

Soviet New Policy toward Asia: Special Reference to Its Socialist Allies in the Region

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I. Shevardnaze's Ministry and Its Asian Policy

Since Gorbachev's accession to power, the Soviet Union has been extending its foreign policy in two main directions, namely the North Atlantic and Asia. While USSR's European policy became more dynamic in 1985, 1986 can be described as the start of a new positive policy toward Asia, with special emphasis on coordinated action among their Socialist allies in Asia. The Soviet's new approach to Asia is well illustrated by Shevardnaze's personnel reshuffling and organizational changes in his Ministry.

1. Changes in Deputy Ministers

As for the ministerial personnel changes, mention must be made of the reshuffling among the deputy ministers in charge of Asian affairs. L. Il'ichev and M. Kapitsa, both of whom served for a long time as Gromyko's right hand men for Asian matters, left the ministry to follow their master. The young, energetic and apparently more gentlemen-like (at least more than Kapitsa) I. Rogachev replaced them as a deputy minister. Rogachev visited Peking often in order to improve Sino-Soviet relations at a more rapid pace, as designed by the Kremlin. In spring 1988 he spent as long as 5 weeks in southeast Asia, apparently searching for a solution to the Cambodian problem. Toward the end of this August, Rogachev is going to Peking for special consultations with his counterpart, solely concerning this Cambodian problem, which has remained a sticking point between Moscow and Peking. Rogachev's flexible and energetic diplomatic activities are symbolic of the new positive Soviet Asian policy. There is one more new deputy minister, B. Chaplin, who was the former Ambassador to Hanoi and is also a candidate-member of the Central Committee. Although he is now in charge of intra-ministerial affairs, he visited Hanoi twice in these last two years as a special envoy. It is fair to say that Shevardnaze would not make any significant decision regarding Indochinese affairs without consulting Chaplin.

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2. Changes in Ambassadors

Shevardnaze has also been making ambassadorial personnel changes vis-a-vis Asian countries, especially the Socialist ones. As is well known, the Kremlin has traditionally sent Ambassadors with full Central Committee membership to just a dozen foreign countries, such as France, India, Algeria and other non-Socialist countries, as well as all Warsaw Pact member-countries and Yugoslavia. These countries can be said to belong to a category of first importance to Moscow. Then comes a second category, consisting of countries, to which the Kremlin sends their Ambassadors with Central Committee candidate membership. And finally the rest of the world is sent Soviet Ambassadors with non-Central Committee membership (a third category). In this way, the party-status of Soviet Ambassadors reflects the Kremlin's priorities as regards foreign countries. Of course there are some exceptions, but this status ordering can be regarded as a general rule.

Just before the Gorbachev era, none of the Soviet Ambassadors accredited to countries in Southeast Asia and the Far East (except Japan) had Central Committee membership, which means that that region did not have any countries in this first category. Only Vietnam and Mongolia (CMEA full member countries), and North Korea (bordering country to the USSR) had Soviet Ambassadors with candidate-membership to the Central Committee. These three countries were in the second category. All other Asian countries were in the third category. Since Gorbachev's coming to power, however, an important transformation in this ambassadorial configuration has taken place. In 1986 the above-mentioned Soviet Ambassador in Hanoi was replaced by the former first secretary of the Kamchatka region, a full Central Committee member. And in late 1987, G. Bartoshevich, another Central Committee full member, was accredited to Pyongyang. Hence, Vietnam and North Korea can now be said to be in the first category, but Mongolia still remains in the second. In this connection, some mention must be made of the following points: 1) Moscow in 1986 appointed a new Ambassador to China, who is a candidate member to the Central Committee, while his predecessor was a non-member of this important party apparatus (Thus China is now in the second category); 2) Soviet Ambassadors recently appointed to Asian countries are more often recruited from among experts in this particular region rather than non-experts with party credentials. Examples of this tendency include, inter, Japan, China, and Laos. Another interesting choice is the new Soviet Ambassador to Manila, O. Sokolov, a veteran diplomat who served at the Soviet Embassy in Washington under A. Dobrynin for many years. It may not be unfair to say that this Ambassador was likely chosen with the Kremlin's hope that he will exert some

