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**Gorbachev's foreign policy toward the two Koreas, 1985–1991:  
Power and the new political thinking**

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**The Pennsylvania State University, 1993**

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The Graduate School  
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GORBACHEV'S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD THE TWO KOREAS, 1985-1991:  
POWER AND THE NEW POLITICAL THINKING

A Thesis in  
Political Science

by

Seung-Ho Joo

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

December 1993

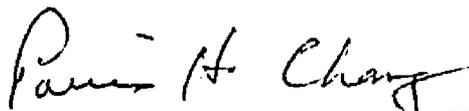
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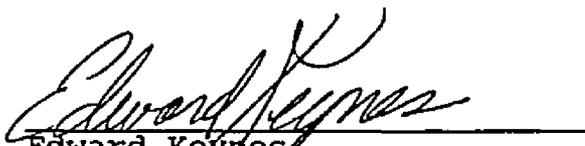
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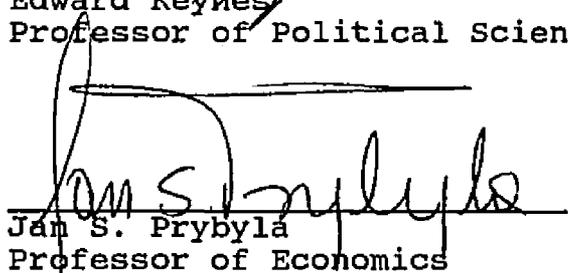
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## ABSTRACT

After Mikhail Gorbachev rose to power, Moscow reversed its love-hate relationship with North and South Korea reversed by increasingly alienating its traditional ally-- North Korea--and cultivating friendship and cooperative relations with its former enemy--South Korea.

This research was designed to answer two questions: how did Gorbachev's foreign policy toward the two Koreas change between 1985-1991, and why? Specifically, the following questions are asked and examined: (1) How did Gorbachev's foreign policy goals and behavior toward the two Koreas evolve during this period?; (2) What contributing factors led to Gorbachev's new policy toward the Korean peninsula?; (3) How was his foreign policy influenced by his shifting power position within the Soviet leadership?; and (4) How did internal conditions in the USSR intersect with Gorbachev's foreign policy toward the two Koreas?

This study is based on the premise that internal factors rather than are key to an explanation of Gorbachev's Korea policy during this period. The main foci of this work are the shifts in factional and group alignments between the "new thinkers" and the "old thinkers" that developed as Gorbachev's new policy threatened the functional and ideological interests of the conservative hard-liners.

Soviet foreign policy toward the Korean peninsula was linked closely to Gorbachev's power position and his new political thinking. In March 1985-early 1988, the Soviet leader consolidated his political power and delineated a new policy toward East Asia and the Korean peninsula. Soviet foreign policy during this period was a residual continuation of Brezhnev's policy; it was directed toward increased security ties with Pyongyang and limited non-official ties with Seoul.

Gorbachev successfully consolidated his power by late 1988. Between the summer of 1988 and the summer of 1990, a new foreign policy was implemented concerning the two Koreas. However, Moscow implemented the new foreign policy toward Seoul cautiously. The Kremlin tried to avoid completely alienating Pyongyang by continuing its consultations with North Korean leaders.

In the midst of the domestic turmoil and confusion that intensified after fall 1990, Gorbachev's influence eroded rapidly despite his position as Soviet President. His foreign policy was increasingly overtaken by events at home and abroad, and new political thinking became obsolete as a guide for Soviet foreign policy. After the Seoul-Moscow normalization in September 1990, the new Soviet policy toward Seoul continued via momentum. During this period, Moscow's relations with Pyongyang degenerated rapidly. The

August coup and the subsequent dissolution of the USSR further weakened the ties between Moscow and Pyongyang.

This examination of Gorbachev's foreign policy toward the two Koreas largely confirms the proposition that domestic needs and group/factional conflict within the Soviet leadership are key to explaining Soviet foreign policy behavior.

Gorbachev's foreign policy toward the two Koreas often seemed to be contradictory and inconsistent. Incompatible views and interests between reformers and conservatives within the Soviet leadership and their relative power positions were largely responsible for this perception.

The role of new political thinking in Soviet foreign policy fluctuated. It initially set new directions and goals for Soviet foreign policy and led to revolutionary changes in Soviet foreign relations, including normalization between Moscow and Seoul. As events unraveled rapidly in the Soviet Union, the new political thinking became obsolete and was no longer able to guide Soviet foreign policy.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to numerous individuals and institutions that I am pleased to acknowledge. I am eternally indebted to my thesis advisor, Evan Pugh Professor Emeritus Vernon V. Aspaturian. As thesis advisor, he stimulated and guided the writing of this thesis and helped me reshape and refine it. As a person, he always encouraged and supported me with a warm heart and kind words. My deep appreciation goes to Professor Parris H. Chang, who provided me with constant encouragement and invaluable advice. He also broadened my perspective by exposing me to numerous academic gatherings. I am greatly indebted to Professor Edward Keynes for his unflinching support and encouragement. I wish also to express my deep gratitude to Professor Jan S. Prybyla for his deep concern, warm support, and constant encouragement.

I owe special thanks to Professor Tae-Hwan Kwak at Eastern Kentucky University, who provided me with invaluable advice and suggestions at the early stage of this thesis and supported me generously in every possible way throughout my graduate years. I also thank the individuals who provided me with invaluable first-hand information about Soviet-Korean relations through personal interviews: the Honorable Chung Jae Moon of the Democratic Liberal Party, Mr. Huh Yong Sang, an aide to President Kim Young Sam, Mr. Vladimir O.

Rakhmanin at the Russian Embassy in Washington, D.C., and Ambassador Victor Israellian. I also thank Mrs. Alla Israellian for supplying me with crucial Russian source materials.

Several institutions have generously supported and assisted the preparation of this thesis. Research grants and facilities provided by the Institute for Far Eastern Studies at Kyungnam University in Seoul enabled me to do field research during the summer of 1991 in Seoul. The Slavic and Soviet Language and Area Center and the Center for East Asian Studies at The Pennsylvania State University were also generous with financial help and library facilities. I also express my appreciation to Ms. Lee Carpenter for her laborious efforts to clarify my writing style and her kindness.

I am most grateful to my wife, Soon-Mi, and to our daughters, Young-Min and Young-Hyun, for providing me with constant support and a happy environment. Finally, I thank my mother and deceased father for their sacrifice, support, and care. I cannot recount my parents' contributions in a few sentences.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION:

#### RESEARCH PURPOSES, THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, AND METHODOLOGY

After Mikhail Gorbachev's rise to power, Soviet foreign policy experienced radical and rapid changes that had far-reaching repercussions in the international system. In the span of six years, Gorbachev's foreign policy behavior against the backdrop of constantly shifting internal and external conditions led to revolutionary changes in international relations that were tantamount to a general upheaval of seismic proportions. The new world that was emerging in the late 1980s was qualitatively different from that of the past.

The historic changes sweeping across the world during this period transformed Soviet relations with the two Koreas as well. Not only did the Soviet Union's perceptions of and attitudes toward North and South Korea change, but its foreign policy goals and orientations toward the two Koreas also were altered.

In the pre-Gorbachev era, Soviet foreign policy toward North and South Korea unequivocally tilted toward the North. Moscow had maintained friendly and cooperative relations with Pyongyang based on identical ideological interests and

complementary strategic interests. On the other hand, Moscow had continued to express hostile attitudes toward Seoul while allowing only limited private contacts with the South Koreans. The Soviets had blindly supported North Korea's official policy and refused to recognize South Korea as a legitimate member of the international community. In line with North Korea's official policy, the Kremlin had retained the position that Communist North Korea was the sole legitimate government representing the Korean people.

The Soviet Union under Gorbachev's leadership pursued a new foreign policy based on new political thinking. As the new policy was being implemented, Soviet relations with the two Koreas began to change. By 1990, Soviet foreign policy goals and behavior in relation to North and South Korea assumed new aspects. The establishment of diplomatic relations between the USSR and the Republic of Korea (ROK) in September 1990 was an historic event that ushered in a new era in Soviet-Korea relations. Subsequently, Moscow's "love-hate relationship" with North and South Korea began to reverse. Moscow increasingly alienated its traditional ally--North Korea--and cultivated friendship and cooperative relations with its former enemy--South Korea.

This research was designed to answer two questions: how did Gorbachev's foreign policy toward the two Koreas change between 1985-1991, and why? Specifically, the following questions are asked and examined: (1) How did Gorbachev's

foreign policy goals and behavior toward the two Koreas evolve during this period?; (2) What were the contributing factors that led to Gorbachev's new policy toward the Korean peninsula?; (3) How was his foreign policy influenced by his shifting power position within the Soviet leadership?; (4) What was the reaction of the conservative hard-line leaders to his new policy?; and (5) How did internal conditions in the USSR intersect with Gorbachev's foreign policy toward the two Koreas?

This study is based on the premise that internal factors, instead of external factors, are key to an explanation of Gorbachev's Korea policy during this period.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For the domestic sources of Soviet foreign policy, see Vernon V. Aspaturian, "Internal Politics and Foreign Policy in the Soviet System," in R. Barry Farrell, ed., *Approaches to Comparative and International Politics* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1966), pp. 212-287. Cf. also Vernon V. Aspaturian, "Soviet Foreign Policy," in Roy C. Macridis, ed., *Foreign Policy in World Politics* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1958), where he first established a general framework involving the group approach. The group approach to Soviet foreign policy has been adopted by others. See, for example, Alexander Dallin, "Domestic Factors Influencing Soviet Foreign Policy," in Michael Confino and Shimon Shamir, eds., *The USSR and the Middle East* (Jerusalem: Israeli University Press/John Wiley, 1973), pp. 31-58; Sidney Ploss, "Studying the Domestic Determinants of Soviet Foreign Policy," in Erik P. Hoffmann and Frederic J. Fleron, Jr., eds., *The Conduct of Soviet Foreign Policy*, 2d ed. (New York: Aldine Publishing Company, 1980), pp. 76-90; Morton Schwartz, *The Foreign Policy of the USSR: Domestic Factors* (Encino, CA: Dickinson Publishing Co., 1975); Seweryn Bialer, "Soviet Foreign Policy: Sources, Perceptions, Trends," in Seweryn Bialer, ed., *The Domestic Context of Soviet Foreign Policy* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1981), pp. 409-441; Wolfgang Leonhard, "The Domestic Politics of the New Soviet Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 52, No. 1 (October 1973); Stephen F. Cohen, "Soviet Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy," in Robbin F. Laird

The main focus of this work is the shifting factional and group alignments between the "new thinkers" and the "old thinkers" that developed as Gorbachev's new policy threatened the functional and ideological interests of the conservative hard-liners. Thus, primary emphasis is placed on the interaction between Gorbachev's new foreign policy and the factional/group conflicts as they affected Gorbachev's Korea policy.<sup>2</sup>

Gorbachev's new political thinking and its implications for the Soviet Union's policy toward Northeast Asia, particularly the Korean peninsula, are discussed in chapter 2. The nature of the new political thinking that led to the re-formulation of Soviet foreign policy goals and instruments is enunciated in this chapter. This chapter also includes an examination of the new political thinking

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and Erik P. Hoffmann, eds., *Soviet Foreign Policy in a Changing World* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1986), pp. 66-83.

<sup>2</sup>Since there are limits to unidimensional explanations, other levels of analysis are also taken into consideration in this thesis. For multicausal explanations of foreign policy, Rosenau's "pre-theory of foreign policy" deserves special attention. Rosenau asserted that "all foreign policy analysts either explain the external behavior of societies in terms of five sets of variables, or they proceed in such a way that their explanations can be recast in terms of the five sets." The five sets of variables included idiosyncratic, role, governmental, societal, and systemic variables (James N. Rosenau, "Pre-theories and Theories of Foreign Policy," in R. Barry Farrell, ed., *Approaches to Comparative and International Politics* [Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1976], pp. 42-43).

as it affected the pattern of Soviet interactions with Northeast Asian countries, including the two Koreas.

The relationship between group/factional conflicts and Gorbachev's new foreign policy in the Soviet foreign policy-making process are explored in chapter 3. First, the link between domestic politics and external policy in Soviet foreign policy is analyzed from a group politics approach. Second, the polarization of the Soviet leadership on foreign policy issues that resulted from divergent perceptions and interests between the "new political thinkers" espousing a new foreign policy and the "old political thinkers" calling for the status quo in foreign policy is examined. In particular, the "military-industry-party apparatus" complex is discussed as a conservative grouping that obstructed Gorbachev's new policy. Third, the structure and process of Soviet foreign policy-making that underwent drastic and rapid changes under Gorbachev are investigated.

Chapter 4 deals with the changing East Asian strategic equation under Gorbachev as it relates to shifting Soviet policy goals and directions toward the two Koreas. The focus of this chapter is the constraints imposed by the international and regional systemic factors on Soviet foreign policy behavior. Gorbachev's foreign policy initiatives in the Asia Pacific region and their impact on the Soviet Union's bilateral relations with North East Asian countries are examined.

South Korea's foreign policy toward the Soviet Union as a conditioning factor for Gorbachev's Korea policy is analyzed in chapter 5. The focus of this chapter is South Korea's "nordpolitik," which was the open-door policy toward Socialist countries, including the Soviet Union; its ultimate aim was a peace settlement and peaceful unification of the Korean peninsula. Nordpolitik's goals and instruments are outlined and its impact on Gorbachev's new policy toward South Korea is explored.

A review of Soviet foreign policy toward North and South Korea in the pre-Gorbachev era is contained in chapter 6. Soviet national interests in the Korean peninsula as defined by pre-Gorbachev Soviet leaders are analyzed. Soviet foreign policy goals and behavior toward North and South Korea are discussed as they provided the historical setting for Gorbachev's new foreign policy toward the two countries.

Gorbachev's foreign policy toward the two Koreas in 1985-1991 is investigated in chapters 7-9. These chapters focus on the connection between the changing power equation in the Kremlin and new Soviet policy toward the two Koreas. Gorbachev's power consolidation and formulation of the new policy in March 1985-Spring 1988 are discussed in chapter 7. This chapter sheds light on the widening gap between the residual continuation of the pro-Pyongyang policy stance

from the Brezhnev era and Gorbachev's new political thinking, which called for improved relations with Seoul.

Chapter 8 deals with Gorbachev's ascendancy as the Soviet leader and the implementation of his new policy toward the Korean peninsula in Summer 1988-Summer 1990. This chapter's main focus is the rapidly improving relations between Moscow and Seoul that culminated in the establishment of diplomatic ties in September 1990. The widening gap in perceptions and national interests between Moscow and Pyongyang during this period is also discussed. The group/factional conflicts between the new thinkers who formed Gorbachev's inner circle and advocated an early normalization with Seoul and the conservative hard-liners who emphasized continued close ties with Pyongyang are examined in this chapter.

Chapter 9 deals with Gorbachev's declining influence and authority in the USSR and the continuation of his new policy toward North and South Korea in Fall 1990-1991. The domestic crisis in the USSR resulting from power decentralization and spreading secessionist movements in the country that led to the re-emergence of the conservative hard-liners in Soviet political scene is examined. Also explored is the new role assumed by Gorbachev in regard to the Korean question after Seoul-Moscow normalization.

A brief summary of these chapters and a list of the findings from this study can be found in chapter 10.

This thesis is empirical and analytical in approach and employs qualitative research methods. Primary source materials were utilized, including memoirs, interviews in newspapers and scholarly journals, and some government documents published in the U.S., the Soviet Union, and North and South Korea. Personal interviews were conducted by the author with select officials from South Korea and the Soviet Union. The primary source data were supplemented by secondary source information contained in various journals, magazines, and newspapers that have been published in the English, Korean, and Russian languages. Because most of the relevant government documents from the former Soviet Union and the two Koreas are not yet accessible to outside researchers, this study suffers from the limited availability of government documents.

Some remarks on the transliteration of Korean into English are in order. This study followed a modified MacCune-Reischauer system that is most commonly used in general publications. Nevertheless, diacritical marks that symbolize short or long vowel sounds are eliminated for convenience. In regard to Korean names, family names, which are mostly single syllables, come first (e.g., Roh Tae Woo, Kim Il Sung). In footnote citations, however, given names are listed first, following Western usage.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE NEW POLITICAL THINKING AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD NORTHEAST ASIA AND THE KOREAN PENINSULA

From the Soviet Union's emergence, the nature of its political system varied from one leader to the next. In fact, "the study of Soviet politics is first and foremost a study of eras, periods associated with specific leaders doing specific things."<sup>1</sup> Soviet leaders viewed the outside world through the ideological prism of Marxism-Leninism.<sup>2</sup> Based on their own interpretation of the Marxist-Leninist ideology, they prescribed different strategies and tactics for Soviet foreign policy.

Much of this changed when Mikhail Gorbachev came to power. His "new political thinking" on international

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<sup>1</sup>Valerie Bunce and John Echols III, "'Pluralism' or 'Corporatism'?" in Donald R. Kelley, ed., *Soviet Politics in the Brezhnev Era* (New York: Praeger, 1980), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Besides providing long-term objectives to Soviet foreign policy, Soviet ideology performed the following functions: (1) to set and define ultimate, often transcendental goals; (2) to provide a system of knowledge and an analytical prism; (3) to serve as an action strategy with which to accelerate the transformation of the existing social order into the Communist millennium; (4) to provide a system of higher rationalization to justify, obscure, or conceal the chasms that may develop between theory and practice; and (5) to represent a symbol of continuity and legitimacy (Vernon V. Aspaturian, *Process and Power in Soviet Foreign Policy* [Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1971], p. 337).

relations contained new elements that radically departed from the past interpretations of the Marxist-Leninist ideology. This new political thinking provided new goals and means to Soviet foreign policy, leading to radical changes in Soviet foreign policy behavior and serving as a catalyst for systemic changes at global and regional levels.

In the past, Soviet foreign policy toward the two Koreas was largely determined by the Soviet Union's overall strategic considerations. The new political thinking contributed to improved relations between the Soviet Union and the major actors in Northeast Asia (i.e., the U.S., China, and Japan); in the process, it also changed Soviet relations with North and South Korea. The new political thinking as abstract ideas and reasoning contained elements that demanded a reformulation of Soviet relations with the two Koreas. That is, it implied that the Soviet Union should discontinue its lopsided favoritism toward North Korea based on ideological principles and adopt a pragmatic approach that would result in improved ties with South Korea and enhance the Soviet Union's national interests.

## 1. The Evolution of the Soviet View on International Relations

Gorbachev's new political thinking was not created in a vacuum. Some elements of the new political thinking were intrinsically linked to the past. Lenin's ideas as set forth in his pamphlet, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1917), provided the basic framework for the Soviet view of international relations.<sup>3</sup> Lenin explained the dynamics of international relations and the issue of war and peace through the internal contradictions of capitalism which require foreign markets for surplus goods and raw materials. From Lenin's perspective, class relations played the central role in international relations; national interests were secondary: "There is no qualitative distinction in this view between internal and international politics. International relations are essentially the product of the various socioeconomic systems organized as separate states."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>For the evolution of the Soviet view on international relations, see Allen Lynch, *The Soviet Study of International Relations* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Margot Light, *The Soviet Theory of International Relations* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988); and Paul Marantz, *From Lenin to Gorbachev: Changing Soviet Perspectives on East-West Relations* (Ottawa, Ontario: Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security, Occasional Paper No. 4, May 1988).

<sup>4</sup>Allen Lynch, *Gorbachev's International Outlook: Intellectual Origins and Political Consequences* (New York: Institute for East-West Security Studies, 1989), p. 7.

One of the important propositions of Lenin's conception of international relations related to the cause of war. Lenin attributed the cause of war to the capitalist system. According to Lenin, capitalists' quest for new markets and raw materials was the main reason for war. Thus, it was postulated that conflicts among capitalist states over limited markets and raw materials would lead to a world war among capitalist states (inevitability of world war among capitalist states). Since Socialist states would not have to compete with one another for limited markets and raw materials, they would not go to war against one another (impossibility of war between Socialist states). Furthermore, Lenin postulated that war was the midwife of revolution. Lenin's conception of international relations continued to be official dogma until Stalin's death.<sup>5</sup>

In Stalin's image of the outside world, forced coexistence occurred between the two camps, i.e., a Socialist camp centered around the USSR and a hostile capitalist world that encircled it. Stalin believed that a war was inevitable between the Socialist and capitalist camps. However, it was to be postponed because the Soviet Union was weaker than the capitalist camp. Stalin considered the peaceful coexistence between the Socialist and capitalist camps to be temporary.

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<sup>5</sup>Paul Marantz, *From Lenin to Gorbachev: Changing Soviet Perspective on East-West Relations*, p. 21.

After World War II, international relations entered a new phase. The development of nuclear weapons, the emergence of the Third World as a new political actor in the international arena, and the development of the Sino-Soviet rift all prompted new thinking on international relations. At the Twentieth Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in February 1956, General Secretary Nikita Khrushchev revised Lenin's theory of international relations. The Soviet leader declared the end of capitalist encirclement and recognized the existence of a third camp (ex-colonial states). He also denounced the belief in the inevitability of wars between the capitalist and Socialist systems, in doing so negating the idea of general war as a mid-wife of revolution. Khrushchev elevated peaceful coexistence with the capitalist system to a "fundamental principle" of Soviet foreign policy and no longer placed a high priority on revolutionary movements abroad. Besides, the post-Stalin leadership began to consider states (as opposed to the two camps) to be the dominant actors in international arena and paid increasing attention to the role of institutions as sources of foreign policy conduct.<sup>6</sup>

During the Brezhnev era, Soviet analysts rejected traditional Soviet ideas about international relations and adopted ideas congruent with Western ideas:

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<sup>6</sup>See William Zimmerman, *Soviet Perspectives on International Relations, 1956-1967*, pp. 275-279.

Such ideas as the identification of international relations with interstate relations; the primacy of the national (as opposed to the class) factor as long as a world structured along the state principle exists; the transformation of international relations into an independent force, exercising a potentially decisive influence on the internal structures and prospects of states and socioeconomic systems; and the primacy of the political sphere over economic and class forces in the conduct of foreign policy.<sup>7</sup>

By the end of the Brezhnev era, many of the postulates that had dominated the Stalin and even Khrushchev years had begun to be challenged and reshaped by Soviet analysts and theoreticians. As a result, "The cumulative effect has been to sever the link between world war and revolution, thereby effecting a progressive 'de-utopianization' of Soviet thinking about international relations."<sup>8</sup>

Brezhnev continued Khrushchev's policy of peaceful coexistence with the West. At the same time, the Brezhnev leadership actively supported national liberation movements in the Third World. Such a dual-track approach (i.e., détente with the West and promotion of national liberation movements in the Third World) was predicated on "a recognition that pursuing the class struggle in Europe was risky and dangerous, whereas the newly emancipated Third

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<sup>7</sup>Allen Lynch, *Gorbachev's International Outlook: Intellectual Origins and Political Consequences*, p. 11.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

World afforded ample opportunity for extending Soviet influence, power and ideology."<sup>9</sup>

In accordance with the dual-track approach, the Brezhnev leadership concluded the SALT agreements and the Helsinki Accords with the West, and actively supported national liberation movements and aided Socialist-oriented regimes in the Third World, simultaneously. The U.S.-Soviet détente that started in the early 1970s did not last long. The belligerent and expansionist policies of the Brezhnev leadership--military involvement in Angola and Ethiopia, the invasion of Afghanistan, enforcement of martial law in Poland, the support of revolutionary movements in Central America and the Caribbean, and the military buildup in Europe and East Asia--invited a hard-line response from the U.S.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the U.S.-Soviet détente gave way to a new Cold War between the superpowers that was characterized by arms buildup, military confrontation, and exchanges of militant rhetoric. Brezhnev's expansionist policy led to an overextension of the Soviet empire, which caused a heavy drain on limited Soviet resources. The Reagan Administration was determined to redress the strategic imbalance caused by the U.S.

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<sup>9</sup>Vernon V. Aspaturian, "Gorbachev's 'New Political Thinking' and Foreign Policy," in Jiri Valenta and Frank Cibulka, eds., *Gorbachev's New Thinking and Third World Conflicts* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1990), p. 12.

retrenchment in the 1970s. Reagan's belligerent policy toward the USSR accelerated the arms race and confrontational relations between the two superpowers. The U.S. also formed anti-Soviet coalitions throughout the world to counter Soviet expansionism, which led to the deterioration of the Soviet Union's strategic position.

When Brezhnev died in November 1982, Yuri Andropov, a former KGB chief, became his successor as General Secretary of the CPSU. The new Soviet leader did not leave a substantial imprint on Soviet foreign policy. However, Andropov made efforts in domestic reform during his interregnum. Andropov immediately abandoned the commitment to the stability of cadres that had characterized the Brezhnev period. He began to replace large numbers of central party apparatchiki, regional party officials, and state administrators. Recognizing the need for far-reaching changes, he subjected all aspects of the Soviet system to harsh but informed criticism. The November 1982 plenum of the CPSU Central Committee under the leadership of Andropov proclaimed the line that called for labor and production discipline, legality, and order as well as personal responsibility at all levels of management. He initiated a campaign emphasizing discipline and order in an effort to boost Soviet society's productive forces. Steps were taken to expand openness (*glasnost*), to develop criticism and

self-criticism, and to combat corruption and other negative phenomena.

Andropov's reform movement did not make a great impact on the Soviet political system because of his short reign and because it did not comprise overall economic reform. Andropov died after little more than fourteen months in office. Konstantin Chernenko succeeded Andropov as the Soviet leader and remained in office for thirteen months until he too died without making any remarkable impact on the Soviet political system.

## 2. The Crisis of the Soviet System and the Emergence of Perestroika

Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary of CPSU in March 1985 after Chernenko's death. His rise to the top position was due largely to his leadership qualities.<sup>10</sup> His election to the post of General Secretary was made possible

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<sup>10</sup>Gorbachev had been a agriculture specialist before becoming General Secretary and did not have any military experience. He might have been a less acceptable leader to the military-industrists than his conservative rival Grishin. It is likely that the military establishment played little part in the post-Brezhnev succession struggle and that Gorbachev came to power owing little or nothing to the Defense Ministry (Stephen Foye, "The Case for a Coup: Gorbachev or the Generals?" *Report on the USSR*, Vol. 3, No. 2, [1991], p. 2).

with Gromyko's support in the Politburo and a majority support in the Central Committee.<sup>11</sup>

Gorbachev launched an ambitious reform program in order to cope with deepening crises in the Soviet system. A sense of imminent crisis facing the Soviet Union prompted the Gorbachev leadership to launch perestroika [restructuring]. Gorbachev argued in his book *Perestroika* that perestroika was "an urgent necessity arising from the profound processes of development in our Socialist society" and predicted that without perestroika his country would face serious social, economic, and political crises.<sup>12</sup> At the April 1985 plenary

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<sup>11</sup>Yeltsin, then a Central Committee member, revealed that Gorbachev had the support of a majority of the Central Committee members: "A large number of first secretaries agreed that of all the Politburo members, the man to be promoted to the post of general secretary should be Gorbachev. . . . we decided that if any other candidate was put forward. . . we would oppose him en bloc." Yeltsin also recalled that Gorbachev was elected as the General Secretary of the Party when "Grishin or Romanov did not dare risk making a move" after Gromyko nominated Gorbachev for the post of General Secretary (Boris Yeltsin, *Against the Grain*, trans. Michael Glenny [New York: Summit Books, 1990], pp. 138-139). At the 19th All-Union Party Conference of June 1988, Yegor Ligachev stated that Gorbachev was elected General Secretary thanks to the support of four Politburo members (Vernon V. Aspaturian, "Soviet Foreign Policy," in Roy Macridis, ed., *Foreign Policy in World Politics: States and Regions*, 7th ed. [New Jersey, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, 1989], p. 544).

<sup>12</sup> Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, updated ed. (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988), p. 3. For the Soviet writings on perestroika, see Abel G. Aganbegian, "Programma korennoi perestroiki" [The Program of Radical Restructuring], *Ekonomika i organizatsiia promyshlennogo proizvodstva*, No. 11 (1987), pp. 3-19; Stephen F. Cohen and Katrina Vanden Heuvel, eds., *Voices of Glasnost: Interviews with Gorbachev's Reformers* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1989).

session of the Central Committee, the Soviet leadership announced the new strategy of perestroika and formulated its basic principles.<sup>13</sup>

The primary cause of the systemic crisis lay in the economic failure of the Soviet system, making it the main focus of Gorbachev's reform. The Soviet economy's stagnation became increasingly obvious to the Soviet leadership in the late 1970s. Gorbachev stated, "At some stage--this became particularly clear in the latter half of the seventies--something happened that was at first sight inexplicable. The country began to lose momentum. Economic failures became more frequent."<sup>14</sup> Especially unnerving to the Soviet leadership was the fact that ". . . the gap in the efficiency of production, quality of products, scientific and technological development, the production of advanced technology and the use of advanced techniques began to widen, and not to our [the Soviet Union] advantage."<sup>15</sup> Gorbachev sought to strengthen the national power base through economic revitalization and technological renovation through perestroika.

Three points need to be stated about Gorbachev's reform program. First, although perestroika formally started at the 1985 April plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, reform-

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<sup>13</sup>Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, p. 10.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

minded leaders had been working on it for quite some time with the help of academicians.

The concept of restructuring with all the problems involved had been evolving gradually. Way back before the April Plenary Meeting a group of Party and state leaders had begun a comprehensive analysis of the state of the economy. Their analysis then became the basis for the documents of perestroika. Using the recommendations of scientists and experts, our entire potential, all the best that social thought had created, we elaborated the basic ideas and drafted a policy which we subsequently began to implement.<sup>16</sup>

Gorbachev revealed that in the early 1980s, he, with the help of Ryzhkov, had canvassed approximately 110 reports from intellectuals on the need for change in the Soviet Union. The results of these discussions and their analysis formed the basis for the decisions made at the April plenum in 1985 and the first steps thereafter.<sup>17</sup>

Gorbachev had strong feelings about the reform of the Soviet system even before becoming General Secretary of the Party. Shevardnadze revealed that in the winter of 1984 he and Gorbachev, then as Party leaders in neighboring regions, had discussed the need for far-reaching reforms in their country:

Perhaps it is this inner conflict that has made me an active proponent of perestroika. This struggle, along with my knowledge of the true state of affairs in our country, has led me to conclude that the root of existing evils is not in the individual people, but in

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>17</sup>Pravda, January 7, 1989, in FBIS-SOV, January 9, 1989, pp. 50-59.

the system. And if some people seethe with hatred for the system, that is only because the system is ruthless toward the individual. Under conditions of totalitarianism, it is impossible to guarantee observance of human rights and freedoms, and that means it is impossible to guarantee the normal development of the country.

"Everything's rotten. It has to be changed." I really did say that to Gorbachev on a winter evening in 1984 at Pitsunda, and I will not recant those words today.<sup>18</sup>

Nevertheless, Gorbachev's perestroika did not follow a clear-cut blueprint at the outset; it gained new meaning and took on concrete form through an evolutionary process.<sup>19</sup>

Second, perestroika did not intend to abandon Socialist principles.<sup>20</sup> Gorbachev never renounced the principles of Socialism. He believed that Socialism as a social system had "immense potentialities for revolving the most complex problems of social progress."<sup>21</sup> Gorbachev's perestroika was

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<sup>18</sup>Eduard Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom*, trans. Catherine A. Fitzpatrick (New York: The Free Press, 1991), p. 37.

<sup>19</sup>Boris Yeltsin blamed Gorbachev for not having preparing a master plan for reform: "The main trouble with Gorbachev is that he has never worked out a systematic, long-term strategy. There were only slogans" (Boris Yeltsin, *Against the Grain*, p. 141).

<sup>20</sup>Aganbegian, one of the key architects of perestroika, postulated that the radical nature of perestroika in economic management lay in "the transition from administrative to economic methods of management, in the development of economic development." "The new economic mechanism," he continued, "will be based on the dominance of socialist, especially public, ownership, on planned economic development, on distribution according to one's labor, on democratic centralism, on the intensification of commodity-monetary relations, etc." (Abel G. Aganbegian, "Programma korennoi perestroiki" [The Program of Radical Restructuring], p. 5).

<sup>21</sup>Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, p. 30. In a major policy speech in mid-1985 to a private meeting of high-level East European

aimed at restoring true Socialism based on Leninist principles that had been distorted by Stalinist totalitarian system perestroika.

The Soviet leader mistakenly assumed that organizational reshuffling and more autonomy for low-level management would be the right solution to the Soviet economic problem.<sup>22</sup> Gorbachev sought to improve the Soviet economic performance by transplanting elements of the market

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economic planners, Gorbachev expressed his opposition to China's economic revolution and Yugoslavia's market socialism: "Many of you see the solution to your problems in resorting to market mechanisms in place of direct planning. Some of you look at the market as a lifesaver for your economies, but comrades, you should not think about lifesavers but about the ship. And the ship is socialism!" (Richard Nations, "Deng Xiaoping's Reforms Worry Kremlin's Bosses," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, August 14, 1986, p. 34).

<sup>22</sup>Gorbachev's and his predecessors' economic reform programs were all based on the misleading idea that planned economy, if grafted onto a market economy, would prosper and excel. Since the economic system constitutes an integral part of the whole system that includes political, social, and economic systems, part of an economic system alone cannot be transplanted into another system. Economic institutions can be either market or planned economy, and there is no third way of organizing economic institutions. Market economy as an economic system is superior to planned economy because it does "what an economic system is supposed to do, namely, supplying people with a larger quantity and better quality of goods and services that the people themselves want at prices they are willing and able to pay, and to do this efficiently" (Jan S. Prybyla, "The Road from Socialism," *Problems of Communism* [January-April 1991], p. 5). For the superior nature of the market economy over the planned economy, see Don Lavoie, "Computation, Incentives, and Discovery: The Cognitive Function of Markets in Market Socialism," *American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 507 (January 1990), pp. 72-79; Arthur M. Okun, *Equality and Efficiency: The Big Tradeoff* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1975), pp. 40-50; Friedrich A. Hayek, "The Price System as a Mechanism for Using Knowledge," in M. Bronstein, ed., *Comparative Economic Systems*, pp. 49-60.

economy into a planned economy. He wanted to institute a hybrid system in which some production activity was market-directed while the remaining production was to be guided by central planning and public ownership. Gorbachev's tactics were "to chip away at the administrative apparatus, to free individual sectors, to marketize certain categories of prices and so on."<sup>23</sup> The end result was that practically nothing substantial was done to move away from a centrally planned, administrative command economy toward a market economy. Because of Gorbachev's inconsistent and contradictory economic policy, the Soviet economy turned from bad to worse.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Robert W. Campbell, "How to Think about Perestroika," in John E. Tedstrom, ed., *Socialism, Perestroika, and the Dilemmas of Soviet Economic Reform* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), p. 5.

<sup>24</sup>Gorbachev neglected economic issues from Summer 1987-September 1989. As a result, economic reform did not proceed rapidly during this period. It is likely that Gorbachev wanted first to carry out political changes before initiating substantial economic reform. See Anders Aslund, "Gorbachev, Perestroika, and Economic Crisis," *Problems of Communism* (January-April 1991), p. 31. Since Fall 1989, numerous economic reform plans were presented by economists and government officials. In October 1989, the State Commission on Economic Reform presented an outline for so-called "Abalkin program." Although this program favored a market economy over a planned economy, it fell short of accepting private ownership and envisaged the transition period of six years. In December 1989, Prime Minister Ryzhkov presented a conservative reform program. Ryzhkov's program prescribed three years of preparation period before the introduction of marketization. In the meantime, the economy would become more centralized. In February 1990, the so-called 400-day program was proposed by the young radical economist Gregori Yavlinsky and his collaborators. It prescribed a rapid and massive privatization and swift marketization. The 400-day plan (later renamed 500-day program) was more radical than the Abalkin plan and was

Third, Gorbachev mobilized social forces previously excluded from power--especially the cultural intelligentsia--as a lever against entrenched institutional interests (e.g., the Communist Party apparatus, economic ministries of the state, and the military officers). He also relied on the masses for the successful implementation of perestroika. Gorbachev viewed perestroika as irreversible through the democratization of society:

". . . we need broad democratization of all aspects of society. That democratization is also the main guarantee that the current processes are irreversible."<sup>25</sup>

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similar to the "shock therapy" in Poland. A conservative government program was prepared by Ryzhkov, Abalkin, Valentine Pavlov (the Finance Minister), and Vyacheslav Senchagov (the chairman of the State Price Committee) soon after Shatalin's plan was presented. Instead of making a choice, Gorbachev ordered a compromise between the conservative government program and Shatalin's radical program.

<sup>25</sup>Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, p. 18. Tatyana Zaslavskaya, Director of the National Center of Public Opinion of the USSR, explained the importance of glasnost for perestroika: "Glasnost, the freedom to express positions, and pluralism of opinions are absolutely necessary premises for the further radicalization of social relations. It is natural that the revolutionary transformation of society should begin with this. If people's consciousness had not been unshackled, any further social and economic changes would be impossible" ("Korennoi vopros perestroiki" [The Fundamental Question of Restructuring], *Izvestiya*, June 4, 1988).

### 3. The New Political Thinking and the Restructuring of Soviet Foreign Policy

Gorbachev's "new political thinking" (or new thinking) laid down the basic principles of perestroika in foreign policy.<sup>26</sup> Gorbachev's "new political thinking" should be understood in the broad context of the Soviet leader's efforts to revitalize the Soviet system through reform. A peaceful and stable international environment was a

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<sup>26</sup>The phrase "new thinking" originated from the comments of Albert Einstein. Academician M. A. Markov raised the topic of "new thinking" while speaking with Gorbachev in reference to the Russell-Einstein Manifesto issued in Pugwash, Nova Scotia in a 1983 article, "Nauchilis' li my myslit po novomy?" in B. T. Grigorian, ed., *Problemy mira i sotsialnogo progressa v sovremennoi filosofii* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1983), p. 120 (Bruce J. Allyn, "Sources of 'New Thinking' in Soviet Foreign Policy: Civilian Specialists and Policy Toward Inadvertent War" [Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1990], p. 372). The term "new thinking" in Soviet foreign policy was first used by Anatoly Gromyko and Lev Lomeiko in their book, *New Thinking in the Nuclear Age* (1984). However, their book does not seem to have had a great impact on Gorbachev's new political thinking. For the Soviet source writings on the new political thinking, see Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, pp. 121-238; Mikhail Gorbachev, *The August Coup: The Truth and the Lessons* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1991); Eduard Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom*, trans. Catherine A. Fitzpatrick (New York: Free Press, 1991); G. Kh. Shakhnazarov, "Logika politicheskovo myshlenia v iadernuiu eru" [The Logic of Political Thinking in the Nuclear Age], *Voprosy Filosofii*, No. 5 (1984), pp. 63-74; Andrei Zagorsky and Yuri Kashlev, "The Human Dimension of Politics," *International Affairs* (Moscow) (March 1990), pp. 62-73; Vyacheslav Dashichev, "East-West Quest for New Relations: The Priorities of Soviet Foreign Policy," *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, May 18, 1988; Vadim Zagladin, "An Arduous But Necessary Path--The Destinies of New Thinking," *International Affairs* (Moscow) No. 9 (1988), pp. 34-36.

prerequisite for successful economic reform at home.<sup>27</sup> Under Gorbachev, the first priority was domestic reform while foreign policy was secondary; domestic needs took precedence over foreign policy considerations. Shevardnadze stated that the 19th All-Union Party Conference of July 1988 reestablished the first priority accorded to domestic reform: "I recall July 1988. The 19th All-Union Party Conference had just ended, having reaffirmed the main priority for us: to secure by political means the favorable external conditions needed to bring about change inside the country."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Gorbachev was frank and unequivocal in this regard: "We are saying openly for all to hear: we need lasting peace in order to concentrate on the development of our society and to cope with the tasks of improving the life of the Soviet people" (Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, p. 118).

