time since Vietnamese troops entered Kampuchea in 1979, the military bases of the Kampuchean rebels straddling the Thai-Kampuchea border were overrun.

Late 1984 and early 1985 also marked the heaviest round of Vietnamese-Chinese border clashes since the February 1979 shellacking the Chinese received from the Vietnamese Army, when Chinese troops invaded Vietnam to, in the "famous last words" of Chinese leader Deng, "teach Vietnam a lesson." In the same time frame, the Russians have launched the biggest offensives in Afghanistan since their occupation began.

The United States, meanwhile, has become increasingly militarily irrelevant in the Pacific Basin since the time of Nixon's promulgation of the Guam Doctrine, in which Kissinger's China Card was put forward as Washington policy. IMF-instigated political insurgency and economic warfare

against the government of Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos have thrown into jeopardy the West's front-line strategic defense facilities at Subic Bay and Clark Field. In the South Pacific, the ANZUS pact of Australia, New Zealand, and the United States collapsed last fall, when New Zealand's newly elected Prime Minister Lange banned U.S. port calls in favor of the Soviet-backed proposal to turn the South Pacific into a nuclear-free zone. And, finally, it is only in the last few months, that genuine progress has been made in healing the wounds suffered when President Jimmy Carter decided to pull U.S. troops out of South Korea as part of his human rights campaign.

U.S. diplomacy, in recent months, has failed miserably to reassure Peking that Washington can, or will, fulfill its part of the China Card game. The round of "Jap-bashing" that seized the U.S. Congress in early April, with tacit encouragement from the U.S. Treasury, Commerce, and State departments, against the United States' strongest strategic ally in the region, speaks volumes in shaping Peking's, and Moscow's, perceptions. If "Jap-bashing" is U.S. policy toward its best ally in the region—what columnist Joseph Kraft has called a policy of "shooting itself in the foot first"—then being allied to the United States is no security at all.

If Washington is to have an effective "China policy," then it is clear that that policy must be on the basis of an overall policy toward the entire Pacific Basin, including Japan, Southeast Asia, and India.

From 'equidistance' to accommodation

The perception in Peking is that China has no choice but to seek accommodation with the Soviet Union, as the super-power whose rise will dominate regional affairs over the next decade, and longer. Deng Xiaoping is known to have held this view since 1965, when the two communist giants broke off relations. Since the beginning of 1985, China has been making clear military concessions to what the Chinese perceive as "reality" for the next decade and beyond.

China is scaling down its military strength from the 4 million level to some 3 million. Secondly, hundreds of fighter planes, and ever more infantry divisions have been transferred from North China, facing Russia, to Kwangsi and Yunnan Provinces, facing Vietnam. Alone from mid-January to early March, two Chinese divisions were transferred.

The big political signal came on April 9, the day the Soviet-Chinese talks started, from Party General Secretary Hu Yao Bang. China has always cited "three obstacles" to normalization: 1) Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan; 2) reduced Soviet military presence facing China; and 3) Vietnamese withdrawal from Kampuchea. Hu said: "Why shouldn't we have relations of friendship and good neighborliness with a Socialist country which shares with us the longest common border?" He added: "What are the three obstacles? I'm not sure."