influence in a country which, because of the question of the U.S. maintaining military bases there is strategically critical; 3) Shevardnaze in 1986 replaced the Soviet Ambassador to Afghanistan, F. Tabeev (a full member of the Central Committee) with P. Mozhaev (who is only a Central Committee candidate member). Rather surprisingly, Mozhaev was recently replaced by N. Egorychev, currently a non-member of the Central Committee. This overt downgrading clearly shows that the importance the Kremlin attaches to Afghanistan has diminished greatly over the last four years. This demotion of Afghanistan as a Soviet ally from the first to the third category, is certainly related to the Kremlin's changed policy toward Nagibula-Kabul, the Soviet-backed President and Party Chief.

3. Organizational Changes

Shevardnaze made very fundamental changes in his Ministry's Asian Section in June 1986. The organization of this Section, under Gromyko, was unable to function efficiently enough to stay abreast of changing realities in this rapidly developing region. This is well illustrated by the fact that the Second European Department of Gromyko's Ministry dealt directly with Australia and New Zealand despite their Asian location, ostensibly because of their membership in the British Commonwealth. But since Great Britain's entry into the EC, these two countries have become politically and economically, as well as geographically, genuine Asian countries. The most salient point of new organizational changes, however, is that the Foreign Ministry now has a Bureau specifically in deal with Asian Socialist countries. The Asian Section under Rogachev initially had one Bureau and two Departments: the South Asian Department and the Pacific Asian Department, with the latter now assuming responsibility for relations with Australia and New Zealand. This change suggests the Ministry has finally seen fit to give due attention to Asia in its own right. And, these two Departments were elevated to the status of Bureaus to match the Asian Socialist Bureau. Through these organizational transformations, Shevardnaze has achieved a much more efficient basis for policy-making and implementation in Asia.

II. Moscow's Policy toward Its Asian Socialist Allies

One of the most prominent features of Gorbachev's new Asian policy is the design for organizing Asian Socialist countries. Today the Kremlin has five pro-Soviet allies in Asia: Mongolia, North Korea, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. For historical and geopolitical reasons the Soviet Union has so far left these countries less organized on a regional political and economic basis than

those in Eastern Europe. In Asia, Marxism-Leninism has been a great deal less influential than in Europe, and although the Soviet Union has common borders with only Mongolia and North Korea, it is separated by considerable geopolitical space from the three Indochinese countries. What is more important, Mongolia, North Korea, and the three Indochinese allies are geographically separated from each other, which is not the case in Eastern Europe. Nevertheless, the present situation in Asia and the new Soviet approach toward Asia has been pressing the Kremlin to strengthen its ties with its Asian Socialist allies, and furthermore to establish some form of regimentation among them. Here historical knowledge suggests that the USSR tried to tighten the reins in Eastern Europe before launching a flexible policy towards Western Europe, so that the latter policy would not promote disorder in Eastern Europe. This lesson may be useful in understanding recent Soviet efforts to strengthen its ties with its Asian Socialist allies, especially when the USSR is assuming a flexible stance toward China, once the ideological archenemy of the Soviet bloc, and Japan, the main historical enemy in Asia in the 20th century.

The need to strengthen the ties among the Asian Socialist countries was clearly expressed when Gorbachev and Kaison, Laotian Party General Secretary agreed "to intensify further coordinated action of Asian Socialist countries" on the occasion of Kaison's visit to Moscow in October 1986. (*Pravda*, 1986. 10. 16). The Kremlin is trying to forge an Asian Socialist front. In my eyes, this is an attempt to create another triangle composed of the Soviet Far East plus North Korea; Mongolia plus Central Siberia; and Indochina. The Soviet press is playing up the importance of various peace initiatives for Asian security proposed mainly by the respective three corners of its five allies; Mongolia's proposals for a convention on non-use of force in Asia; North Korea's initiatives directed at peace in the Korean Peninsula; and Indochinese proposals concerning Southeast Asia. these initiatives could constitute a sort of common platform for these Asian Socialist countries only if they can find a suitable institutional forum for coordinated action.