<sup>28</sup>Eduard Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom*, p. 52. From the Soviet viewpoint, the idea of international security organically involved the notion of economic security, which in turn implied a lessening of dangerous disparities in levels of development and realization of the "disarmament for development" principle, and serves to help overcome hostility and improve the political atmosphere (Mikhail Titarenko, "Asian and Korean Security and Stability," *Korea & World Affairs* (Seoul) (Summer 1989), p. 286). Vorontsov also emphasized the centrality of domestic reform: "The USSR has focused its efforts on providing favorable international conditions for domestic transformation, carrying out more open politics and stimulating political settlement of current conflicts on the basis of balance of interests of all parties concerned, as well as promoting the doctrine of defense sufficiency for that of military-strategic parity" (V. Vorontsov, "Asia and Pacific Security: Some Problems," *Sino-Soviet Affairs* [Seoul], Vol. 13, No. 1 [Spring 1989], p. 83). In February 1987, Gorbachev, at the "Peace Forum" in front of cultural and intellectual figures from around the world, noted the dependence of foreign policy on domestic policy: "Before my people, before you and before the whole world, I frankly say

The new political thinking "should be understood primarily as a response to the crisis in foreign relations to which Leonid I. Brezhnev's policies had brought the Soviet Union by the early 1980s."<sup>29</sup> Taking advantage of inaction and retrenchment by the U.S. in the 1970s, the Brezhnev leadership pursued expansionism abroad, particularly in the Third World, and gained remarkable achievements in military and foreign policy areas. Consequently, the Soviet Union was accorded status as a global power and, for the first time, recognized as an equal in military strength to the U.S. However, the Soviet military buildup and expansionist policy throughout the world during the late Brezhnev period eventually invited harsh reactions from the U.S., the West, Japan, and China. By the early 1980s, Soviet foreign policy was suffering from multiple setbacks.

The Reagan Administration's massive military buildup, the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), and deployment of ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs) and Pershing II ballistic missiles in Western Europe posed formidable threats to Soviet national security. The Soviet troops had been bogged down in Afghanistan since they invaded the

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that our international policy is, more than ever before, determined by domestic policy, by our interests in concentrating on constructive work to improve our country" (*Pravda*, February 17, 1987).

<sup>29</sup>David Holloway, "Gorbachev's New Thinking," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 68, No. 1 (1988-1989), p. 66.

country in December 1979. Sino-Soviet relations and Soviet-Japanese relations remained cool and chilly. During the late 1970s-early 1980s, inertia and traditional dogmas dominated Soviet foreign policy.

In an effort to break the foreign policy impasse, Gorbachev initiated new political thinking. The foreign policy crisis that Gorbachev inherited was part of the broader social, economic, and political crises in the Soviet system. Gorbachev believed that the systemic crisis could be overcome through perestroika and that the new political thinking was an integral part of perestroika. Restructuring Soviet foreign policy goals and means in accordance with this new political thinking was a prerequisite for détente and arms control with the U.S., which would in turn provide a stable and predictable international environment for domestic reforms.

Shevardnadze noted that the first priority of Soviet foreign policy was "to secure by political means the favorable external conditions needed to bring about change inside the country."<sup>30</sup> Gorbachev pursued a détente with the West for the successful implementation of a far-reaching domestic reform, whereas Brezhnev sought détente with the West for the limited goal of inducing foreign trade and technology transfer without domestic reform.

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<sup>30</sup>Eduard Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom*, p. 52.

Perestroika's successful implementation at home would enhance the prestige and influence of the Soviet Union abroad and strengthen its security. Economic capability and political stability at home constitute central parts of national power. Without a dynamically growing economy that emphasizes advanced science and technology, the Soviet Union would not be able to sustain its position as a global power and its national security might be jeopardized.

Gorbachev's new political thinking consisted of three parts: (1) re-conceptualization of foreign policy goals and national security requirements in accordance with the new foreign policy philosophy; (2) redirection of Soviet foreign policy goals in accordance with a more rational structure of foreign policy priorities and a redefinition of the proper balance between the foreign policy agenda and the domestic agenda; and (3) the reorganization and restructuring of the foreign policy decision-making apparatus in terms of personnel, institutions, and processes.<sup>31</sup> It was Eduard Shevardnadze, Gorbachev's Foreign Minister from June 1985 to December 1990, who was given the task of putting the new

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<sup>31</sup>Vernon V. Aspaturian, "Gorbachev's 'New Political Thinking' and Foreign Policy," p. 3. Allen Lynch similarly characterized the new political thinking: "This 'new political thinking' may be seen as a determined effort by the Gorbachev leadership to redefine conceptually, as well as through a process of political interaction, the nature of the international environment facing the USSR and the range of appropriate Soviet choices in foreign and security policy" (Allen Lynch, *Gorbachev's International Outlook: Intellectual Origins and Political Consequences*, p. 3).

political thinking in practice. The challenges facing Shevardnadze as the new Foreign Minister were threefold:

. . . I saw three interrelated tasks ahead. The first was to define and establish myself as Minister, that is, as head of a ministry and as a diplomat recognized by my colleagues, and not just formally, by virtue of my high appointment.

The second was the restructuring of the Ministry's work in keeping with the strategic aims of the new foreign policy declared by Gorbachev at the April 1985 Communist Party Central Committee plenary session. The third was the most important and the most difficult: our participation in the practical realization of the new foreign policy strategy, closely linked with the efforts of perestroika and democratization of society and the whole country.<sup>32</sup>

The new world view espoused by Gorbachev and his supporters represented "an explicit crystallization of tendencies that have been present--albeit often in piecemeal form--in Soviet policy circles since Nikita Khrushchev's anti-Stalin speech at the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956."<sup>33</sup> Gorbachev's new political thinking was directly indebted for its intellectual origin to the specialists and academicians of the Brezhnev period. The new political thinking was greatly influenced by Gorbachev's advisers and supporters, including Aleksandr Yakovlev, Evgeni Primakov, Aleksandr Bovin, and Feodor Burlatsky.

The new political thinking as a conceptual outlook for Soviet foreign policy was not so much a goal in itself as an

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<sup>32</sup>Eduard Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom*, p. 43.

<sup>33</sup>Allen Lynch, *Gorbachev's International Outlook: Intellectual Origins and Political Consequences*, p. 30.

instrument of Gorbachev's political goals. Its primary function was to promote Gorbachev's power consolidation and reform at home: ". . . the 'new political thinking' itself is first of all a political rather than an intellectual or conceptual act. It reflects pre-established political priorities of the Gorbachev leadership, . . . which suit its purposes and long-term goals."<sup>34</sup>

The starting point of a new Soviet foreign policy was the April plenum of the CPSU Central Committee in 1985. The prominent academician Evgeni Primakov noted:

Right after the April [1985] plenary session of the CPSU Central Committee, the elaboration of a new foreign-policy philosophy began. Two main themes were involved: to avoid thermonuclear war and to allocate resources between defense and socio-economic sectors.<sup>35</sup>

The 27th Congress of the CPSU in 1986 became a watershed, after which "one doctrinal principle after another was subjected to review, discussion, and revision."<sup>36</sup> It is important to note that the new political thinking did not take a concrete form from the beginning. Over the years, the contents of the new political thinking were revised and refined.

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>35</sup> Evgeni Primakov, "A Look into the Past and the Future," *Pravda*, January 8, 1988, p. 4, in *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, February 3, 1988, p. 2.

<sup>36</sup> Stephen Meyer, "The Sources and Prospects of Gorbachev's New Political Thinking on Security," *International Security* (Fall 1988), p. 126.

The significance of Gorbachev's new political thinking lay in the fact that it encompassed fundamental changes in Soviet ideology. For the first time, the new political thinking contained a revision of the analytical and epistemological aspects of Soviet ideology:

Previously, the goal-orienting and action strategy components of Soviet foreign policy have been the most conspicuously tampered with, whereas the epistemological-analytical dimension has suffered relatively little change. Both Stalin and Khrushchev made substantial and critical emendations with respect to the "inevitability of war" analytical thesis and the nature of the ideological polarization and confrontation between Socialism and capitalism, but their principal innovations were in the realm of strategy and approach, rather than epistemology and cognitive analysis.<sup>37</sup>

The new political thinking included a comprehensive and far-reaching restructuring of Soviet foreign policy.<sup>38</sup> First, the new political thinking meant the de-ideologization of Soviet foreign policy. Ideology, as opposed to national interest, was a crucial element of Soviet foreign policy. In the past, "Soviet ideology itself . . . [defined] national interest, power, and world revolution in such a way as to make them virtually indistinguishable and inseparable as the three sides of an equilateral triangle."<sup>39</sup> The relative weight of

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<sup>37</sup>Vernon V. Aspaturian, "Gorbachev's 'New Political Thinking' and Foreign Policy," pp. 14-15.

<sup>38</sup>See Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, pp. 121-175.

<sup>39</sup>Vernon V. Aspaturian, "Soviet Foreign Policy," in Roy Macridis, ed., *Foreign Policy in World Politics: States and*

ideological interests (world revolution) and national interests (survival and prosperity of the Soviet state) in Soviet foreign policy had shifted as the Soviet Union transformed from an "encircled Socialist state" to a uni-dimensional global power. The Soviet state was initially conceived as an instrument of world revolution. According to the Marxist-Leninist ideology, the state is an instrument of the ruling class and will wither away when Communism arrives. It was initially postulated that the Soviet state should serve the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and that the Soviet Union's national interest was identical with the Party's interest of world revolution.

Over the years, the role for Party and state were reversed in Soviet foreign policy. Since its emergence as a superpower after World War II, ideological goals were increasingly overshadowed by the Soviet Union's imperative for power consolidation. Furthermore, ideology became increasingly "less a guide to Soviet policy than a legitimization of Soviet behavior."<sup>40</sup>

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*Regions*, 7th ed. (New Jersey, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, 1989), p. 186.

<sup>40</sup>Vernon V. Aspaturian, "Gorbachev's 'New Political Thinking' and Foreign Policy," p. 7. Many Sovietologists in the West focused on Soviet ideology "because it was thought that the all-encompassing character of Soviet beliefs--embracing a critique of the existing order, notions about a better future society, and policy prescriptions for transforming the real into the desired--provided the key to the seemingly uniquely purposive character of Soviet behavior" (William Zimmerman, "Elite Perspectives and the Explanation of Soviet Foreign Policy," in Erik P. Hoffmann and Frederic J. Fleron, Jr., eds., *The Conduct of Soviet*

Pursuit of ideological goals that had led to confrontation and military tension with the U.S.-led capitalist bloc became increasingly anachronistic in the nuclear age. Gorbachev maintained that the emergence of "global" processes, including nuclear weapons, had made it imperative for class values to be subordinated to universal values in the formulation of Soviet foreign policy. Gorbachev was keenly aware of the danger of mutual annihilation and human extinction that might result from East-West confrontation. Therefore, the survival of mankind and the prevention of world war, he continued, should take precedence over the promotion of ideological positions.

The Soviet leader called for the promotion of international cooperation and exchanges rather than continuing confrontational policies and military buildup between opposing socioeconomic systems. Gorbachev argued that ideological differences should not affect inter-state relations and that each nation should be allowed to choose its own path of national development:

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*Foreign Policy*, 2d ed. [New York: Aldine Publishing Company, 1980], p. 21). However, the focus on Soviet ideology turned out to be inappropriate: ". . . ideology has neither hindered nor enhanced general Soviet appraisal of international relations. Aside from the Soviet assessment of relations among Communist states, the maintenance of *elan* domestically through the retention of doctrinal purity internationally has been consistently sacrificed to the aspiration to pursue foreign policy goals rationally and efficiently" (Ibid., p. 28).

. . . security in our time rests on the recognition of the right of every nation to choose its own path of social development, on the renunciation of interference in the domestic affairs of other states, on respect for others in combination with an objective self-critical view of one's own society. . . .

Ideological difference should not be transferred to the sphere of interstate relations, nor should foreign policy be subordinate to them, for ideologies may be poles apart, whereas the interest of survival and prevention of war stand universal and supreme.<sup>41</sup>

Second, the new political thinking reflected the Soviet leadership's new perspective on the nature of capitalism. The Soviet leaders came to realize that modern capitalism was not going to face a general crisis but continue to prosper in socio-political stability and that the capitalist path to development in some Third World countries led to remarkable successes. As Bialer put it, the new attitudes of the Soviet leaders on modern capitalism included:

First, the 'new' world capitalism is not in a state of general crisis, but is a dynamic force that pushes forward technological development on an unprecedented scale. . . . Second, the new capitalism disposes of major reserves of internal socio-political stability . . . . Third, for many third-world countries the capitalist path of development brought explosive growth, technological progress and improvements in the standard of living. . . . Fourth, the conviction that world capitalism is doomed by history to disintegrate under the weight of its own contradictions is now being questioned. . . . And fifth, the Soviet leadership now believes that the United States and NATO are not poised to strike eastwards, that they do not present an imminent threat to the Soviet Union, and that 'bourgeois democracy' constitutes a barrier against war preparations in the West.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, p. 129.

<sup>42</sup>Seweryn Bialer, "'New Thinking' and Soviet Foreign Policy," *Survival* (July-August 1988), p. 299.

Two sober realizations emerged: Socialism was lagging far behind capitalism in science and technological innovation, and the Socialist path of development in the Third World was a definite failure. Thus, Soviet leaders had to accept the fact that Socialism had to coexist with capitalism side by side for an indefinite period of time, and that the Soviet Union should do its utmost to catch up with the West, especially in science and technology.

Third, the new political thinking elevated "peaceful coexistence" with the Western world to a universal principle regulating Soviet foreign policy. This was a greater departure from Stalin's conception of peaceful coexistence as a tactic in relation with the capitalist world and from Khrushchev's as a long-term "strategy" in dealing with the external world.<sup>43</sup> At the 27th Congress, the idea of peaceful coexistence as a specific form of class warfare was discarded, and peaceful coexistence was redefined as a universal formula for inter-governmental relations.<sup>44</sup> The

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<sup>43</sup>Vernon V. Aspaturian, "Gorbachev's New Political Thinking and Foreign Policy," p. 19.

<sup>44</sup>Eduard Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom*, p. 48. In his memoirs, Shevardnadze denounced the Soviet approach to foreign policy based on ideological tenets: "For us. . . one factor always prevented the development of relations with the United States, and with the West as a whole. That was the primacy of the doctrine that ideological struggle between the two social and political systems is inevitable. Any arrangement, any attempt to improve our relations with the United States immediately foundered on this obstacle . . . . To be honest, I cannot figure out how to make friends with a person and at the same time carry on an implacable struggle against him. Even long before

newly defined concept of peaceful coexistence was not intended to be a *peredyshka* (breathing spell) in the international class struggle, but a permanent condition of international life in the age of nuclear deterrence and global interdependence. Gorbachev explicitly repudiated the idea that the worldwide victory of Socialism was inevitable. However, peaceful coexistence did not mean an end to Socialism as a socioeconomic system. It meant that the competition between Socialism and capitalism should be carried out peacefully.

While according new meaning to the peaceful coexistence that regulated its relationship with the Western world, Gorbachev renounced the principle of "proletarian internationalism" which had given the Soviet Union the right to intervene, even militarily, in the internal affairs of a Soviet bloc country. The new political thinking abandoned proletarian internationalism in relation with Socialist countries and advocated cooperation and compromise among all countries. Gorbachev noted that mutual cooperation, understanding, and joint action were a necessity in view of the world's interdependence.

Fourth, the idea of war as a mid-wife of revolution was dismissed as too dangerous in a nuclear age since nuclear

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perestroika, our propaganda and our policies. . . would get more and more entangled by trying to reconcile their contradictory ideological tenets" (Ibid., p. 84).

war would be suicidal.<sup>45</sup> The idea that another world war would usher in a world-wide political transformation in which Socialism would prevail was considered no longer tenable because of the emergence of nuclear weapons. Gorbachev stated that the fundamental principle of the new political thinking was that "nuclear war cannot be a means of achieving political, economic, ideological or any other goals."<sup>46</sup> He continued: ". . . nuclear war is senseless; it is irrational. There would be neither winners nor losers in a global nuclear conflict: world civilization would inevitably perish. It is a suicide, rather than a war in the conventional sense of the word."<sup>47</sup> Along the same lines, Gorbachev declared in an address to the 27th Congress of the CPSU that the existing situation had been too dangerous to be resolved by military means alone and that security had become a political problem that could be resolved only through political means. In its reports on foreign political and diplomatic activity under Gorbachev, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs downgraded the role of military power as a component of national security by stating that the military establishment in the Soviet Union

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<sup>45</sup>Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 127.

no longer enjoyed the virtually monopolistic role it had once played in determining Soviet foreign policy.<sup>48</sup>

The new political thinking thus virtually abandoned revolution and war as components of Soviet foreign policy. This thinking was based on the realization that all the states of the world were interdependent and the survival of humanity took precedence over the expansion of either of the two social systems. According to Gorbachev, "the backbone of the new way of thinking is the recognition of the priority of human values, or, to be more precise, of humankind's survival."<sup>49</sup> The humanistic element in the new political thinking was emphasized by Shevardnadze as well: "the new thinking is a view of the world through man and his interests. 'Man is the measure of all things.'"<sup>50</sup>

Fifth, the new political thinking postulated that security was indivisible. Gorbachev emphasized in this regard: "It is either equal security for all or none at all."<sup>51</sup> The underlying premise of the concept was that security was primarily a political problem:

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<sup>48</sup>The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR issued the first such report in late 1989: it covered the period from April 1985 to October 1989. The second report covering the period from November 1989 to December 1990 assessed changes in Soviet foreign policy and discussed national interests and national security. See *International Affairs* (Moscow), No. 12 (1989); *Ibid.*, No. 3 (1991).

<sup>49</sup>Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, p. 132.

<sup>50</sup>Eduard Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom*, p. 66.

<sup>51</sup>Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, p. 127.

Security can no longer be assured by military means--neither by the use of arms or deterrence, nor by continued perfection of the "sword" and the "shield." Attempts to achieve military superiority are preposterous. Now such attempts are being made in space. It is an astonishing anachronism which persists due to the inflated role played by militarists in politics. . . . The only way to security is through political decisions and disarmament.<sup>52</sup>

This concept called for the reformulation of Soviet military policy and doctrine according to the principle of "reasonable sufficiency" and a defensive military posture, and the abandonment of strategic deterrence which might bring about the total annihilation of mankind.<sup>53</sup> Alexei Arbatov stated that reasonable or defensive sufficiency did

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<sup>52</sup>Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, p. 127.

<sup>53</sup>The principle of reasonable sufficiency was first articulated by Gorbachev during his trip to France in October 1985, and formally introduced in his political report at the 27th Party Congress in February 1986. Reasonable sufficiency was codified into policy, first in the June 1986 Budapest proposal for reductions of conventional forces "from the Atlantic to the Urals," and later by the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty Organization in May 1987 (R. Hyland Phillips and Jeffrey I. Sands, "Reasonable Sufficiency and Soviet Conventional Defense: a Research Note," *International Security*, Vol. 13, No. 2 [Fall 1988], p. 164). In the latter half of 1987, a number of political-military analysts developed the concept of reasonable sufficiency, and applied it to the East-West relationship. For the analysis of reasonable sufficiency by Soviet writers, see Igor Malashenko, "Parity Reassessed," *New Times*, No. 47 (1987), pp. 9-10; Igor Malashenko, "Reasonable Sufficiency and Illusory Superiority," *New Times*, No. 24 (1987), pp. 18-20; Vitaly Zhurkin, Sergei Karaganov and Andrei Kortunov, "Reasonable Sufficiency--or How to Break the Vicious Circle," *New Times*, No. 40 (1987), pp. 13-15; Yevgeny Grebish, "On the Basis of Reasonable Sufficiency," *Soviet Military Review*, No. 2 (1989), pp. 3, 6.

not mean a simple "reduction of troops and armaments but thorough revision of strategy, operational plans and armed forces, in part by reducing them, revising modernization programs and re-deploying forces, primarily with the aim of greatly strengthening the country's defenses on a long term basis."<sup>54</sup> Arbatov further elaborated on the concept of reasonable sufficiency:

. . . until such time as all nuclear weapons are eliminated under relevant agreements, the combat task of offensive and defensive strategic forces will be not to limit damage in the event of nuclear war (which is impossible in any circumstances) nor to defeat the aggressor's armed forces, but to deliver a crushing blow against its life centers; the task of armed forces and conventional armaments is not to conduct offensive strategic operations in the main European and Asian theaters of war but to engage in defensive operations in order to frustrate offensive operations by the enemy.<sup>55</sup>

According to Arbatov, reasonable sufficiency implied "the shifted emphasis from extensive to intensive means of ensuring defense, the realization that the enemy's military buildup is directly influenced by our measures, and emphasis on disarmament to strengthen our security at lower cost."<sup>56</sup> The new military doctrine formulated in accordance with the new political thinking defined the task of strategic offensive weapons as preventing a U.S. nuclear attack

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<sup>54</sup>Alexei Arbatov, "How Much Defence is Sufficient?" *International Affairs* (Moscow) (April 1989), p. 35.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 34-35. See also Vitaly Zhurkin, Sergei Karaganov, and Andrei Kortunov, "Reasonable Sufficiency--or How to Break the Vicious Circle," p. 15.

<sup>56</sup>Alexei Arbatov, "How Much Defence is Sufficient?" p. 35.

through the possibility of surviving a U.S. first strike and causing the enemy unacceptable losses by retaliation.<sup>57</sup> The only defense against nuclear weapons would be "to prevent their use by maintaining a dependable capability for retaliation and ultimately to get rid of them by means of accords."<sup>58</sup>

As far as conventional arms were concerned, the level of reasonable sufficiency must be determined not by the ability to win a major local conflict but by the ability to prevent the aggressor from launching a "local blitzkrieg" or escalating a local conflict with impunity. Consequently, the quantitative factors of military capability were de-emphasized and the qualitative factors such as the quality of armaments, mobility and level of professional training, materiel, and preparedness of forces were emphasized. The new Soviet doctrine called for "a more compact, more combat-ready and well paid army having the latest equipment."<sup>59</sup>

Reasonable sufficiency also called for selective definition of the political objectives in a specific region and harmonizing these objectives with the economic potential and the main foreign policy principles.<sup>60</sup> An important element of reasonable sufficiency should be the flexible

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>60</sup>Vitaly Zhurkin, Sergei Karaganov and Andrei Kortunov, "Reasonable Sufficiency--or How to Break the Vicious Circle," p. 15.

combination of bilateral and unilateral steps toward limiting and reducing armaments.<sup>61</sup>

Sixth, Gorbachev advocated full utilization of international organizations, especially the United Nations (UN), as forums for international cooperation: "It is true that the efforts of the United Nations have not always been successful. But, in my view, this organization is the most appropriate forum from seeking a balance of the interests of states, which is essential for the stability of the world."<sup>62</sup> The new political thinking preferred political means of safeguarding security (primarily through diplomacy and treaties) to military means (through military buildup and expansion). The UN and other international organizations, in Gorbachev's view, could serve as a forum for conflict resolution and cooperation among nations. Gorbachev pledged to strengthen the function of the UN to assist in ensuring a "balance of interests" among all countries and to discharge its peace-making functions effectively. The Soviet Union under Gorbachev paid its past financial obligations to the UN and praised its peacekeeping missions. Furthermore, it agreed to allow Soviet citizens to serve as authentic international civil servants in the UN secretariat and other administrative agencies. The Soviet

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>62</sup>Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, p. 120.

Union also showed a strong interest in joining international financial and economic organizations.

Finally, Soviet thinking on the Third World underwent drastic changes as well. The Soviet Union began to reformulate its policy toward the Third World--in particular, with regard to regional conflicts and national liberation movements--based on "national interests" and economic profitability rather than ideological commitments and revolution.

Soviet Third World policy since the mid-1970s had been geared to active support of Marxist-Leninist regimes in the Third World. Gorbachev shifted emphasis from Marxist-Leninist regimes to geopolitically important nations in the Third World.<sup>63</sup> Gorbachev's new political thinking placed a high priority on resolving regional conflicts. The new interest in peaceful solutions came after the painful realization that: (1) these conflicts served as an obstacle to the improvement of relations with the U.S. and other major powers; (2) they resulted in a heavy drain upon Soviet resources and contributed to the distortion of Soviet economic, domestic, and military priorities; and (3) they had aggravated Soviet relations with Third World countries, especially those bordering on the conflict zones.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>Francis Fukuyama, "Patterns of Soviet Third World Policy," *Problems of Communism* (September-October 1987), p. 1.

<sup>64</sup>Vernon V. Aspaturian, "Gorbachev's 'New Political Thinking' and Foreign Policy," p. 35.

Karen Brutents and Aleksandr Yakovlev, among others, provided a theoretical framework for a new Soviet policy toward the Third World.<sup>65</sup> Brutents, a deputy head of the CPSU Central Committee's International Department since the mid-1970s, argued in the early 1980s that the Soviet Union should increase its links with geopolitically important Third World countries with anti-imperialist potential (e.g., India, Brazil, and Mexico) and decrease its ties with the Socialist-oriented countries that were weak and small (e.g., Ethiopia, Afghanistan, and Angola). Yakovlev, one of Gorbachev's important foreign policy advisers, suggested a "multi-polar strategy" through which the Soviet Union could broaden its range of contacts and cultivate important capitalist allies in the U.S., Western Europe, and Asia. While criticizing the past practice of narrowly focusing on its relations with the U.S. and neglecting its relations with other countries, Yakovlev maintained that the Soviet Union should anticipate and take advantage of the "contradictions" between the West and the newly industrializing countries.

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<sup>65</sup>The following analysis is drawn from the article by Francis Fukuyama, "Patterns of Soviet Third World Policy," pp. 1-26. Brutents was in charge of the Middle Eastern and Latin American affairs. He probably took charge of the rest of the Third World as well since Rostislav Ulyanovsky, a deputy head of the International Department and close associate of conservative Ponomarev, retired in 1986. Ponomarev was replaced by Anatoli Dobrynin as head of the International Department in February 1986.

The Brutents-Yakovlev strategy was aimed at promoting the Soviet Union's interests as a great power, and discarding its former role as the carrier of a messianic, universal ideology.<sup>66</sup> In accordance with the new strategy, it also increased diplomatic engagement with major powers. Besides Moscow placed a new emphasis on large, geopolitically important states. Gorbachev had a tendency to deal directly with key regional actors, such as India, China and Japan in East Asia, Egypt, and Israel in the Middle East, and Mexico in Central America. This tendency reflected the Soviet leadership's recognition of the multi-polar and interdependent character of contemporary international relations. It also meant a departure from an earlier emphasis on ideology and a near-obsession with the United States, which were largely responsible for the Soviet Union's isolation during the Brezhnev period.<sup>67</sup>

#### 4. The Impact of the New Political Thinking on Northeast Asia and the Korean Peninsula

Gorbachev's new political thinking inevitably affected the pattern of Soviet interactions with Northeast Asian countries, including the two Koreas. Moscow critically

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<sup>66</sup>Edward A. Kolodziej, "The Multi-lateralization of Regional Security in Southeast and Northeast," *Pacific Focus*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Spring 1991), p. 5.

<sup>67</sup>Allen Lynch, *Gorbachev's International Outlook: Intellectual Origins and Political Consequences*, p. 35.

reevaluated its past policies toward these countries and sought to establish itself as a new actor in the region. The implementation of the new political thinking in Northeast Asia eventually transformed the power structure in the region, which in turn provided an impetus for a new Soviet policy toward the Korean peninsula.

Gorbachev's new political thinking vis-a-vis Northeast Asian countries was included in his speeches in Vladivostok in July 1986 and in Krasnoyarsk in September 1988 which outlined a new Soviet policy toward the Asia Pacific region (for Gorbachev's initiatives in the Asia Pacific region, see chapter 4). The new Soviet initiatives in the region reflected the new political thinking including de-ideologization of Soviet foreign policy, political means to ensure security, and an effort to create a new image for the Soviet Union as a reliable partner.

Gorbachev recognized the increasing importance of the Asia Pacific region in Soviet foreign policy and called for local solutions to regional conflicts in the region as early as the 27th Congress of the Party:

The political report by the Central Committee to the 27th CPSU Congress stressed the growing significance in Soviet foreign policy of the Asian and Pacific directions. We stated that local solutions should be sought without delay, beginning with the coordination and then the pooling of efforts to produce political settlements to sensitive problems, so as, in parallel and on that basis, to at least take the edge off

military confrontation in various parts of Asia and to stabilize the situation there.<sup>68</sup>

The new political thinking called for dialogue and cooperation with relatively small states in the Asia Pacific region including Canada, Australia, South Korea, and the ASEAN.<sup>69</sup> To use Gorbachev's phrase, the Soviet Union sought to establish "a new kind of relationship" in the region:

Up until now international relations have depended greatly on moves by certain countries or groups of countries. This did not improve the situation in the world. . . . New relations in our complex world, and in such an intricate region as Asia and the Pacific, can be built only along the road of cooperation where the interests of all states are brought together. The type of relationship inherited from the past, with a metropolis being on one side and colonies on the other, has outlived itself. It must give way to a new type of relationship.<sup>70</sup>

The new political thinking also meant the application of political and economic means to the resolution of regional conflicts. Mikhail Titarenko, the director of the Far Eastern Studies Institute, USSR Academy of Sciences, shed light on this point:

When applied to the Asian-Pacific region, this concept [new political thinking] holds that regional problems (including those related to security of lengthy eastern borders of the USSR) cannot be solved through an arms

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<sup>68</sup>Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, pp. 166-167.

<sup>69</sup>Vladimir I. Ivanov, "The Soviet Union and the Asia-Pacific Region in the 1990s: Evolution or Radical Changes?" *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* (Seoul) Vol. 2, No 2 (Winter 1990), pp. 44-45.

<sup>70</sup>Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, p. 169.

race and military confrontation. Rather they should be solved through political and economic means, on the basis of peaceful coexistence and the elimination of hostility, suspicion and mistrust in international relations.<sup>71</sup>

In Northeast Asia, the major areas of conflict that required a political solution included the Soviet-Chinese dispute over borderlines, Soviet-Japanese animosity over the Kurile Islands, and the continuing tension and military confrontation regarding the Korean peninsula. The establishment of a viable peace system in the region through confidence-building measures, arms control and disarmament, and a multilateral security arrangement was an important goal of Gorbachev's new policy in Northeast Asia.

The primary goal of this new policy was not to diminish the influence of the U.S, since Moscow now considered U.S.-USSR cooperation as its highest priority. Rather, it was primarily aimed at the Soviet Union as a new full-fledged member of the region who would share its prosperity. As Gorbachev has noted, his East Asian initiatives were closely interconnected with the need to develop Siberia and the Far East: "The East, specifically Asia and the Pacific region, is now the place where civilization is stepping up its pace. Our economy in its development is moving to Siberia and to

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<sup>71</sup>Mikhail Titarenko, "Asian and Korean Security and Stability," p. 279.

the Far East. We are therefore genuinely interested in promoting Asia-Pacific cooperation."<sup>72</sup>

The new political thinking did not simply take the form of ideas and thinking. It substantially changed Soviet behavior in the international arena during Gorbachev's reign.<sup>73</sup> The changes in Soviet foreign policy behavior included: a self-imposition of a unilateral moratorium on nuclear weapons testing from August 1985 to February 1987; major concessions during INF negotiations with the U.S. including on-site verification, an arrangement the Soviets had never accepted until then<sup>74</sup>; force reduction along the Sino-Soviet frontier and acceptance of the main channel of the Amur and Ussuri Rivers as the demarcation line for the border<sup>75</sup>; troop withdrawal from Mongolia; troop withdrawal from Afghanistan; and positive influence in the Vietnamese withdrawal from Kampuchea.

Soviet foreign policy priorities in Northeast Asia were ranked in order of importance as follows: Soviet-American

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<sup>72</sup>Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, p. 166.

<sup>73</sup>See Rajan Menon, "New Thinking and Northeast Asian Security," *Problems of Communism*, (March-June 1989), pp. 3-4; Mikhail Titarenko, "Asian and Korean Security and Stability," pp. 279-284.

<sup>74</sup>For example, the Soviet side had originally said that the INFs in Asia would be dismantled after the U.S. had withdrawn its nuclear weapons platforms and delivery vehicles from South Korea, Japan, and the Philippines, and pulled its aircraft carriers behind lines. The Soviet Union later withdrew this precondition, allowing it to be mutually negotiated.

<sup>75</sup>The Soviet side had insisted on the Chinese side of the bank as the borderline between the two countries.

relations; Soviet-Chinese relations; Soviet-Japanese relations; and Soviet relations with the two Koreas. The Soviet policy toward North and South Korea had been influenced by its relations with the major powers in Northeast Asia (i.e., the U.S., China, Japan). The impact of the new political thinking on Soviet policy toward the Korean peninsula was largely a function of intricate and shifting relationships between the Soviet Union and the major powers.

With this caveat in mind, the new political thinking vis-a-vis the two Koreas was as follows. First, de-ideologization of Soviet foreign policy meant de-emphasizing ideological ties with its traditional ally North Korea and emphasizing economic and political ties with capitalist South Korea. If the Soviet Union intended to choose concrete national interests over abstract ideological principles, it should cultivate relations with South Korea for economic gain and political influence and discontinue material and political support to North Korea, which had been a drain on its resources. Second, the renunciation of the principle that "war is the mid-wife of revolution" led the Soviets to object to the North Koreans' revolutionary war against the South. The possibility that a local war in Korea might escalate into an all-out war involving the Soviet Union precluded any Soviet involvement in North

Korea's war efforts. Therefore, the Soviet supply of advanced weapons to North Korea should be discontinued.

Third, the principle of peaceful coexistence between different socioeconomic systems implied that the Soviet Union should recognize South Korea as a legitimate member of the international community. Thus, the new political thinking called for the establishment of normal state-to-state relations with South Korea.

However, a consensus did not emerge from among the Soviet leaders in regard to Soviet foreign policy. The Soviet leadership was roughly divided into "new thinkers" and "old thinkers." Since Gorbachev's new thinking and overall foreign policy behavior adversely affected their interests, old thinkers within the leadership did not completely endorse Gorbachev's new policy line. The Soviet leader needed enough power to overrule the opposition and put his reform program into practice. Gorbachev's power consolidation proceeded to parallel the restructuring of the Soviet decision-making process. In this way, the restructuring of this process and the restructuring of Soviet foreign policy became interconnected.

## CHAPTER 3

### POWER AND POLICY IN THE SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY-MAKING PROCESS: A LINKAGE BETWEEN INTERNAL POLITICS AND EXTERNAL POLICY

In the Soviet Union, political power and reform policy were intrinsically interrelated because power was a prerequisite for the implementation of reforms whose success or failure in turn could enhance or erode power. Soviet leaders were engaged in a constant struggle for power because the Soviet system lacked an institutionalized process of leadership succession.<sup>1</sup> In the absence of an orderly succession of leadership, the Soviet Union inevitably became involved in the informal process of competition and maneuvering between opposing factional and institutional leaders.

Soviet leaders utilized policy issues (foreign as well as domestic) to attract potential allies and followers and to mobilize their support in this power struggle.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Soviet system under Communist rule did not have a written, statutory provision for a fixed role of the leader. Such a fixed role was not established through customary practice either (G. Hodnett, "Succession Contingencies in the Soviet Union," *Problems of Communism* [March-April 1976], p. 14).

<sup>2</sup>Foreign policy views and power struggles were often closely related in the Soviet Union. Stalin and Trotsky sought to bolster their power position by advocating different foreign

Conversely, they needed to establish a firm power base and maintain a widespread support within the leadership before launching new policies, especially if the new policies were to transform the overall structure of Soviet society, which would pose a direct threat to the power and interests of the "ruling" class. Thus power and policy in the Soviet political system had been intimately interrelated and often enjoyed a mutually reinforcing relationship. Likewise, Gorbachev's new foreign policy, based on the new political thinking, was closely connected with domestic factors.

Gorbachev's new political thinking called for an overall restructuring of Soviet foreign policy, which

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policy views. Stalin's "socialism in one country" and "peaceful coexistence" with capitalism, and his support of Chiang Kai-shek in China were designed to enhance his power position by winning widespread support from the Party and the population who wanted peace and internal development rather than an aggressive revolutionary external policy. "Hence such a policy would result in associating Stalin's political fortunes and interests with larger and more powerful social constituencies than his opposition could muster in support of its views" (Vernon Aspaturian, "Internal Politics and Foreign Policy in the Soviet System," in R. Barry Farrell, ed., *Approaches to Comparative and International Politics* [Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1966], p. 241). Foreign policy differences within the Soviet leadership played a crucial role in the ouster of Molotov and Malenkov in 1955. Khrushchev's ouster in 1964 can be partly attributed to his foreign policy lines, which were not agreeable to most of the Politburo members (Z. A. Medvedev, *Khrushchev: The Years in Power* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1976]). Armstrong analyzed the relationship between internal power struggle and Soviet foreign policy (John Armstrong, "The Domestic Roots of Soviet Foreign Policy," in Erik P. Hoffmann and Frederic J. Fleron, Jr., eds., *The Conduct of Soviet Foreign Policy*, 2d ed. [New York: Aldine Publishing Company, 1980], pp. 50-60).

inevitably involved a large-scale replacement of leadership and the restructuring of foreign policy-making institutions. A high level of leadership turnover was recorded at every major institution in Soviet diplomacy during the first years of Gorbachev's rule. The leadership changes proceeded simultaneously with the extensive restructuring of foreign policy-making institutions. Eventually Gorbachev debilitated the once omnipotent Party and instituted the presidential system upon its ruins.

The restructuring of diplomatic institutions was part of Gorbachev's broad scheme to restructure the central decision-making bodies, which was closely related to Gorbachev's power consolidation and augmentation. The Soviet leader carried out the restructuring of Party and state institutions in order to enhance his personal power and diminish his opponents'. In doing so, he showed remarkable shrewdness and dexterity.

### 1. The Linkage Between Soviet Foreign Policy and Internal Politics

There is a clear "linkage" between the domestic and foreign policies of any state.<sup>3</sup> Among other domestic

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<sup>3</sup>James N. Rosenau, "Pre-theories and Theories of Foreign Policy," in R. Barry Farrell, ed., *Approaches to Comparative and International Politics* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1966), p. 31.

factors, interest group activities had an unmistakable impact on the formulation and implementation of Soviet foreign policy.<sup>4</sup>

#### A. Soviet Foreign Policy as a Function of Domestic Group Politics

Aspaturian initiated a systematic conceptualization of the group approach in his analysis of Soviet foreign policy in 1966.<sup>5</sup> Aspaturian started from the proposition that a state's interests in foreign policy were circumscribed by

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<sup>4</sup>The interest group politics in the Soviet Union require some qualification. Unlike the United States, the Soviet Union did not contain autonomous, overt, voluntary associations representing a certain economic interest or political belief. Instead, a number of "institutional groupings" with authorized formal structure were discernible in the USSR. The line between interest groups and bureaucratic politics was not clear-cut in the Soviet Union because secondary associations and organized public lobbies were absent, and all formal and informal groups were included in the official hierarchy (Alexander Dallin, "The Domestic Sources of Soviet Foreign Policy," in Seweryn Bialer, ed., *The Domestic Context of Soviet Foreign Policy* [Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1981], p. 346). In reference to interest group activities in the Soviet political process, Jerry Hough preferred the phrase "institutionalized pluralism" (Jerry Hough and Merle Fainsod, *How the Soviet Union is Governed* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979], p. 547). Cross-cutting opinion groups were also found in the USSR. Loose groupings of like-minded or like-interested groups were a striking feature of the interest groups in the Soviet Union (David Langsam and D. W. Paul, "Soviet Politics and the Group Approach: A Conceptual Note," *Slavic Review* [March 1972], p. 139).