In this connection, important moves towards the necessary institutionalization (some would say regimentation) have been witnessed in Ulan Bator. The first move was the unprecedented convention of the Asian Socialist countries' parliamentary delegates in 1986, attended by delegates from the USSR, Mongolia, North Korea, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia (Heng Samrin government) attended. (*Rude Pravo*, 1986. 3. 27). Seven months later Ulan Bator announced that Mongolia would host the first conference of the Asia Communist and Labor Parties in her capital in the summer of 1987. (*Pravda*, 1986. 10. 26). The motives behind this conference were likely to organize the Soviet's Asian Socialist allies and to enlist all "peace loving forces" in Asia (through the good

services of local opposition Communist Labor parties) in the struggle against a "nuclear threat from over the sea."

No less interesting was another unprecedented meeting of Deputy-Foreign Ministers from the Soviet's five Asian Socialist allies took place in Moscow on 12 January 1987. (*Pravda*, 1987. 1. 12). Similar kinds of Deputy-Foreign Ministers' meetings were held in the past [in Vientiane (1981) and in Ulan Bator (1983)] in which, however, most of the East European Deputy-Foreign Ministers participated. In this sense, the January 1987 meeting in Moscow can be described as the first meeting of Asian Socialist Deputy-Foreign ministers as such. The Kremlin would probably like to establish a coordination mechanism to forge a common policy in Asia, and would also like to build up a political platform from which it could take foreign policy initiatives, not just of its own, but also those emanating from the Asian division of the Socialist Commonwealth. This can be viewed as comparable to the political (rather than military) function which the Warsaw Pact is performing in the European theater. It might not be too far-fetched to anticipate the possibility of the foreign ministers of 6 Asian Socialist countries, including the USSR, may get together in one of the capital cities of the countries in the near future, as a counterpart to the enlarged meeting of ASEAN Foreign Ministers which includes the US Secretary of State, the Japanese Foreign Minister, and other prominent foreign policy officials from member countries.

From the 7th to the 9th of July 1987, the first conference of Asian Communist and Labor Parties took place in Ulan Bator, in which 23 party-delegations from 21 countries took part. (But, as had been correctly predicted by many observers, Party-delegations from China and Japan were missing). Dobrynin led the Soviet delegation and made a speech at the conference. (*Pravda*, 1987. 7. 10). However, Moscow certainly did not consider the conference as very successful, mainly because the North Korean Party did not show up. This meant that the Soviets have simply failed to organize the 6 Asian Socialist allies as the nucleus of the Communist movement in Asia. This may be the main reason why the Soviet press did not give much coverage to this conference.

Nevertheless, the conference was not insignificant, because neither worldwide nor European conferences of this sort are not likely to be forthcoming in the future, despite their desirability. There is no denying that this type of conference which produces no concrete declarations, has undoubtedly induced Gorbachev into having second thoughts about holding conferences of this sort either at regional or at global level. While in November 86 Gorbachev is said to have doubted the wisdom of holding the World Communist Party Conference (*Rude pravo*, 1986. 12. 6), six months later he maintained that "I can't understand the cautious attitude to the proposal to have a multilateral meeting

of the Communist Parties." (Pravda, 1987. 5. 20). Here he has in mind a conference which will not actually issue any concrete document. All in all, the Kremlin seems to appreciate the significance of the Ulan Bator conference, despite its limited success. According to Tass, it was pointed out to Politburo members that "there was a significant desire expressed by the participant countries to have multilateral Party contact in a more regular basis and in a more diversified way." (Pravda, 1987. 7. 18).

As explained above, one of the main emphases of the Kremlin's policy toward Asia is to strengthen the ranks of the Asian Socialist Allies and to organize the Asian Communist movement. However, these Soviet efforts to fortify Socialism in Asia seems to have undergone some kind of change, probably related to recent significant modifications in the Kremlin's overall foreign policy. As US-USSR relations have been changing for the better since the middle of 1987, Moscow has become less and less vociferous in criticizing Washington for its efforts to establish an Asian NATO against the USSR and its Asian allies. The Kremlin's judgment in 1986 that it was facing an Asian NATO must have forced Gorbachev's leadership to feel the need to prepare an Asian Warsaw Pact. But, the Asian situation of today is certainly not a situation in which the Kremlin would be well advised to try to force creation of an Asian Socialist bloc. For instance, Dobrynin at the Ulan-Bator conference pointed out that some positive tendency has been recently observed in the Asia-Pacific region; this perception has brought a deepened consciousness of the necessity to avert the dangerous potential of conflicts in this region. (Pravda, 1987. 7. 10). Of course, preparations for such a policy coordination mechanism are much needed, so the Soviets will likely to continue these efforts. However, the point is that their efforts are becoming more subtle. As for the communist movement in Asia, in my opinion, it will not be based upon "class interests", or more precisely, "Proletariat Internationalism"; instead this movement seems to be changing into a more broadly based Communist and Labor Movement, including Social Democrats, the main objective of which is "survival from a nuclear catastrophe."