<sup>5</sup>Vernon V. Aspaturian, "Internal Politics and Foreign Policy in the Soviet System," in R. Barry Farrell, ed., *Approaches to Comparative and International Politics* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1966), pp. 212-287.

its domestic socio-power structure: "In foreign policy, as in domestic, the interests of the state reflect the socio-power structure of the community, . . . The interests of the state in foreign policy thus inevitably reflect the spectrum of domestic interest groups which are affected by foreign policy decisions and are capable of making their demands known and their influence felt in the shaping of these decisions."<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, according to Aspaturian, it was necessary to study the nature of the social structure and the process of group politics within it to understand a state's interests in foreign policy:

Thus when we speak of state or national interests in foreign policy, it is necessary to examine the social structure, the interrelation of interest groups and social classes, the degree of ideo-social consensus, and the process whereby conflicts among various groups are resolved without rupturing the social consensus--and how foreign policy decisions are a product of these processes while at the same time reacting upon them.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, he continued, even the perception of Soviet national interests by individual leaders and factional groups reflected their own biases and inclinations.

Although a residual fervor of an ideological commitment to specific goals and policies remains operative in the thought and behavior of Soviet leaders, there has also been an inexorable tendency for individual leaders and factional interest groups to perceive the interests of society as a whole through their own prism and to

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 218.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 217-218.

distort and adjust the national interest accordingly.<sup>8</sup>

According to Aspaturian, the foreign policy behavior of the Soviet Union, as in any other state, was "more a function of preserving the social order and the interests of its dominant groups than of the state or the national interests in the abstract" and functioned "more to serve tangible internal interests than intangible or abstract ideological interests abroad."<sup>9</sup>

Therefore, a clear understanding of the Soviet Union's social-political structure becomes key to an objective analysis of Soviet foreign policy. Two questions now arise: what kinds of institutional groups did the Soviet system contain?, and what were the implications of their interaction for Soviet foreign policy?

#### **B. Interest Group Activities and Cleavages in the Soviet Leadership**

Soviet society contained numerous groups (non-associational and institutional) with diverse interests, especially in the post-Stalin era. After World War II, the Soviet Union emerged as a military superpower. The Soviet Union also turned into an economically advanced society in which decisions regarding the distribution of scarce

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 254-255.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 229-230.

resources became increasingly important.

The individual leaders in an economic sector had particular preferences for resource allocation, and lobbied to safeguard and enhance the functional interests of the groups they belonged to. Individual leaders from different groups sometimes formed political coalitions or alliances to prevail in the policy-making process over the opposing individual leaders. Institutional and occupational groups in the Soviet Union such as the military, the Party, and the KGB, functioned as interest groups. Informal opinion groups (interest groupings) such as the intelligentsia, the workers, peasants, and some regional, national, or religious groups also functioned as interest groups.<sup>10</sup>

Broadly speaking, individual leaders and institutions of the Soviet Union could be categorized into either a "security-production-ideological grouping" or a "consumer-agricultural-public services grouping."<sup>11</sup> The former

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<sup>10</sup>Cf. David Langsam and D. W. Paul, "Soviet Politics and the Group Approach: A Conceptual Note," *Slavic Review* (March 1972), pp. 137-139; Alexander Dallin, "The Domestic Sources of Soviet Foreign Policy," pp. 349-350.

<sup>11</sup>This concept of the polarization of the Soviet leadership derived from an analysis by Vernon V. Aspaturian, which was reported in "Soviet Military-Industrial Complex-Does it Exist?" *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (1972). The term "complex" consists of two elements: (1) the close connection; and (2) the non-monolithic, differentiated relationship between groups (E. John, "The Role of the Armaments Complex in Soviet Society," *Journal of Peace Research*, 12 [1975], p. 180). Dallin used "left" and "right" to describe the "single most pervasive and persistent pattern of political cleavages and linkages" within the Soviet leadership (Alexander Dallin, "The Domestic Sources of Soviet Foreign Policy," in Seweryn

grouping also could be termed the "military-industry complex" of the Soviet Union. Defense-related sectors and the military community strove to influence policy outcomes in order to protect and promote their interests. Their common interest bonded them together and created a "military-industry complex" in the USSR. The military-industry complex drew its components from the traditional sectors of the armed forces, heavy-industrial managers, professional conservative party apparatchiki and ideologues, and the secret police. The latter grouping comprised the sectors of the state bureaucracy, light-industrial interests, consumer goods and service interests, and agricultural interests, the cultural, professional, and scientific groups, and Soviet consumers.<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that these components were not monolithic groupings but in the main were distributed along these lines of cleavage.

The former grouping tended to advocate certain priorities that would enhance its functional interests: (1) increase military capabilities and prepare for a possible military confrontation with the West; (2) concentrate economic resources on defense production, heavy industry, and research and development; (3) tighten ideological

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Bialer, ed., *The Domestic Context of Soviet Foreign Policy* [Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1981], pp. 344-345).

<sup>12</sup>Vernon V. Aspaturian, "Soviet Military-Industrial Complex-Does it Exist?", p. 4.

control at home, maintain high morale during crises, and oppose de-Stalinization; (4) criticize arms control and disarmament and favor the territorial status quo of the Soviet Union; and (5) value political commitments to allied and client states.<sup>13</sup> In contrast, the latter grouping favored "butter" over "guns" in resource allocation and a more open society, and advocated détente and enhanced cooperation with the West including arms control and disarmament.

One of the main features of the Soviet military-industry complex was the absence of private motives.<sup>14</sup> In the Soviet Union, the military community and the defense industries did not share overlapping or interlocking personnel. However, a number of sub-groups within the two bureaucracies were closely interrelated based on customer-supplier relationships. The Ministry of General Machine Building that produced ballistic missiles might have maintained sub-group alliances with the Strategic Rocket Forces. Likewise, the Ministry of Defense Industry, the main producer of conventional weapons, might have had intimate ties with the military services that utilized conventional weapons. It is also likely that a similar alliance was formed between the Air Force and the Aviation

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>14</sup>William T. Lee, "The 'Politico-Military-Industrial Complex' of the USSR," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (1972), p. 73.

Industry, and between the Naval Forces and the Ministry of Ship-Building. These alliances played an important role when military budgets and allocations were curtailed and many service sectors of both the military community and the defense industries struggled to get a share of the resources.<sup>15</sup>

Under Stalin's protective shield, the military-industry complex had expanded and thrived.<sup>16</sup> However, the privileged status of the complex began to be challenged after Stalin's death. The question of budget priorities was reconsidered

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<sup>15</sup>Vernon V. Aspaturian, "Soviet Military-Industrial Complex-Does it Exist?", p. 19. These relationships changed over time, as did the number and names of ministries that were part of the complex.

<sup>16</sup>Andrew Shren, "Structure and Organization of Defense-related Industries," *Economic Performance and the Military Burden in the Soviet Union*, U.S. Congress, Joint Economic Committee (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1970), pp. 128-130. The Soviet military-industry's basic features were established in the late 1920s-early 1930s. During this period, a centralized economic planning system was established and a R&D (research and development) network was created. The Stalinist economic model placed a great emphasis on developing heavy industry for long-term economic growth and for military build-up (D. Hollaway, "Technology and Political Decision in Soviet Armament Policy," *Journal of Peace and Research*, Vol. 11 [1974], pp. 261-262). The Soviet economy at that time was primarily concerned with investment and defense expenditures. When the First Five-Year Plan started in 1929, military industry was designated a "group A" in industries that included the economic sectors producing means of production. Since this group was given a high priority, military industry grew at a much faster rate than the Soviet economy in general. During the Second Five-Year Plan (1933-1937), the military industry increased its production by 286 percent. During the years 1938-1940, the average annual increase of military output was 39 percent. By the time of Stalin's death, the military industry comprised an inappropriately large portion of industrial output (K. Krylov, "Soviet Military-Economic Complex," *Military Review* [November 1971], p. 90).

by Soviet leaders during the succession period. The post-Stalin leadership not only decided to break with the "rule of terror" but also recognized the need to satisfy Soviet consumers. After Stalin's death, the Soviet leadership was divided in regard to priorities for resource allocation. G. M. Malenkov emphasized the development of light industry, and sought to reorganize heavy and defense industry factories on a limited basis in order to boost consumer production. He further advocated cuts in defense spending and long-term investment in agriculture.

In contrast, Nikita Khrushchev proposed a program that called for continued high-level investment in military-industrial sectors. He advocated the solution of the agricultural problem in a "low-cost, short-term" manner and supported military modernization and the expansion of strategic nuclear forces at the expense of light industry.<sup>17</sup> The military-industrialists in the Soviet leadership apparently supported Khrushchev, thereby playing a crucial role in Khrushchev's victory in the power struggle.

Initially, after defeating Malenkov, Khrushchev continued to be cautious and tried not to alienate the military-industrial sectors and not to cut the military budget too drastically. The economic ministries related to armament production were exempted from his decentralization

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<sup>17</sup>Cf. G. W. Breslauer, *Khrushchev and Brezhnev as Leaders: Building Authority in Soviet Politics* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982).

plan and Khrushchev curtailed the Party's interference in the military.<sup>18</sup> After the 20th Party Congress in 1956 and the enunciation of an open anti-de-Stalinization policy, Khrushchev began to shift gears and reverse his priorities, which now gave a higher priority to domestic economic and social interests and a lower priority to defense, foreign policy, and ideological considerations. Increasing the standard of living at home and détente/peaceful coexistence in foreign policy became his principal goals; this dictated a cut in military and military-related economic expenditures, including radical reductions in military personnel and conventional military capabilities. The Air Force and Navy were slated for almost virtual extinction and the ground forces were drastically reduced in number. The new strategic Rocket Forces and the deterrent/intimidating capabilities of ballistic nuclear weapons were to be relied upon primarily.

Khrushchev's proposal for troop reduction was vehemently opposed by the military. In a speech to the Supreme Soviet in 1960, he announced the reduction of military manpower by 1.2 million, stressed the strategic forces, and even suggested a territorial militia system. High-level military officers expressed their concerns about Khrushchev's plan to reorganize the military. In the face

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<sup>18</sup>Vernon Aspaturian, *Process and Power in Soviet Foreign Policy* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971), p. 516.

of the military's opposition, Khrushchev gave up his plan temporarily in 1961.<sup>19</sup> In 1962, the Soviet leadership reallocated budgets in favor of the agricultural sector to improve disastrous agricultural performance. Again, the military establishment responded negatively to the plan because it would result in cuts in the defense budget. Strong opposition from the military-industrial sectors undermined the budget reallocation plan. Consequently, on June 1, 1962, the Central Committee and the Council of Ministers revealed their decision to increase the price of some agricultural products so as to provide funds for agriculture without cutting military budgets.<sup>20</sup>

The military and military-related sectors continued to be a high priority during the Brezhnev period. The 11th Five-Year Plan adopted at the 26th Party Congress in 1981 indicated a high emphasis on defense sectors in budget allocation. According to the plan, defense spending was to increase by 6 to 7 percent while the economy was projected

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<sup>19</sup>Marshal Konev (Commander of the Warsaw Pact Forces) and Marshal Sokolovski (Chief of the General Staff) were relieved from their posts probably because of their opposition to Khrushchev's proposal (Matthew P. Gallagher, "Military Manpower: A Case Study," *Problems of Communism* [May-June 1964], pp. 54-55).

<sup>20</sup>In an article in May 1962, Malinovski stressed the continuing threat from the West and emphasized the need to build-up Soviet military power. He further stated that a high level of defense budget was absolutely necessary because of heightened external threat. During this period, the military press continuously referred to the Eighth CPSU Congress. By doing so, the military writers pointed out that regular standing army was approved by Lenin (*Ibid.*, pp. 56-58).

to grow about 3.5 percent annually.<sup>21</sup> The Soviet economy began to stagnate in the early 1970s and the large share of the defense outlays became an increasingly heavy burden on the economy. Nevertheless, the Brezhnev leadership continued to allocate a high level of the government budget to defense spending.

The military-industry complex in the Soviet Union had been actively engaged in "lobbying" to enhance its material interests and ideological values, particularly after Stalin's death in 1953. In general, its interests were protected and promoted by the Soviet leaders not only because it exercised a strong political influence on the policy-making process but also because its interests and values coincided with those of the Soviet leaders. The Cold War atmosphere in the post-World War II era contributed to international tension and military confrontation between the two superpowers; in doing so, it created favorable circumstances for the growth of the military-industry complex in the Soviet Union.

Gorbachev's reform policies directly challenged the privileged position of the military-industry complex. In contrast to Brezhnev, who had stated in 1981 that the Soviet military had "everything necessary in order to reliably defend the Socialist achievements of the people," Gorbachev

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<sup>21</sup>William T. Lee, "The Shift in Soviet National Priorities to Military Forces, 1958-85," *The Annals of the American Academy* (September 1981), pp. 65-66.

steadily reduced the military budget and pursued disarmament agreements with the U.S. from the beginning.<sup>22</sup> In June 1985, Gorbachev reportedly told Soviet military leaders in a secret speech in Minsk that the military budget would be cut, stating that "new realities" meant that political rather than military-technical means had become the primary tools for guaranteeing the security of the Soviet Union.<sup>23</sup> Gorbachev's new foreign policy de-emphasized military aspects and eventually led to the polarization of the Soviet leadership.

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., Stephen Meyer, "The Sources and Prospects of Gorbachev's New Political Thinking on Security," *International Security* (Fall 1988), p. 129.

<sup>23</sup>In the aftermath of the Cessna flight to Moscow's Red Square by the West German youth Mathias Rust, Gorbachev started a sweeping purge of senior officers. Consequently, the most prestigious and strong personalities among the senior military elite were swept away. General of the Army Dmitri Yazov, the successor to Sokolov as Defense Minister, was an obscure officer with little to distinguish him, either in command-and-staff experience or in demonstrated intellectual qualities as a military theorist. The choice of Yazov as Defense Minister might have reflected Gorbachev's intent to have someone dependent on him and loyal in carrying through military reforms. Gorbachev's selection of then Colonel-General Mikhail Moiseyev as the new chief of the General Staff seemed to reflect similar calculations. An equally undistinguished officer with no General Staff experience, Moiseyev was neither a military intellectual nor a strong leader (William Odom, "The Soviet Military in Transition," *Problems of Communism* [May-June 1990], p. 58).

## 2. The Polarization of the Soviet Leadership on Foreign Policy: The New Political Thinkers and Old Political Thinkers

The deplorable economic condition of the Soviet Union was a major catalyst for Gorbachev's reform program. The relentless arms race with the U.S. as well as the economic deterioration resulting from the deficient economic system led the Soviet Union into a general economic crisis by the early 1980s.<sup>24</sup> Although the Soviet military industry won the "quantitative" competition (i.e., the building of more weapons), it lost the competition to exploit technology for qualitatively superior weapons. Gorbachev, fully aware of the crisis situation, intended to rejuvenate his country by redressing the deficient economic system through perestroika and by doing away with the costly arms race with the U.S. through a new foreign policy.

Based on the new political thinking, Gorbachev's new foreign policy, like his overall reform program at home, affected the interests of the Soviet individual leaders differently. The nature of its impact (or perceived impact) on their material interests and ideological values differed in degree and intensity depending on the nature of the groups or groupings to which they belonged.

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<sup>24</sup>Minister of Defense Yazov and Chief of the General Staff Moiseyev acknowledged that the U.S. military build-up of the last decade led the Soviet Union into a "qualitative" arms competition that was exhausting the Soviet economy (*Krasnaya Zvezda*, February 9, 1989; February 10, 1989).

Those who saw hope and personal enhancement in perestroika and the new political thinking joined the reformers led by Gorbachev. Those who perceived drastic reform as a direct threat to their interests formed an informal coalition against Gorbachev and his reform policies. In an effort to protect their vested interests, the individuals belonging to the conservative coalition resisted and obstructed Gorbachev's reform movement individually or en bloc. The conservatives attempted to brake or modify Gorbachev's reform policies, and in doing so challenged his political power and authority.

In time, the Soviet leadership was polarized into reformers and conservatives. The polarization within the Soviet leadership extended to foreign policy issues. Consequently, two opposing groupings of individual leaders and institutions congealed into "the new political thinkers" and "the old political thinkers." Thus, foreign policy issues became entangled in the domestic political process.

The former grouping drew its membership from Gorbachev's inner circle, reform-minded academics, and intelligentsia who believed in political and diplomatic solutions to inter-state conflicts on the basis of balance of interests and compromises. They emphasized the de-ideologization of Soviet foreign policy. The membership of the latter grouping matched that of the military-industry complex. The old political thinkers considered the world to

be divided into two confronting political systems and searched for ways to settle regional conflicts by strengthening the military and political positions of Socialism while weakening those of capitalism.

Gorbachev's new foreign policy posed a grave threat to the interests of the old political thinkers. In an effort to safeguard their vested interests, they resisted and stalled Gorbachev's new foreign policy. Shevardnadze recalled how the prospects of the Soviet-American rapprochement in the first years of Gorbachev's rule led to the formation of a conservative coalition: "After all, the very attempt by the two leaders [Gorbachev and Reagan] to make a quick, long-distance gain frightened many people and activated forces that were alarmed by a rapprochement between the USSR and the United States."<sup>25</sup>

Gorbachev swiftly consolidated power. Power was the ultimate means of bringing the new political thinking into reality. In an effort to improve his own power position, the Soviet leader began to pack the central policy-making institutions with his followers and allies, and restructured policy-making institutions so that his opponents' power base was further curtailed. In doing so, Gorbachev sought to replace the old political thinkers with the new political thinkers in the leadership. However, it is important to

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<sup>25</sup>Eduard Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom*, trans. Catherine A. Fitzpatrick (New York: The Free Press, 1991), p. 89.

note that not all of Gorbachev's appointees agreed with the speed and scope of Gorbachev's reforms. Some considered them to be too rapid and too radical, while some complained that they were moving too slowly and were too limited. Under the circumstances, Gorbachev attempted to maintain a central position between the two, partly accommodating both sides but never fully satisfying either side.

### 3. The Foreign Policy-making Process in the Soviet Union: Power and Restructuring

The foreign policy-making process in the Soviet Union was radically transformed under Gorbachev. Gorbachev's foreign policy can be divided into two periods, focusing on the locus of policy-making power. The first period extended from 1985 to summer 1988, when the Politburo and, to a lesser extent, the Central Committee of the CPSU served as the central foreign policy-making institutions. The second period was from fall 1988 to the end of 1991, when the power center steadily shifted from the Party to state institutions. Eventually, the executive presidency was established.

### A. Gorbachev's Emergence as the Dominant Leader in the Politburo

During the first years of Gorbachev's rule, the center of power and authority resided in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). As the leading and guiding force in the Soviet system, the CPSU had long played the central role in the foreign policy-making process.<sup>26</sup>

The Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU served as the top policy-making institution until early 1990.<sup>27</sup> It consisted of 15 to 20 full- and candidate

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<sup>26</sup>The CPSU performed multiple roles and functions: "(1) as the ideological guardian of the multinational socio-political order at home and the initiator and architect of its future development; (2) as the ideological and organizational leader of the ruling communist parties and the ultimate arbiter of the ideological parameters within which their socio-political existence and development takes place; and (3) as the ideological leader and source of inspiration and material support of the World Communist movement, made up of both ruling and non-ruling Communist parties" (Vernon V. Aspaturian, *The Process and Power in Soviet Foreign Policy*, 14).

<sup>27</sup>Created as a subcommittee of the Central Committee of the CPSU in 1919, the Politburo worked as a collective policy-making body during the lifetime of Lenin. During the Stalin era, this organ increasingly turned into a mere instrument of Stalin's oppressive rule. Since the death of Stalin in 1953, the principle of collective rule was restored. Subsequently, more stress was put on consensus and compromise among Politburo members in the policy-making process. Victor Israellian, the former Soviet ambassador to the UN and a senior professor at the Soviet Diplomatic Academy, emphasized the central role of the Politburo in foreign policy: "Decisions concerning the problems of foreign policy were made by either the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPSU, or by a small group of high-ranking party officials' people--Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev and two or three of their closest supporters, in certain cases. This process was at work in 1939 and 40 years later, in 1979, when Soviet troops were sent into

members, set broad policy directions in all areas, giving priority to achieving goals, integrating between policy and official ideology, and coordinating particular interests with the overall Soviet national interest. The Politburo convened every Thursday in full session.<sup>28</sup> A general agenda for discussion in the Politburo session was prepared by the Secretariat of the Central Committee based on staffing papers, memoranda (zapiski), and draft decisions coming from numerous sources such as the Secretariat, the various departments of the Central Committee, special commissions of a permanent or *ad hoc* nature, various government agencies, or the personal staffs of the Politburo members.

If necessary, the Politburo session was enlarged by including pertinent external figures in the policy deliberation. In crisis situations such as the Cuban

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Afghanistan" (Victor Israellian, unpublished paper, "Policy Making and Russian Diplomacy," pp. 2-3).

<sup>28</sup>Yeltsin, a former candidate member of the Politburo, depicted the operations of Politburo sessions under Brezhnev and Gorbachev: "The Politburo met every Thursday at eleven in the morning and would finish its sessions at varying times: at four, five, seven, or even eight in the evening. Under Brezhnev: The wording of various draft decrees was rubber-stamped and everything was dealt with in fifteen or twenty minutes. He would ask if there were any objections, which there never were, and then the Politburo would adjourn. Under Gorbachev: The sessions usually began with the full members of the Politburo gathering in one room. The candidate members, the second category of Politburo membership, and the Central Committee secretaries, the third category, were lined up in a row in the conference room to await the appearance of the general secretary. After him the other full members would file into the room in order of seniority" (Boris Yeltsin, *Against the Grain*, trans. Michael Glenny [New York: Summit Books, 1990], p. 143).

Missile Crisis in 1962, a smaller "inner cabinet" group within the Politburo pertinent to the issue became actively involved in the major military policy making.<sup>29</sup> Shevardnadze, a former Politburo member and Foreign Minister, revealed that the Politburo often organized working groups and commissions to deal with crucial issues:

In certain priority areas it is the Politburo's practice to set up working groups and commissions. One such commission coordinates the formulation of our positions at the disarmament talks, for example. There is also the working group on human rights, the commission on Afghanistan and others that prepare proposals and draft decisions for the Politburo.<sup>30</sup>

Decision-making within the Politburo in the post-Stalin period placed greater stress on 'consensus-building' and reducing direct conflict over most policy issues. When consensus over an issue was not reached, a majority vote would determine the outcome. In cases where voting might disrupt the balance within the Politburo, the issues were often postponed or handed down to the staff level of the

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<sup>29</sup>Edward Warner, *The Military in Contemporary Soviet Politics: An Institutional Analysis* (New York: Praeger, 1977).

<sup>30</sup>Shevardnadze's interview with *Izvestiya*, March 22, 1989, p. 5. The locus of decision-making was often closely interrelated with the type of decisions to be made: "Crisis decision-making [had] often involved a small group of generalist leaders; day-to-day decisionmaking [had] rested predominantly with the appropriate officials of the Central Committee staff; the broader type of policy that the leadership has some time to consider that can involve a major change of direction--outsiders can have a major impact" (Jerry F. Hough, "Soviet Policymaking Toward Foreign Communists," *Studies in Comparative Communism*, Vol. 15, No. 3 [Autumn 1982], pp. 181-182).

Central Committee for a decision. This measure served as an "institutionalized buffer" to reduce conflict at the top level.<sup>31</sup>

The Politburo was, in principle, a collective decision-making body, and the General Secretary of the Central Committee who presided over the Politburo session was supposedly "one of equals." In reality, the General Secretary was the most powerful figure in the Soviet Union because he could manipulate Politburo sessions to his advantage by preparing agenda beforehand and leading discussions there. Taking advantage of his position as General Secretary, not only did Gorbachev set the new agenda for Soviet foreign policy (i.e., the new political thinking) but also proceeded to rapidly consolidate power through leadership turnover.

Gorbachev's Soviet Union "experienced an unprecedented upheaval in turnover in its leadership, comparable only to the dramatic turnovers during the mid-thirties, but without the tragedy of the purges."<sup>32</sup> Gorbachev promoted his own appointees to Politburo membership, replacing Brezhnev holdovers. By the time the 27th Congress of the CPSU convened on February 27, 1986, "of the twenty-two full and

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<sup>31</sup>Donald Kelley, "Toward a Model of Soviet Decision Making," *American Political Science Review* (June 1974), pp. 705-706.

<sup>32</sup>Vernon V. Aspaturian, "Soviet Foreign Policy," in Roy Macridis, ed., *Foreign Policy in World Politics: States and Regions*, 7th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1989), p. 211.

candidate members of the Politburo elected at the Twenty-sixty Party Congress in 1981, only four full members . . . and four candidate members . . . survived removals and deaths to be reelected in 1986 at the Twenty-seventh Party Congress."<sup>33</sup> At the end of 1988, nine of the 11 full members (excluding Gorbachev) of the Politburo were Gorbachev's appointees. All eight candidate members were his own appointees and supporters.<sup>34</sup>

Despite the sweeping turnover in the Politburo, Gorbachev had not yet established undisputed authority. Not all of Gorbachev's appointees truly supported him; many were temporary allies who were to pose a greater threat to Gorbachev and his reform policies later on. In this regard, Aspaturian's differentiation of the top Soviet leadership is particularly pertinent:

The top leadership clearly reflects at least three distinctive groupings: (1) Brezhnev holdovers; (2) Gorbachev partisans; and (3) Gorbachev coalition allies. It is important to distinguish between the two latter groups, since they are often collapsed together as Gorbachev partisans simply because they represent the post-Brezhnev generation of leaders. Political alliances and coalitions are frequently opportunistic and allies often betray a tendency to displace their partners and change alignments accordingly. Gorbachev's allies are by no means immune from these tendencies, and the challenge to Gorbachev's leadership is likely to come from among his allies rather than from the Brezhnev holdovers, whose aging and ailing

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., pp. 211-12.

<sup>34</sup>Steven L. Burg, "The Soviet Union: Politics and Society in Flux," in Roy C. Macridis, ed., *Modern Political Systems: Europe*, 7th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990), p. 403.

condition severely limit their opportunities.<sup>35</sup>

By late 1988, the almost complete elimination of Brezhnev holdovers from the Politburo did not result in a total consensus on the new Soviet foreign policy within the leadership. The new Politburo members who had been appointed or promoted by Gorbachev had different ideas about the speed and extent of reforms to be pursued by the Soviet Union. The Politburo was still torn.

Yegor Ligachev and Victor Chebrikov, two of Gorbachev's appointees, were opposed to Gorbachev's "radical" reforms and espoused a slower and less extensive approach to reforms. Boris Yeltsin, Gorbachev's appointee and proponent for "radical" reforms, was removed from the post of candidate member of the Politburo after denouncing Ligachev for obstructing reforms (the so-called "Yeltsin Affair"). Ligachev, with other like-minded leaders, continued to advance conservative views on perestroika and the new political thinking and applied a brake to Gorbachev's reform efforts.

In the Central Committee Plenum in September 1988, Gorbachev moved his major rival Ligachev to a position with less influential responsibilities, and introduced changes in the Party and the state in order to give more complete

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<sup>35</sup>Vernon V. Aspaturian, "Soviet Foreign Policy," in Roy C. Macridis, ed., *Foreign Policy in World Politics: States and Regions*, p. 213.

powers to himself.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, Ligachev held on to his position as a Politburo member to the very end. By turning over the leadership in the Politburo, the General Secretary gained the dominant power position within the leadership. But the remaining conservative Politburo members still had reservations about his reforms. In late 1989, five of the 11 Politburo members were connected to the defense industry, which was likely to be unenthusiastic about Gorbachev's economic and political reforms.<sup>37</sup>

The role of the Politburo as the highest decision-making body was greatly diminished in 1989. From the beginning of 1989 on, the Politburo did not meet every week. The Politburo and Secretariat met only 34 times in 1989. In 1990, the Politburo convened once a month and only to consider Party matters.<sup>38</sup> In an interview with *Time* in April 1990 shortly after the creation of the executive presidency in the Soviet Union, Foreign Minister Shevardnadze stated that "the Politburo [would] deal with

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<sup>36</sup>At that time, Gorbachev removed Ligachev from the influential post of Party second Secretary, and the duties of Party second Secretary were divided among four senior secretaries: Lev Zaikov (defense industry); Aleksandr Yakovlev (foreign policy); Viktor Chebrikov (administrative organs); and Vadim Medvedev (ideology). Gorbachev's former schoolmate Anatoli Lukyanov became First Deputy Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet. Cf. Alexander Rahr, "Restructuring of the Kremlin Leadership," *Radio Liberty Research* (October 4, 1988), pp. 1-2.

<sup>37</sup>Alexander Rahr, "Opposition to Gorbachev in the Politburo," *Report on the USSR* (December 8, 1989), p. 3.

<sup>38</sup>*Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, No. 1, 1990, quoted in Alexander Rahr, "From Politburo to Presidential Council," *Report on the USSR*, Vol. 2, No. 22 (June 1, 1990), p. 2.

purely political and Party matters--its leadership [would] try to exercise its influence through the activities of its members."<sup>39</sup> The ultimate decision-making authority in the Soviet Union began to shift from the Politburo to the state organs after 1989.

**(1) The Restructuring of the Central Committee and the Foreign Ministry**

The Central Committee of the CPSU and the Foreign Ministry were the major foreign policy-making institutions at the second level below the Politburo. Gorbachev not only effected extensive leadership changes at this level but also restructured these bodies in an effort to broaden his power base and to promote the new political thinking.

Soviet foreign policy had long been divided into two spheres: inter-state relations and international class relations. The Soviet state interacted with other states within the parameters of traditional diplomacy, power politics, and international law. Inter-state relations were carried out through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In this sphere, the operating principle was "peaceful coexistence" between states with differing social systems. The second sphere was the domain of the Party, operating through the Comintern (later the International Department of the Central Committee) and foreign Communist parties. In

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<sup>39</sup>*Time*, April 16, 1990.

this sphere, "proletarian internationalism" was the operating principle which was translated to mean the subordination of state and national loyalty to proletarian class loyalty. The Foreign Ministry and the International Department of the Central Committee Secretariat had been the leading institutions of foreign policy-making and implementation, respectively.

The Secretariat of the Central Committee (which consisted of 22 Central Committee Departments) participated in the policy-making process through (1) the selection of personnel, (2) the preparation of policy options and (3) checking the implementation of policy decisions.<sup>40</sup> The Secretariat met every Tuesday before full sessions of the Politburo and functioned as the staff of the Politburo. The General Department of the Secretariat, in particular, prepared a draft for the Politburo session.<sup>41</sup> The role of the Secretariat was crucial in the Soviet policy-making process. It decided on minor issues on its own. It also greatly affected decisions about crucial issues by preparing a draft for the Politburo. Policy decisions were usually

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<sup>40</sup>J. M. Mackintosh, "The Military Role in Soviet Decision Making," in Curtis Keeble, ed., *The Soviet State: The Domestic Roots of Soviet Foreign Policy* (Boulder, CO: Praeger, 1985), p. 177. The Central Committee was restructured in late 1988, resulting in the creation of six Central Committee commissions in place of the 22 departments.

<sup>41</sup>Vernon V. Aspaturian, "Soviet Foreign Policy," in Roy C. Macridis, ed., *Foreign Policy in World Politics: States and Regions*, p. 213.

made at the Secretariat level. In brief, the Secretariat served as a filter for all information and proposals destined for the Politburo. Yeltsin provided first-hand information about the operation of the Secretariat:

The secretariat meets every Tuesday. It has become a convention that the administration of the party is divided between these two bodies--the Politburo and the Central Committee secretariat. The secretariat deals with minor questions on its own, whereas if the issue is serious it is dealt with at a joint session of the Politburo and the secretariat. But despite the outward appearance of democratic procedures, matters are essentially settled through discussions within the apparat. The apparat prepares a draft, which is approved by the Politburo. . . in reality the apparat controlled everything passed by the Politburo. More often than not, the Politburo members' contribution to the debate was a mere formality.<sup>42</sup>

The specialists in the Central Committee departments briefed the Soviet leadership directly. The department chiefs also commissioned studies from the Academy of Sciences.<sup>43</sup>

Outside specialists were sometimes invited to the weekly meetings of the Secretariat to provide further information.<sup>44</sup>

The International Department of the Central Committee played a crucial role in Soviet foreign policy. The

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<sup>42</sup>Boris Yeltsin, *Against the Grain*, pp. 144-145.

<sup>43</sup>Bruce J. Allyn, "Sources of 'New Thinking' in Soviet Foreign Policy: Civilian Specialists and Policy Toward Inadvertent War" (Doctoral Dissertation, Harvard University, 1990), p. 37.

<sup>44</sup>Robert W. Kitrinis, "The CPSU Central Committee's International Department," in Robbin F. Laird and Erik P. Hoffmann, eds., *Soviet Foreign Policy in a Changing World* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1986), p. 192.

International Department, which worked directly under the Secretariat, was responsible for ensuring the faithful implementation of party foreign policy directives by government organs.<sup>45</sup> The International Department, created in 1943 following the dissolution of the Comintern, was responsible for relations with foreign Communists.<sup>46</sup> "The Department's primary function during this formative stage was presumably to maintain the CPSU's links with the outside world through its contacts with foreign Communists and to commission/supervise studies on the world situation, the results of which were to be used for policy purposes."<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Vernon V. Aspaturian, "International Department of the CC CPSU under Dobrynin," Proceedings of a Conference, October 18-19, 1988 at the Department of State hosted by the Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the State Department and the Office of Global Issues, Central Intelligence Agency, Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs, 1989, p. 28.

<sup>46</sup>Robert W. Kittrinos, "The CPSU Central Committee's International Department," p. 181; Elizabeth Teague, "The Foreign Departments of the Central Committee of the CPSU," *Supplement to Radio Liberty Research Bulletin*, October 27, 1980, pp. 6-7; Jerry Hough, "Soviet Policy-making Toward Foreign Communists," *Studies in Comparative Communism*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Autumn 1982), pp. 168-169; Leonard Schapiro, "The International Department of the CPSU: Key to Soviet Policy," *International Journal*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Winter 1976-1977), p. 42.

<sup>47</sup>Robert W. Kittrinos, "The CPSU Central Committee's International Department," pp. 181-182. It was only after the collapse of the Cominform in late 1948 (the Cominform existed until 1956 but did not function properly after 1948) that the International Department gained a dominant position in overseeing Soviet relations with all foreign Communist parties. When the Cominform was disbanded in 1957, the International Department's section that dealt with ruling Communist parties split off to become a separate Central Committee's Department--the Department for Liaison with the Workers' and Communist Parties. Thereafter the task of the International Department was reduced to relations with non-ruling Communist parties. Consequently, the International

Despite the relatively small size of its staff, the International Department was able to maintain its influence and control over the Foreign Ministry by maintaining access to top CPSU policy-making bodies.

For one thing, senior International Department personnel such as Zagladin, Brutents, and Ul'yanovskiy have established reputations as experts in their fields. For another, the International Department acts as a filter through which information on the developing world and capitalist countries is funneled to Soviet leaders: Recommendations on policy issues, based upon inputs from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Soviet intelligence services, and the Ministry of Defense, are made by the International Department and sent to the general secretary's aides who assist in preparing the agenda for Secretariat (and Politburo) meetings.<sup>48</sup>

The Secretariat also experienced high turnover. Of the five senior secretaries (secretaries who were simultaneously full members of the Politburo) in 1980, Gorbachev was the only survivor, and five of the six junior secretaries were Gorbachev appointees. However, Gorbachev was less successful in replacing the Central Committee with his own people; in the Central Committee, only 60 percent of the full members and 44 percent of the candidate members brought in in 1981 were replaced in 1986. Consequently, the Central Committee became a center of resistance to Gorbachev's

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Department expanded its activities into the national liberation movement in the Third World. The division of labor between the International Department and the Department for Liaison with the Workers' and Communist Parties lasted until 1988 when Gorbachev carried out the restructuring of the central Party apparatus.

<sup>48</sup>Robert W. Kitrinis, "The CPSU Central Committee's International Department," p. 191.

reform.<sup>49</sup>

The International Department experienced sweeping personnel turnover. At the 27th Party Congress in February 1986, the appointment of Anatoli Dobrynin, the long-time ambassador to the U.S., to replace Ponomarev as head of the International Department was approved. A few months later, Dobrynin became chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Supreme Soviet's Council of Nationalities. Dobrynin was also appointed as secretary of the Central Committee. He reportedly was granted the power to oversee appointments within the diplomatic corps; "in other words, considerable control over the nomenklatura of the foreign ministry has been granted to the International Department of the CPSU."<sup>50</sup>

The personnel changes in the International Department as well as the Foreign Ministry enhanced the International Department's authority, and thus strengthened the Party's control over the foreign policy apparatus.<sup>51</sup> This move by

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<sup>49</sup>Vernon V. Aspaturian, "Soviet Foreign Policy," in Roy C. Macridis, ed., *Foreign Policy in World Politics: States and Regions*, p. 212.

<sup>50</sup>Alexander Rahr, "Winds of Change Hit Foreign Ministry," *Radio Liberty Research* (July 16, 1986), p. 4.

<sup>51</sup>In April 1986 Georgi Kornienko, who had been a first deputy foreign minister since 1977, was moved over to the International Department to join Vadim Zagladin as one of Dobrynin's two first deputies. Over the next several months Dobrynin also appointed two new deputies, Andrei Urnov and Yuri Zuev, and in April 1988, he appointed a third new deputy, Mikhail Smirnovsky. Replacement at lower levels of the International Department, including sector heads and deputy sector heads, continued as well. For a discussion of personnel changes in the International Department, see Wallace Spauling, "Shifts in CPSU 'International Department'," *Problems of Communism*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (July-

Gorbachev might have been intended to strengthen the International Department so that he, as the General Secretary of the Party, could re-enforce his grip on foreign policy:

. . . the temporary enhanced role of the International Department under Gorbachev thus may simply have reflected an improvisational arrangement to allow Gorbachev, who had no formal state executive responsibilities and was in the process of consolidating his power, to more closely supervise the coordination and formulation of foreign policy in an agency over which he had direct command and control in his capacity as General Secretary.<sup>52</sup>

The General Secretary might have appointed Dobrynin as head of the International Department in order to maintain stronger party control over foreign policy while Shevardnadze, the newly appointed Foreign Minister and Gorbachev's confidante, gained greater experience and established a solid presence as Foreign Minister.<sup>53</sup> Gorbachev needed Dobrynin to assist Shevardnadze both in the restructuring of the Foreign Ministry and in the transition to Shevardnadze's new role as Foreign Minister. In relative terms, foreign policy-making power shifted from the Foreign Ministry to the International Department in 1986. However,

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August 1986), pp. 80-86.