III. The Cambodian Problem

As for Cambodian problem itself, the Kremlin has displayed some new approaches. Firstly, at the beginning of 80's the Soviets did not recognize the Cambodian problem as such (instead they always referred to it as "situations around Cambodia"), regarding the process in the country as "irreversible". But after Gorbachev's accession to power, Soviet policy has changed to approaching the problem by political means, "taking into account the existing reality," with

Vietnam, however, refusing to accept this formula. (Pike, 1987: 208). "The existing reality there" may first of all be interpreted as Heng Samrin regime's governing the country. It can be seen as the existing reality that the USSR and Vietnam have been unsuccessful in solving the problem, and the Heng Samrin regime will not be strong enough to manage without the direct backing of Moscow and Hanoi. (Pravda, 1987. 5. 22). But when Nguen Van Linh visited Moscow in May 87, Gorbachev succeeded in persuading the Vietnamese Party leader to accept this formula. But the Soviets and the Vietnamese did not seem to agree on how to treat the Pol Pot group, one of the most sticky points of this Cambodian problem. As is well known, Moscow and Hanoi formally agreed on the principle that "the Pol Pot clique" should be excluded from any future Cambodian government of national reconciliation. If the "the Pol Pot clique" is interpreted in the broad sense of the term, logically this largest faction within anti-Phnom Penh resistance movements would be completely denied their right to come back home to share power, which automatically means that there is less chance of seeing *modus vivendi* endorsed by Peking, and consequently accepted by Pol-Pot and other groups of Democratic Cambodia. If on the contrary the meaning of "clique" were taken narrowly to mean only Pol Pot and small numbers of his associates, then there would be more chance for effective national reconciliation. However, even without Pol Pot the mere presence of his people would be a threat to the incumbent government in Phnom Penh and to the Vietnamese. In this sense, the interpretation of "clique" is a key point.

On the occasion of Nguen Van Linh's visit to Moscow in May 1987, the discrepancy of approach between Moscow and Hanoi on this very point loomed large. Before his departure, the Vietnamese press launched a campaign to stress the significance of the "exclusion of the Pol Pot clique". In Moscow, Linh himself made efforts to emphasize this principle. (Radio Press 1987. 6. 9) Gorbachev, however, did not follow suit. In fact he touched upon the problem only once on 19 May, when he said that "Cambodia is steadily, though gradually recovering from the terror of Pol Pot's genocide" at his banquet speech, never mentioning the "exclusion." (Pravda, 1987. 5. 20). And this long recognized principle was not touched upon in the joint communique. Vietnamese dissatisfaction with Moscow's line was shown, when Hanoi repeated the importance of the formula after Linh's return. (Radio Press, 1987. 5. 27).

Following Nguen Van Linh, Heng Samrin, Cambodian Party head visited Moscow towards the end of July. The Soviet side did not use that formula to Vietnam's liking. According to Tass, Gorbachev said that "There is no place for those guilty of genocide in the process of national reconciliation and resolution." (Pravda, 1987. 7. 29). Again this expression is rather vague, and more

to the point Pol Pot's name was not singled out. A few weeks later, *Izvestiya* carried a very interesting interview article with Heng Samrin's former Foreign Minister, Kong Korm, in which he mentioned for the first time, "exclusion of Pol Pot and his closest associates (blizhaishie podruzhnye)." (*Izvestiya*, 1987. 8. 11). This expression would suggest that Pol Pot himself and Ieng Sary should be excluded, and now that Khieu Samphen is acceptable. Another few weeks later, on 29 August, the Heng Samrin regime officially announced the following even narrower definition, "Pol Pot and his closest accomplices (edinymsheenniki)". Again we can't but help notice the significant role played by the Soviets behind the scenes. Once again we witness the long arm extended by the Kremlin. Namely one day before Heng Samrin's announcement, four representatives of Foreign Ministries from Cambodia, Laos, the USSR and Vietnam began three days of consultation in Phnom Penh. Shevardnaze sent Kiriev, the Director of the Asian Socialist Countries Bureau, an influential policy maker, to Phnom Penh. (*Radio Press*, 1987. 8. 31). This more specific interpretation of "the Pol Pot clique" is now prevailing. This certainly has led to the first meeting between Prince Sihanouk and the Cambodian Premier, Hun Sen, scheduled for the forthcoming December in Paris which was again officially confirmed in Moscow during Hun Sen's recent visit. (*Sankei Shimbun*, 1987. 10. 31). As may be clear from what has been mentioned above, Gorbachev has been very active in breaking the back of one of the most difficult aspects of the Cambodian problem, namely "Pol Pot clique." Though his efforts were made quietly behind the scenes.

Concerning the Cambodian problem as an obstacle to improving Sino-Soviet relations, Gorbachev here again changed his policy. His previous stance was that in so far as the USSR was not directly involved in the Cambodian problem, it is not an appropriate topic for discussion between Moscow and Peking. (*Pravda*, 1987. 5. 20). But, since the 10th Sino-Soviet Political Consultation Meeting of April 87, the USSR has met the Chinese demands to tackle the Cambodian problem. (*UPI*, 1987. 4. 26). A month later Gorbachev expressed the opinion that "although the Cambodian problem has nothing to do with Sino-Soviet relations, the USSR and China are interested in resolving this problem." (*Pravda*, 1987. 5. 20). As suggested by this statement, Moscow reluctantly agreed to include this problem in the talks with the Chinese. In this context it is quite understandable that the 11th Political Consultation Meeting did not bring much progress, probably because of the Cambodian impasse. (*UPI*, 1987. 10. 16). At the stage the Kremlin was yet unable to make any substantial concessions on this matter by bypassing Hanoi, which would have reacted rather stridently to Moscow in such a situation, perhaps even threatening to deny Soviet use of the naval base at Cam Ranh Bay.

When Hun Sen met with Prince Sihanouk in France in December 1987 and January 1988, he dutifully stopped over in Moscow both before and after these meetings for direct Soviet advice and instruction. Moscow's involvement in this affair apparently begun to be rather overt. On May 30, 1988, the Soviet Government issued a statement welcoming Hanoi's decision to withdraw her military forces (approximately 50,000 troops) from Cambodia. In this statement Moscow declared that, "it is prepared to make contributions to searching for constructive solutions to the conflict-ridden situation in Southeast Asia." (Pravda, 1988. 5. 31). Thus the Soviet attitude appears to be becoming even more positive and visible. A few months before the Bogor cocktail party Shevardnaze sent Rogachev to the capital city of Cambodia, where he joined a 4 country consultation concerning the Cambodian problem. Significantly, this time, the level of the consultation was elevated to deputy ministers, from bureau directors level a year before. After the Bogor meeting the Soviet Foreign Ministry issued a statement which once again made it clear that the USSR was ready to contribute to the resolution of the Cambodian problem. (Pravda, 1988. 8. 4). Finally, mention must be made of Rogachev's forthcoming visit to Peking solely devoted to the problem.

IV. Kremlin's Policies toward Indochina, China, and North Korea

1. Policy toward Indochina

Brief mention must be made of the Soviet attitude toward the development of socialism in Indochina, especially in Cambodia. It is true that Moscow has been seeking a solution to the Cambodian problem. But one must ask what ulterior motive lies behind these efforts? Some plausible answers are that the Soviets are trying to minimize further negative repercussions of the long festering Cambodian problem on the regional situation; on East-West relations; and on the international Communist movement. In these contexts, their recent emphasis on "national reconciliation" for a "neutral and nonaligned" (Pravda, 1987. 10. 9). Cambodia has definite objectives.