<sup>52</sup>Vernon V. Aspaturian, "International Department of the CC CPSU under Dobrynin," p. 30.

<sup>53</sup>Mark Kramer, "The Role of the CPSU International Department in Soviet Foreign Relations and National Security Policy," *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (July 1990), p. 434; Vernon V. Aspaturian, "International Department of the CC CPSU under Dobrynin," p. 7.

the eclipse of the Foreign Ministry in 1986 was a temporary phenomenon and the Foreign Ministry gained a dominant role in almost all areas of foreign policy after late 1988.

The departments in the Central Committee, especially the International Department and the Department for Liaison with Socialist Countries, had traditionally overshadowed those in the Foreign Ministry in terms of policy influence. The relative influence of the Foreign Ministry began to increase with the restructuring of the Central Party organs in 1988.<sup>54</sup>

## (2) The Restructuring of the Foreign Ministry

In theory at least, the International Department as a Party institution was more important to foreign policy than was the Foreign Ministry. When Gorbachev was elected the Party's leader in March 1985, the International Department, as a leading party organ, clearly had formal precedence over the Foreign Ministry. However, there were frequent conflicts between the International Department and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs over policy-making jurisdiction. Arkadi Shevchenko, the former high-ranking Soviet diplomat, noted that high "tensions [did] sometimes arise from overlapping each other's turf," and that Foreign Minister

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<sup>54</sup>Bruce J. Allyn, "Sources of 'New Thinking' in Soviet Foreign Policy: Civilian Specialists and Policy Toward Inadvertent War," p. 37.

Gromyko disliked Ponomarev (the long-time head of the International Department) intensely and at one time emphasized "with considerable heat that there should not be two centers for handling foreign policy."<sup>55</sup>

During his 28 years as Foreign Minister, Gromyko somewhat shifted the foreign policy center away from the Party to the Foreign Ministry. Gromyko's personal status and the Foreign Ministry's wide range of expertise ensured that the Foreign Ministry had at least as prominent a voice in top decision-making bodies.<sup>56</sup> Especially after 1973, when Gromyko was elevated to full membership on the Politburo and later to full membership on the Defense Council, party-foreign ministry coordination was largely at the Suslov-Gromyko level in both bodies and the International Department's traditional coordinating and supervisory functions over foreign policy was considered diminished over time.<sup>57</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs enhanced status vis-a-vis the International Department was further reinforced by Gromyko's rise to prominence after the succession from Yuri Andropov to Konstantin Chernenko.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Arkady N. Shevchenko, *Breaking with Moscow* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1985), p. 189.

<sup>56</sup>Mark Kramer, "The Role of the CPSU International Department in Soviet Foreign Relations and National Security Policy," p. 432.

<sup>57</sup>Vernon V. Aspaturian, "International Department of the CC CPSU under Dobrynin," p. 18. Suslov had long been the Party Secretary in charge of ideology and, in that capacity, supervised the work of the International Department.

<sup>58</sup>Elizabeth Teague, "Veteran Foreign Minister Dies," *Report on the USSR* (July 14, 1989), p. 3.

Despite the relative enhancement of the Foreign Ministry's status through Gromyko's personal prestige and power, the Party's influence over the Foreign Ministry had been pervasive until 1989. According to former Foreign Minister Shevardnadze, the Party continued to interfere in the Foreign Ministry's activities until parliamentary structures were established:

Top Party officials were appointed to ambassadorial posts in Eastern Europe, and those appointments were made exclusively by the Politburo (ambassadors to all other countries had to be confirmed by the Politburo as well). This subordination determined the way decisions were made. Former Party officials appealed to higher Party levels in all questions, bypassing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. . . . I shall note in passing that this way of doing things could not be changed immediately. To be precise, it could be done only after the creation of parliamentary structures. And only in 1989, after the cycle of East European revolutions, were we able to appoint ambassadors of another type and caliber.<sup>59</sup>

In July 1985, Andrei Gromyko, who had been foreign minister for 28 years, relinquished that post to become chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet--the ceremonial head of state.<sup>60</sup> He was succeeded by Shevardnadze as Foreign Minister who had been accorded full membership in the Politburo the day before Gromyko's

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<sup>59</sup>Eduard Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom*, p. 113.

<sup>60</sup>Gromyko maintained a harsh tone toward the West. Western observers blamed him for the intransigent posture adopted by the USSR in the first half of the 1980s on East-West relations, particularly where arms control was concerned (Elizabeth Teague, "Veteran Foreign Minister Dies," p. 3).

transfer. Despite his inadequate background in foreign affairs,<sup>61</sup> Shevardnadze was a reliable official to Gorbachev. By replacing Gromyko with Shevardnadze, Gorbachev paved the way for an assault on the fiefdoms and power bases of officials who had served their entire careers in the Foreign Ministry with Gromyko.<sup>62</sup> After Gromyko relinquished the post of Foreign Minister, Gorbachev and Shevardnadze launched a thorough restructuring and made personnel changes in Gromyko's former fiefdom.

In May 1986, Shevardnadze appointed two new first deputies, Anatoli Kovalev and Yuli Vorontsov. Shevardnadze further designated seven new deputies between December 1985 and August 1986.<sup>63</sup> Most of the Ministry's department chiefs were also replaced around this time. The Soviet diplomatic corps underwent a far-reaching shake-up; only 15 percent of the pre-1985 ambassadors remained in their posts by March 1989.<sup>64</sup>

The Foreign Ministry's central apparatus underwent a

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<sup>61</sup>Shevardnadze was a total outsider in the Foreign Ministry. His career had been limited to the Georgian party and the KGB before his appointment as Foreign Minister.

<sup>62</sup>Mark Kramer, "The Role of the CPSU International Department in Soviet Foreign Relations and National Security Policy," p. 433.

<sup>63</sup>Shevardnadze replaced nine of the 11 deputies by August 1986. For information on the leading officials of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs appointed under Gorbachev, see Alexander Rahr, "Winds of Change Hit Foreign Ministry," *Radio Liberty Research* (July 16, 1986), pp. 7-10.

<sup>64</sup>Mark Kramer, "The Role of the CPSU International Department in Soviet Foreign Relations and National Security Policy," p. 434.

major reorganization as well.<sup>65</sup> As a result, the East Asian region fell under the jurisdictions of three separate departments: (1) the First Far Eastern Department, including China, three Indochinese countries, Mongolia, North Korea; (2) the Southeast Asia department including the five ASEAN countries plus Brunei; and (3) the Directorate for Pacific Cooperation including Japan, Australia, and New Zealand, as well as other South Pacific countries.<sup>66</sup>

The practitioners and specialists in charge of East Asian countries were replaced with a new breed of officials. Oleg Rakhmanin (pseudonym, O. Borisov), a hard-liner on Sino-Soviet relations, was removed from the Central Committee in April 1989. Ivan Kovalenko (pen name, I. Ivkov), who was associated with Brezhnev's policies toward Japan, was transferred from the International Department to the Institute of Oriental Studies.<sup>67</sup> Igor Rogachev replaced

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<sup>65</sup>Four new units were set up in the Foreign Ministry in line with new foreign policy priorities: (1) the Administration for Problems of Arms Reduction and Disarmament; (2) the Department for Humanitarian and Cultural Ties; (3) the Administration for Information; and (4) the Pacific Ocean Department (Alexander Rahr, "Winds of Change Hit Foreign Ministry," p. 2; Eduard Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom*, pp. 44-45).

<sup>66</sup>Richard Nations, "'China Mafia' doomed as ties with Peking Improve," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, August 14, 1986, p. 36.

<sup>67</sup>Rajan Menon, "New Thinking and Northeast Asian Security," *Problems of Communism* (March-June 1989), p. 12. Rakhmanin had served in the Central Committee Department for Liaison with Socialist Countries, and was known as a the hard-liner on Sino-Soviet relations and opponent of post-Mao reform in China. Ivan Kovalenko had been chief Japan specialist in the Central Committee International Department, director of the Japanese prisoner-of-war camp in Manchuria after World

hard-liner Mikhail Kapitsa as the Deputy Foreign Minister in charge of East Asia.<sup>68</sup>

The Soviet Union sent a new ambassador to Japan in May 1986. Nikolay Solovyev was a Japanese language specialist and the former head of the Second Far Eastern Department; he was described as "the most pro-Japanese in the whole Soviet foreign ministry" by a Japanese newspaper. Oleg Troyanovsky, who was considered the most senior and experienced diplomat in the Soviet diplomatic corps, became a new ambassador to China in May 1986.<sup>69</sup> Appointment of Troyanovskiy as ambassador to China reflected China's upgrading to "global status" in the new Soviet foreign policy establishment.<sup>70</sup>

### (3) Restructuring of the Central Committee

In July 1988, Gorbachev convened the 19th All-Union Party Conference in order to obtain its approval for sweeping changes in the organization and staffing of the

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War II, and was a well-known anti-Japanese official (Richard Nations, "'China Mafia' doomed as ties with Peking Improve," p. 36).

<sup>68</sup>Kapitsa became director of the Institute for Oriental Studies after retiring from the post of Deputy Foreign Minister.

<sup>69</sup>Rajan Menon, "New Thinking and Northeast Asian Security," p. 8; Richard Nations, "'China Mafia' doomed as ties with Peking Improve," p. 36. Troyanovsky was a generalist who had close ties with Anatoli Dobrynin, then head of the Central Committee International Department.

<sup>70</sup>Richard Nations, "'China Mafia' doomed as ties with Peking Improve," p. 36.

central party organs, and a constitutional reorganization of the central state organs. At the conference, Gorbachev revealed his plans for restructuring the highest policy-making institutions of the Party and the state that were designed to increase his personal power.

The proposed changes were clearly intended to circumvent the powerful Party Central Committee and the Party Apparatus in general where most of his determined opponents were located.<sup>71</sup> They were especially intended to weaken the power position of Ligachev, the unofficial second Secretary who had been criticizing Gorbachev's reform.<sup>72</sup> With the move, Gorbachev enervated the second Secretary, whose job was to oversee the day-to-day work of the Party apparatus. Subsequently, the post of unofficial second Secretary was practically abolished and its traditional responsibilities were reassigned to other secretaries and commissions.<sup>73</sup> The conference endorsed the Soviet leader's plan for restructuring the Central Party apparatus. Consequently, a far-reaching restructuring of the Party as well as state organs ensued; this in turn greatly affected

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<sup>71</sup>Vernon V. Aspaturian, "Soviet Foreign Policy," in Roy C. Macridis, ed., *Foreign Policy in World Politics: States and Regions*, p. 231; Alexander Rahr, "Gorbachev Changes Party Structure," *Radio Liberty Research* (November 30, 1988), p. 2.

<sup>72</sup>Vernon V. Aspaturian, "International Department of the CC CPSU under Dobrynin," p. 9; Alexander Rahr, "Gorbachev Changes Party Structure," p. 1.

<sup>73</sup>Dawn Mann, "Gorbachev's Position Consolidated," *Radio Liberty Research* (October 4, 1988), p. 1.

the Soviet foreign policy-making process.

The reorganization of the Central Party organs in late 1988 resulted in the abolishment of most of the 22 Central Committee departments and creation of six new CPSU Commissions that were to supervise key domestic and foreign matters. Consequently, executive authority shifted from the Central Committee secretariat to the newly created six Commissions of the Central Committee, each of which was headed by a Party Secretary and Politburo member.<sup>74</sup> By appointing the members of the Central Committee and the Central Auditing Commission to the six commissions, Gorbachev strengthened the supervisory function of the Central Committee's elective officials over its apparatus.<sup>75</sup>

The nine departments that survived were subordinated to one or more of the six Commissions, and these in turn were made directly accountable to the Politburo. As one of the surviving departments, the International Department was subordinated to the Commission on International Policy headed by Aleksandr Yakovlev.<sup>76</sup> Thus, after late 1988, the

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<sup>74</sup>The six Commissions and their chairmen include: (1) Party Issues and Personal Policy (chairman: Georgi Razumovsky); (2) Ideology (chairman: Vadim Medvedev); (3) Social and Economic Policy (chairman: Nikolai Slyunkov); (4) Agrarian Policy (chairman: Yegor Ligachev; deputy chairman: Viktor Nikonov); (5) International Policy (chairman: Aleksandr Yakovlev); and (6) Legal Questions (chairman: Viktor Chebrikov) (Steven L. Burg, "The Soviet Union: Politics and Society in Flux," pp. 403-404).

<sup>75</sup>Alexander Rahr, "Gorbachev Changes Party Structure," pp. 2-3.

<sup>76</sup>Mark Kramer, "The Role of the CPSU International Department in Soviet Foreign Relations and National Security

International Department operated under the supervision of a new Commission on International Policy, which was now supposed to be the leading body responsible for Soviet foreign relations.<sup>77</sup> In the restructuring, all of the three top officials in the old International Department (i.e., Dobrynin, Zagladin, and Kornienko) were replaced, and Valentin Falin succeeded Dobrynin as the Head of the International Department.<sup>78</sup>

In general, as a result of the restructuring, the role of the Central Party organs as a whole in foreign policy was substantially reduced, and the Foreign Ministry gained the upper hand in foreign policy. Despite all of the changes, the Foreign Ministry and International Department embraced irreconcilable perspectives on the survival of the Communist system. Unlike the Foreign Ministry, the old political thinkers still enjoyed substantial influence in the International Department.

The International Department had a vested interest in

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Policy," p. 436. Cf. *Pravda*, November 29, 1988, pp. 1-2; V. Falin, "Kriticheski otnositsya k sebe," *Argumenty i fakty*, No. 9 (March 4-10, 1989).

<sup>77</sup>At the same time, its functions were broadened as it incorporated those of the dissolved Department for Relations with Communist and Worker's Parties in Socialist Countries, i.e., policy toward ruling Communist countries (Vernon V. Aspaturian, "International Department of the CC CPSU under Dobrynin," p. 34; Mark Kramer, "The Role of the CPSU International Department in Soviet Foreign Relations and National Security Policy," p. 429; Suzanne Crow, "International Department and Foreign Ministry Disagree on Eastern Europe," *Report on the USSR* [June 21, 1991], p. 7).  
<sup>78</sup>Dobrynin and Zagladin, however, remained as personal advisors to Gorbachev.

the survival and flourishing of Communism and "the overthrow of Communism as an institution certainly must have shaken the International Department as a defender of that institution."<sup>79</sup> In contrast, the USSR Foreign Ministry responded favorably to the revolutions of 1989. Consequently, the two bodies issued contradictory reports on Soviet-East European relations. The International Department viewed the changes in Eastern and Central Europe as a potential threat and favored a policy that would establish some degree of Soviet control in the region. In contrast, the Foreign Ministry saw the emerging relationship between the Soviet Union and its former allies as an improvement over the previous one.<sup>80</sup>

#### **B. The Shift of Policy-making Authority from the Party to the State**

In an effort to mobilize popular enthusiasm and support, Gorbachev called for the "democratization" of political life. To encourage popular participation and

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<sup>79</sup>Suzanne Crow, "International Department and Foreign Ministry Disagree on Eastern Europe," p. 7.

<sup>80</sup>On January 22, 1991, the International Department issued a document entitled "On the Development of the Situation in Eastern Europe and Our Policy towards That Region," which was published in *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, No. 3 (1991). In the document, the International Department presented its view of Soviet priorities and policies toward Eastern Europe. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a report on Gorbachev's foreign policy during the period of November 1989-December 1990 in *International Affairs* (Moscow) (No. 3, 1991).

increase the accountability of public officials, he advanced proposals to revitalize the network of local, regional, and central representative institutions of the state. He instituted multiple-candidate elections and expanded the role of local soviets in the administration of society. Gorbachev not only pushed through the adoption of proposals to reorganize the legislative and executive organs, but also extended his personal power to the institutions of the state.

In late 1988, Gorbachev moved to assume direct control over the state organs. Consequently, the power center steadily shifted from the Party organs to newly created state institutions. The first sign came with Gorbachev's election as chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet in October 1988, whereby he assumed the role of head of state while retaining the position of General Secretary.

Soon thereafter, Gorbachev created new supreme legislative bodies (i.e., the Congress of Peoples' Deputies and the Supreme Soviet) with enhanced responsibilities and powers. By doing so, he strengthened his power base as chairman of the legislature. The elections to the Congress of People's Deputies, held in March 1989, resulted in a stunning defeat for many key party officials and victory for many non-party, dissident, and opposition personalities. In May 1989, the Congress of People's Deputies elected Gorbachev as chairman of the Supreme Soviet (the new

legislative body), thereby granting broad domestic and foreign policy-making powers to the Soviet leader.<sup>81</sup>

### (1) The Executive Presidency

In March 1990, the executive presidential system was established with the approval of the Congress of Peoples' Deputies on March 13, 1990.<sup>82</sup> At the same time, the legislative body repealed the Communist Party's monopoly on power. Two days later, Gorbachev was elected the first executive President (*prezident*) of the Soviet Union by the Congress of the People's Deputies.<sup>83</sup> From then on,

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<sup>81</sup>The revised constitution of 1988 provided that the chairman of the Supreme Soviet should, *ex officio*, serve as chairman of the Defense Council and commander-in-chief of the armed forces. Before then, it was customary for the General Secretary of the Party to serve as the chairman of the Defense Council although the Council was a state institution.

<sup>82</sup>For the constitutional changes approved by the Congress of the People's Deputies, see *Izvestiya*, March 16, 1990. Gorbachev had long opposed the idea of an executive presidency. Aleksandr Yakovlev testified in an interview with *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (March 13, 1990) that he had always favored the idea of an executive presidency, but Gorbachev had only recently adopted his idea. Fedor Burlatsky, a prominent intellectual, also revealed that Gorbachev's decision to create an executive presidency came only about two months earlier. Cf. Elizabeth Teague, "The Powers of the Soviet Presidency," *Report on the USSR*, Vol. 2, No. 12 (March 23, 1990), p. 5. Burlatsky said that he had long espoused a presidential system for the Soviet Union. According to his testimony, in 1964 he worked as a Central Committee staff member on a team preparing the never-realized "Khrushchev constitution," which envisaged a presidential system for the USSR. The proposal, he said, was turned down by Party leader Nikita Khrushchev (Elizabeth Teague, "Executive Presidency Approved," *Report on the USSR*, Vol. 2, No. 10 [March 9, 1990], p. 15).

<sup>83</sup>In an unopposed election, he received only 1,239 votes,

Gorbachev had dual roles as the Soviet President and the Party's General Secretary.

With the creation of the presidency, Gorbachev became the highest individual authority for foreign policy, and was no longer subject to the principle of collective leadership of the Politburo. The Central Party organs practically lost all of their policy-making authority.

The presidential system, modeled after those in the United States and France, accorded to President Gorbachev unprecedented powers:<sup>84</sup> (1) he would be both head of state and commander in chief of the armed forces; (2) he would not only have the power to declare war but also, as commander in chief of the armed forces, the responsibility for its conduct; (3) the President could be removed from office by the Congress of the Peoples' Deputies only when he violated the constitution; (4) the President had the right to nominate and request the removal of leading officials such as the chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, the chairman of the USSR Supreme Court, and the USSR prosecutor-general; (5) the President could impose martial law or declare a state of emergency within specific areas of the

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just 206 more than were required to win. Many military deputies voted against him because, from their perspective, "his arms concessions have wrought havoc in the officer corps, and because glasnost has allowed open criticism of the military" (*The New York Times*, March 16, 1990).

Although Gorbachev was elected the first President by the Congress of People's Deputies, the next President was scheduled to be elected by a direct popular vote in 1995.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., pp. 5-6.

USSR; (5) the President could dissolve the legislature (though not the Congress of the Peoples' Deputies) and veto legislation passed by the USSR Supreme Soviet; and (6) the President might issue decrees (*ukazy*) with binding force throughout the USSR. As long as these decrees were not judged to be unconstitutional, they could not be overruled by the parliament.

With the establishment of an executive presidency, the Party organs were debilitated and the state institution of the presidency became the new center of power. Thereafter, the President became responsible for the general state of domestic and foreign policy, whereas the Politburo dealt with purely political and Party matters.<sup>85</sup> The creation of the presidency definitely shifted the power center from the party to state authority. After the executive presidency was instituted, President Gorbachev and his close aides decided the course of Soviet foreign policy.

When the presidential system was instituted in March 1990, two consultative bodies were also created to support the President: the Presidential Council (*Presidentsky sovet*) and the Council of the Federation (*Sovet Federatsii*). The Presidential Council was intended to reflect the disparate interests in Soviet society and "to boost Gorbachev's

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<sup>85</sup>Shevardnadze further revealed that he had favored a presidential system from the first days of perestroika but that his view had been in the minority within the Soviet leadership at that time (Shevardnadze interview with *Time*, April 16, 1990, p. 28).

authority and distance him from the now compromised Party machine."<sup>86</sup> The precise role of the Presidential Council was, however, never clearly delineated. Initially, the members of the Presidential Council were to serve as advisors to President Gorbachev; each member had his own sphere of responsibility.

In the Presidential Council, the President was in charge, unlike in the Politburo where, at least in principle, the members were collectively in charge. The President was empowered to appoint the members of the Council without the approval of the Supreme Soviet. Gorbachev appointed 16 members with diverse ideological and ethnic backgrounds to the Presidential Council.<sup>87</sup> The ability of the Presidential Council to successfully perform these roles was doomed from the start because its functions were vaguely defined and the diverse backgrounds of its members led to irreconcilable differences within the Council itself.

The Council of the Federation was initially created to serve as a consultative body for the President and intended

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<sup>86</sup>Alexander Rahr, "From Politburo to Presidential Council," *Report on the USSR*, Vol. 2, No. 22 (June 1, 1990), p. 1. All major cultures and geographical regions of the Soviet Union are represented in the Presidential Council--the Ukrainians by Revenko, the Balts by Kauls, the Armenians by Yuri Osipyan, and Central Asia by the Kirgiz writer Chingiz Aitmatov.

<sup>87</sup>Elizabeth Teague, "The Presidential Council Starts Its Work," *Report on the USSR*, Vol. 2, No. 14 (April 6, 1990), p. 3.

to perform the following functions: (1) to monitor observance of the Union Treaty; (2) to draw up measures for implementing the state's nationalities policy; (3) to make recommendations to the Council of Nationalities on solving inter-ethnic disputes; and (4) to coordinate the activity of the Union republics and to ensure their participation in matters of all-Union importance assigned to the competence of the President of the USSR.<sup>88</sup> The membership of the Council of the Federation was ex officio, consisting of the highest state officeholders of the Union republics. The highest office-holders of the autonomous republics, oblasts, and okrugs were entitled to attend its meetings.<sup>89</sup>

### C. The Impact of the Academic Community on Soviet Foreign Policy

One of the striking features of Gorbachev's foreign

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<sup>88</sup>*Pravda*, March 16, 1990.

<sup>89</sup>At the end of 1990, the Presidential Council was abolished, and the Council of the Federation was transformed from a consultative into a policy-making body with a rather vaguely defined place in the executive. The Council of the Federation had met mainly to discuss progress on the draft Union treaty, the agreement for 1991 on the socioeconomic situation, price reform, the anti-crisis program, the situation in the Baltic republics, and the organization of and appointments to the cabinet. On June 10, 1991, Gorbachev's chief presidential aide on nationalities policy, Grigori Revenko, told a press conference in Moscow that the role of the Council of the Federation would be taken over by the Council of the Republics, one of the two chambers of the proposed new Union parliament (Ann Sheehy, "Council of the Federation to be Abolished?", *Report on the USSR* [June 21, 1991], p. 3).

policy was the crucial impact made by the specialists and academic advisors on its formation. The more power Gorbachev accumulated around him, the greater was the impact of his inner circle, including specialists and academics, on Soviet foreign policy. "Personal ties, as in any political system, appear to have played a decisive role in advancing 'new thinking,' and new thinkers, in the age of Gorbachev."<sup>90</sup> Soviet academics and specialists exerted "their influence in the process of acting as mediators, translating Western ideas into the Soviet context, and shaping them in the process."<sup>91</sup> The work of Soviet academics had the greatest impact not only in formulating the general direction of Soviet foreign policy, but also in formulating specific policy options.<sup>92</sup>

Gorbachev inherited several policies and practices from Andropov, including the practice of consulting with specialists. For example, Gorbachev worked with and promoted many of the Central Committee advisory group that had worked under Andropov's supervision in the early 1960s.<sup>93</sup> In addition, as Secretary of Agriculture,

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<sup>90</sup>Allen Lynch, *Gorbachev's International Outlook: Intellectual Origins and Political Consequences* (New York: Institute for East-West Security Studies, Occasional Paper Series 9, 1989), p. 56.

<sup>91</sup>Bruce J. Allyn, "Sources of 'New Thinking' in Soviet Foreign Policy: Civilian Specialists and Policy Toward Inadvertent War," p. 42.

<sup>92</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup>Georgi Arbatov, Alexander Bovin, Fedor Burlatsky, Oleg Bogomolov, and Georgi Shakhnazarov all worked for Andropov and became strong advocates of perestroika under Gorbachev.

Gorbachev was in contact with the directors and top scholars of the major economic institutes.<sup>94</sup> The academic community had existed in various forms before any movement occurred toward organization and mobilization in 1983. There was, for example, much contact between Abel Aganbegian's economic institute in Novosibirsk and the foreign policy institutes in Moscow.<sup>95</sup> Gorbachev not only tapped into networks that had existed for years, but mobilized and politicized them.<sup>96</sup>

Many of the ideas adopted by Gorbachev in the late 1980s included specific ideas regarding Soviet-Third World relations and changes in foreign policy that originated with the specialist advisors.<sup>97</sup> Academic institutes such as the Institute of the Oriental Studies, IMEMO (Institute of World Economics and International Affairs), and the Institute of the Far Eastern Studies had been involved in sending reports (*zapiski*) since the 1970s to the Central Committee for consultation.<sup>98</sup> The enhanced role of the academic community in Soviet foreign policy was made possible by glasnost and by Gorbachev's encouragement of open discussion of foreign

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<sup>94</sup>Sarah E. Mendelson, "Explaining Change in Soviet Foreign Policy," paper delivered at the 1991 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, The Washington Hilton, August 29-September 1, 1991, p. 22.

<sup>95</sup>Cf. Dosker Doder and Louise Branson, *Gorbachev: Heretic in the Kremlin* (New York: Viking, 1990), p. 46. Gorbachev frequently met with Zaslavskaya and Aganbegian in 1983. Hedrick Smith, *The New Russians* (New York: Random House, 1990), pp. 5-16; 68-78.

<sup>96</sup>Sarah E. Mendelson, "Explaining Change in Soviet Foreign Policy," p. 16.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

policy issues.<sup>99</sup>

Furthermore, Gorbachev's personnel changes in the leadership resulted in the empowerment of certain intellectuals.<sup>100</sup> After the academics and policy specialists were given a political voice by Gorbachev, they set the political agenda. This, in turn, created a political environment conducive to new thinking in Soviet foreign policy.<sup>101</sup> In this sense, the increased demand for a new foreign policy in accordance with new thinking was a result of (1) the development of a new specialist network before Gorbachev came to power; (2) the massive personnel changes in the Central Committee and the Politburo that took place after Gorbachev came to power; and (3) the empowerment of the epistemic community as an alternative source of political support once Gorbachev had consolidated his power.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup>Allen Lynch, *Gorbachev's International Outlook: Intellectual Origins and Political Consequences*, p. 56.

<sup>100</sup>For example, Gorbachev appointed Leonid Abalkin as Deputy Prime Minister, Alexander Yakovlev as a full member of the Politburo, and Vitali Korotich as editor of *Ogonok*. In the wake of the Congress of Peoples' Deputies' elections in March 1989, many intellectuals and academics became deputies in the Supreme Soviet.

<sup>101</sup>Sarah E. Mendelson, "Explaining Change in Soviet Foreign Policy," p. 2. In Soviet-South Korean normalization, Gorbachev's advisors, mostly from the academic community, played a vital role. His personal advisors and confidants frequently visited Seoul to establish official contacts and, in doing so, paved the way to normalization. Informal and personal contacts, rather than formal institutions of the Party and the state, provided the crucial channel of communications between the two countries until the establishment of formal diplomatic ties.

<sup>102</sup>Sarah E. Mendelson, "Explaining Change in Soviet Foreign

Among others, specific institute directors exerted their influence on policy. This influence varied depending upon the degree of personal contact with the top leadership and the leadership's confidence in the quality of their analyses and competing sources of information.<sup>103</sup> Besides his official aides, Gorbachev also relied on a number of unofficial advisors who belonged to the academic community.<sup>104</sup>

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Policy," p. 13.

<sup>103</sup>Bruce J. Allyn, "Sources of 'New Thinking' in Soviet Foreign Policy: Civilian Specialists and Policy Toward Inadvertent War," p. 39.

<sup>104</sup>The most prominent members of the academic community at the top echelon included: Abel Aganbegian, Dean of the Academy of National Economics; Tatyana Zaslavskaya, Director of the National Center of Public Opinion; Leonid Abalkin, Deputy Prime Minister; Stanislav Shatalin, former member of the Presidential Council; Nikolay Petrakov, former economic advisor to the President; Alexander Yakovlev, former director of IMEMO, former member of the Presidential Council and Politburo; Georgi Arbatov, Director of the Institute of the USA and Canada; Evgeni Primakov, former director of IMEMO, former member of the Presidential Council; Titili Korotich, editor of *Ogoniok*; Yegor Yakovlev, editor of *Moscow News*. Cf. Sarah E. Mendelson, "Explaining Change in Soviet Foreign Policy," pp. 16-17; Alexander Rahr, "Gorbachev's Personal Staff," *Radio Liberty Research* (May 30, 1988), p. 1; Bruce J. Allyn, "Sources of 'New Thinking' in Soviet Foreign Policy: Civilian Specialists and Policy Toward Inadvertent War," p. 39. In addition, the following can be added to the list: Aleksandr Bovin of *Izvestiya* and Fedor Burlatsky of *Literaturnaya Gazeta* in the press; and within the research institutes, Vitali Zhurkin, Director of the new Institute of Europe; and Andrei Kokoshin, in the Institute of U.S. and Canada Studies (Allen Lynch, *Gorbachev's International Outlook*, p. 55).

#### 4. Concluding Remarks

Soviet foreign policy was closely related to Gorbachev's power position within the leadership. A new foreign policy based on the new political thinking could be implemented only after Gorbachev amassed dominant power as the Soviet leader. In a span of three and one-half years, Gorbachev consolidated power as General Secretary of the Party. The Soviet leader soon realized that conservative party leaders within the Politburo and Central Committee were an obstacle to his reform policy. The conservative hard-liners not only obstructed his reform, but also posed a threat to his political power. Repeated attempts by conservative party leaders to debilitate Gorbachev's power and annul his reform policy led him to shift the power center from the Party to the state.

Gorbachev circumvented the conservatives' opposition to his new foreign policy by creating an executive presidency with unprecedented powers and authority. He became the first executive President of the USSR in March 1990. Even though he succeeded in securing political power, his capability to wield power was increasingly constrained by the paralysis of the central power within the Soviet Union. In 1990, the Soviet empire faced the threat of disintegration under the pressure of various nationalist

movements in the Soviet republics and its own worsening economic condition. After the abortive coup in August 1990, for all practical purposes, Gorbachev was deprived of all powers and authority as the Soviet leader.

As Gorbachev's new foreign policy was implemented in relations with the U.S., China, and Japan in Northeast Asia, Soviet policy toward the two Koreas began to change as well. The new political thinking called for improved relations with South Korea that would be more beneficial to Soviet national interests. Gorbachev's Korean policy was an integral component in the overall restructuring of Soviet foreign policy and the re-establishment of its role in the international community. However, the Korean peninsula was initially a relatively minor concern to the Soviet leadership, and Soviet policy toward the two Koreas was greatly affected by Soviet relations with the major powers in Northeast Asia. The structure of the global system and the Northeast Asian regional system was an important variable affecting Soviet-Korean relations. In the next chapter, the interaction between the structure and process of the international and regional systems and Soviet foreign policy toward the Korean peninsula will be analyzed.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE CHANGING EAST ASIAN STRATEGIC EQUATION

After Gorbachev's rise to power in March 1985, the structure and process of the international system underwent profound changes. During the six years of Gorbachev's reign in the Soviet Union, the bipolar international system that had characterized the post-World War II environment was transformed into a multipolar international system. In the meantime, the Cold War system characterized by ideological rivalry and military confrontation between the two blocs faded away. International systemic change was accompanied by a regional systemic transformation in Northeast Asia, which included such major actors as the U.S., the USSR, China, Japan, and the two Koreas.

Gorbachev's pursuit of a new foreign policy and America's positive response to it facilitated a series of breathtaking agreements between the two superpowers, which in turn opened the way to a new international system characterized by de-ideologization and collaboration. Gradually, long-standing mutual distrust and fear of the U.S. and the USSR gave way to mutual understanding and cooperation. The amelioration of U.S.-Soviet relations was bound to affect the structure and process of the Northeast

Asian regional system. The transformation of the Northeast Asian regional system proceeded with the improvement of Soviet relations with the major powers in the region. Gorbachev's foreign policy toward the two Koreas began to change in accordance with the new political thinking in the late 1980s and as a result of the transformation of the international and regional systems.

This chapter focuses on the external environment at the international and regional levels as it related to Soviet foreign policy toward North and South Korea. The external environment in the post-World War II era can be divided into two periods: the Cold War (1945-1985) and post-Cold War (1985-1991).

### 1. The Bipolar, Cold War International System and the Competitive Triangular Relationship in Northeast Asia

The international system in 1945-1989 was characterized by the bipolar power structure, and limited and largely hostile patterns of interaction between the countries belonging to the two opposing blocs that centered around the U.S. and the USSR.<sup>1</sup> The same period also witnessed a

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<sup>1</sup>The structure of an international system refers to the configuration of power between the major and minor actors (K. J. Holsti, *International Politics: A Framework for Analysis*, 5th ed. [Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1988], p. 70). The international system of the post-World War II period is also called the Yalta system. For an analysis of the Yalta system, see William Zimmerman, "The

largely non-cooperative, unstable relationship (with minor exceptions) in Northeast Asia. Soviet-American relations were hostile and confrontational; Soviet-Chinese relations were characterized by tension and conflict except for the short honeymoon period in the early 1950s; Soviet-Japanese relations remained cool; and Soviet-South Korean relations were characterized by mutual hostility and indifference until the early 1970s.

#### A. The Nature of the Bipolar, Cold War International System

In the bipolar system, military power and diplomatic influence center around two bloc leaders, "which dominate or lead lesser units by combining rewards--such as providing security and economic assistance--with implicit or explicit threats of punishment against recalcitrant allies"<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, "foreign policy [of a lesser unit within the bipolar system] is determined essentially, if not exclusively by the needs, ideologies, and aspirations of the bloc leaders."<sup>3</sup> Likewise, the decisions and actions of the

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'Yalta Systems,' the End of East Europe and the Two Koreas," *The Korean Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Spring 1991), pp. 1-13; James N. Rosenau, "Beyond Yalta and Malta: United States Foreign Policy in a More Benign World," *The Korean Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (Winter 1990), pp. 441-470.

<sup>2</sup>K. J. Holsti, *International Politics: A Framework for Analysis*, p. 87.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 88.

U.S. and the Soviet Union, the two bloc leaders, dominated international affairs and provided a general framework for the international interaction among the lesser states.

The conflicts and issues of the bipolar system in the post-World War II era contained strong ideological overtones, and assumed philosophical and moral confrontation between the two opposing socioeconomic systems, i.e., Socialism and capitalism. The most pervasive and persistent conflict in the global system had been the competition, struggle, and occasional crisis between the Socialist bloc in the East and the capitalist bloc in the West. The two bloc leaders distrusted and feared each other: "Soviet leaders have feared U.S.-sponsored Western perfidy and encirclement, and U.S. leaders have feared Soviet expansionism and aggression. This mutual distrust and fear produced the Cold War, a dangerous conflictual interaction in which the two opponents hid behind ideological barriers, fixed positions and frozen values."<sup>4</sup> Thus, the bipolar system was also characterized by the Cold War.

As depicted by K. J. Holsti, the bipolar Cold War system was characterized by a zero-sum game mentality, competition for the future world, and self-justification:

1. A gain by one side represents a loss, and therefore a direct threat, to the other;

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<sup>4</sup>Jan F. Triska, "The Strategic Triangle and Soviet Foreign Policy," *The Korean Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (Spring 1985), p. 211.

2. The stakes involved are the future of the world-- whether it will be composed of independent states each pursuing its values and objectives unrestrained by ideological dogma and the brute military power of a hegemon; or whether there will develop a community of socialist states, all bound by an international division of labor, and each more or less arranging its domestic economics and foreign policies according to a Marxist-Leninist blueprint.

3. One's own behavior is always directed toward establishing stability and peace; the other side's initiatives, whether in diplomacy or arms deployment, are directed toward gaining unilateral advantages and, ultimately, some sort of victory. The cold war is a constant struggle in many dimensions--propaganda, ideology, armaments, economic output, sports, and culture.<sup>5</sup>

Despite their hostile attitudes and incompatible ideologies, the U.S. and the USSR as bloc leaders shared certain goals and behavioral norms. They shared the goals of preventing World War III and preserving the gains of World War II--to keep Germany divided and Japan militarily weak. The bipolar system was also governed by shared norms: the U.S. behaved as though it recognized the legitimacy, or at least the reality, of Soviet claims vis-a-vis Eastern Europe; the two sides observed the basic rule of engagement, that is, they avoided direct confrontation with each other; and they observed the norm that crossing national borders to advance the revolutionary cause was illegitimate (until the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan in 1979), but national liberation wars were legitimate. Bloc leaders' shared goals and norms combined with nuclear deterrence

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<sup>5</sup>K. J. Holsti, *International Politics: A Framework for Analysis*, p. 74.

since the late 1950s and the presence of U.S. troops in Europe, made the bipolar system rather predictable and peaceful.<sup>6</sup>

#### **B. The Soviet Union as a Uni-dimensional Global Power**

The Soviet Union constituted a multi-layered empire: the inner empire consisted of non-Russian nationalities within the USSR; the outer empire, formally independent and full members of the international community, included "the Socialist community" or "Socialist commonwealth" of Eastern European states (before the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe) and Mongolia, North Korea, Cuba, and Vietnam; the extended empire was made up of Socialist-oriented regimes in the Third World that included more than 20 states with a total population of more than 220 million. Besides the three layers of empires, the Soviet empire also included non-Socialist client states in the Third World whose connection with the Soviet empire was purely opportunistic.<sup>7</sup>

The Soviet Union, as the largest continuous intercontinental empire in the world, had the world's

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<sup>6</sup>William Zimmerman, "The 'Yalta Systems,' the End of East Europe and the Two Koreas," pp. 5-7.