On such objective is to strengthen socialism in Indochina. The Soviets have been striving to improve their Party relations with Cambodia. The more pronounced the Soviet's flexible stance has become on the Cambodian problem, the more they have tried to strengthen their ties with the Heng Samrin regime at the Party level; and they have also tried to fortify and reinforce this regime's brotherly solidarity with Vietnam and Laos. There have been numerous clear examples of these Soviet cooperative efforts. When Hun Sen and Heng Samrin paid a visit to Moscow in 1987, much to our surprise, it was Med-

vedev, the Central Committee Secretary in charge of Liaison with Ruling Communist Parties, who accompanied Gorbachev and other top level leaders in their conversations with the Cambodian political representatives. (Pravda, 1987. 7. 29). This indirectly indicates that Moscow is now treating Cambodia differently than in the past. This dealing with Heng Samrin's incipient socialist regime as a full-fledged socialist country coincides with Soviet efforts to bring about Cambodian participation in various conferences and meetings, despite the opposition of other socialist countries to Cambodian involvement. And relations with Cambodia are now handled by the Bureau of Asian Socialist countries at the USSR's Foreign Ministry. Furthermore, a special edition of the journal *Novoe Vremya* commemorating the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution made it clear that Cambodia is the latest entrant into the world Socialist System. (Novoe Vremya, 1987).

Especially with the possibility of progress regarding Cambodian national reconciliation, "special relations" between Hanoi, Vientiane, and Phnom Penh will become all the more important for Moscow. What is interesting is that two apparently contradictory Soviet approaches are unfolding simultaneously: 1) a flexible or even compromising approach to the Cambodian problem, with an eye toward reducing Western antagonism toward the Heng Samrin regime, and; 2) the traditional Soviet policy of fortifying socialism in the country through Moscow-Phnom Penh Party relations, and also through regional bonds among these three brotherly Indochinese countries. In some respects these two approaches are not really contradictory: indeed the latter is a precondition to the former. From the Soviet standpoint, only a strong and stable socialism can accommodate non-socialist elements such as Sihanouk as the Head of State, Pol Pot's people without Pol Pot, non-alignment, and even neutrality.

The Soviet policy to assist Vietnam was assured for the future, when Ligachev, the second most influential man in the Kremlin, visited Hanoi in late 1986 to attend the Vietnamese Party Congress. He went so far as to announce that assistance to Hanoi in the next five years would be doubled. (Pravda, 1986. 12. 18). At the same time Ligachev bluntly complained to the Vietnamese about their ineffective utilization of Soviet assistance, and called for changes in economic relations between the USSR and Vietnam. Nevertheless, nothing concrete in this respect was accomplished until spring 1987, when Nguen Van Linh went to Moscow. He and Gorbachev seemed to agree on qualitatively new policies. After returning home, Linh made it clear that an understanding had been reached in Moscow whereby the character of Soviet assistance would be changed, away from the existing orientation of trade and aid and toward new forms of economic cooperation. Specifically, joint ventures would henceforth play a much larger role in Soviet-Vietnamese economic relations, and

non-repayable economic assistance grants were to be reduced, except for military assistance. (Radio Press, 1987. 6. 2). Moreover, major changes in Vietnam's internal economic administration would have to take place. A month later, from the Soviet side Ligachev matched Linh's call for internal change by vehemently criticizing the ministries in charge of economic relations with non-European CMEA countries. He stated that these ministries, "have not drawn the necessary conclusions from the Central Committee's decisions concerning the improvement of economic relations with these brotherly countries." (Pravda, 1987. 6. 23).

Coming back to the Soviet-Vietnamese relations, in July of this year, the 44th CMEA plenum meeting took place in Prague. According to the meeting's communique, a special programme to help the three non-European CMEA member participate in the international division of labor was sanctioned. What was emphasized was that the programme is to be of a long perspective. (Pravda, 1988. 7. 8). This clearly suggests that aid from European to non-European members of CMEA would be different in character from the traditional form of aid grants, which had been disbursed for primarily strategic reasons.