<sup>7</sup>Vernon V. Aspaturian, "Managing the Soviet Empire," paper prepared for delivery at the Conference on "The Great Disenchantment: Nationalism and Internationalism at the End of the 20th Century," Hans Seidel Stiftung, Kreuth, West Germany, June 27,29, 1984, 1-2.

longest and most exposed frontier. "The dismantling of the overseas British and French Empires did not mean the end of either Britain or France. The dismantling of the territorially contiguous Russian Empire could even threaten Russia herself, given the absence of national frontiers."<sup>8</sup> Such geographical features could be an asset or liability to Russia/the Soviet Union. When Russia was weak, such a frontier invited attack from outside, but when Russia was powerful, it served as a means for external expansion.<sup>9</sup>

The Soviet Union acquired its global power status only in the 1970s, when it began to define its interests in global terms and was able to defend or expand those interests. The Soviet Union, however, was a uni-dimensional global power; it was a global power only in the military dimension. Its status as a global power derived solely from its formidable military capability, which was on a par with the U.S. The Socialist giant was "neither a genuine economic rival to the U.S. nor--as once was the case--even a source of a globally interesting ideological experiment," and was unable to provide financial leadership or attractive

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<sup>8</sup>Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Soviet Union: Her Aims, Problems, and Challenges to the West," in Robbin F. Laird and Erik P. Hoffmann, eds., *Soviet Foreign Policy in a Changing World* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1986), p. 7

<sup>9</sup>Vernon V. Aspaturian, "Northeast Asia Between the United States and the Soviet Union," paper prepared for presentation at the Conference on Chinese Unification, The Pennsylvania State University, July 1991, p. 2.

mass culture for the world.<sup>10</sup> Because of the uni-dimensional nature of its global power status, the Soviet Union was essentially unable to maintain global dominance effectively. Therefore, the Soviet Union, to use Brzezinski's expression, was a "disruptive world power" rather than a "genuinely revolutionary world power":

. . . the real danger to the West is not that the Soviet Union will someday succeed in imposing a Pax Sovietica on the world. Rather, it is that the Soviet Union, as a one-dimensional world power committed to the disruption of the existing arrangements, because such disruption is essential to the displacement of the U.S., will contribute not to a world revolution in existing international arrangements but to greater global anarchy from which all will suffer.<sup>11</sup>

The bipolar structure of the international system and the Cold War atmosphere set the broad framework for the international interactions in Northeast Asia. What were the main features of the inter-state interactions in the Northeast Asian region during the bipolar, Cold War period?

### **C. The Structure of the Northeast Asian Regional System in the Bipolar, Cold War Era**

Before the initiation of the Sino-Soviet disputes, the structure of the Northeast Asian system was divided along an ideological cleavage, reflecting the bipolar, Cold War

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<sup>10</sup>Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Soviet Union: Her Aims, Problems, and Challenges to the West," p. 7.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

international system. During the early post-war period, the unity and integrity of the Socialist community under the leadership of the Soviet Union was largely intact, and China looked to Moscow for ideological guidance, policy directions, and military and economic assistance. The relationship between the USSR and the PRC during this period was stable, and the latter was heavily dependent on the former for assistance.

By 1958, the tensions between Moscow and Beijing became serious. The Sino-Soviet conflict increased in intensity and culminated in 1969 with bloody border incidents on the Ussuri River. Between 1960 and 1970, U.S.-Soviet relations improved, Sino-Soviet relations deteriorated, and Sino-American relations remained hostile. During this period, Japan, which was heavily dependent on the U.S. for its security and preoccupied with economic development, maintained a passive posture in foreign policy.

#### **D. The Strategic Triangle in Northeast Asia**

Nixon's Secretary of State Henry Kissinger initiated "triangular diplomacy"<sup>12</sup> in Northeast Asia in the early

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<sup>12</sup>The concept of the strategic triangle was limited in space, issue, and value. In space, the strategic triangle was limited to the region of the Far East and the Pacific Asian region. In issue, it was primarily concerned with security. The actors in the strategic triangle game were the two superpowers, U.S. and the USSR, and a regional

1970s. The Nixon-Kissinger team sought to play off the fears of the PRC and the USSR against one another at a time of increasing Sino-Soviet hostility. They also tried to establish non-ideological, pragmatic grounds for businesslike relations with the two powers, thereby lowering the tension levels.<sup>13</sup> Nixon and Kissinger made a historical visit to Beijing in 1972, and the U.S. extended full diplomatic recognition to the PRC in December 1978.

China's move to improve its relations with the U.S. was motivated by "power politics." The Chinese were energetically pursuing balance of power strategy to counterbalance Soviet influence in East Asia. After the U.S.-China normalization, the strategic relationship between the two countries began to expand along a number of dimensions.

The U.S. pursued improved relations with China and sought détente with the USSR simultaneously. After President Nixon's visit to Moscow in 1972, an era of U.S.-Soviet détente began. Subsequently, the two superpowers concluded the SALT I treaty and other bilateral agreements. The U.S. and the Soviet Union pursued détente for different purposes: "For the U.S., it meant the beginning of the triangular game, with the U.S. at the pivot--a new bargaining power position for the U.S. government. For the

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power, the PRC (Jan F. Triska, "The Strategic Triangle and Soviet Foreign Policy," p. 215).

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 202.

USSR, it was a great opportunity to head off the new, dangerous Sino-American collusion against the Soviet Union, a policy of nightmare and of high costs and risks."<sup>14</sup>

Thus, the strategic triangle was formed among the three powers. The relatively stable relationship among the three players depended on the powers' sustained mutual distrust. Both the U.S. and the PRC distrusted the Soviet Union (and vice versa) more than they distrusted each other.

U.S.-Soviet détente, however, did not last long. Brezhnev's expansionist and hard-line policies--military involvement in Angola and Ethiopia, invasion of Afghanistan, enforcement of martial law in Poland, support of revolutionary movements in Central America and the Caribbean, and military build-up in Europe and the Far East--invited a harsh, determined reaction from the U.S. (particularly, the Reagan Administration), and led to the diplomatic isolation and military encirclement of the Soviet Union by its neighboring powers in Northeast Asia. As a result, the Soviet Union's strategic position in Northeast Asia deteriorated rapidly in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 212.

### E. The Soviet Union in Northeast Asia--The Odd Man Out

Despite the global power status and enormous military capability, the Soviet Union's power and influence in East Asia, particularly Northeast Asia, had been minuscule. The Soviet Union's negligible role in the region was rooted in its geographical configuration and historical experiences with East Asian nations. In addition, Soviet Union's heavy-handed, stubborn attitudes and policy toward East Asian countries, and the military build-up and expansionist policy during the last years of Brezhnev's rule all combined to effect the deteriorating strategic position of the Soviet Union in the region.

Geography and history exerted a pervasive influence over Russian/Soviet relations with East Asian countries.<sup>15</sup> The Soviet Union, by virtue of its geographical configuration, was a power in East Asia, but it was not an indigenous East Asian power: "Whereas the Soviet Union is territorially a Middle Eastern and East Asian power because of the configuration of its empire, it is indigenously only

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<sup>15</sup>Russia and Asia overlapped spatially and ethnically. Three-quarters of the Soviet territory belonged to Asia, and one-third of Asia was located within the USSR. About 80 million of the Soviet population (some 30%) lived in Asiatic regions of the USSR, and 50 million Soviet citizens (20% of the population) were of Asian nationalities (John Stephen, "Asia in the Soviet Perception," in D. Zagoria, ed., *Soviet Policy in East Asia* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982], p. 31).

a European power and is not an indigenous actor in either the Middle East or East Asia. Rather, it is a European state with territorial extensions intruding into both the Middle East and East Asia."<sup>16</sup>

For the East Asian nations, the Russians were strangers with a different civilization, culture, and patterns of behavior.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, the Soviet cities in Siberia including Vladivostok, Khabarovsk, and Irkutsk were European cities built by Europeans for European Russians. The majority of the population in those cities was Russian under a European leadership.<sup>18</sup> Historically, Soviet foreign policy and economic activities had been oriented toward Europe. The Eurocentricism resulted from various factors, i.e., geography, history, cultural, and national roots,

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<sup>16</sup>Vernon V. Aspaturian, "Northeast Asia Between the United States and the Soviet Union," p. 2. Cf. Gerald Segal, "Introduction," in Gerald Segal, ed., *The Soviet Union in East Asia: Predicament of Power* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1983), p. 1.

<sup>17</sup>History as well as geography left the Russians with ambivalent attitudes about their identity. Russians shared complex and ambivalent feelings about Asia and Asians (John Stephen, "Asia in the Soviet Perception," p. 37). Soviet leaders tried to take advantage of their peculiar identity in dealing with foreigners. They pretended to be either Asian or European depending upon their interest: Stalin once said to a visiting Japanese ambassador, "We Orientals should stick together," and, in 1972 Brezhnev said, "We Europeans are totally different from the Chinese" (Joseph M. Ha, "The Soviet Policy Toward East Asia: Its Perceptions on the Korean Unification," *Asian Survey* [Spring-Summer 1986], p. 120).

<sup>18</sup>Malcolm Mackintosh, "Soviet Attitudes toward East Asia," in Gerald Segal, ed., *The Soviet Union in East Asia: Predicament of Power* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1983), p. 7.

industrial potential, the concentration of population, and communications. These factors severely constrained Soviet relations with Asia-Pacific countries.<sup>19</sup>

Sometime in the early 1970s, the USSR began to define itself as an 'Asian-Pacific' power.<sup>20</sup> This new self-definition reflected increased Soviet stakes in the Far Eastern and West Pacific region. As the Soviet Union gained global power status in the early 1970s, the strategic and economic values of Siberia and the Soviet Far East were also enhanced.

The image of the Russians as a non-Asian nation with imperialistic tendencies has been sustained in the minds of the East Asians; this worked to setback Soviet foreign policy in the region. In actuality, Russia became part of East Asia as a result of its eastward expansion.<sup>21</sup> The Russians were newcomers in East Asia. Until Russia and China concluded the Nertsinsk Treaty in 1689, Russians had been almost unknown to the East Asians. As late as the

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<sup>19</sup>Vladimir I. Ivanov, "The Soviet Union and the Asia-Pacific Region in the 1990s: Evolution or Radical Changes?" *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Winter 1990), p. 64.

<sup>20</sup>Hiroshi Kimura, "Soviet Policies in the Asian Pacific Region: A Japanese Assessment," *Asian Affairs* (Winter 1985), p. 41.

<sup>21</sup>Its eastward expansion underwent two distinct phases: in the seventeenth century, Russia conquered Siberia; in the mid-nineteenth century, it penetrated into the populated areas of neighboring countries, especially China and Korea (Sung-hwan Chang, "Russian Designs on the Far East," in Taras Hunszak, ed., *Russian Imperialism from Ivan the Great to the Revolution* [New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1974], p. 299).

nineteenth century, Russia began to settle in Far Eastern Siberia.<sup>22</sup>

Russian imperialism in Asia was not prompted by nationalism or capitalism, and in this respect should be set apart from modern imperialism. Russian imperialism in Asia was primarily an outgrowth of expansionism of much earlier origin.<sup>23</sup> It was "a classic case of how an imperial power, operating in a political vacuum, failed to draw the line on where to stop and therefore overextended itself."<sup>24</sup> The Russian imperialism with its tendency toward expansionism was reinforced later by Marxist-Leninist ideology that contained a messianic vision for a future world.<sup>25</sup> After the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, the Soviet regime strengthened the negative image of the Russians as imperialists by promoting the Communist movement in East Asia and trying to destroy the political systems of the region.

Russian imperialism left a strong imprint on Soviet relations with China and Japan. While China was suffering from internal instability and military backwardness in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Russia acquired vast expanses of territories from China through unequal treaties

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<sup>22</sup>The Russians reached the Pacific coast by 1649, and founded the city of Vladivostok in 1860.

<sup>23</sup>Sung-hwan Chang, "Russian Designs on the Far East," p. 321.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., pp. 319-320.

<sup>25</sup>Malcolm Mackintosh, "Soviet Attitudes toward East Asia," p. 8.

and force. The first official relations between Russia and China started with the Nertsinsk Treaty in 1689. The northern bank of the Amur and the Maritime province were formally recognized by China as Russian territory in the treaties signed at Aigun in 1858 and Peking in 1860, respectively.<sup>26</sup> It is noteworthy that most of these areas taken by Russia in the past did not, and even today do not have definite borderlines defined by the two countries. China has claimed territories in Sinkiang, Ussuri, Aigun, and Amur. The territorial issue was an old yet major obstacle to the improvement of Sino-Soviet relations.

The eastward movement of Russia brought it into conflict with the territorial and maritime interests of Japan. Japan and Russia (later the Soviet Union) had constantly struggled over the possession of Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands. Japan won the Southern Sakhalin as a prize during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905. But the Soviet Union acquired the Kuriles and Southern Sakhalin after defeating Japan in World War II.<sup>27</sup> Thereafter, the dispute

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<sup>26</sup>As a result of Russia's acquisition of the Maritime province, Russia and Korea began to share a common border for the first time. The strategic importance of Korea with its warm-water ports in the southern part of the peninsula and its strategic location vis-a-vis both China and Japan, had been recognized by Russian policy-makers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Robert M. Slusser, "Soviet Far Eastern Policy, 1945-50: Stalin's Goals in Korea," in Yonosuke Nagai and Akira Iriye, eds., *The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* [Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1977], p. 127).

<sup>27</sup>The territorial acquisition after World War II was probably an additional security measure by Stalin to better

over the Kurile Islands or "the Northern territories" (Habomai, Shikotan, Kunashiri, and Etorofu) has been a bone of contention between the two countries. The Kurile Islands issue prevented the conclusion of a peace treaty between the USSR and Japan. Japan linked the territorial issue with the peace negotiation with the Soviet Union, while the Soviet Union refused to make any concessions to Japanese claim.

#### **F. The Deteriorating Strategic Position of the Soviet Union in East Asia**

While historical and geographical factors provided a backdrop for the Soviet Union's deteriorating strategic position in Northeast Asia, Brezhnev's policy toward the Northeast Asian countries, including the U.S., was directly responsible for it because the policy facilitated the formation of an anti-Soviet strategic coalition and the resultant military encirclement of the Soviet Union.

The U.S. has been the dominant power in the Asia-Pacific region since World War II. The Soviet Union had trouble expanding its influence over non-Communist states of the region. A number of factors were responsible for the minuscule influence of the Soviet Union: it was a region

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cope with a future threat from resurgent Japan; this thinking was probably backed by the U.S. (Harold Hinton, "East Asia," in Kurt London, ed., *The Soviet Union in World Politics* [Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980], p. 146).

with dynamic economic growth, which made the countries of the region relatively immune to the Soviet-led Communist movement; the peoples of the region, in general, embraced strong anti-Communist attitudes; many of the countries in the region maintained good relations with the U.S., especially in the security realm; the Soviet Union was unable to provide the kinds of economic and technological assistance needed most by these countries for economic growth and modernization; and the Socialist system as a development model was not a viable alternative to the market-oriented system.

Brezhnev's foreign policy in East Asia was characterized by heavy-handed attitudes and military build-up. The Soviet Union under Brezhnev was a major power in the region by virtue of its military strength. The only foreign policy instrument that was abundantly available was military force. While increasing its military capability in the region, the Brezhnev leadership utilized "a steady barrage of belligerent and blackmail oriented rhetoric, warning especially of dire consequences if the East Asians support the U.S. 'imperialism.'"<sup>28</sup> Its economic relations with East Asian countries were negligible and the prospects

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<sup>28</sup>William Schneider, Jr., "Nature of Soviet Global Strategy," in Ray S. Cline et al., eds., *Asia in Soviet Global Strategy* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987), p. 15.

for significantly increased economic relations in the near future were minimal.<sup>29</sup>

The pre-Gorbachev Soviet Union considered military force and even war to be the central instrument of foreign policy.<sup>30</sup> As Gaylor aptly put it, military forces had been an integral part of Soviet foreign policy: "The foreign policy of the Soviet state advances through both the presence and the use of power. Power is both the shield which Soviet interests advance and their armor against encroachment. . . . And military forces are the dominant component of that power."<sup>31</sup> In Russia (Soviet Union), as in Byzantium (the Tsarist Empire claimed to be the successor to the Byzantine empire), diplomacy was considered to be a quasi-military activity. In this contest, negotiation was considered to be a strategic device, designed to lead to victory rather than to compromise or mutual understanding.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Donald S. Zagoria, "Soviet Policy in East Asia: The Quest for Constructive Engagement," in Dora Alves, ed., *Change, Interdependence, and Security in the Pacific Basin* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1991), p. 144.

<sup>30</sup>Robert Legvold, "The Concept of Power and Security in Soviet History," in Christoph Bertram, ed., *Prospects of Soviet Power in the 1980s* (London: MacMillan Press, 1980), p. 5.

<sup>31</sup>Noel Gaylor, "Security Implications of the Soviet Military Presence in Asia," in Richard H. Solomon, ed., *Asian Security in the 1980s*, 2d. printing (Cambridge, MA: Olegeschlager, Gunn & Hain, Publishers, Inc., 1982), p. 54.

<sup>32</sup>Morton Schwartz, *The Foreign Policy of the USSR: Domestic Factors* (Encino, CA: Dickenson Publishing Company, Inc., 1975), p. 76.

The central role of military force in Soviet diplomacy was clearly shown in the Soviet handling of the intensified dispute with China in the late 1960s. Instead of seeking a diplomatic solution to the dispute, the Soviet leadership embarked on a massive military build-up along the Sino-Soviet border. Right after the military clash on Darmansky Island on the Ussuri River in the spring of 1969, the Soviet Union began to increase its military presence in East Asia drastically.<sup>33</sup>

In the 1970s, the Soviet Union attempted to exploit the post-Vietnam paralysis in U.S. foreign policy on the basis of a supposed change in the "correlation of forces."<sup>34</sup> Brezhnev pursued expansionism by actively supporting national liberation movements in the Third World. In East Asia, the Soviet Union steadily increased its military strength, and especially in the early 1980s, implemented qualitative improvements of its military weapons and equipment.

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<sup>33</sup>In the 1950s, 15 Soviet divisions were deployed along the Sino-Soviet border. Five more divisions were added by 1965. By 1979, 45 divisions (excluding elite border troops of 400,000 men) were stationed in the region (Paul Langer, "Soviet Military Power in Asia," in D. Zagoria, ed., *Soviet Policy in Asia*, p. 258. p. 267). By 1985, the Soviet forces in the Far Eastern Theater included 53 divisions (five in Outer Mongolia). About 35 percent were believed to be in categories of 1 or 2 in terms of combat readiness (*The Military Balance, 1984-1985* [London: IISS, 1985], p. 29).

<sup>34</sup>Leszek Buszynski, "International Linkage and Regional Interests in Soviet Asia-Pacific Policy," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 61, No. 2 (Summer 1988), p. 214.

The prospect of a Sino-American-Japanese coalition against the USSR was a great fear of the Soviet leaders since the early 1970s, when the U.S. and Japan began to seek normalization with China.<sup>35</sup> A consistent theme in Soviet propaganda during this period was the "militarization" and "anti-Soviet alliance" in East Asia. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Soviet leaders charged that China, Japan, and the U.S. were colluding militarily against the USSR. In the wake of Nakasone's visit to Seoul and Reagan's subsequent visit to Seoul in November 1983, the Soviets argued that South Korea was also being drawn into the quasi-alliance against the Soviet Union.<sup>36</sup>

The Soviets tended to view a certain regional area in terms of "groupings" of nations. They saw the power relationship in Northeast Asia as a quadrilateral one that involved the U.S., China, Japan, and the USSR. The Soviet

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<sup>35</sup>Paul Langer, "Soviet Military Power in Asia," p. 258.

<sup>36</sup>Byung-joon Ahn, "The Soviet Union and the Korean Peninsula," *Asian Affairs* (Winter 1985), p. 10. The Soviet fear of an anti-Soviet military coalition was based on increased military cooperation and coordination in the late 1970s and early 1980s. U.S.-Japanese military cooperation was increasing: the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *Enterprise* visited Japan after years of hiatus; the U.S. deployed F-16s at the Misawa base; the Japanese government announced that it would protect sea lanes up to 1,000 nautical miles from its coastal line; Japanese Prime Minister Nakasone stated that Japan would carry out a blockade of the three straits (Tsushima, Tsugaru, and Soya) in case of emergency; and in January 1983, Japan announced its plan to export military technology to the U.S. on a commercial basis (Robert J. Hanks, *The Pacific Far East: Endangered American Strategic Position* [Cambridge, MA: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, Inc., 1981], p. 65).

perception of an incipient anti-Soviet coalition in the region was in part a reflection of what the Soviets call a "1941 complex" whereby they tended to see an anti-Soviet coalition among all their neighbors.<sup>37</sup>

In reaction to the perceived threat to its security, the Soviet leadership chose to react via intimidation and military build-up. In 1982-1983, the Soviet air force in East Asia underwent qualitative improvement despite its quantitative reduction. The new type of Tu-22M backfire bombers (with a speed of mach 2.5 and range of about 8,800-9,600 km without refueling) replaced Tu-16 Badgers (with a speed of mach 0.8 and range of 6,400 km).<sup>38</sup>

In relation to Japan, Moscow continued to show inflexible and heavy-handed attitudes. The Soviet Union chose to implement military build-up in three (Etorofu, Shikotan, and Kunashiri) of the four disputed islands, rather than seeking negotiation and compromise on the territorial issue.<sup>39</sup> In May 1979, the Soviet Union began to reinforce its garrisons on the Kurile Islands. In December

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<sup>37</sup>John Stephen, "Asia in Soviet Conception," p. 33. Military alliances between the U.S. and Asian states were bilateral. Different security perceptions and interests among them practically excluded the formation of multilateral alliance systems in the form of U.S.-PRC-Japanese or U.S.-Japanese-South Korean alliances.

<sup>38</sup>John Erickson, "The Soviet Strategic Employment in Asia," *Asian Affairs* (London) (February 1981), p. 13.

<sup>39</sup>See R. L. J. Long, "The Pacific Theater: Key to Global Stability," in Claude Buss, ed., *National Security Interests in the Pacific Basin* (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1985), p. 12.

1982, 12 MiG-21 Fishbed fighter-bombers replaced a squadron of MiG-17s in Etorofu.<sup>40</sup> By May 1983, these MiG-21s were replaced by about 10 MiG-23 Flogger fighters. The MiG-23s (with a range of 900-1,200 km) were capable of returning to Etorofu after attacking Tokyo.<sup>41</sup> The Soviets seized Japanese fishing boats and conducted provocative reconnaissance flights over Japan in the early 1980s as part of its intimidation tactics to force Japan into submission.<sup>42</sup>

Between 1975-1978, the Soviet Union gradually gained dominance in Indochina at the expense of China. The Soviet Union gained access to Danang and Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam. This access was an invaluable asset to the Pacific Fleet since it not only provided logistics and forward bases but also could serve to threaten the sea lanes ranging from the Middle East through the Malacca Straits to Japan. Vietnam was admitted to COMECON in June 1978, and the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Moscow and Hanoi was concluded in November 1978. In December 1978, Soviet-supported Vietnam invaded Kampuchea and the Soviet Union

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<sup>40</sup>Hiroshi Kimura, "Soviet Policies in the Asian Pacific Region," p. 51.

<sup>41</sup>U.S. Department of Defense, *Soviet Military Power, 1985* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1985), pp. 102-103. The Japanese Ground Self Defense Force was maintaining four full divisions with air support on the island. The Soviet military reinforcement on the Kurile Islands seems to have been a defensive measure to secure the sea of Okhotsk in the event of Japan's attack on the disputed Kurile Islands.

<sup>42</sup>Harold Hinton, "East Asia," p. 163.

launched a military invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979.

This line of policy, in turn, incited suspicion and fear from the Soviet Union's neighboring countries. Thus, the vicious cycle of military build-up and confrontation continued in Northeast Asia under the atmosphere of Cold War. By the late 1970s, the Soviet strategic condition in the region began to deteriorate as a result of anti-Soviet alignments, called into being in response to Soviet expansionism. By the early 1980s, the Soviet Union was surrounded by hostile and unfriendly countries, both Communist and non-Communist (with the exceptions of Vietnam and North Korea).

When Gorbachev rose to power in 1985, the Soviet Union was politically isolated and militarily "encircled" in Northeast Asia. The new Soviet leader pursued a new foreign policy intended to stabilize relations with the U.S. and to improve relations with regional powers, including Northeast Asian countries. The arrival of Gorbachev opened a new chapter in Soviet foreign policy.

## 2. The Debacle of the Bipolar, Cold War System and the Arrival of the Cooperative Triangular Relationship in Northeast Asia

In the late 1980s, the bipolar, Cold War system began to disintegrate and moved toward a multipolar system. In the newly emerging multipolar system, the latitude of choice for a state was less constrained by systemic structure and ideology. In contrast, domestic needs, personalities of key leaders, public opinion, and traditional policies became more important in a state's foreign-policy outputs than system structure.<sup>43</sup>

U.S.-Soviet rapprochement and Sino-Soviet normalization eventually transformed the "competitive" triangular relationship of the past into a "cooperative" triangular relationship. The systemic changes in international and regional levels provided a new opportunity for improved relations between the Soviet Union and South Korea.



### **A. Soviet-American Détente leading to the Disintegration of the Bipolar, Cold War System**

As the Soviet leader, Gorbachev came to realize that the U.S., the PRC, and Japan were forming a semi-alliance against the Soviet Union. His approach to the

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<sup>43</sup>For the main features of the multipolar system, see K. J. Holsti, *International Politics: A Framework for Analysis*, p. 78.

"encirclement" differed from his predecessors'. Gorbachev preferred a political and diplomatic approach to a military approach to resolving security issues in East Asia.

Gorbachev turned to a peace offensive; he announced the unilateral reduction of Soviet military strength and proposed confidence-building measures as well as arms control and disarmament in the Asia Pacific region.

Due to the divergent interests of the two superpowers, the scope of U.S.-Soviet cooperation in the region was far more limited than in Europe. First, the U.S. and the Soviet Union did not share a common understanding of the general foundations of international politics in East Asia. Second, substantial differences remained in security perceptions of confidence-building measures, the naval arms race, sea-based nuclear weapons, forward deployments and military bases, and nuclear-free zones. Third, U.S.-Soviet contacts in regard to regional conflicts, including the Korean peninsula, were limited.<sup>44</sup>

Nevertheless, the spirit of military, diplomatic cooperation in Soviet-American relations in other parts of the world was bound to affect the regional environment of Northeast Asia favorably for mutual cooperation.

Substantial and in some cases unprecedented changes in Soviet behavior occurred during the first years of

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<sup>44</sup>Vladimir I. Ivanov, "The Soviet Union and the Asia-Pacific Region in the 1990s: Evolution or Radical Changes?", p. 46.

Gorbachev's reign, which in turn precipitated the end of the Cold War and the arrival of détente and cooperation between the two superpowers. Gorbachev's new foreign policy paved the way for Soviet-American détente.

U.S.-Soviet arms control and disarmament talks resulted in the INF treaty in December 1987, the CFE Treaty in November 1990, and the START Treaty in July 1991. Not only did the Soviet Union pull out its troops from Afghanistan, but it also pressured Vietnam to withdraw its troops from Cambodia. The collapse of the Soviet bloc in East Europe as a result of Gorbachev's so-called "Sinatra doctrine" and the dissolution of the Warsaw pact in 1989-1990 all contributed to seismic changes in the international systemic structure.

U.S. President George Bush and USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev held a summit in Malta in December 1989. The summit was significant because it implied the collapse of the Yalta system, which had led the world political order since World War II, and the advent of a new system based on mutual coordination and cooperation. At this summit, the two superpowers finally declared the end of the Cold War and the birth of a new era of peaceful collaboration based on mutual trust. Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze and U.S. Secretary of State James Baker declared in 1990 that the two superpowers no longer considered each other opponents. Thus, the Cold War system that had characterized the post-war years came to a conclusion.

## **B. Gorbachev's East Asian Initiative and Transformation of the East Asian System**

When Gorbachev was elected General Secretary of the CPSU, he had to tackle three major problems in East Asia: a hostile security environment, political isolation from Asian neighbors, and economic stagnation. Consequently, Gorbachev's foreign policy goals in the Asia-Pacific region were threefold: (1) to reduce the threat to Soviet security posed by anti-Soviet military movement among the PRC, the U.S., and its allies; (2) to develop closer political relations with all countries in the region regardless of ideological orientation by dealing flexibly with long-standing disputes with the PRC, Japan, and South Korea; and (3) to establish a close connection with the dynamic regional economic order in the Asia Pacific region in order to accelerate the domestic reform process.<sup>45</sup>

Gorbachev made the economic and social needs of the Soviet Union the first priority, and gave increased priority to the Soviet Far Eastern region and the Soviet Pacific coast. The Soviet leader sought dialogue and cooperation with all states of the Pacific Rim region. Gorbachev endeavored to establish a "new kind of relationship" with

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<sup>45</sup>Charles E. Ziegler, "Soviet Strategies for Development: East Asia and the Pacific Basin," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 63, No. 4 (Winter 1990-1991), p. 451.

surrounding countries in East Asia by implanting the image of the Soviet Union as a reliable partner.

**(1) Gorbachev's East Asian Initiative**

Gorbachev's plan to establish a new relationship with East Asian countries began to take shape in his speech in Vladivostok in 1986; this plan was further refined in his speech in Krasnoyarsk two years later. His East Asian initiative served as the catalyst for improved relations between the USSR and East Asian countries, in turn leading to the transformation of the Northeast Asian regional system.

Gorbachev's initiative in the Asia Pacific region was first declared in Vladivostok on July 28, 1986.<sup>46</sup> Gorbachev's speech is considered to be the point of departure for the Soviet Union's decision to face the Pacific Ocean.

A major part of the Vladivostok statement was devoted to economic perestroika and the development of the Soviet Far East. Overall development of the Asia Pacific region not only would guarantee its contribution to the USSR's economy, but also would create prerequisites for the

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<sup>46</sup>For the full text of the Vladivostok speech, see *Pravda*, July 29, 1986, p. 1; *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, August 27, 1986, pp. 1-9; "From the Speech by Mikhail Gorbachev in Vladivostok, July 28, 1986," in *Security in the Asia-Pacific Region: Documents and Materials* (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1988), pp. 16-28.

economy's integration into the structure of the rapidly developing Asia Pacific world. Gorbachev declared that interdependence and the need for economic integration led to Soviet interest in the Asia Pacific region: "The experience of history, the laws of growing interdependence and the need for economic integration urge one to look for ways leading to agreement and to the establishment of open ties between states in the region and beyond it."<sup>47</sup> Gorbachev continued: "We approached this idea [Pacific economic cooperation] without bias and we are ready to join in the deliberations on the possible foundations of such cooperation."<sup>48</sup>

In the Vladivostok speech, Gorbachev made a number of proposals for economic cooperation between the Soviet Union and East Asian countries. Gorbachev proposed that a collaboration between the Soviet Union and China in the use of the Amur River's rich resources would result in mutual benefits and in building water-management projects. Gorbachev suggested to the Japanese that Moscow and Tokyo pursue mutual economic cooperation to develop their coastal regions and discuss the question of establishing joint enterprises in adjacent and nearby regions of the USSR and Japan. Gorbachev further proposed long-term cooperation in

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<sup>47</sup>"From the Speech by Mikhail Gorbachev in Vladivostok, July 28, 1986," in *Security in the Asia-Pacific Region: Documents and Materials*, p. 18.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 24.

the investigation and comprehensive use of ocean resources and the peaceful study and use of outer space.<sup>49</sup>

Gorbachev not only acknowledged the status of the U.S. as a great Pacific power, but also urged U.S. participation in resolving the problem of security and cooperation in the Pacific Ocean.<sup>50</sup> His plan included the development of Vladivostok as a commercial and cultural center in the East.

Furthermore, Gorbachev's speech at Vladivostok included a number of proposals to enhance peace and security in the Asia Pacific region<sup>51</sup>: resumption of a serious dialogue between the two Koreas; a halt to proliferation and build-up of nuclear weapons in Asia and the Pacific Ocean; establishment of a nuclear-free zone on the Korean peninsula; creation of a peace zone in the Indian Ocean; the reduction of the activity of naval forces in the Pacific, particularly of nuclear armed ships; restriction of the rivalry in the sphere of anti-submarine weapons; radical reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments in Asia to limits of reasonable sufficiency; and confidence-building measures and the non-use of force in the region.

Gorbachev also declared that his country was "prepared to discuss with China concrete steps aimed at the commensurate lowering of the level of land forces."<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., pp. 25-26.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

Besides, the Soviet leader stated that the Soviet Union was ready to withdraw all troops from Afghanistan as soon as a political settlement was worked out. He proposed a Helsinki-like conference in the Asia Pacific region in order to establish a comprehensive system of international security.

Gorbachev's East Asian initiative was refined in his Krasnoyarsk speech.<sup>53</sup> In a major address in Krasnoyarsk on September 16, 1988, Gorbachev indicated that the economic development of the Soviet Far East had become a top priority and called for measures to encourage foreign trade, including the creation of special "joint enterprise zones" and opening up Vladivostok as a bridge to East Asia.

The program touched upon new ideas such as direct ties between Soviet enterprises and cooperatives and the outside world, and tax exemptions for joint enterprises. The Krasnoyarsk program suggested the possibility of developing Chinese-Japanese-Soviet tripartite economic activity on mutually advantageous conditions and the possibility of establishing economic ties with South Korea. In addition, the program suggested the possibility of developing the Soviet Far East for large-scale foreign tourism and of

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<sup>53</sup>For the full text of the Krasnoyarsk speech, see "M. S. Gorbachev's Speech in Krasnoyarsk," *Pravda*, September 18, 1988; "Gorbachev Offers New Bids on Asian Policy," *The Current Digest of Soviet Press*, October 19, 1988, pp. 1-7.

creating a regional Center for Cultural Contacts between Peoples for the Asia Pacific region.

In Krasnoyarsk, Gorbachev enunciated a number of new proposals for peace and security in the Asia Pacific region:

- (1) The Soviet Union would not increase the number of any types of nuclear weapon in this region and the U.S. should do the same.
- (2) The principal naval powers in the region should consult on not increasing naval forces there.
- (3) A multilateral talk should be held to deal with the question of lessening military confrontation in regions where the coasts of the USSR, the PRC, Japan, North Korea, and South Korea converge, with the aim of a freeze and a commensurate reduction in the levels of naval and air forces and the restriction of their activity.
- (4) The U.S. naval bases in the Philippines should be closed and the Soviet Union should shut down the Soviet base at Cam Ranh Bay.
- (5) Joint measures should be taken to prevent incidents in the open seas and in the airspace above them to guarantee the safety of sea lanes and air lanes in the region.

(6) An international conference should be convened on the possibility of turning the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace.

(7) A negotiating mechanism should be set up for considering our proposals and any others relating to the security of the Asia Pacific region.

(8) A meeting of the Foreign Ministers of all the interested states should be held to discuss initial approaches to building new relations in the Asia Pacific Basin.

In his speech at the Second international Conference on "Asian-Pacific Region: Dialogue, Peace, Cooperation," Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze provided details about an international system that would promote security and stability in East Asia. The Soviet foreign minister took the occasion to: (1) propose a meeting of all Asian foreign ministers to be held in Vladivostok in 1993; (2) state that the Soviet Union did call on the countries to do away with existing military-political structures in the region; (3) suggest the creation of a regional center to ensure the security of marine communications; and (4) reaffirm that in 1991 Soviet armed forces in the Asian part of the country would be reduced by 200,000 men, including 12 divisions of ground forces, nine big naval ships, and seven submarines.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>G. Sidorova, "After Uncompromising Hostility and Unreserved Friendship," *New Times*, No. 38 (September 18-24,

Gorbachev endorsed the ideas put forward by reform-minded Soviet academicians. Discarding the traditional penchant for autarky and isolation, in the late 1980s, Soviet economists overwhelmingly began to speak of the "internationalization of the world economy" and increasing economic interdependence and interconnection. Soviet spokesmen pointed out that the Pacific Basin had become a new center of world economy, accounting for around 60 percent of world industrial production and more than one-third of world trade. It was also pointed out that capitalism had far greater reserves of strength than Socialism for launching a scientific-technical revolution (especially information technology), and that the Socialist development model was a failure in the Third World.

Gorbachev's emphasis on global interdependence and more complete Soviet integration into the world economy meant the reversal of six decades of autarky. Under Brezhnev, foreign trade and economic cooperation were intended to enhance efficiency and to preclude the need for significant structural reform. Therefore, the Brezhnev leadership took precautions to minimize undesirable influences from foreign economic contacts on Soviet economy and society.<sup>55</sup> In contrast, Gorbachev's Soviet Union sought to expand its

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1990), pp. 8-11, in *FBIS-SOV-90-196*, October 10, 1990, pp. 3-5.

<sup>55</sup>Charles E. Ziegler, "Soviet Strategies for Development: East Asia and the Pacific Basin," p. 467.

economic activity in the Asia Pacific region in part to "provide quick fixes to an economic system in decline."<sup>56</sup>

In an effort to expand economic relations with the Asia Pacific region, the Soviet National Committee for Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (SOVAPEC) was set up in 1988 to establish working relations with the Pacific Economic Cooperation Conference (PECC).<sup>57</sup>

Gorbachev's East Asian initiative included both economic aspects and security issues. On numerous occasions, Gorbachev advocated the creation of a new security mechanism and arms control/disarmament in the Asia Pacific region.

## (2) Gorbachev's Asian Collective Security System

One of the most important dimensions of Gorbachev's East Asian policy was the re-introduction of the idea of a collective security system, variously referred to as "an all-embracing system of international security," "a

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<sup>56</sup>James R. Blaker, "Awakening of Soviet Interest in Asia," in Ray S. Cline et al., eds., *Asia in Soviet Global Strategy* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1987), p. 21.

<sup>57</sup>The SOVAPEC consisted of more than 68 representatives of scientific, economic, and public organizations, ministries, and departments of the government and the Communist Party. Evgeni Primakov, then director of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), USSR Academy of Science, became chairman of the SOVAPEC.

Helsinki-like Pacific conference," or the "All Asian Forum."<sup>58</sup>

The program for an Asian collective security system was first enunciated by Brezhnev in his speech at the International Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties on June 7, 1969. He proposed for the first time the creation of "the Asian Collective Security System" while accusing "Mao's Group" of preparing for conventional and nuclear war against the Soviet Union.<sup>59</sup>

The primary objective of Brezhnev's collective security system for Asia was to contain China's power and to counterbalance the nuclear and conventional forces of the United States in the West Pacific and the Indian Ocean.<sup>60</sup> Brezhnev's Asian collective security program was deliberately vague--it did not specify how such a system would be structured or operate. The Brezhnev plan for an Asian collective system was intended as a trial balloon.<sup>61</sup>

Gorbachev revived the idea of a collective security system in Asia. Gorbachev first presented his version of the Asian collective security system on May 21, 1985, during

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<sup>58</sup>Bilveer Singh, "The Soviet Asian Collective Security System: from Brezhnev to Gorbachev," *Sino-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Summer 1988), p. 180.

<sup>59</sup>Paul Keal, "Implications for Northeast Asia," p. 67; G. W. Choudhury, "Soviet Policy Towards Asia," *Sino-Soviet Affairs* (Seoul), Vol. 8, No. 4 (Winter 1989-1990), p. 145.

<sup>60</sup>Osamu Miyoshi, "Soviet Collective Security Pacts," in Ray S. Cline et al., eds., *Asian in Soviet Global Strategy* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1987), p. 26.

<sup>61</sup>G. W. Choudhury, "Soviet Policy Towards Asia," p. 146.

Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Moscow. He took this occasion to propose a Helsinki-like process in Asia. The Soviet leader recounted his meeting with Rajiv Gandhi:

When . . . I first met with Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, in May 1985, I suggested that in the context of previous initiatives, and to some extent of European experience, it would be a good idea to ponder on a general and integrated approach to the issue of security in Asia and on the possibility of coordinated efforts by Asian countries in that direction. This idea was maturing as I met with leaders of European states and with other political figures. I involuntarily compared the situation in Asia with that in Europe. And this made me think that the Pacific region, because of mounting militarization, also needed some system of "safeguards," like those provided by the Helsinki process in Europe.<sup>62</sup>

In his political report to the 27th Party Congress on February 25, 1986, Gorbachev called for "vitalizing collective quests for ways of defusing conflict situations" all over the world, including Asia.<sup>63</sup> In a government statement on April 23, 1986, the Soviet Union proposed the concept of an Asian collective security system.<sup>64</sup> In the Vladivostok speech on July 28, 1986, Gorbachev called for a "conference in the mold of the Helsinki conference to be attended by all countries gravitating towards the [Pacific] Ocean."<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, p. 166.

<sup>63</sup>*American and Soviet Studies Annual*, 1986, pp. 163-164.

<sup>64</sup>*Pravda*, April 24, 1986.

<sup>65</sup>"From the Speech by Mikhail Gorbachev in Vladivostok, July 28, 1986," p. 24.

Gorbachev reiterated his call for a collective system in Asia in the Krasnoyarsk speech on September 16, 1988, where he proposed "a negotiating mechanism" to consider security matters in the Asia Pacific region and "a meeting of the foreign ministers of all the interested states to discuss initial approaches to building new relations in the Asia-Pacific Basin."<sup>66</sup> In September 1990 in Vladivostok, Foreign Minister Shevardnadze called for "a pan-Asian forum" of foreign ministers to be held in 1993. During his visit to Tokyo in April 1991, Gorbachev once again proposed a five-power collective security system in Asia composed of the U.S., the PRC, the USSR, India, and Japan.

The goals of Gorbachev's Asian collective security program were to: (1) bring predictability and stability into international relations in Asia; (2) be admitted as a legitimate player into the Asian system; (3) weaken the political dominance of the U.S. in the region; and (4) stabilize its border. Among others, the consideration to play a central role in shaping the future of Asian affairs by directly participating in the resolution of Asian conflicts in Indochina, Korea, and Afghanistan was the most important motive for Gorbachev's Asian collective security proposal.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>"Gorbachev Offers New Bids on Asian Policy," *The Current Digest of Soviet Press*, October 19, 1988, p. 6.

<sup>67</sup>For Gorbachev's objectives in the Asian collective security system, see Bilveer Singh, "The Soviet Asian

Gorbachev's collective security proposal was more comprehensive and broadly based than Brezhnev's earlier proposal. The two Soviet leaders' proposals, however, contained similarities: "Their policy convergence stems from their views that a collective security system is imperative in Asia to ensure peace and security . . . [and] the belief that by involving the Chinese in the scheme would not only undermine the burgeoning Sino-American strategic community, but also make China more responsive and therefore 'controllable' appears to be uppermost in Soviet policy-makers' calculations."<sup>68</sup>

Gorbachev's proposal, unlike Brezhnev's, emphasized the need for Chinese and American participation in the plan in order not to give the impression that it was intended to isolate the U.S. and to establish a coalition of states hostile to China.<sup>69</sup>

Gorbachev also pushed for de-nuclearization in Asia. The Soviet Union under Gorbachev advocated a nuclear-free zone in the South Pacific, the Indian Ocean, East Asia, and the Korean peninsula in order to increase its political influence and prestige in the international community, and

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Collective Security System: from Brezhnev to Gorbachev," p. 184; G. W. Choudhury, "Soviet Policy Towards Asia," p. 146.  
<sup>68</sup>Bilveer Singh, "The Soviet Asian collective Security System: from Brezhnev to Gorbachev," pp. 186-187.  
<sup>69</sup>Rajan Menon, "New Thinking and Northeast Asian Security," *Problems of Communism* (March/June 1989), p. 27.

to reduce the military threat from the U.S. in these areas. Gorbachev summarized Soviet efforts in this way:

And it is possible to start moving toward the elimination of nuclear weapons in Asia. A major step in this direction could, for example, be the creation of nuclear-free zones. The Soviet Union is known to have signed the protocols to the Rarotonga Treaty to establish such a zone in the South Pacific. We also support other countries' proposals to set up nuclear-free zones in South-East Asian and on the Korean peninsula. An international conference on the Indian Ocean could further the purpose of nuclear disarmament by considering and deciding the question of declaring this area of the world a zone of peace.<sup>70</sup>

However, many of Gorbachev's arms control proposals were one-sided and self-serving: "The proposal to establish nuclear-free zones in Korea, Southeast Asia, and the South Pacific, where naval forces are stationed, while omitting any mention of the Sea of Okhotsk, the Kamchatka Peninsula, and the Soviet Union's own Maritime Province, where nuclear forces are stationed, is one such example."<sup>71</sup>

### **C. The Emergence of the Cooperative Triangular Relationship in Northeast Asia**

Gorbachev's East Asian initiative provided crucial momentum for the change in the Northeast Asian system by

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<sup>70</sup>Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, updated ed. (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988), p. 170.

<sup>71</sup>Donald Zagoria, "Soviet Policy in East Asia: The Quest for Constructive Engagement," *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Summer 1990), p. 21.

facilitating improved relations between the Soviet Union and the major powers in the region. Under Gorbachev, Soviet relations with the Northeast Asian powers, particularly China and the U.S., improved drastically as a result of its flexible and accommodating policies, and favorable reactions to them from the U.S., China, and, to a lesser extent, Japan. Improvement of bilateral relations prompted the Northeast Asian system to change from a competitive triangular relationship to a cooperative one.

The normalization of Sino-Soviet relations in the late 1980s was the most significant development in Northeast Asia. In the early 1980s, the Soviet Union continued to view China as a foremost threat, and the military containment of China was pivotal in Soviet Northeast Asian policy because of the perceived threat from China.<sup>72</sup> Moscow pursued a two-pronged policy toward Beijing: it tried to contain China militarily but at the same time did not preclude the possibility of reaching a political understanding.<sup>73</sup> As long as China insisted on three preconditions before improving the bilateral relationship (Soviet troop reduction along the Sino-Soviet border, the withdrawal of Soviet support for Vietnamese expansionism,

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<sup>72</sup>Paul Dibb, "Soviet Capabilities, Interests and Strategies in East Asia in the 1980s," *Survival* (July-August 1982), p. 156.

<sup>73</sup>Lawrence Freedman, "The Military Dimension of Soviet Policy," in Gerald Segal, ed., *The Soviet Union in East Asia: Predicament of Power* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1983), p. 91.

and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan) and the USSR was unwilling to concede to their demands, the military containment of China was the main Soviet foreign policy objective.

By the time the 26th Congress of the Communist Party of the CPSU convened in February 1981, the Soviet leadership appeared to be convinced that the scope and direction of internal change in China favored another attempt at reconciliation.<sup>74</sup> The real turning point came in 1982. In his speech on Asian policy delivered in Tashkent in March 1982, Brezhnev made conciliatory gestures and called for improved relations with Beijing.<sup>75</sup>

The course of reconciliation, however, was not smooth. Ivan Arkhipov (first Deputy Prime Minister) visited Beijing in December 1984. Arkhipov, the highest ranking Soviet official to come to China in fifteen years, negotiated a five-year trade accord and an agreement that provided for Soviet assistance in the modernization of Soviet-financed industrial projects dating from the 1950s.<sup>76</sup> In the wake of

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<sup>74</sup>Herbert J. Ellison, *The Soviet Union and Northeast Asia* (New York: University Press of America, 1989), p. 13.

<sup>75</sup>The Soviet move was based on the calculated possibility that a "non-aligned" China could keep an equal distance from both the U.S. and the Soviet Union (Parris Chang, "Beijing's Changing Perspectives on the Pacific Community," *Korea & World Affairs* [Spring 1989], pp. 100-101).

<sup>76</sup>Leif Rosenberger and Marian Leighton, "Gorbachev's New Strategic Designs for Asia," in Y. W. Kihl and L. E. Grinter, eds., *Security, Strategy, and Policy Responses in the Pacific Rim* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989), p. 59.

Li Peng's visit to Moscow to participate in Chernenko's funeral in March 1985, the two sides moved rapidly to expand cooperation, especially economically. In the 1980s, total trade increased between the two countries rapidly, jumping from \$363 million in 1982 to \$2.63 billion in 1986.<sup>77</sup> By the late 1980s, China emerged as the second largest trading partner of the Soviet Union (after Japan) in the Asia Pacific.

Due to their own domestic interests, both Beijing and Moscow understood the need to improve bilateral relations after 1985. Deng's open-door policy and Gorbachev's new political thinking were new foreign policies designed to facilitate domestic reform.<sup>78</sup> Gorbachev's Vladivostok speech in 1986 contained a radical shift in the Soviet position vis-a-vis China: the Soviet leader accepted China's position on the fixation of the Sino-Soviet border along the main ship channel of the Amur River. He suggested that the Soviets were willing to meet two of China's three preconditions for Sino-Soviet normalization, i.e., the reduction of Soviet troops along the Sino-Soviet border and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan.

In August and September 1986, Deng Xiaoping responded positively to Gorbachev's overture in Vladivostok, but

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<sup>77</sup>Charles E. Ziegler, "Soviet Strategies for Development: East Asia and the Pacific Basin," p. 457.

<sup>78</sup>Vladimir I. Ivanov, "The Soviet Union and the Asia-Pacific Region in the 1990s: Evolution or Radical Changes?" p. 54.

insisted on Soviet fulfillment of the third precondition for improved relations (Soviet efforts to remove Vietnamese troops from Cambodia) before the two countries normalized relations.<sup>79</sup>

In February 1987, for the first time in nine years, Moscow and Beijing opened negotiations. By August 1988, the two sides reached an agreement on demarcation of the border along the Amur and Ussuri, which was made possible by Gorbachev's acceptance of the main channel as the dividing line (rather than the Chinese side of the river as earlier insisted upon by the Soviets).<sup>80</sup> In December 1987, Soviet deputy Foreign Minister Igor Rogachev visited Beijing and briefed Chinese officials on the Washington summit meeting between Gorbachev and Reagan. It marked the first time that

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<sup>79</sup>Parris Chang, "Beijing's Changing Perspectives on the Pacific Community," p. 101. Then Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze recalled that Vietnam's military involvement in Cambodia remained the major stumbling block in the improvement of bilateral relations: "The key problem was Cambodia and the military presence of Vietnam in that country. From the beginning of our talks with Deng Xiaoping on ways to normalize Soviet-Chinese relations, we invariably stumbled over this issue. . . . It was not the military presence at our borders or the settlement of complex boundary issues, but the Cambodian question that kept the door firmly locked" (Eduard Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom*, trans. Catherine A. Fitzpatrick [New York: The Free Press, 1991], p. 159).

<sup>80</sup>The issue of an island in the Fuyuan Delta at the confluence of the Amur and Ussuri Rivers was still not resolved. The Soviet side insisted that it was necessary to protect nearby Khabarovsk and the Trans-Siberian Railway (Herbert J. Ellison, *The Soviet Union and Northeast Asia*, pp. 18-19).

a senior Soviet official gave such a briefing to the Chinese.<sup>81</sup>

Gorbachev's visit to Beijing in May 1989 marked the beginning of new relations between the USSR and the PRC, and resulted in normalized relations between the two countries. During his visit to Beijing, Gorbachev made an important breakthrough in Sino-Soviet relations by reaching an agreement, in principle, on the demilitarization of the border.<sup>82</sup>

Sino-Soviet normalization mitigated the strategic importance of North Korea for both countries. Competition over the support and loyalty of North Korea was alleviated. In turn, Sino-Soviet normalization induced a better climate for mutually beneficial economic cooperation between South Korea and the Soviet Union, and between South Korea and China.<sup>83</sup>

Soviet-Japanese relations witnessed substantial improvement since 1985 as well. The two countries established official channels to discuss pending issues. Gorbachev tried to improve relations with Japan for expanded

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<sup>81</sup>*The New York Times*, January 12, 1988.

<sup>82</sup>This issue was further discussed during the visit of Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng to Moscow in April 1990, when a formal document was signed that outlined guidelines for the mutual reduction of armed forces along the 7,000 km border (Gennady Chufrin, "The USSR and Asia-Pacific in 1990," *Asian Survey* [January 1991], pp. 16-17).

<sup>83</sup>Chan Young Bang, "Prospect of Korean-Soviet Economic Cooperation and Its Impact on Security and Stability of the Korean Peninsula," *The Korean Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Autumn 1990), p. 320.

trade and economic cooperation. Unlike the past, the Soviet Union came to regard Japan as an important player to be reckoned with. The Gorbachev leadership made an effort to improve Soviet-Japanese relations. Such an effort stemmed from the new perspective that Soviet-Japan relations was not a function of the state of U.S.-Soviet relations. In January 1986, Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze visited Tokyo, the first such visit by a Soviet foreign minister in ten years.

In contrast to Brezhnev's policy, Gorbachev was willing to reach a negotiated solution to the territorial issue surrounding the four Kurile Islands. The two countries established a negotiating mechanism for the peace treaty-- permanent working groups at three levels: foreign ministers, deputy foreign ministers, and experts.<sup>84</sup> Shevardnadze explained the changed atmosphere in Soviet-Japanese relations:

We have been talking about a new stage since 1985, when we began regular discussions with the Japanese. During my first visit to Tokyo in January 1986, Sintaro Abe and I agreed that we would discuss all the issues--the territorial problem, bilateral relations. In the course of my second visit to Tokyo, at my suggestion, a working mechanism was created for holding talks on the signing of a peace treaty that would resolve the territorial issue.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup>Mikhail Titarenko, "Asian and Korean Security and Stability," *Korea & World Affairs* (Summer 1989), p. 283.

<sup>85</sup>Eduard Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom*, p. 155.

The exchange of visits by high-level officials continued. In 1989, Aleksandr Yakovlev, then a member of the Politburo and Secretary of the CPSU, visited Tokyo, and in January 1990, Shintaro Abe, one of the leaders of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party, visited Moscow for talks with President Gorbachev.

Despite the improved atmosphere, economic cooperation between the USSR and Japan remained low. While the Soviets sought to attract Japanese capital investment, technology, and management assistance in developing the Soviet Far Eastern economy and European Russia, the Japanese had few incentives to cooperate. Aside from the Kurile Islands issue, the development of oil and gas in Siberia were not attractive to Japanese businessmen since world energy prices remained low, and the costs of joint extraction ventures in the remote and inaccessible Eastern regions were high.<sup>86</sup> Moreover, the USSR did not have the foreign currency reserves to pay for sizable imports of Japanese goods or technology.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup>Charles E. Ziegler, "Soviet Strategies for Development: East Asia and the Pacific Basin," p. 458.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., p. 459. The Soviets and the Japanese began joint economic projects in 1968. The economic cooperation peaked in the 1970s when the Japanese were keenly concerned about fuel and raw materials supplies (Raymond S. Mathieson, *Japan's Role in Soviet Economic Growth: Transfer of Technology Since 1965* [New York: Praeger, 1979]). In the 1970s, the Japanese were involved in the development of energy in Siberia. The Soviets, Japanese, and Americans jointly participated in the exploration and development of the Tiumen oil field, while Gulf Petroleum cooperated with Japan through SODECO (the Sakhalin Oil Development Company),

The basic difference between the two countries remained: Moscow wanted to focus on trade and economic cooperation while Tokyo continued to insist on the inseparability of economics from politics. The Soviets refused to concede the four Kurile Islands. Because of incompatible views on this issue, Soviet-Japanese relations remained poor.

### 3. Concluding Remarks

Gorbachev's initiative in the Asia Pacific region as well as his new policies based on the new political thinking facilitated international systemic change in other parts of the world. In the late 1980s, the East Asian regional system experienced qualitative change. The rapprochement of Soviet-American relations, the normalization of Soviet-Chinese relations, and improvement of Soviet-Japanese relations all contributed to the transformation of the Northeast Asian system.

The strategic triangular relationship among the U.S., China, and the USSR that had prevailed in the region for decades in the Cold War atmosphere finally gave way to a

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from 1974-80 (Michael J. Bradshaw, "Trade and High Technology," in Roger Swearingen, ed., *Siberia and the Soviet Far East: Dimensions in Multinational Perspective* [Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1987], p. 123). The economic cooperation between the Soviets and the Japanese declined in the 1980s.

cooperative relationship (especially in the fields of economy, and science and technology). After Sino-Soviet normalization in 1989-1990, the triangular relationship among the U.S., the USSR, and China became normal in that the legitimate interests of each side would not be endangered by collusion by the two others.<sup>88</sup>

The international and regional systemic changes served as a backdrop for Gorbachev's new policy toward North and South Korea, which subsequently unraveled. The systemic change had significant implications for Soviet-Korean policy. As a result of Sino-Soviet normalization, Pyongyang's strategic value to the Soviet Union (as well as China) was substantially reduced. At the same time, Seoul became increasingly central to development plans in the Soviet Far East while Japan was cautious about greater involvement in Soviet Far East development for political and economic reasons. Thus, external environments in the late 1980s provided a favorable condition for Gorbachev's new policy toward the Korean peninsula. Now, North Korea's objection to Soviet-South Korea normalization, which had been a crucial factor in Soviet-Korea policy in the context of the Sino-Soviet dispute, was no longer a major consideration, and Gorbachev's Korea policy was based on Soviet national interests. By 1990, North Korea's value as

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<sup>88</sup>Vladimir I. Ivanov, "The Soviet Union and the Asia-Pacific Region in the 1990s: Evolution or Radical Changes?", p. 47.

a strategic ally (against the PRC or the U.S.) and an ideological partner (as a Communist country) to the Soviet Union almost totally evaporated.

## CHAPTER 5

### SOUTH KOREA'S NORDPOLITIK INTERSECTS WITH GORBACHEV'S NEW POLITICAL THINKING

Mikhail Gorbachev drastically changed Soviet foreign policy toward the Korean peninsula. His new political thinking alone could not have achieved such a spectacular achievement: South Korea had to respond positively as well. South Korean President Roh Tae Woo's nordpolitik, combined with Gorbachev's new political thinking, totally rearranged their relationship on the Korean peninsula.

Until the 1960s, South Korean-Soviet relations were characterized by hostility and lack of contact. Economic and cultural interactions between Seoul and Moscow began cautiously in the early 1970s, and slowly increased over the decade. After Gorbachev came to power in March 1985, South Korean-Soviet relations entered a new phase. Indirect economic relations in the past turned into direct economic relations and official political contact. Finally, Seoul-Moscow relations culminated in the establishment of diplomatic ties in September 1990. In the meantime, the Soviet Union gradually distanced itself from its traditional ally, North Korea.

### 1. The New Goals of Roh's Nordpolitik

Nordpolitik (*pukbang chungch'aek*) denotes Seoul's foreign policy toward Socialist countries including the USSR, the PRC, and East European countries.<sup>1</sup> Initially, its major targets were the Soviet Union and China, which are located to the north of South Korea--thus the term nordpolitik. Later it came to include the Socialist countries in East Europe, as well as the Soviet Union and China.<sup>2</sup>

Although nordpolitik bore its fruits in the Sixth Republic of President Roh Tae Woo, its origin dates back to the Third Republic of President Park Chung Hee.<sup>3</sup> As early

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<sup>1</sup>Lee Bum-suk, President Chun Doo Hwan's Foreign Minister, first coined the term nordpolitik (or northern policy) in 1983. In a newspaper interview, Lee explained nordpolitik: "The terminology nordpolitik is almost identical with 'policy toward the Communist bloc'. . . . I used nordpolitik because the term, [foreign policy toward] Communist bloc has become. . . obsolete in view of changed international environment and because it contains unnecessarily offensive elements" (*Seoul Sinmun*, June 30, 1983).

<sup>2</sup>Nordpolitik is analogous to *Ostpolitik* as enunciated by West German Chancellor Willy Brandt in the late 1960s. Brandt pursued *Ostpolitik* to improve relations with East European countries by (1) accepting a postwar status quo in Europe and (2) abandoning the "Hallstein Doctrine" which branded any diplomatic recognition of East Germany as an unfriendly act (Josef Joffe, "The Foreign Policy of the Federal Republic of Germany," in Roy C. Macridis, ed., *Foreign Policy in World Politics*, 6th ed. [Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1985], pp. 99-100).

<sup>3</sup>The Republic of Korea has experienced six major Constitutional revisions since its inception in 1948. Syngman Rhee was elected the President of the First Republic in August 1948 and ruled the country until he was forced to resign in April 1960 over corruption and election rigging.

as 1969-70, the South Koreans began to give serious thought to the possibility of trade and political relations with Communist countries. In January 1971, South Korean President Park Chung Hee announced in a news conference that his country was prepared to have diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and the PRC if they ceased "hostile activities," recognized the sovereignty of South Korea, and suspended aid to North Korea.<sup>4</sup> It was the beginning of a new chapter in South Korea's foreign policy. Until then "anti-Communism served as a pillar of the ROK's foreign policy,"<sup>5</sup> which had excluded any contacts with or recognition of Communist countries. In his special foreign policy statement of June 23, 1973, Park proposed the two Koreas' entry into international organizations, in

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The Second Republic was inaugurated in 1960 under a cabinet system of government. In May 1961, Prime Minister Chang Myun of the Second Republic was overthrown by a military coup led by Army Major General Park Chung Hee. After two years of military rule, in 1963, Park was elected the President of the Third Republic. The Fourth Republic began in 1972 when President Park adopted the authoritarian *Yushin* [revitalization] Constitution which enabled him to stay in power for life. The Fourth Republic came to an abrupt end in October 1979 when Park was assassinated by the chief of the Korean intelligence agency. Army Major General Chun Doo Hwan successfully staged a military coup in December 1979 and, after revising the Constitution, became the President of the Fifth Republic to serve a seven-year term. Roh Tae Woo, former Army General and close associate of Chun Doo Hwan, was elected the President of the Sixth Republic through a free and competitive election in December 1987. Roh served a five-year term from 1988 to 1992.

<sup>4</sup>Oemubu, *Hanguk oegyo samsimnyon, 1948-1978* (Seoul: Taehan Min'guk Oemubu, 1989), p. 242.

<sup>5</sup>B. C. Koh, "Seoul's 'Northern Policy,'" *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Summer 1989), p. 128.

particular the United Nations, as separate political entities, and announced South Korea's open-door policy toward Communist countries on the basis of the principles of reciprocity and equality.<sup>6</sup> South Korea's diplomatic efforts to improve relations with Socialist countries continued in the Fifth Republic of President Chun Doo Hwan, but with no substantial results.

President Roh Tae Woo not only gave nordpolitik new goals, but pursued it with greater energy and more substantive actions than before. In addition, President Roh successfully utilized "such forums as the Olympics and the United Nations to draw more attention to the Northern Policy [nordpolitik]." <sup>7</sup>

In a special declaration on July 7, 1988, Roh delineated nordpolitik.<sup>8</sup> The special declaration contained

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<sup>6</sup>National Unification Board, *A White Paper on the South-North Dialogue in Korea* (Seoul, 1982), pp. 320-325.

<sup>7</sup>Dan C. Sanford, *South Korea and the Socialist Countries: The Politics of Trade* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), p. 61.

<sup>8</sup>Even prior to the July 7th declaration, Roh touched upon nordpolitik on a number of occasions. Roh stated in his inaugural address in February 1988: "We will positively pursue northern policy to improve relations with the Northern countries with which [South] Korea maintains no diplomatic relations. Improved relations with these countries will contribute to the stability, peace, and common prosperity in North East Asia . . . This diplomatic route will also pave the way to reunification of our divided fatherland" (cited from Chung Tae Dong, "Korea's Nordpolitik: Achievements & Prospects," *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 15, No. 2 [Fall/Winter 1991], p. 154). In his commemorative address on March 1, 1988, he also mentioned northern policy: "We will establish positive relations with northern countries which have no diplomatic relations with South Korea" (Kim Ildong, "Ch'ung'wadae pukbangchungch'aek

six-point policies, intended to open a new era of national self-esteem, unification, and prosperity, which was to form the gist of his nordpolitik.<sup>9</sup> The six points included the following: (1) exchange of visits by a broad spectrum of the people of South and North Korea and free visits to both parts of the Korean peninsula by overseas Koreans; (2) exchanges of correspondence and visits between members of divided families; (3) open trade between South and North Korea as a single community; (4) no opposition to nations friendly with the South trading with the North unless military goods were involved; (5) giving up the competitive and confrontational diplomatic war between South and North while ensuring that the North made a positive contribution to the international community; and (6) cooperation with Pyongyang in its efforts to improve ties with the United States and Japan, while seeking improved ties with the Soviet Union and China simultaneously.

The six points were closely interrelated because they were all aimed at a peace settlement and national reconciliation on the Korean peninsula. Among others, point 6 directly involved Roh's nordpolitik.

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inmaek" [Northern Policy Connections in the Blue House], *Sindong-A* [Seoul] [September 1990], p. 217).

<sup>9</sup>For the full text of Roh's July 7th declaration, see *The Korea Herald*, July 8, 1988; Source Materials section in *The Korean Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (1988), pp. 608-611.

Roh adopted a new policy toward North Korea. The South Korean President declared that his country no longer considered North Korea an enemy, but a member of the Korean "national community" [minchok kongdongch'ae]. Roh further stated: "The fundamental reason that the tragic division is yet to be overcome is because both the south and the north have been regarding each other as an adversary, rather than realizing that both halves of Korea belong to the same national community."<sup>10</sup> Roh's July 7th declaration was aimed at building a national community for the two Koreas in the spirit of coexistence and co-prosperity.

In his speech before the United Nations General Assembly on October 18, 1988, Roh reiterated most of the points contained in his July 7th declaration. In particular, Roh made it clear that nordpolitik did not seek to drive North Korea into a corner in the international community but aimed to create the conditions needed for a peaceful unification by inducing North Korea to open up to the outside world. He further called on the U.S. and other allies to help North Korea open up to the outside world:

It is our wish that our allies and friends will contribute to the progress and opening of North Korea by engaging Pyongyang in expanding relations.

It is also our position that those Socialist countries with close ties to North Korea continue to

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<sup>10</sup>Source Materials in *The Korean Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (1988), p. 609.

maintain positive relations and cooperate with North Korea even as they improve their relations with us.<sup>11</sup>

The Roh government never spelled out the goals and means of nordpolitik in a systematic and orderly fashion; it provided only a broad framework for nordpolitik. Nevertheless, various statements and the behavior of South Korean government officials revealed different levels of the goal: (1) an immediate, short-range goal was to create an international atmosphere for reconciliation and cooperation between the two Koreas with increased cross-contact between South Korea and Socialist countries on the one hand and between North Korea and the West on the other; (2) the mid-range goal was to achieve international cross-recognition of South and North Korea and intensify the degree of interdependent relations among the two Koreas, Socialist countries, and the West; and (3) the long-term goal was to normalize inter-Korean relations and create circumstances favorable to peaceful unification with the help of Socialist "friends."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Source Materials section in *The Korean Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (1988), pp. 615-622; *The Korea Times*, October 19, 1988; Source Materials section in *Korea & World Affairs* (1988), pp. 839-845.

<sup>12</sup>Park Chul-on, the architect of Roh's nordpolitik, articulated three goals of nordpolitik in a speech delivered at the National Youth Leaders' Conference on February 26, 1989: (1) to induce tension-reduction and reconciliation between the two Koreas and promote unification through cross-contact and cross-recognition; (2) to pursue worldwide diplomacy by expanding South Korea's diplomatic activities in the Communist world including the Soviet Union and China; and (3) to promote economic development through trade and economic cooperation with Socialist countries (Park Chul-on,

Besides the political goals, the economic goals of diversifying markets and securing sources of raw materials were a crucial consideration in pursuing improved relations with Socialist countries. Despite the fact that new markets and sources of raw materials were of increasingly paramount importance to the resource-scarce and export-oriented economy of South Korea (especially in the face of economic protectionist movements around the globe), economic interest was not the driving force behind nordpolitik, but served as an instrument for it.

What main features of Roh's nordpolitik were distinct from the previous ones? First, Roh's nordpolitik was characterized by its positive attitude toward unification. It sought to achieve a "national community" of North and South Korea to promote mutual development and to open the way to national unification. Unlike the past, it did not oppose North Korea's efforts to foster substantive relations with South Korea's allies and friends. In the past, nordpolitik's ultimate goal was the prevention of a second war on the Korean peninsula, and it was considered to be an effective means of weakening North Korea's alliance system with the USSR and the PRC, thereby reducing the probability of North Korea's aggression against South Korea.<sup>13</sup>

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"Minjog'ui Chinwun'kwa Pukbangchungch'aek" [Nation's Destiny and Northern Policy], *Minchogchisung* [Seoul] [April 1989], pp. 188-189).

<sup>13</sup>In a lecture at South Korea's National Defense College on June 29, 1983, Chun's Foreign Minister Lee Bum-suk clarified

Second, Roh pursued nordpolitik with creative energy and remarkable consistency in favorable international and domestic environments. Internationally, détente in U.S.-Soviet relations and normalization of Sino-Soviet relations were conducive to the successful implementation of nordpolitik. Internally, democratization since June 1987, the successful hosting of the 24th Summer Olympics in the Fall of 1988, and remarkable economic growth all led to a sense of self-confidence among South Korea's leadership and served as favorable conditions for nordpolitik.

Third, Roh's nordpolitik was an attempt to achieve a self-reliant, independent diplomacy. The Roh government sought to broaden the scope of its diplomatic relations from a limited number of allies and friends, particularly the U.S. and Japan, to the whole world, including Communist countries. Park Chul-on, Roh's brain trust, underlined the independent nature of nordpolitik: "We did not receive any advice or support from any country in the normalization negotiation with Hungary. Literally, it opened a new horizon on self-reliant diplomacy and national self-respect diplomacy."<sup>14</sup> The independent nordpolitik aroused U.S.

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this point: "Our most important foreign policy goal in the 1980s is to prevent the recurrence of war on the Korean peninsula, and our most important diplomatic task is to successfully pursue nordpolitik with the view to normalizing relations with the Soviet Union and China" (*Kyunghyang Sinmun* [Seoul], June 29, 1988).

<sup>14</sup>Park Chul-on, "Minjog'ui Chinwun'kwa Pukbangchungch'aek," p. 196.

concern and became a potential source of conflict with the U.S.<sup>15</sup>

Fourth, Roh's need to enhance his political support was partly responsible for the genesis of nordpolitik. During his presidential campaign, Roh presented nordpolitik to amass political support for him and his ruling Democratic Justice Party. Roh promised to realize the dream of greater prosperity for the people along South Korea's Yellow Sea coast by pursuing direct commercial ties and transportation with the Shantung and Liaoning areas of China. Roh tried to win the support of the people on the western seaboard by pledging to transform west seaports into China-oriented trading centers.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>The Bush Administration was most concerned about South Korea's involvement in Siberian development projects that might strengthen Soviet strategic potential and the potential danger that South Korea might inadvertently pass along strategic technology in the context of widening trade. In addition, a different assessment of the international situation was a source of conflict between Seoul and Washington. Nevertheless, the U.S. supported nordpolitik as long as it would help Eastern Europe and China develop their economies along the capitalist road, open their societies, and make them independent from the Soviet Union. See *ibid.*, p. 195.

<sup>16</sup>During his presidential campaign, Roh pledged on November 28, 1987 that he would seek to establish formal diplomatic relations with China because it would lead to permanent peace in Northeast Asia and open the road to Korean unification. In December 1987 in Seoul, he again said that he would give top priority to the northern policy if elected president. See Chung Yongsuk, "Cheyuk konghwaguk-kwa pukbangchungch'aek" [The 6th Republic and Northern Policy]; Kim Ildong, "Ch'ung'wadae pukbang chungch'aek inmaek," *Sindong-A* (September 1990), pp. 210-219.

## 2. The Instruments of Nordpolitik: Economic Interdependence and Secret Diplomacy

The process leading to the establishment of a diplomatic relationship between South Korea and Socialist countries followed three distinct phases. First, economic and other non-political contacts and exchanges were initiated at the non-governmental level in the early 1970s. During this period, South Korean businessmen and academicians played a key role in expanding non-political relations with Socialist countries; in doing so, they laid the groundwork for future political relations.

Second, as trade and economic cooperation increased steadily over the decade, South Korea and Socialist countries came to exchange trade offices, starting with Hungary in 1988. During this phase, South Korea's Korea Trade Promotion Corporation (KOTRA; a semi-government organization) and Socialist countries' chambers of commerce and industry emerged as key actors and often negotiated for the establishment of trade offices. An exchange of trade offices meant a de facto recognition of one another. Nevertheless, Socialist countries, in particular the USSR and China, insisted on the non-political nature of trade offices on the grounds that they were between non-governmental organizations. North Korea's objection to any

political relations between South Korea and Socialist countries was mainly responsible for such an anomaly.

Third, trade offices were upgraded to a full diplomatic relationship from 1989-1992. The secret diplomacy of the Roh government greatly facilitated the establishment of trade offices and diplomatic ties. The South Korean government offered "soft" loans to these countries as an economic incentive for diplomatic recognition. Such economic incentives played an important role in establishing diplomatic ties between South Korea and Socialist countries.

South Korea's economic penetration into and secret diplomacy with Socialist countries served as the effective means of nordpolitik. The linking of economics and politics was key. Nordpolitik was based on the assumption that expansion of economic and cultural contacts would lead to diplomatic recognition.

#### **A. Economic Interdependence as an Instrument of Nordpolitik**

Ever since South Korea's open door policy vis-a-vis Socialist countries was proclaimed in the early 1970s, economic and cultural contacts at the private level have increased steadily. South Korean businessmen have pursued their own economic interests in the Socialist world. The South Korean businessmen as well as academicians initiated

contact and exchanges with Socialist countries independently of government policies:

. . . many South Korean businessmen, technicians and academicians have taken it upon themselves to initiate contacts and to personally schedule their journeys to once-forbidden lands. Their enthusiasm for exchanges with socialist countries has outpaced the government's intended policy. Government bureaucrats confess that they can hardly keep themselves apprised of all of the developments. Corporate executives have become diplomats par excellence.<sup>17</sup>

The first visit by South Korean nationals to a Socialist country occurred in September 1971 when an economic delegation headed by the president of the KOTRA visited Yugoslavia. In April 1973, South Korean athletes went to Sarajevo, Yugoslavia, to participate in the world table tennis championship games. In May and August of 1973, South Korean nationals went to the Soviet Union to attend international conferences. In August 1973, Moscow allowed South Korean athletes to compete in the university games in Moscow. From then on, visits to the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries by South Korean citizens became increasingly frequent.<sup>18</sup>

Economic cooperation and trade between South Korea and Socialist countries coincided with personal contact and exchanges. There was mutual interest in economic exchanges. While the South Korean government or businessmen were

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<sup>17</sup>Dan C. Sanford, *South Korea and the Socialist Countries: The Politics of Trade*, p. 98.

<sup>18</sup>B. C. Koh, "Seoul's 'Northern Policy,'" pp. 128-129.

seeking new economic opportunities in Socialist countries, China, the Soviet Union, and other Socialist countries also made deliberate efforts to expand trade with South Korea. Such mutual interest in economic exchanges eventually facilitated the collapse of the ideological barriers that had stood between them and South Korea.<sup>19</sup>

Access to new markets and a stable supply of raw materials were crucial to continuing South Korea's economic growth. In an effort to cope with the increasingly protectionist trade policies of its traditional economic partners (in particular, the U.S., Japan, and West Europe), South Korea began to explore new markets in the 1970s.<sup>20</sup> In this sense, "trade agreements with Communist countries was but one part of a broad, world-wide crusade to secure new markets."<sup>21</sup> The economies of South Korea and the Soviet Union were mutually complementary; the Soviet Union could supply South Korea with high-level basic science and technology in exchange for consumer goods (mostly household appliances), industrial technology, and marketing experience.

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<sup>19</sup>Dan C. Sanford, *South Korea and the Socialist Countries: The Politics of Trade*, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup>South Korean corporations' interest in economic exchanges with East European countries was related to the more lucrative markets in Western Europe. By producing goods through joint-venture agreements with East Europe and shipping them to the European Community, some South Korean businessmen hoped to avoid the high tariffs that might be imposed on Korean-made products in the future (*Ibid.*, p. 26).

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 5.

Besides, the Soviet Union and China were richly endowed with energy resources (e.g., crude oil and coal) and raw materials that were badly needed by South Korea for its economic development. The short travel distance between South Korea and its Socialist neighbors made it especially attractive as a source of raw materials.

As a result of South Korea's economic penetration into Socialist countries, by the second half of the 1980s trade and economic cooperation were increasing steadily. In 1990, total trade with Socialist countries reached \$5.6 billion which accounted for 4 percent (as compared with 3.4% in 1989) of South Korea's foreign trade. South Korea's trade with Socialist countries increased four times between 1985 and 1990. The trade volume increased sharply in 1988 (81% over the previous year) when the government-level contacts between South Korea and Socialist countries intensified before and during the Seoul Olympics (see Table 1).

In terms of trade and investment, China has been South Korea's largest partner among Socialist countries. South Korean businessmen began to trade with China in the late

**Table 1. South Korea's Trade Volume with Communist Countries**  
(Unit: in million U.S. dollars)

		1980	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
With All Communist Countries	total	--	--	1,438	1,609 (11.9)	2,027 (26.0)	3,671 (81.1)	4,223 (15.0)	5,617 (33.0)
	export	--	--	850	900 (5.9)	982 (9.1)	2,001 (95.0)	1,962 (-1.9)	2,731 (39.2)
	import	--	--	588	709 (20.6)	1,045 (47.4)	1,670 (59.8)	2,261 (35.3)	2,886 (27.6)
With China	total	188	358	1,161	1,336 (15.1)	1,679 (25.7)	3,087 (90.4)	3,143 (1.8)	3,821 (21.6)
	export	115	160	683	715 (4.9)	813 (13.7)	1,700 (122.5)	1,438 (-15.4)	1,553 (8.0)
	import	73	198	478	621 (29.9)	866 (39.5)	1,387 (60.2)	1,705 (22.9)	2,268 (33.0)
With USSR	total	36	57	102	133 (30.4)	200 (50.4)	290 (45.0)	600 (106.9)	889 (48.2)
	export	29	26	60	65 (8.3)	67 (3.1)	112 (67.2)	208 (85.7)	519 (149.5)
	import	7	31	42	68 (61.9)	133 (95.6)	178 (33.8)	392 (120.2)	370 (-5.6)
With East Europe	total	--	--	175	140 (-20.0)	148 (5.7)	215 (82.8)	387 (80.0)	754 (94.8)
	export	--	--	107	120 (12.2)	102 (-1.7)	126 (29.1)	270 (114.3)	541 (100.4)
	import	--	--	68	20 (-70.6)	46 (130)	89 (176.1)	117 (31.5)	213 (82.1)
With Others*	total	--	--	--	--	--	79 (30.0)	93 (17.7)	153 (64.5)
	export	--	--	--	--	--	63 (43.3)	46 (-27.0)	118 (156.5)
	import	--	--	--	--	--	16 (-4.0)	47 (193.8)	35 (-25.5)

This information was compiled by the author from the following materials: "Pukbang Tonggye," Pukbang Kyungche (June 1991), p. 154; Lim Yangtaek, "Pukbang chungch'aek ui hyunhwang kwa palchunbanghyang," *Minchok Chisong* (August 1989), p. 45

Figures in parentheses indicate increase rate.

\* Others include Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Mongolia, and other Communist countries.