It is of course still premature to state whether this transformation in economic relations between the USSR and Vietnam will definitely take place. But judging from the economic reforms under way in both countries, the odds are that this change will occur, and that it will go as far as to influence even their political relations. If so, this "economization" of Soviet-Vietnamese trade relations will perhaps influence positively the Southeast Asian situation in the future.

2. Policy toward China

The Sino-Soviet relations since Gorbachev's Vladivostok address have not been much improved at the political level. As far as Party to Party relations are concerned, a point worth drawing attention to is the official visit to Peking of Razumovski, Central Committee Secretary who has been the highest ranking Party official without any governmental status ever being in China in recent years. The fact that Peking accepted this predominantly Party personnel as a head of a Soviet delegation suggests that at least there has been one step forward in this most difficult field of bilateral relations. Besides this development, there has been nothing else to indicate any political improvement. This does not, however, mean that Moscow has no intention to adopt its "new thinking" policy into Asian politics. In fact, some ways in which the Soviets have shown their goodwill to Peking are; by a partial withdrawal of their armed forces stationed in Mongolia, bilateral talks on the Sino-Soviet borders, the

Soviets' new stance on the Cambodian problem and "global zero" (the decision to eliminate all SS-20 in Asia). Moscow, in trying to stress their goodwill to Peking, went as far as to announce after this "double zero" decision that it was a decision made by taking into account Chinese apprehensions concerning the Soviets' SS-20s in Asia. (Radio Press, 1987. 7. 23). Despite these policy changes, as mentioned before, their relations have not shown any great improvements. Recent developments in Sino-Soviet relations probably suggest that their rapprochement has already reached a point, beyond which Moscow cannot improve further without giving substantial concessions. To put it in another way, Moscow might have achieved a minimum objective in its approach to Peking, namely the neutralization of a possible negative Chinese reaction to the Soviets' launching of a more active and dynamic policy in the Asia-Pacific region.

As for the Cambodian problem, a Sino-Soviet agreement may be in the offing. Also, the impact of the Afghanistan accord of mid-April 1988 upon the Cambodian problem cannot be neglected. If Moscow succeeds in removing the Cambodian problem as a bone of contention between the USSR and China, or at least reducing it significantly, then a summit between Gorbachev and Deng may take place and Party-to-Party relations will likely be restored. It is quite unlikely, however, that the resurrection of party contact will itself fundamentally improve the character of the two countries' overall current relations.

3. Policy toward Pyongyang

Concerning Moscow-Pyongyang relations, we may now judge that their relations, which showed improvement at a rather surprising pace in 1985 and 1986, by 1988 the pace has already slowed down, despite Central Committee Secretary Medvedyev's statement to the contrary, (Medvedyev, 1988) my own view is that the rate of improvement in Moscow-Pyongyang relations had slowed considerably 1988. In this context, several points can be made. Firstly, Pyongyang seems to resist meeting the Soviet desire to include North Korea into CMEA, i.e. into the family of the Socialist Commonwealth (CMEA member states and Laos). This is clearly shown by the fact that Pyongyang has been trying hard to use Proletarian Internationalism as the principle to regulate Soviet-North Korean relations, while Moscow incessantly uses the terminology of Socialist Internationalism which always refers to relations within the Socialist Commonwealth. (Akino, 1986: 79-80). Secondly, to Moscow's chagrin, Kim Il Sung did not send a Party delegation to the Asian Communist Parties conference in Ulan Bator, to which the Chinese delegation did not show up either. Thirdly, Moscow's attitude towards the Seoul Olympics has not been at all encouraging to Pyongyang. Fourthly, Peking-Pyongyang relations have been

improved since the resignation of Hu Yaoban, whose relations with Kim Il Sung were supposed to be simply bad. What is more interesting is that Moscow apparently welcomes Chinese involvement in the Korean Peninsula. Recently, a Soviet historian wrote that "It is pleasant to see that China is closely cooperating with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and supporting this countries' comprehensive programmes aiming at the peaceful resolution of the Korean problem." (APN, 1987. 9. 24). This may perhaps be an idea that both Moscow and Peking should have an equal say on Pyongyang, instead of getting ahead of each other.

Finally, it is true that Moscow is sending some of its most sophisticated weapon systems, e.g., Mig 29s, to Pyongyang. And apparently military cooperation between the USSR and North Korea is increasing. However, judging from the general direction of Moscow's foreign policy, it might be plausible to say that the recent delivery of these new weapons is a "payoff" for Soviet participation in the Seoul Olympic Games, despite Pyongyang's plea for Socialist boycott. Any case, there is surely a limit beyond which military cooperation by itself cannot go, without there is no common goals and broader mutual understanding in the political, economic, cultural and ideological sphere.

V. Conclusion

1. What was the main motive behind the Soviet invasion into Afghanistan? In retrospect, the most plausible answer is the defense of the attainment of the Afghan revolution, which is surprisingly the very explanation made by Brezhnev himself in 1979. To put it in another way, the Kremlin sent its military forces there in order to secure and protect a pro-Soviet regime in Kabul, so that the Afghan revolution might evolve into Afghan Socialism by the Afghans in due course. In fact, the Soviets never tried to be a main driving force behind the construction of Socialism in Afghanistan, instead they remained just a guardian of the Kabul government, on whose shoulder the main task of Socialism-building fell. In this sense, the Afghanistan-affairs was not the application of the Brezhnev doctrine into a non-East European region. The Soviet army is now leaving Kabul, with almost no prospect of establishing Socialism there. As a very important background against their decision to withdraw, we have to point out Gorbachev's sober recognition that the USSR now has no model of social system to impose upon any third world countries. This recognition must have deprived the Kremlin of the will power to endlessly station its armed forces in Afghanistan.

2. We may be now witnessing the same sort of process in Cambodia, too. The USSR and Vietnam, both having recognized that their long cherished

"really existing Socialism" does not fit any longer in the late 20th century world, have now become less and less enthusiastic for transforming Cambodia after their type. Hence a "national reconciliation" regime with Prince Sihanouk as its head, is looming large. But there is one significant difference between Afghanistan and Cambodia. While the Kremlin under Gorbachev has never tried to recognize Afghanistan as a Socialist country, Cambodia can be possibly said to have been admitted lately to the Socialist World system as the 16th member of it. Therefore, it is not unfair to think that although a neutral and non-aligned Afghanistan can be Finlandized (neither Socialist nor deadly antagonistic to the USSR), a neutral and nonaligned Cambodia might not be so. The fact is that Cambodia is to Vietnam what Poland is to the USSR. The Vietnam factor definitely makes the Cambodian problem much more complicated than the case of Afghanistan.

3. As is illustrated by these two cases, the Kremlin now seems to have been pursuing a new course in their foreign policy toward Socialist World for some time. This change is also observed in their attitude toward the World Communist movement. This new attitude comes from their giving "interests for all mankind" priority over their traditionally held "class interests". Of course, there are not a small elements for propaganda in here. But, we can not overlook the fact that this proclaimed change in foreign policy priority has been causing not negligible disturbances among the movement. More substantially speaking, the USSR is trying to forge a sort of common front for peace (interests for all mankind) between non-ruling Communist or Labour parties and more broadly based social democratic parties, despite the excessive encouragement of this common front policy necessarily weakens ideological cohesion ("class interests") in the World Communist movement.

For instance, the Kremlin has decided to establish better relations with the Japanese Socialist Party (social democrats) despite the Japanese Communist Party's vehement criticism against this policy.

Also concerning this, it must be pointed out that the first Ulan Bator conference of Asian Communist-Labour Parties in the summer of 1987 announced that they would regularly have this sort of conference of Asian Communist-Labour parties and social democratic parties. This addition of social democratic parties to the ranks of the Communist family covertly shows the Kremlin's new policy. Up to 1986, the USSR had been ostentatiously tried to forge an Asian Socialist bloc, consisting of Mongolia, North Korea, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. But now this movement has become significantly latent, which has surely something to do with the above-mentioned change in the USSR's foreign policy priority.

4. This Soviet about-face may cause a rift among the Socialist Common-

wealth. For instance, Cuba, the current Kabul government, North Korea, possibly even Vietnam, may make a group, which put unchanging emphasis upon "class interest" in the World Communist movement. Simply because they are still feeling threat from "imperialism," or they badly need such a bogey in order to run their regime.

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