1970s through third-party mediation.<sup>22</sup> At this early stage, China insisted on secrecy and indirect shipping in its trade with South Korea for fear of North Korea's protest and for ideological reasons. It was only after 1981 that South Korea began to import Chinese products such as coal directly from the Chinese ports of Qingdao, Dalian, Tientsin, and Shanghai to the South Korean posts of Pusan, Inchon, and Pohang.<sup>23</sup> By 1987, South Korean corporations trading in the largest commodities, such as coal, were conducting their business with China in a normalized, open fashion.<sup>24</sup> Bilateral trade in 1985 amounted to \$1.2 billion and reached \$3.8 billion in 1990, accounting for 80 percent and 68 percent of South Korea's total trade with Socialist countries, respectively. Bilateral trade was projected to reach \$10.5 billion by 1995.<sup>25</sup>

South Korea's trade with the Soviet Union started in the late 1970s. As with other Socialist countries, South Korea's trade with the Soviet Union was initially conducted

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<sup>22</sup>South Korean products were mostly re-exported from Hong Kong, Singapore, and Japan through various middlemen. The middlemen were in most cases (1) American, Japanese, and overseas Chinese general trading firms; (2) Hong Kong trading companies that had contacts with Korean trading companies; and (3) trading firms owned by expatriate Koreans (Ibid., p. 9).

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 11

<sup>25</sup>*Korea Business World*, October 1991, pp. 10-11. Major items exported by South Korea to China included textiles, electronics, steel, and metal. South Korea's major imports from China included coal, crude oil, chemical products, and agricultural and fishery products

through third-party countries. After December 1988, South Korea began to trade with the Soviet Union directly.<sup>26</sup> Trade with the Soviet Union increased almost nine-fold between 1985 and 1990. It reached \$889 million in 1990, up 48.2 percent from the previous year.<sup>27</sup>

East European countries' combined two-way trade with South Korea represented only a small fraction of Korea's total trade with the Communist world (less than 13% on the average).<sup>28</sup> The bilateral trade between South Korea and East Europe rapidly increased since 1988, and amounted to

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<sup>26</sup>*Dong-A Ilbo* (New York Edition), December 29, 1988.

<sup>27</sup>The major items exported by South Korea to the Soviet Union included consumer goods and manufactured goods (mainly shoes and textiles). Recently, ships, passenger cars, and computers were added to the list. Major Soviet exports to South Korea were raw materials and energy-related materials including iron ore, timber, coal, uranium, fisheries, and machinery. In 1989, South Korea imported \$424 million worth of energy from Socialist countries (mostly the Soviet Union and China) which accounted for 4.8 percent of South Korea's total energy imports. For South Korea's economic exchanges with Socialist countries, see Kim Sun-ok, "Pukbang korye ilban" [Economic Exchanges with Northern Countries: An Overview], *Pukbang Kyungche* (February 1991), p. 36; Chung Hangu, "Hanso kyungche korye" [Economic Exchanges Between South Korea and the Soviet Union], *Pukbang Kyungche* (February 1991), pp. 51-56; Ahn Chungyoung, "Hanjung kyungche kurye" [Economic Exchanges between South Korea and China], *Pukbang Kyungche* (February 1991), pp. 45-50; Chung Kapyong, "Handongku kyungche korye" [Economic Exchanges Between South Korea and East Europe], *Pukbang Kyungche* (February 1991), pp. 57-61; Lim Yangtaek, "Pukbang chungch'aekui hyunhwang kwa palchun panghyang" [Northern Policy and Its Development Direction], *Minchok Chisong* (August 1989), pp. 44-50.

<sup>28</sup>South Korea's exports to East Europe included textiles, television sets, VCRs, passenger cars, and ships; South Korea's imports from East Europe consisted of petrochemicals, steel, metals, machinery, and agricultural products (Kim Sun-ok, "Pukbang korye ilban" [Economic Exchanges with Northern Countries: An Overview], p. 39).

\$50 million in 1990. South Korea has also cultivated relations with Vietnam. Since the first official contact in October 1987<sup>29</sup>, the two countries have continuously expanded economic relations.<sup>30</sup>

South Korea's investment in Socialist countries lagged far behind its trade relationship due mainly to political uncertainty and economic obstacles in those countries. South Korea began investment in China indirectly through third countries in the mid-1980s. Investment by South Korean corporations in the Soviet Union and East European countries started in 1989. Seoul's investment in Socialist countries has rapidly increased since 1989. Investment in Socialist countries accounted for 4.5 percent of South Korea's total foreign investment in 1990, compared with 1 percent in 1988.<sup>31</sup> The total investment by South Korea in Socialist countries from 1985-1990 amounted to \$140 million. In 1990, South Korea was involved in a total of six investments in the USSR (see Table 2).

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<sup>29</sup>*Asian Wall Street Journal*, February 8, 1988, p. 2.

<sup>30</sup>Supposedly South Korea was Vietnam's biggest importer of coal. The Samsung Group of South Korea has been operating a color television assembly plant in Vietnam. The Vietnamese government has promised South Korean businessmen investment opportunities in special economic zones to be set up near Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (Yonhap, February 23, 1989, in FBIS-EAS-89-035, February 23, 1989, p. 39).

<sup>31</sup>Kim Sun-ok, "Pukbang korye ilban" [Economic Exchanges with Northern Countries: An Overview], p. 36.

**Table 2. South Korea's Investment in Communist Countries**

(Unit: in 1,000 U.S. dollars)

		1985-88	1989	1990	Accumulative Total
China	Number	9	15	41	66
	Amount	13,334	12,033	56,178	81,545
USSR	Number	--	2	4	6
	Amount	--	480	11,181	11,661
East Europe	Number	--	2	1	3
	Amount	--	46,465	475	46,940
Total	Number	9	19	46	75
	Amount	13,334	58,978	67,834	140,146

Source: Korean Bank, cited from Sun-ok Kim, "Pukbang korye ilban" [Economic Exchanges with Northern Countries: An Overview], *Pukbang Kyungche* (February 1991), p. 39.

Socialist countries initially insisted on separating politics from economics. For practical considerations, they were willing to increase trade and economic cooperation with South Korea. But they were reluctant to establish political ties with South Korea because of North Korea's objections and for ideological reasons. Under the circumstances, the South Korean government encouraged the private sector to assume more responsibility in dealing with Socialist countries. In November 1988, the International Private Economic Council of Korea (IPECK) was established as a private organization to provide consultation and coordination for South Korea's economic exchanges with Socialist countries.<sup>32</sup>

Where active official involvement was needed in coordination between industries, especially in barter trade and financing guarantees, the South Korean businessmen could easily receive help from their government. While encouraging the private sector to expand economic relations with Socialist countries, the Roh government employed secret diplomacy vis-a-vis these countries to achieve the goals of nordpolitik.

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<sup>32</sup>Park Chul-on, "Minjog'ui Chinwun'kwa Pukbangchungch'aek," p. 194.

## B. Secret Diplomacy as an Instrument of Nordpolitik

While economic and other non-governmental contacts and exchanges laid the groundwork for improved relations, South Korea's secret diplomacy facilitated the process of normalization with the Soviet Union as well as other Socialist countries. Secret diplomacy led to an exchange of trade offices and eventually to the conclusion of diplomatic ties with the Soviet Union.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Secret contact with Communist countries to realize foreign policy goals was not new in the Sixth Republic. As early as September 1961, soon after Park Chung Hee's military coup, the two Koreas had secret contacts with each other to improve inter-Korean relations (*Chosun Ilbo* [New York Edition], June 25, 1992, p. 15; Lee Young-shin, "Seoul-Pyongyang'e taepyobu sulch'i hap'ui haess'suda" [An Agreement Was Made to Exchange Representative Office in Seoul and Pyongyang], *Sindong-A* [August 1992], pp. 434-463). The July 4th Communiqué of 1972 was a result of secret contacts between South and North Korea. Lee Hu Rak, Director of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency, secretly visited Pyongyang from May 2 to 5, 1992 for talks with North Korean leader Kim Il Sung and Kim's younger brother Kim Young Joo. North Korea's Second Vice Premier Park Sung Chul secretly visited Seoul from May 29 to June 1, 1972, to hold talks with President Park Chung Hee and Lee Hu Rak (Tae-Hwan Kwak, *In Search of Peace and Unification on the Korean Peninsula* [Seoul: Seoul Computer Press], p. 15). President Chun Doo Hwan of the Fifth Republic wanted to hold a summit with North Korean leader Kim Il Sung during his tenure. Reportedly, high-level officials of the two Koreas visited each other's capitals in 1985; on September 14, 1985, Huh Dam, former Foreign Minister of North Korea, visited Seoul and on October 15, 1985, Chang Seidong, chief of South Korea's intelligence agency, and his aide Park Chul-on visited Pyongyang to discuss a summit between Chun Doo Hwan and Kim Il Sung ("No chung'gwon pukbangchungch'aekui milsa park chul-on" [Park Chul-on: Roh Regime's Secret Envoy for Nordpolitik], *Sindong-A* [December 1988], pp. 208-209; Kim Jae-hong, "Park Chul-on milsa oegyo nambuk chupch'okui magchonmaghu," *Sindong-A* [March 1989]).

The main targets of nordpolitik were the Soviet Union and the PRC, the two most important allies of North Korea. Nordpolitik was directed initially toward East European countries. Since some East European countries had pursued pragmatic and reformist policies, it was "assumed that East European countries had a freer hand and were more pragmatic in shaping their policies toward South Korea than either Moscow or Beijing."<sup>34</sup> Despite its relatively small volume, "South Korea's trade with Eastern European countries . . . [were] more instrumental in crafting diplomatic ties."<sup>35</sup> The South Koreans rightly calculated that a diplomatic breakthrough with the East European countries would create favorable circumstances which would eventually open the way to a political relationship with the USSR and the PRC.

The first diplomatic breakthrough came from Hungary. Negotiations to exchange trade offices with Hungary and Yugoslavia opened in Seoul in 1987 during President Chun Doo Hwan's term. A South Korean trade office was permitted to open in Budapest in December 1987 and Hungary opened a trade office in Seoul in March 1988.

Roh Tae Woo took the oath of office as South Korean President in February 1988. The Roh government showed keen interest in nordpolitik from the very beginning. Park Chul-on, a major architect of Roh's nordpolitik, maintained

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<sup>34</sup>B. C. Koh, "Seoul's 'Northern Policy,'" p. 132.

<sup>35</sup>Dan C. Sanford, *South Korea and the Socialist Countries: The Politics of Trade*, p. 16.

indirect contacts with the Soviets from March 1988 on in pursuance of nordpolitik.<sup>36</sup> Roh secretly dispatched Park Chul-on,<sup>37</sup> Presidential Secretary for Policy-making, and Yom Don-Jae, secretary in the Blue House, to Budapest on July 6, 1988.<sup>38</sup>

Negotiations in Budapest initially ran into a deadlock after Hungarian officials refused to accept Park's proposal to exchange permanent representatives, insisting on the establishment of a trade representative office instead. According to his own account, Park finally managed to hold a private conversation with Karoly Grosz, General Secretary of the Hungarian Communist Party, and successfully persuaded him to agree to the establishment of permanent

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<sup>36</sup>See *Dong-A Ilbo* (New York Edition), December 29, 1988.

<sup>37</sup>Upon Roh Tae Woo's inauguration, Park Chul-on took charge of nordpolitik and unification policy as head of the newly established *Chungch'aek Pochakwansil* of the Blue House (Huh Moonyoung, "Tong'ilwon-ui kot-kwa sok," *Wolgan Joong-ang* [Seoul] [October 1990], p. 188). In June 1989, Park Chul-on resigned as President Roh's Secretary for Policy-making and became Minister for Political Affairs without Portfolio. Park Chul-on, who is related to Roh by blood, enjoyed almost absolute authority on nordpolitik and major domestic matters until the merger of the ruling party and two opposition parties on January 22, 1990 (Min Byung-tu, "Hangae'e pudich'in Park Chul-on' ui holosugi," *Observer* [Seoul] [October 1990], p. 118). Park Chul-on's involvement in nordpolitik dates back to the Fifth Republic of Chun Doo Hwan. In March 1985, Chang Seidong (Director of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency) appointed Park as his special assistant and head of a new section within the Korean intelligence agency to deal solely with nordpolitik and inter-Korean relations (Kim Ildong, "Ch'ung'wadae pukbangchungch'aek inmaek," p. 217).

<sup>38</sup>*Hanguk Ilbo*, December 29, 1988.

representation in principle.<sup>39</sup> There was speculation that Grosz approved a "last-ditch compromise" of extending full recognition in exchange for a truly effective and permanent trade position in Seoul.<sup>40</sup> Thus Park achieved a major diplomatic coup in Budapest.

Subsequently, an exchange of permanent missions between South Korea and Hungary was announced on the eve of the Seoul Olympics; henceforth, the South Korean Foreign Ministry became the main channel of negotiations with Hungary. On February 1, 1989, Hungary became the first Communist country to establish full diplomatic relations with South Korea, despite fierce protests from North Korea. Other East European countries followed suit. By the end of 1989, most of the Socialist countries in East Europe had exchanged diplomatic ties with South Korea.

Roh's emissary continued his journey from Budapest to Moscow in August, 1988. While in Moscow, Park conveyed President Roh's letter to Gorbachev via Georgy Arbatov, Director of the USA and Canada Institute of the Soviet Academy of Sciences.<sup>41</sup> In response to the letter, Gorbachev

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<sup>39</sup>Chung Yongsuk, "Cheyukkonghwaguk-kwa pukbangchungch'aek" [The 6th Republic and Northern Policy], pp. 24-25.

<sup>40</sup>*The Korea Times*, September 4, 1988, p. 12.

<sup>41</sup>This information was revealed by the vice director of the Oriental Studies Institute, Georgi Kim, who was in Seoul in early December 1988 attending a seminar. See *Yonhap in English*, December 29, 1988, in *FBIS-EAS-88-250*, December 29, 1988, pp. 20-21. Park Chul-on himself confirmed his trip to the Soviet Union as a special envoy in late August-early September of 1988. Park also revealed that he had made indirect contacts with the Soviets since March 1988 in

expressed the Soviet willingness to initiate economic cooperation with South Korea in his Krasnoyarsk speech on September 16, 1988.<sup>42</sup> Park held talks with Soviet officials on a wide range of topics including establishment of a trade office in one another's countries and mutual cooperation in the Seoul Olympics in September. Consequently, Park reached an agreement with the Soviets concerning the exchange of trade offices<sup>43</sup>; then-KGB chief Viktor Chebrikov was reportedly sent as head of the Soviet delegation for the 40th anniversary of North Korea's founding in September 1988 to discourage Pyongyang from disrupting the Seoul Olympics.<sup>44</sup>

The 24th Seoul Olympics, held on September 17-October 3, 1988, provided a convenient cover for the Socialist

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pursuance of nordpolitik. See *Dong-A Ilbo* (New York Edition), December 29, 1988.

<sup>42</sup>Kim Ildong, "Ch'ung'wadae pukbangchungch'aek inmaek," p. 216.

<sup>43</sup>*Hanguk Ilbo*, December 29, 1988; *Dong-A Ilbo* (New York Edition), December 29, 1988. Secret diplomacy was not restricted to the Soviet Union and East European countries. Political contacts between South Korea and China started before those between South Korea and the Soviet Union. Reportedly Mr. H from a third country mediated negotiations since 1988 to improve relations between South Korea and China. See "Hanjung pimilchupch'ok" [Secret Contacts Between South Korea and China], *Wolgan Observer* (July 1990). Secret diplomacy was also used to conduct negotiations with North Korea. Reportedly, Park Chul-on met secretly with Han Sihae, Deputy Director of the International Department of North Korea's Korean Workers' Party, in January 1989 in Singapore to discuss improvement of inter-Korean relations. For further details, see Kim Jaehong, "Park Chul-on milsa-ui magchonmaghu," pp. 186-188.

<sup>44</sup>Tokyo, Kyodo in English, in *FBIS-SOV*, September 12, 1988, p. 23.

countries to quietly establish contacts with South Korea and test its offer of economic trade and eventual diplomatic ties. The Seoul Summer Olympics were attended by the largest number of countries of any Olympiad including China, the Soviet Union, and all East European countries with a total of 13,303 athletes and officials from 160 countries. It not only tremendously enhanced South Korea's international status but also resulted in rapid improvement in South Korea-Soviet relations.

A series of bilateral agreements were reached prior to and during the Olympics. A group of Soviet officials accompanying the Soviet Olympic team met with KOTRA to discuss an exchange of trade offices between Moscow and Seoul. On October 11, a Soviet delegation led by Vladimir Golanov, vice chairman of the Soviet Chamber of Commerce and Industry, arrived in Seoul to talk about reciprocal trade offices and Siberian investment goals. Subsequently, an agreement for an exchange of trade offices was signed on December 2, 1988.<sup>45</sup>

After trade offices were exchanged between KOTRA and the Soviet Chamber of Commerce and Industry in early 1989, the two countries maintained open channels of communication. Consequently, the role of secret or personal diplomacy vis-a-vis the Soviet Union was reduced. In early 1990, Seoul and Moscow upgraded their bilateral relationship from the

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<sup>45</sup>*The Korea Times*, October 18, 1988, p. 1.

trade office to consular department level. The immediate goal of nordpolitik turned into the establishment of ambassador-level full diplomatic ties with the Soviet Union at the earliest date.

Seoul continued to utilize secret diplomacy as a means of nordpolitik. Kim Young Sam, a chairman of South Korea's ruling Democratic Liberal Party, visited Moscow in March 1990 along with Park Chul-on and South Korea's leading businessmen. While Kim's visit was mainly to make official contact, Park's visit was geared toward unofficial, secret contacts.<sup>46</sup> In Moscow, Park contacted Soviet government officials to begin "behind-the-scenes" negotiations for the establishment of diplomatic relations.<sup>47</sup>

The first summit between Roh and Gorbachev in June 1990 in San Francisco was reportedly arranged as a result of a series of secret contacts with the Soviets.<sup>48</sup> Park Chul-on, however, was excluded from summit preparations; the Blue House staff, especially Roh Jaebong, chief of staff of the Blue House, and Kim Jonghwi, Presidential Secretary for Diplomacy and Security, were the main actors. At the San

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<sup>46</sup>Kang Sukyoung, "Moskba round," *Wolgan Observer* (Seoul) (May 1990), p. 144.

<sup>47</sup>Yonhap, March 21, 1990, in *FBIS-SOV-90-055*, March 21, 1990, p. 11. Park Chul-on himself confirmed this fact by saying, "I met with a respectable Soviet official at a respectable place in a courteous atmosphere." See *The Korea Herald*, March 27, 1990, p. 1, in *FBIS-SOV-90-060*, March 28 1990, pp. 8-9.

<sup>48</sup>Choi Myunggil, "Roh-Gorbachev Hwoedam" [Roh-Gorbachev Meeting], *Sindong-A* (July 1990), pp. 170-179.

Francisco meeting, the two summits agreed on the exchange of diplomatic recognition in principle.<sup>49</sup> On September 30, 1990, South Korean Foreign Minister Choi Ho-Joong and Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze met at the UN to sign the document establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries. With the opening of diplomatic ties, nordpolitik toward the Soviet Union came to a conclusion and Seoul-Moscow relations entered a new phase.

### 3. The Assessment of Nordpolitik

The immediate and mid-term goals of nordpolitik were to increase contacts and establish diplomatic ties with Socialist countries. Its ultimate goal was to create favorable circumstances for the normalization of inter-Korean relations and for peaceful unification. The transition from non-political to political relations between Seoul and Moscow was neither inevitable nor automatic. Political breakthrough as a result of negotiations at the governmental level was required for the transition. In fact, South Korea's secret contacts with government officials in Moscow played a crucial role in the Soviet decision to establish full diplomatic relations with South

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<sup>49</sup>After the summit, Roh quoted Gorbachev as saying, "The meeting itself indicates the beginning of the normalizing process" (Moscow in Mandarin to Southeast Asia, June 5, 1990, in FBIS-SOV-90-111, June 8, 1990, pp. 23-24).

Korea. There is no denying, however, that an accumulation of economic, personal, and cultural contacts at the private or quasi-private level with Socialist countries over the years served as a prerequisite for the establishment of diplomatic relations between South Korea and Socialist countries.

#### **A. Nordpolitik's Impact on Soviet Policy Toward South Korea**

What was the impact of nordpolitik on the Soviet decision to recognize South Korea? The new political thinking in the Soviet Union and nordpolitik in South Korea coincided with one another and eventually led to an exchange of diplomatic ties between the two countries. Gorbachev sought to revitalize the Soviet Union's ailing economy with South Korea's help. The Soviet leader believed that South Korea would serve as a vital link between the Soviet Union and the Asia Pacific region. From the ideological perspective, the new political thinking, unlike the old thinking, advocated universal recognition of every country in the world regardless of ideological and political differences.

The "old thinkers" who had thrived under the "old system" were strongly opposed to the implementation of new political thinking. Gorbachev's foreign policy toward South

Korea is one example of the conflict between new and old thinkers. Establishing formal diplomatic ties with South Korea went against the economic and ideological interests of the old thinkers within the Soviet leadership. Alexandr Yakovlev's revelation that there was two opposing views within the Politburo concerning the establishment of diplomatic relations with South Korea attests to this point.<sup>50</sup>

South Korea's aggressive nordpolitik contributed to the early conclusion of diplomatic ties between Seoul and Moscow.<sup>51</sup> Nordpolitik strengthened Gorbachev's position in the Politburo regarding the change in Soviet foreign policy toward the Korean peninsula, since it served to justify public discussions about economic and political ties with South Korea among the new thinkers in the Soviet elite. Moreover, South Korea's strategy to reach the Soviet Union and China through East Europe proved to be effective. Nordpolitik bore its first fruits in Hungary in September

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<sup>50</sup>Yakovlev made this statement in his talk with Kim Young Sam in March 1990 (*Dong-A Ilbo* [New York Edition] [March 24, 1990]).

<sup>51</sup>Needless to say, a number of factors contributed to the Soviet decision to establish formal diplomatic relations with Seoul. The political situations in the PRC, the Soviet Union, and other Communist countries, improvement of Sino-Soviet relations, economic and political conditions in South Korea, and reduced tension on the Korean peninsula all served as a favorable background for Gorbachev's decision to normalize Seoul-Moscow relations despite North Korea's objections. Gorbachev also pressured Japan to normalize relations with Moscow by threatening to use South Korea as a surrogate economic partner.

1988 when South Korea and Hungary declared their intention to exchange permanent missions. Other East European countries followed in Hungary's footsteps and concluded diplomatic ties with Seoul. Nordpolitik's success in East Europe created an atmosphere conducive to Moscow-Seoul normalization.

### **B. Nordpolitik's Impact on Inter-Korean Relations**

Although nordpolitik's immediate and mid-term goals were fulfilled, its ultimate goal has yet to be attained since the two Koreas have failed to agree on a common blueprint for the Korean peninsula. North Korea's initial reaction to nordpolitik was vehemently antagonistic.<sup>52</sup> It bitterly resented the increase in political and non-political contacts since 1988 and the exchange of diplomatic ties between Seoul and Moscow in 1990. A good indication of the distanced relationship between Pyongyang and Moscow was North Korea's expulsion of a correspondent from the official

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<sup>52</sup>For North Korea's reaction to Northern policy, see "Miche-  
ui saerowun pan'gonghyunggae-wa namchosun koeroe-ui  
pukbangchungcha'ek" [American Imperialism's New Anti-  
Communism Plot and South Korean Puppet Regime's Northern  
Policy], *Rodong Sinmun*, November 6, 1988; "Punyolchu'uichuk  
pukbangchungcha'ek-ul kyutanhanda" [We Refute Divisionist  
Northern Policy], *Rodong Sinmun*, December 28, 1988;  
"Namchosun koeroedul-ui pukbangchungcha'ek-ui ponchil" [The  
Reality of South Korean Puppet Regime's Northern Policy],  
*Rodong Sinmun*, October 31, 1988.

Soviet press agency TASS in early 1990 for his articles on North Korea's economic problems.<sup>53</sup>

After the normalization between South Korea and the Soviet Union, North Korea sought stronger links with China and made immediate efforts to solicit diplomatic normalization with Japan. In response, China vowed to seek mutual economic relations and to renew general moral support to North Korea. When Moscow and Seoul established formal diplomatic ties, Kim Il Sung declared his willingness to begin unconditional talks to establish diplomatic relations between Pyongyang and Tokyo by mid-1991. Kim Il Sung invited Shin Kanemaru, former Vice Prime Minister of Japan, to Pyongyang in September 1990. Subsequently, the two countries initiated government-level negotiations on the normalization of ties between North Korea and Japan. North Korea's nuclear weapons program, however, remains the main obstacle to the realization of full diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The South Korean government has on numerous occasions asked Moscow to pressure North Korea to adopt reform and an open door policy and to resume dialogue and negotiations with Seoul. Since 1985 Pyongyang's stand on inter-Korean relations has been seriously scrutinized in Moscow. Some

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<sup>53</sup>*The New York Times*, May 31, 1990.

Soviet specialists on Korea have noted that North Korea's propositions on unification were not practical.<sup>54</sup>

Soviet diplomatic efforts to promote tension reduction and to foster dialogue on the Korean peninsula have been prominent since 1988. Such Soviet efforts resulted partly from a result of Seoul's diplomatic efforts and partly in accordance with the Soviet Union's changed foreign policy line. During his visit to Pyongyang in December 1988, Foreign Minister Shevardnadze advised North Korea to adopt a realistic view of inter-Korean relations based on the principle of balance of interests. He told the North Koreans that reform in North Korea was necessary to further strengthen and balance a brotherly Socialist relationship between Moscow and Pyongyang.<sup>55</sup>

Roh revealed that during his talk with Gorbachev in San Francisco in June 1990, he asked Gorbachev to talk to Pyongyang about a dialogue and peace settlement with South Korea, and Gorbachev promised to do his best.<sup>56</sup> During the second summit in Moscow in December 1990, Gorbachev implied that he would increase pressure on North Korea for reform and openness. He concurred with Seoul's approach to arms

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<sup>54</sup>Eugen Bazhanov and Natash Bazhanov, "Soviet Views on North Korea," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 31, No. 12 (December 1991), p. 1131; see also E. Bazhanov, "Changing Impetus," *Pravda*, January 16, 1990; and V. Lukin, "Pacific-Asian Region: A Dialogue is Needed," *Izvestiya*, January 4, 1988.

<sup>55</sup>*Dong-A Ilbo* (New York Edition), December 29, 1988, p. 13.

<sup>56</sup>*Dong-A Ilbo* (New York Edition), June 11, 1990.

control on the Korean peninsula.<sup>57</sup> At the Cheju summit in April 1991, Roh asked Gorbachev to work toward an inter-Korean dialogue and exchange, and for peace and stability in Korea.

Undoubtedly Seoul's nordpolitik vis-a-vis the Soviet Union succeeded in persuading the Kremlin to exercise its influence toward dialogue and a peace settlement in Korea. Whether Seoul's connection with Moscow (or with other "northern" countries) will induce reform and openness in Pyongyang is another matter.

#### 4. Concluding Remarks

As North Korea's most important economic and military supplier, the Soviet Union was believed to have more potential leverage over North Korea than any other country. After the Soviet Union established diplomatic relations with South Korea, it was expected to play a mediating role between the two Koreas. As the link weakened between Moscow and Pyongyang, Moscow lost much of its influence over North Korea.

South Korea's nordpolitik has yielded a mixed outcome. Nordpolitik succeeded in multiplying economic, cultural, and diplomatic relations with the Communist world. In doing so,

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<sup>57</sup>*Chosun Ilbo* (New York Edition), December 19, 1990, p. 21.

nordpolitik greatly reduced the likelihood of an armed conflict on the Korean peninsula. Nordpolitik also laid the foundation for peaceful coexistence between South and North Korea with two Koreas' separate entry into the UN. Inter-Korean relations have witnessed remarkable progress in recent years: South and North Korea signed an "Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-aggression, Exchanges and Cooperation" and agreed on a "Joint Declaration for a Non-Nuclear Korean Peninsula" in December 1991. Inter-Korean trade has been increasing steadily and large-scale economic cooperation may ensue in the near future.

Nevertheless, Pyongyang's reluctance to renounce completely its nuclear weapons program is a major obstacle to the normalization of inter-Korean relations and improved relations between Pyongyang and the West. The current regime in North Korea appears to believe that nuclear capability is the most reliable basis for ensuring its separate existence as a state as long as it resists unification in terms other than its own. That is, it is a guarantee against the events that occurred in East Germany. After this regime's collapse or passing, the situation, of course, may change.

The ultimate measure of nordpolitik's success will be North Korea's decision on its nuclear program. Nordpolitik heightened the North Korean leaders' sense of isolation and inadvertently drove them into a nuclear weapons program.

Now the ultimate task of nordpolitik is to relieve their perception of outside threat and encirclement. The shortcut to a nuclear-free Korean peninsula may lie in increased interactions and patient negotiation with Pyongyang. Pyongyang is more likely to reform its economic and political system when exposed to the outside world. Political negotiations and economic incentives rather than forceful means seem to be the key to resolving North Korea's nuclear issue and to the success of nordpolitik.

## CHAPTER 6

### SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD THE KOREAN PENINSULA IN THE PRE-GORBACHEV ERA

In the pre-Gorbachev era, Soviet policy toward the Korean peninsula was determined largely by ideological and geo-strategic considerations. Ideological ties with North Korea as a member of the Socialist commonwealth and North Korea's geo-strategic importance in the midst of the Sino-Soviet dispute constrained Soviet policy toward the two Koreas. As long as the Cold War between the two diametrically opposed socioeconomic systems persisted and the Sino-Soviet dispute between the two largest Socialist countries continued, the Soviet Union fully supported North Korea's position on the Korean question and refrained from any official contacts with South Korea. In the early 1970s, when U.S.-Soviet détente started, Moscow allowed limited contacts with Seoul at the unofficial level while maintaining traditional ties with Pyongyang.

### 1. The Korean Peninsula as a Secondary Interest in Soviet Foreign Policy

Until recently, Soviet foreign policy had been Eurocentric. East Asia was not high on the Soviet political agenda and relations with the U.S. and Europe were the primary concern of the Kremlin: "The very character of the Soviet Union constrains it to face west, not east. Its population is concentrated in European Russia, where also is located most of the usable land, heavy industry, and the roots of Russian culture."<sup>1</sup>

During the Cold War period, the Soviet Union regarded East Asia primarily in the context of world-wide confrontation with the United States. The highest priority of Soviet foreign policy in the region had been placed on searching for strategic allies and reducing threats to Soviet security interests, which originated from the fierce rivalry with the U.S.

The Korean question itself had not been a high priority issue in Soviet policies in East Asia.<sup>2</sup> Soviet policy

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas W. Robinson, "The Soviet Union and East Asia," in E. A. Kolodziej and R. Kanet, eds., *The Limits of Soviet Power in the Developing World* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), p. 172.

<sup>2</sup>See Max Beloff, *Soviet Policy in the Far East: 1944-1951* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), pp. 154-207. The secondary importance of the Korean peninsula in Soviet foreign policy is also reflected by the fact that the two Koreas had rarely been treated in the Soviet press, books, and periodicals. Soviet media coverage of North Korea was even more reduced as a result of North Korea's tilt toward

toward Korea was subordinate to its policies toward the United States, China, and Japan. Soviet relations with the two Koreas were important primarily because of their effect on Soviet relations with the larger powers. Therefore, Soviet strategies in Korea should be viewed in the context of other Soviet commitments and concerns in East Asia. Soviet interest in the Korean peninsula in the pre-Gorbachev era was determined largely by military and political confrontations with the U.S. and by Soviet strategies in China (i.e., the containment of China).

Through the 1950s, when Russia and China were allies, and Japan was still recovering from the trauma of defeat, the competition in the Korean peninsula remained largely a two-party rivalry between the Soviet Union and the United States. But after the Sino-Soviet split in the early 1960s, Russia and China resumed their historic rivalry by vying for influence in North Korea.<sup>3</sup>

Soviet interest in North Korea was essentially secondary and thus limited prior to the Sino-Soviet dispute. When China began to challenge Soviet hegemony in the world's

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China in the 1960s. See Peter Berton, "The Soviet Union and Korea: Perceptions, Scholarship, Propaganda," *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies* (Spring 1986), p. 25.

<sup>3</sup>Donald S. Zagoria, "The USSR and the Issue of Korean Reunification," in Tae-Hwan Kwak et al., eds., *Korean Reunification* (Seoul: Kyungnam University Press, 1984), p. 191. See also Charles B. McLane, "Korea in Russia's East Asian Policy," in Young C. Kim, ed., *Major Powers and Korea* (Silver Spring, MD: Research Institute on Korean Affairs, 1973), pp. 13-14; Ralph N. Clough, "The Soviet Union and the Two Koreas," in Donald S. Zagoria, ed., *Soviet Policy in East Asia* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 195.

"Socialist camp" and emerged as a major regional power in East Asia, North Korea's value was greatly enhanced in terms of Soviet security interests in the region. The USSR's perception of China became the dominant factor influencing its policies toward Pyongyang.<sup>4</sup>

Soviet policy toward Korea during this period was not elaborated in a detailed and explicit doctrine, but its basic features could be summarized as follows: (1) deter the renewal of military hostilities on the Korean peninsula because of the possibility of an immediate threat to the Soviet Union in the Far East and the danger of direct conflict with the U.S.; (2) prevent the U.S. from establishing control over the entire Korean peninsula and exclude the possible extension of the capitalist system to the northern part of Korea; (3) contribute to the consolidation of the Socialist system in the DPRK in order to create more favorable conditions for peaceful competition between South and North Korea and between the Socialist and capitalist camps as a whole; and (4) maintain a military balance between North Korea and South Korea in order to ensure an equilibrium of forces on the Korean peninsula as well as strategic parity in the Far East.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Joseph M. Ha, "Soviet Perceptions of North Korea," *Asian Perspective* (Seoul), Vol. 6, No. 2 (Fall-Winter 1982), pp. 120-121.

<sup>5</sup>Oleg Davidov, "Soviet Policy Toward the Korean Peninsula in the 1990s," *The Korean Journal of International Studies* (Spring 1990), pp. 424-425. See also Gennady Chufirin,

## 2. Soviet Interests in Korea: Geo-strategy and Ideology

Initially, Soviet policy toward Korea was a continuation of Tsarist policy and was derived from the geo-strategic location of the Korean peninsula as a part of the hostile Japanese Empire bordering on the Pacific marches of the USSR. After North Korea was established under the auspices of the Kremlin in 1948 as a satellite of the USSR, Soviet ideological ties with North Korea became a crucial consideration in Soviet policy toward North Korea and the entire Korean peninsula. The Japanese threat in turn was replaced with American pressure on South Korea. The ideological connection between North Korean Communist leader Kim Il Sung and the doctrine and beliefs of the Soviet Communist Party served as the basis for a persistent bond between Moscow and Pyongyang.<sup>6</sup> In the same vein, Oleg Davidov defined the Soviet approach to the Korean peninsula until the mid-1980s as "geopolitical" and "internationalist":

At that time the Soviet approach could be qualified as "geopolitical" since the solution of the Korean problem

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"Hanguktongil: soryonsigag" [Korean Unification: A Soviet Perspective], *Sasang* (Seoul) (Spring 1991), p. 166.

<sup>6</sup>Joseph M. Ha and Linda Beth Jensen, "Soviet Policy toward North Korea," in Jae Kyu Park et al., eds., *The Foreign Relations of North Korea* (Seoul: Kyungnam University Press, 1987; Colorado: Westview Press, 1987), p. 141.

was viewed to be dependent on the course of competition between world-wide socialist and capitalist forces, as well as the competition between the two superpowers. And secondly, it could be called "internationalist"--so long as North Korea was regarded as the Eastern outpost of the whole socialism camp, the policy of that country received automatic and full support from the part of the Soviet Union.<sup>7</sup>

#### A. Geo-strategic Interest

Korea has been a storm center in East Asia due to its geographical location. Surrounded by three of the great powers--China, the USSR/Russia, and Japan--it has been both bridge and battleground among its neighbors.<sup>8</sup> Each considers Korea to be of geo-strategic importance to its own security and, in the past century, has sought to dominate it. Since the end of World War II, the United States has also developed a major security interest in Korea. Major powers surrounding the Korean peninsula were involved in three major wars--the First Sino-Japanese War of 1894-85,

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<sup>7</sup>Oleg Davidov, "Soviet Policy Toward the Korean Peninsula in the 1990s," p. 425.

<sup>8</sup>The Koreans have endured enormous suffering from the almost constant invasion of surrounding powers. Whenever the surrounding powers fought among themselves over the Korean peninsula, the Korean people became the innocent victims. A Korean saying succinctly describes the situation: "when the whales fight, the shrimp suffers." From the Japanese perspective, the Korean peninsula points "like a dagger at the heart of Japan." From the Chinese perspective, it may serve as a bridge for a Japanese invasion of the mainland. The Russians consider Korea to be strategically crucial to the security of Siberia and the Far East.

the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, and the Korean War of 1950-53--for the domination of Korea.

Imperial Russia's interest in Korea derived from Korea's geo-strategic importance. Tsarist Russia reached the Pacific Ocean by the 1860s through territorial acquisition in the Far East and East Siberia. Through the Aigun Treaty of 1858, it seized the territory north of the Amur and Ussuri Rivers from China. Russia and Korea began to share a common border in 1860, when Russia acquired an additional vast territory from China (the Maritime province) in the Peking Treaty of 1860. Initially, between the 1850s and the 1890s, the Russians showed little interest in Korea.<sup>9</sup> After Korea was forced to open its door to Japan in 1879, Russia formed a diplomatic relationship with Korea in 1884. At least until the 1890s, the Russians were not interested in carving out spheres of influence in Korea.

Imperial Russia's primary goal in the late nineteenth century in East Asia was to consolidate and exploit its newly acquired territory in Siberia. In order to secure this newly acquired territory, Russia established de facto control of Manchuria. In order to secure Manchuria, Russia in turn sought a dominant power position in Korea. According to one Korean writer, "It was in this context that

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<sup>9</sup>Sung-hwan Chang, "Russian Designs on the Far East," in Taras Hunszak, ed., *Russian Imperialism from Ivan the Great to the Revolution* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1974), p. 301.

Russia's political objectives in Korea came to be defined. This is not to say . . . that Russia had specific designs to control the country politically or to obtain certain strategic advantages."<sup>10</sup> In other words, Tsarist Russia came to be involved in the affairs of its neighbor, Korea, from "a largely preventive point of view: that is, Korea must not become a source of threat to Manchuria."<sup>11</sup> Thus, Russia's political aim in Korea between 1895-1904, when Russo-Japanese competition over Korea intensified, was not so much the attainment of an exclusively superior position for itself as to deny military advantage to Japan.

Besides the goal of defending Siberia, Tsarist Russia was interested in Korea because of its warm water ports. In a marginal note dated 25 March/6 April 1985, Nicholas II of Russia wrote: "It is absolutely necessary that Russia should have a port which is free and open during the entire year. This port must be on the mainland (southeastern Korea) and must be connected with our existing possessions by a strip

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<sup>10</sup>Sung-hwan Chang, "Russian Designs on the Far East," p. 303.

<sup>11</sup>Memorandum of V.N. Lamsdorf to Nicholas II, November 22, 1901, in *Krasnyi Arkhiv*, 63, cited from Sung-hwan Chang, "Russian Designs on the Far East," p. 304.

of land."<sup>12</sup> Russia's southward movement in Korea was foiled effectively by the concerted efforts of Britain and Japan.<sup>13</sup>

As a result of Japan's victories in both the First Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, Japan gained the dominant position in Korea. Japan forcefully annexed Korea in 1910 and ruled it as a province until the end of the Pacific War. At Yalta in February 1945, F. D. Roosevelt, Joseph Stalin, and Winston Churchill struck a secret deal regarding Soviet entry into the Pacific War against Japan. Stalin agreed to join the war against Japan in the Pacific within three months of Germany's defeat in Europe. In return, Stalin demanded that the Soviet position in the Far East be generally re-established to that held before the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05. In accordance with the Yalta agreement, the Soviet Union declared war against Japan on August 8, 1945, and launched its invasion of Manchuria and Korea. The dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9, respectively, forced Japan to surrender unconditionally.

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<sup>12</sup>Krasnyi Arkhiv, 52 (1932), cited from Robert M. Slusser, "Soviet Far Eastern Policy, 1945-50: Stalin's Goals in Korea," in Yonosuke Nagai and Akira Iriye, eds., *The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1977), p. 143.

<sup>13</sup>In the late nineteenth century, Imperial Russia told Japan that it was interested in carving up the Korean peninsula into spheres of influence along the 39th parallel. Japan, who was seeking complete domination of Korea, rejected the offer.

The Japanese surrender and the Soviet landing on the Korean peninsula totally altered the history of contemporary Korea.

When the Japanese surrendered on August 15, 1945, the Soviet Red Army was already operating in the northern part of Korea and advancing to the south rapidly, while the American forces were more than 1,000 miles south of the Korean peninsula. On August 15, President Harry Truman proposed the division of Korea at the 38th parallel in a bid to prevent Soviet occupation of the entire Korean peninsula. The next day Stalin agreed. As a result, the divided Koreas fell under the separate control of the occupation forces of the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

Stalin's long-term goal for the Korean peninsula was to attain Soviet domination of the entire country as a base for the extension and strengthening of Soviet power in the Far East. When Stalin accepted Truman's proposal to divide the Korean peninsula along the 38th parallel in August 1945, he postponed his long-term goal of communizing the entire Korean peninsula, and shifted his focus to a short-term goal, i.e., the establishment of a firm base in northern Korea.<sup>14</sup> The geo-strategic importance of the Korean peninsula to the security of the Soviet Far East led the Soviet Union to prevent any of the major powers in the

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<sup>14</sup>Robert M. Slusser, "Soviet Far Eastern Policy, 1945-50: Stalin's Goals in Korea," in Yonosuke Nagai and Akira Iriye, eds., *The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1977), p. 138.

region from gaining dominant influence in the Korean peninsula and to maintain friendly ties with North Korea.

The Soviets were interested primarily in the creation of a "friendly" state in Korea. The Soviet Union's fundamental interest in Korea still derived from its strategic location. Colonel General T. F. Shtikov, top Soviet representative for the U.S.-Soviet Joint Commission organized to establish a provisional Korean government, reiterated Soviet interest in establishing a friendly state in Korea in his statement on March 20, 1946: "The Soviet Union has a keen interest in Korea being a true democratic and independent country, friendly to the Soviet Union, so that in the future it will not become a base for an attack on the Soviet Union."<sup>15</sup> Shtikov candidly informed the U.S. representative on the commission, Lieutenant General John R. Hodge, that the Soviet Union could not risk individuals hostile to the Soviet Union coming to power in Korea; it wanted a government that would be "loyal" to the Soviet Union.<sup>16</sup>

Initially the U.S. and the Soviet Union attempted to create a unified Korea through negotiations, but to no avail. After the U.S. submitted the Korean question to the UN in September 1947, the UN General Assembly adopted a

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<sup>15</sup>U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946*, Vol. 8 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971), p. 653.

<sup>16</sup>Carl Berger, *The Korean Knot* (Philadelphia: University Of Pennsylvania Press, 1957), p. 69.

resolution calling for a nationwide election throughout Korea to form a unified Korean government. After Soviet-controlled North Korea refused to accept the UN resolution, two separate elections were held in the South and the North, resulting in the creation of two separate regimes under different socioeconomic systems in 1948.<sup>17</sup> In September 1948, the USSR approved the formal establishment of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in the north, in response to the creation of the Republic of Korea (ROK) in the South in August 1948.

Since the end of World War II, North Korea had been serving as a buffer for the Soviet Union, first against a potential U.S.-Japanese threat and later against China. The short borderline shared by the DPRK and the USSR is extremely close to Vladivostok, the site of the headquarters of the Soviet Pacific Fleet. The Korean peninsula was geo-strategically vital to both Soviet naval and air forces as a gateway either into Soviet air and naval bases in Asia or from them into the Pacific.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>The Republic of Korea (ROK) was proclaimed on August 15, 1948 and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) was declared on September 9, 1948.

<sup>18</sup>Stephen Blank, "Soviet Perspectives on Arms Control in the Korean Peninsula," p. 130. Basil Dmytryshyn lists five reasons for Soviet interest in the Korean peninsula from the geo-strategic perspective: first, in Soviet hands the area could serve to extend a Soviet semi-circle around Manchuria to intimidate or neutralize China as a great power. Second, Soviet domination of the peninsula would effectively remove American presence from the mainland of Asia. Third, such a development would give the USSR powerful leverage (military, economic, diplomatic and psychological) to compel Japan to

Although North Korea had not always been a subservient ally to the USSR, especially since the late 1950s, she still played a crucial role in Soviet strategic considerations. Pyongyang often acted against Soviet wishes and sometimes openly attacked Soviet policies. Because of the strategic importance of North Korea, the Soviet Union did not expel North Korea from the Socialist camp, and continued to provide the country with economic and military assistance. The Soviet Union could not afford to lose North Korea to its main rival, China.<sup>19</sup>

#### B. Ideological Interests

With the initiation of the Cold War and the establishment of a Socialist country in the northern Korean peninsula, ideological ties with Pyongyang became another crucial concern of Moscow's foreign policy in East Asia. Since the DPRK was established in September 1948 under the auspices of the Soviet Union, the survival of the Socialist

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cooperate with Soviet designs in the Far East. Fourth, in their hands, Korea would provide many excellent warm-water ports to the Soviet fleet, thus giving the USSR a nearly complete monopoly in the North Pacific. Finally, Soviet control of the entire Korean peninsula would place at their disposal rich human and natural resources to assist the economic development of the Soviet Far East--from Lake Baikal to the shores of the Sea of Okhotsk (Basil Dmytryshyn, "Soviet Perceptions of South Korea," *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 6, No. 2 [Fall-Winter 1982], p. 73).

<sup>19</sup>Ralph N. Clough, "The Soviet Union and the Two Koreas," p. 187.

regime in North Korea had been a great concern of the world Socialist movement. Soviet ideological interest dictated defense of the "gains of revolution," i.e., regimes and territories in both Socialist countries and Socialist-oriented regimes. In Asia, the gains of the revolution included North Korea, Mongolia, Vietnam, and Afghanistan.

Since 1948, fraternal links had existed between the Soviet Communist Party and the Korean Workers' Party (KWP). Ideological ties enabled Pyongyang to use party channels, call on "class and anti-imperialist fidelity," and get "the Soviet Communist Party structures to give orders to Soviet institutions to provide the DPRK with unilateral or, at least, greater benefits."<sup>20</sup> The Soviets, especially those belonging to the "military-industry-party apparatus complex" considered North Korea to be a "truly Socialist" state, a member of the "world Socialist community" and a bulwark against "American imperialism and Japanese militarism." These attitudes toward North Korea determined the Soviet approach to Pyongyang and Seoul.<sup>21</sup>

Even after Gorbachev's new political thinking was officially promulgated, the "old thinkers" who rejected perestroika and new political thinking in the Soviet Union advocated closer ideological unity with the Socialist regime

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<sup>20</sup>See Vasily V. Mikheev, "New Soviet Approaches to North Korea," p. 447.

<sup>21</sup>Eugen Bazhanov and Natash Bazhanov, "Soviet Views on North Korea," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 31, No. 12 (December 1991), p. 1123.

in North Korea. Some old thinkers maintained that "North Korea and China are the only Socialist states left in the world and sooner or later [the Soviets] will have to unite with them again in order to save our country from chaos and imperialist domination and to return to the 'time-tested Socialist ways.'"<sup>22</sup> Ideological ties between these two Socialist countries adversely affected Soviet relations with South Korea. For a long time, Soviet ties with Pyongyang, which were based on class principles, were an obstacle to normalizing relations with Seoul.<sup>23</sup>

### 3. Soviet Foreign Policy Toward South Korea in the Pre-Gorbachev Era

Soviet-South Korean relations before Gorbachev can be divided roughly into two periods: (1) No-contact and hostility (1945-1970) and (2) Unofficial, limited contacts and exchanges (1971-1984).

#### **A. No-contact and Hostility (1945-1970)**

The Cold War environment during this period militated against official contact and exchanges between Moscow and

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp. 1124-1125.

<sup>23</sup>Vasily V. Mikheev, "New Soviet Approaches to North Korea," p. 446.

Seoul. In 1946-1948, the Soviet Union used South Korea's Communist Party as an instrument of its foreign policy and the Soviet consulate in Seoul became the headquarters for Soviet operations in the South. The Consul General, Andrei Polyanski, maintained contacts with Communist leaders and served as an intermediary between the Communist regime in the North and the Communists in the South. In April 1946, Polyanski was expelled by the U.S. authorities in the South for illegal operations and the Soviet consulate in Seoul was closed in 1946.<sup>24</sup>

After the two Koreas were established separately on the Korean peninsula in 1948, Soviet attitudes toward South Korea were largely determined by Soviet relations with the United States, China, Japan, and North Korea. Whenever the international climate was "cold," Soviet attitudes toward South Korea were antagonistic; conversely, whenever the climate was "warm" they were less hostile.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, the "North Korean factor" deterred any initiatives from the Soviets to establish contacts or communications between Moscow and Seoul.

The Soviet attitude toward South Korea until the late 1980s was entirely negative; the belief was that South Korea was a creature of the U.S. Soviet media and publications

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<sup>24</sup>David J. Dallin, *Soviet Russia and Far East* (Archon Book, 1971), p. 307.

<sup>25</sup>Basil Dmytryshyn, "Soviet Perceptions of South Korea," p. 77.

often treated South Korea with hostility, calling it "a base of American imperialism in the Far East," "a capitalist-military base against Socialist North Korea," "a chariot of the Pentagon directed against the USSR," "a springboard for various provocations and military adventurism," "a country of oppressive military-bureaucratic dictatorship," "the last American outpost on the continent of Asia," and "a backbone of the American defense treaty system in the Pacific."<sup>26</sup>

The Kremlin never considered South Korea a bona fide independent state. Until recently, the Soviets considered South Korea an artificially created temporary outpost of American imperialism that sooner or later would disappear once America withdrew its support for South Korea's unpopular government. Until about 1970, the Soviets failed to analyze seriously the working of South Korea's complex political system. They merely followed protests and strikes in the South and expected a social revolution to lead eventually to Korean unification under a Socialist system. South Korea's remarkable economic achievement in the 1960s forced the Soviets to take a new look at South Korean society. As a result, Soviet leaders and the public began to be acquainted with the formal structure of South Korea's political system.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 76-77.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 78.

### **B. Unofficial, Limited Contacts and Exchanges (1971-1985)**

In the 1970s, for the first time the Soviet Union and South Korea made personal contacts and exchanges at the unofficial and non-political level. As long as the Cold War persisted between the two superpowers, inter-Korean relations were hostile and the Soviet Union maintained an alliance with North Korea; it was unthinkable, then, for Moscow and Seoul to initiate any kind of relationship. Détente between the U.S. and the USSR and rapprochement between the U.S. and the PRC in the 1970s provided favorable circumstances for Soviet-South Korean contacts. By the same token, South Korean President Park Chung Hee's peace initiative in the early 1970s toward Communist countries (nordpolitik) also contributed to the process of reconciliation between Seoul and Moscow.

In the atmosphere of U.S.-Soviet détente in the early 1970s, the Kremlin's primary interest was in peace and stability in the Korean peninsula and the East Asian region. Soviet interest in the status quo on the Korean peninsula was evident in the early period of détente, when Moscow expanded unofficial relations with Seoul and pressured Kim Il Sung to relax his revolutionary posture toward Seoul. In private talks, Soviet scholars expressed their interest in

applying the German precedent to the Korean case. A Soviet commentary in 1972 welcomed the opening of talks between North and South, which would lead to peace and stability in Korea. The commentator referred approvingly to the precedent of East and West Germany.<sup>28</sup> In December 1978, the visit to Pyongyang by East German Leader Erich Honecker was obviously related to Soviet interest in the status quo in Korea. During the official visit, Honecker reportedly stated that East Germany was fully reconciled to the partition of Germany into two states. This statement was criticized harshly by Kim Il Sung.<sup>29</sup>

The search for peace and stability in Korea was not the only motive behind Moscow's gestures toward Seoul in the 1970s. The emergence of South Korea as a respected member of the international community and its transformation during the past two decades into a major economic power led to Soviet attention to South Korea. In addition, the Kremlin might have used the "South Korean Card" against North Korea as a hedge against close ties between Pyongyang and Beijing.

Since the early 1970s, despite North Korean protests, the Soviets allowed South Korean nationals to attend international conferences held in the USSR. In 1973, a South Korean businessman was allowed to visit Leningrad with a tour group and a dramatist was admitted to attend a

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<sup>28</sup>Commentary by Ligonov, in *FBIS-SOV*, November 22, 1972, pp. C2, C3.

<sup>29</sup>*Korea Herald*, March 23, 1978.

theater meeting in that city. In August 1973, a South Korean team was permitted to participate in the World University Games in Moscow; in protest, North Korea refused to send a sports team to Moscow. In November 1973, through U.S. efforts, the ROK ambassador to the U.S., Kim Tong Cho, met with his Soviet counterpart, Anatoly Dobrynin, in Washington to discuss the Korean question. In July 1974, the ROK reported that non-governmental contacts with the Soviets regarding trade possibilities had taken place and that "prospects for Soviet-South Korean trade were good."<sup>30</sup>

Soviet leaders made several gestures toward improved relations with South Korea. The first came in early 1978 when an off-course South Korean commercial airliner was forced to land at Murmansk near Archangel. On this occasion, the Soviet Union promptly released the crew members and passengers of the Korean airliner. In an unusual move, President Park Chung Hee of South Korea expressed "profound gratitude" to the Soviet authorities for their cooperation in this matter.<sup>31</sup> Later that year, the Soviets granted visas to a South Korean girls volleyball team so that it could compete at an international tournament in Leningrad. Moscow allowed South Korean Minister of Health and Social Affairs Shin Hyon Hwack and his delegation to attend a WHO (World Health Organization) conference in

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<sup>30</sup> Jane P. Shapiro, "Soviet Policy Towards North Korea and Korean Unification," *Pacific Affairs* (Fall 1975), p. 350.

<sup>31</sup> *Korea Herald*, April 25, 1978.

Alma Ata in the summer of 1978. This marked the first time that the Soviets had admitted a cabinet-level minister from South Korea. Moreover, the local newspaper, *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, for the first time referred to South Korea by its official name, "Republic of Korea," in reporting the meeting.<sup>32</sup>

Although the Soviet authorities had been admitting South Korean nationals since the early 1970s, they did not allow Soviet citizens to visit Seoul until 1982. In October 1982, three delegates from the Soviet news agency TASS entered South Korea legally to attend a meeting of the Organization of Asian-Pacific News Agencies, and met with President Chun Doo Hwan. On the same day, Popov, Director of the Bureau for Protection of the Arts and Cultural Assets of the Soviet Ministry of Culture, came to Seoul to attend the Asian regional meeting of the Council of World Museums. In March 1983, two Soviet delegates participated in the meeting of the Executive Committee of the International Cooperatives Association held in Seoul.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>FBIS-EAS, September 7, 1978, p. E. In October 1977, Han Pyo Wook, South Korean ambassador to Great Britain, visited the Soviet Union to participate in a UN Children's Emergency Fund Meeting (UNICEF) (Manwoo Lee, "Soviet Perceptions of South Korea: The Prospects for Normalization of Relations Between The Soviet Union and South Korea," in Tae-Hwan Kwak et al., eds., *The Two Koreas in World Politics* [Seoul: Kyungnam University Press, 1983], p. 263).

<sup>33</sup>Chungang Ilbo, August 20, 1984, p. 2, in FBIS-APA-84-164, August 22, 1984, pp. E8-E9.

In 1981, Soviet economic organizations were authorized for the first time to engage in indirect trade with South Korea, while Soviet citizens were allowed to visit Seoul to participate in international forums there.<sup>34</sup> The Soviets increasingly acknowledged the remarkable economic achievements of the NICs (Newly Industrializing Countries) in East Asia, including South Korea. In 1983, an article dealing with MNCs (Multinational Corporations) in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and South Korea was published in the Soviet Union. According to its author, the emergence of these companies was "an important event in the region's economic life"; they were "increasingly to be reckoned with in international economic relations." The author continued that the dynamic expansion of operations by these MNCs had resulted in the emergence of "a fresh center of economic power in the Far East."<sup>35</sup>

These gestures by the Soviets were major steps designed to open some avenues of communication. Nevertheless, improvement in Soviet-South Korean relations was slow. The unofficial contacts between the two countries in the 1970s and early 1980s should not be construed as a major policy

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<sup>34</sup>Oleg Davidov, "Soviet Policy Toward the Korean Peninsula in the 1990s," p. 428.

<sup>35</sup>A. Bereznoy, "Multinational Companies of Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea," *Far Eastern Affairs* (Moscow), pp. 187-189.

change by the Soviet Union toward South Korea. Still, Moscow had no unilateral position on South Korea.<sup>36</sup>

Despite increased unofficial contact between Seoul and Moscow, the Soviet press and publications condemned South Korea's political system and expressed sympathy toward North Korea's policy on unification and arms control. As late as 1983, then Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko characterized South Korea as "a huge base, more precisely a complex of bases of nuclear weapons."<sup>37</sup>

The Soviet destruction of Korean Air Line Flight 007 in 1983, however, redounded to North Korea's advantage, drawing the two nations closer together. The North Korean government issued a pronouncement that fully supported the USSR on the incident until Soviet authorities publicized their decision not to attend the Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU) conference being held in Seoul (three weeks after the incident). Subsequently, when seventeen South Korean officials were assassinated by North Korean agents in an explosion in Rangoon, Burma, on October 10, 1983, Soviet commentators rejected the generally held view (later

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<sup>36</sup>Manwoo Lee, "Soviet Perceptions of South Korea: The Prospects for Normalization of Relations Between The Soviet Union and South Korea," p. 278.

<sup>37</sup>Peter Berton, "The Soviet Union and Korea: Perceptions, Scholarship, Propaganda," p. 15. The negative attitude of the Soviet Union toward South Korea in the 1970s was clearly visible in Soviet writings. See, for example, V. Marionov, "South Korea in the Vice of Neo-Colonialism," *International Affairs* (Moscow), No. 7, 1978; D. Kapussin, "South Korea in the United States Far Eastern Policy," *Far Eastern Affairs* (Moscow), No. 4, 1978.

confirmed by Burmese authorities) that the North Koreans were responsible for this terrorist act.

#### 4. Soviet Policy Toward North Korea in the Pre-Gorbachev Era

The Soviet-North Korean relationship can be divided approximately into three periods: (1) 1945-1950--the period of Moscow's influence over Pyongyang when Moscow made an effort to transform North Korea into a satellite state and enjoyed its greatest influence over it; (2) 1951-1960--the transitional period from Moscow's dominance when Pyongyang attempted to break away from Soviet dominance; and (3) 1961-1985--the period of Pyongyang's political autonomy when North Korea essentially maintained equidistance from Beijing and Moscow.<sup>38</sup>

##### **A. The Soviet Union's Influence over North Korea (1945-1950)**

Sovietization of North Korea from 1945 to 1948 followed the typical East European pattern, involving a three-stage take-over procedure. Indeed, North Korea is the only

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<sup>38</sup>This periodization is based on the analysis in Joseph M. Ha and Linda Beth Jensen, "Soviet Policy Toward North Korea," p. 143.

postwar Asian state in which the Communists gained power in this fashion.<sup>39</sup>

Soviet control over North Korea was initiated through the installation of Soviet Korean émigrés into top positions; prominent in the political hierarchy were Korean Communists who had received training in the USSR or whose contacts had been primarily with the Soviet Union as opposed to China. Even though the Soviet troop withdrawal from North Korea was completed by January 1, 1949, Soviet advisors stayed to work with North Korea's government, military, and secret agency organizations. North Korea's military also was almost entirely dependent upon the Soviet Union for military hardware. At the same time, the Soviets began to reorganize the North Korean economy so that it fit Soviet economic requirements. In 1950, three-quarters of North Korea's foreign trade was with the Soviet Union.<sup>40</sup>

North Korea was a virtual satellite of the USSR before the Korean War. With the massive introduction of Chinese

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<sup>39</sup>Jane P. Shapiro, "Soviet Policy Towards North Korea and Korean Unification," *Pacific Affairs* (Fall 1975), p. 337. The building of the Communist system met with little resistance. Since the Japanese had ruled Korea for nearly four decades with an iron hand, allowing no opportunities for the Koreans to organize their own political groups, there were no deeply rooted native organizations that could hinder Soviet policy. So when Japan's political power collapsed with the arrival of Soviet forces, North Korean society was left with a power vacuum that was quickly filled by the Soviet command. See Frederica M. Bunge, ed., *North Korea: A Country Study*, 3d. ed. (Washington, D.C.: The American University Press, February 1981), pp. 21-22.

<sup>40</sup>Joseph M. Ha, "Soviet Perceptions of North Korea," p. 39.

troops during this war, the situation began to change.<sup>41</sup> China's influence over North Korea increased relative to the Soviet Union's during the Korean War and thereafter.

#### **B. Transition from Dominant Soviet Influence (1954-1960)**

After Kim Il Sung began to steer an independent course in the midst of intensifying Sino-Soviet conflict, the Kremlin tried to win North Korea's support and cooperation through military assistance, trade, and economic assistance. Moscow put considerable resources into North Korean development in terms of technology transfer, ruble support, advisors, and plant construction. In fact, Soviet economic help to North Korea greatly contributed to North Korea's economic recovery and reconstruction after the Korean War. In addition, the Soviets provided advanced weapons and high-technology military equipment to North Korea in order to maintain a military balance with South Korean forces and U.S. forces in Korea. Over the years, the North Koreans came to depend on the Soviets for economic and military assistance. Nevertheless, Kim Il Sung never sided with Moscow and continued his independent foreign policy based on *Chuche* (self-reliance).

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<sup>41</sup>Robert A. Scalapino, "Current Dynamics of the Korean Peninsula," *Problems of Communism* (November-December 1981), p. 27.

Since the 1950s, Soviet-North Korean relations have been highly unstable and unpredictable. Faced with Soviet attempts to control North Korea during the late 1940s and early 1950s, North Korean leader Kim Il Sung acted to reduce Moscow's domination over North Korea. From the beginning of 1954 to the end of 1958, Kim actively designed ways to reduce Soviet control over his country.<sup>42</sup> Kim's perception that Soviet assistance during the Korean War was too little, too late, and that the Soviets were exploiting the North Korean economy led him to embark on an independent foreign policy. Soviet attempts to interfere in North Korea's domestic affairs in the late 1950s also contributed to Kim Il Sung's bitterness toward the Soviets. Soviet-oriented Korean rivals of Kim sought to weaken his position by espousing Soviet criticisms of the cult of personality following Khrushchev's secret speech to the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU in 1956. The Soviets also criticized North Korean economic policies.

For their part, the Soviets considered Kim Il Sung to be an unreliable and untrustworthy ally. Kim's maneuvering between Moscow and Beijing in the midst of the Sino-Soviet dispute was a source of frustration to the Soviet leadership. Over time, North Korea and the Soviet Union

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<sup>42</sup>For Kim Il Sung's power consolidation from 1950 until 1958, see Koon Woo Nam, *The North Korean Communist Leadership 1945-1965* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1974).

developed mutual feelings of distrust and concern about each party's motivations and goals.<sup>43</sup>

The Sino-Soviet dispute profoundly affected both the attitude and behavior of the Soviet Union toward North Korea.<sup>44</sup> Prior to the eruption of the Sino-Soviet dispute, the Soviets might have allowed North Korea a limited degree of political autonomy. After 1960, the Soviets became more intolerant toward Kim Il Sung.

Kim Il Sung was indebted to both the Soviet Union and China. He owed his rise to power in the 1940s to the patronage of the Soviet occupation authorities. China's direct military involvement saved Kim Il Sung's regime from a total defeat in the Korean War. Thus, Pyongyang sought to maintain friendly relations with Moscow and Beijing.

Initially, in the early stage of the Sino-Soviet dispute from 1956 to 1961, North Korea endeavored to maintain neutrality between the two giants. Although North

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<sup>43</sup>Joseph M. Ha, "Soviet Perceptions of North Korea," p. 111.

<sup>44</sup>For North Korea's relations with Moscow and Beijing in the context of the Sino-Soviet dispute, see B. C. Koh, *The Foreign Policy Systems of North and South Korea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 204-209; Roy U. T. Kim, "North Korea's Relations with Moscow and Peking: Big Influence of a Small Ally," in Young C. Kim, ed., *Foreign Policies of Korea* (Washington, D.C.: The Institute for Asian Studies, 1973), pp. 95-115; Robert A. Scalapino and Chongsik Lee, *Communism in Korea, Part I: The Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), pp. 576-646; Jounghwon Alexander Kim, "Soviet Policy in North Korea," *World Politics* (January 1970), pp. 24-38; Chin O. Chung, *Pyongyang Between Peking and Moscow: North Korea's Involvement in the Sino-Soviet Dispute, 1958-1975* (Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1978).

Korea clearly sympathized with Beijing with respect to major issues, such as de-Stalinization and peaceful coexistence with the West, it paid lip service to the new policy lines from Moscow.

At the same time, Pyongyang continued to strengthen its ties with Beijing. North Korea adopted China's economic development model in 1958; its *Chullima* (Legendary Flying Horse) movement was apparently modeled after the Great Leap Forward movement, and its integration of agricultural cooperatives was patterned after the commune movement. More importantly, Premier Zhou Enlai visited Pyongyang in February 1958, and Premier Kim Il Sung made a return visit to Beijing in November and December of the same year; this was Kim's third visit to China since 1953.<sup>45</sup>

Historically, geographically, and culturally, the North Koreans are more inclined toward China than the Soviet Union.

It was the Chinese and not the Russians who came to the rescue when North Korea was pushed back to the Yalu River during the Korean War. It was the Chinese outright grant versus the Soviet loan, and it was the Chinese army that stayed in Korea until 1958, that helped restore North Korea from the ravages of the war, versus the Soviet army that took with them the industrial facilities left behind in Korea by the Japanese when it withdrew from Korea in 1948. . . .

To the North Koreans, the Soviet Union is still a European nation compared to China, an Asian nation.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Jane P. Shapiro, "Soviet Policy Towards North Korea and Korean Unification," p. 338.

<sup>46</sup>Dae-Sook Suh, "Changes in Sino-Soviet Policies Toward Korea and Implications for the United States," paper

In the post-Korean War period, the two Communist giants continued to be the principal sources of economic, technical, and military aid to North Korea. From 1945-1962, Pyongyang received \$690 million in loans from Moscow and \$376.5 million from Beijing.<sup>47</sup>

### **C. North Korea's Neutrality Between Moscow and Beijing (1961-1985)**

Since the 1960s Kim Il Sung pursued a relatively independent foreign policy regarding Beijing and Moscow. Kim manipulated his country's equidistance, siding with one or the other of its Communist neighbors on particular issues but aligning with neither. In July 1961, Kim Il Sung concluded similar treaties of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance with the Soviets and the Chinese. In doing so, North Korea entered into a military alliance with both Moscow and Beijing. Both agreements provided for military and other assistance.

After initially relying heavily on Soviet assistance to build the North, North Korea steadily tilted toward China in

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prepared for a Cato Institute Conference on the U.S.-South Korean Alliance, The Capital Hilton, Washington, D.C., June 21, 1990, p. 13.

<sup>47</sup>Roy U.T. Kim, "North Korea's Relations with Moscow and Peking: Big Influence of a Small Ally," in Young C. Kim, ed., *Foreign Policies of Korea* (Washington, D.C.: The Institute for Asian Studies, 1973), p. 100.

the early 1960s mainly because of policy differences with Khrushchev's de-Stalinization and peaceful coexistence. The abrupt cancellation of Premier Khrushchev's planned visit to North Korea in October 1961 indicated the uncomfortable relationship between Moscow and Pyongyang.

By late 1962, North Korea found itself solidly with the PRC; Pyongyang unequivocally supported Beijing in the Sino-Indian border clash of October 1962, and indirectly criticized Moscow for backing down in the Cuban missile crisis in the same month. In 1963 and 1964, the North Koreans accused the Soviets of arrogance and big-power chauvinism in trying to force their views on North Korea.<sup>48</sup> Khrushchev's crude attempt to bring the Koreans in line by cutting economic aid intensified Kim Il Sung's bitterness and strengthened his determination to make North Korea as self-reliant as possible.<sup>49</sup> As Pyongyang moved closer to Beijing, Soviet aid to North Korea sharply declined; this, in turn, adversely affected North Korea's Seven-Year plan. Moscow's aid to Pyongyang terminated in 1963. Pyongyang's relations with Moscow were based mainly on military and economic aid, while ties with Peking were grounded more on political and cultural interests. Moscow had been the main source of economic and military aid for Pyongyang.

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<sup>48</sup>Ralph N. Clough, "The Soviet Union and the Two Koreas," p. 178.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 179; Joseph M. Ha and Linda Beth Jensen, "Soviet Policy toward North Korea," p. 146.

The ouster of Khrushchev in October 1964 provided an opportunity for reconciliation between Moscow and Pyongyang. The new Soviet premier, Alexei Kosygin, visited Pyongyang in February 1965 and substantial quantities of Soviet economic, technical, and military aid flowed into North Korea in the late 1960s. The Soviet Union resumed full economic aid and sent arms to the DPRK, along with assistance for advanced industrial projects and shipments of the most recent Soviet military equipment.<sup>50</sup>

The rapprochement between Moscow and Pyongyang was facilitated by the deteriorating relationship between Beijing and Pyongyang during the Cultural Revolution in China. Preoccupied with domestic upheavals, China virtually withdrew from the international scene. China's relations with North Korea became strained as Red Guards in China reportedly labeled Kim Il Sung a "fat revisionist" leading a luxurious life at the expense of the working masses. For several years, Kim Il Sung stayed aloof from both the USSR and China, only warming up to China after Zhou Enlai apologized in 1969 for China's earlier transgressions.<sup>51</sup>

With the conclusion of the most violent phase of the Cultural Revolution in China, Pyongyang resumed a neutral

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<sup>50</sup>Ralph N. Clough, "The Soviet Union and the Two Koreas," p. 179; Joseph M. Ha and Linda Beth Jensen, "Soviet Policy toward North Korea," p. 147; George Gingsburgs, "Soviet Development Grants and Aid to North Korea 1945-1980," *Asia Pacific Community*, No. 18 (Fall 1982), pp. 50-51.

<sup>51</sup>Young C. Kim, "North Korean Foreign Policy," *Problems of Communism* (January-February 1985), p. 1.

position between Beijing and Moscow. From this point on, North Korea was able to maintain cordial, if not warm, relations with both Moscow and Beijing in the midst of the continued Sino-Soviet rift. Exchanges of visits by athletic, cultural, and other groups increased sharply, and cooperation in the economic, technical, and military fields was stepped up.

Pyongyang endeavored to maintain equidistance from either Beijing or Moscow as the Sino-Soviet dispute intensified. Unlike Beijing, Pyongyang avoided using the term "hegemonism" in reference to Soviet expansionism. Instead, Pyongyang coined the phrase "dominationism" (*chibae chuui*). The absence of joint communiqués at the end of Hua Guofeng's visit to the DPRK in May 1978 and Zhao Ziyang's visit in December 1981 may have been related to incompatible attitudes on this issue.

Soviet-North Korean relations cooled considerably during the 1970s as the Soviet Union developed contacts with Seoul at the non-political level. Soviet contacts with Seoul seem to have been aimed at reducing tension on the Korean peninsula during the period of U.S.-Soviet détente. No Soviet Politburo member visited Pyongyang after Mazurov's visit in 1971 until D. A. Kunayev went in January 1978. Kunayev presented Kim Il Sung with an Order of Lenin awarded

by the Supreme Soviet in 1972. No communiqué was issued after the visit.<sup>52</sup>

Pyongyang was critical of some of Moscow's policies. In January 1979, it criticized the Soviet-backed Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia. North Korea revealed its disapproval of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 by withholding support for a statement of solidarity with the new Afghan regime at a meeting of the Socialist parliamentary union in Sofia in February 1980. North Korea and Romania were the only countries that refused to sign the statement at the meeting. Kim Il Sung supported Prince Norodom Sihanouk of Kampuchea and declared opposition to Soviet-backed Vietnamese intervention in Kampuchea. North Korea has been skeptical about China's policies since the late 1970s. U.S.-Chinese rapprochement since the 1970s dampened Beijing's support for North Korea's policies; China's domestic reform policies were counter to Pyongyang's beliefs in a centrally administered command economy; the de-Maoization process in China posed a direct threat to the cult of Kim Il Sung in North Korea.

Since then, Beijing and Moscow have not been enthusiastic about the prospects for a dynastic succession in North Korea, an anomaly in a Socialist country. Both have negative attitudes toward the cult of personality

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<sup>52</sup>Ralph N. Clough, "The Soviet Union and the Two Koreas," p. 182.

centered around Kim Il Sung and North Korea's *Chuche* ideology, which has a trace of exclusive nationalism. Both have openly opposed Kim Il Sung's tendency toward militaristic adventurism, which could drag them into another armed conflict in Korea. Despite the differences and suspicions between Pyongyang and its allies, the two Communist giants have, at an official level, continued to express support for North Korea's policies, especially the unification formula, the arms control policy, and the U.S. troop withdrawal issue.

From 1964-1973, North Korea imported about three-quarters of its weapons from the Soviet Union and about one-quarter from the PRC. After 1973, Soviet military aid declined to a low level while Chinese aid increased. The Soviet Union refrained from providing North Korea with advanced weapons and military equipment since 1973 because it feared that the latter might disrupt peace and stability on the Korean peninsula by initiating another Korean War.<sup>53</sup> The Chinese began to supply T-59 medium tanks (the Chinese version of the Soviet T-54) and Chinese-produced fighter aircraft. The Soviets provided no new planes or missiles

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<sup>53</sup>Ralph Clough provides two additional reasons for the Soviet Union's withholding of advanced weapons from North Korea: (1) Kim Il Sung refused to permit the establishment of Soviet bases in North Korea in return for military supplies; (2) military supplies to North Korea would give the Soviets no increased leverage on him (Ralph N. Clough, "The Soviet Union and the Two Koreas," p. 196).

since 1973 such as MiG-23 aircraft, SA-6 and SA-7 surface-to-air missiles, and T-72 tanks.<sup>54</sup>

North Korea's Stalinist economy has been continuously declining, especially since the mid-1960s.<sup>55</sup> Fully aware of the widening gap in economic capabilities between Pyongyang and Seoul, in the 1970s North Korean leaders attempted to reinvigorate North Korea's economy by importing capital and plants from the West on a large scale. This influx of foreign capital and plants was deemed necessary to accelerating the pace of industrialization and catching up with South Korea's fast-growing economy. Due to miscalculation and mismanagement, North Korea could not utilize these new resources. The outcome was a disaster and Pyongyang came to incur a substantial amount of foreign debt. In 1975, North Korea defaulted on its foreign debt, which had reached \$2.4 billion in 1976, \$1 billion of which was owed to Communist countries.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>*Far Eastern Economic Review*, September 29, 1978, p. 5.

<sup>55</sup>North Korea achieved an overall growth rate of 8-10 percent in the 1960s. In this period, the foundation for North Korea's heavy industry was laid, and agricultural modernization was greatly advanced. During the 1970s, the growth rate was reduced to about 6 percent (Robert A. Scalapino, "Current Dynamics of the Korean Peninsula," pp. 21-22).

<sup>56</sup>Sang-Chul Suh, "North Korean Industrial Policy and Trade," in Robert A. Scalapino and Jun-yup Kim, eds., *North Korea Today: Strategy and Domestic Issues* (Berkeley, CA: Center for Korean Studies, 1983), p. 209. Its foreign debt in 1989 was estimated at \$4-6 billion, about half of which was owed to the Soviet Union.

Unable to solve the debt problem, Kim Il Sung once again turned to China and the Soviet Union for economic assistance at the end of the 1970s. In the 1980s, North Korea began to move away from its traditional emphasis on autarky. In 1984, she began to emulate China's open door policy with caution. In September 1984, the North Korean government enacted a Joint Venture Law that was intended to induce capital, advanced technology, and know-how from the West and Japan. North Korea's trade with non-Communist countries as well as the total trade volume has been rapidly increasing since the 1970s. In early 1970s, North Korea's trade with Socialist countries accounted for about 85 percent of its total trade, while trade with non-Socialist countries accounted for only 15 percent. By 1979, those figures were 51.5 percent and 48.4 percent, respectively.<sup>57</sup>

In the meantime, indirect trade between China and South Korea had been increasing remarkably by the early 1980s. North Korea vigorously protested Chinese trade with South Korea. During the subsequent two years (1982 and 1983), South Korean trade with China was reduced to a nominal level of \$130 million. Nonetheless, a series of accidental events moved Seoul-Beijing relations closer. A Chinese CAAC plane was hijacked to Korea in May 1983, and a Chinese pilot

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<sup>57</sup>In 1979, North Korea's trade with the Soviet Union accounted for 51 percent of North Korea's total trade while its trade with China accounted for 30 percent (Robert A. Scalapino, "Current Dynamics of the Korean Peninsula," p. 23).

defected to South Korea with a military aircraft in 1985, seeking political asylum. Other incidents included the sinking of a South Korean fishing boat by a Chinese freighter, and the drifting of a Chinese Navy torpedo boat and crew into South Korean territorial waters. Officially, China supported North Korea's policies, but after the Rangoon bombing incident in 1983 when North Korean agents killed much of the South Korean leadership and barely missed then President Chun Doo Hwan, Chinese leaders privately criticized North Korea.<sup>58</sup>

Moscow's policy toward North Korea began to change in 1982. Improved relations between the two countries were not particularly visible in 1982-83, largely because of the geriatric instability of the Soviet leadership and the problems created in late 1983 over the Rangoon bombing incident and the KAL 007 incident.<sup>59</sup> Trade between Pyongyang and Moscow substantially increased during these two years.

The Soviet Union was the most important economic partner to North Korea. As early as March 1949, the Soviet Union and North Korea signed the first accord on economic cooperation. Between 1945 and the mid-1950s, the Soviet

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<sup>58</sup>Mike Tharp, "A Nimble Neutrality Keeps Moscow and Peking as Allies," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, February 2, 1984, p. 29.

<sup>59</sup>Thomas W. Robinson, "The Soviet Union and East Asia," p. 190. The KAL incident took place in September 1983, when a Soviet fighter shot down an off-course South Korean airliner near Sakhalin.

share of North Korean trade was as high as 80 percent. During the 1950s, it was reduced to around 40 percent. It further dropped to about 20 percent in the early 1970s due mainly to political differences between the two countries and diversification of North Korea's foreign trade.<sup>60</sup> Soviet-North Korean trade in the first five years of the 1960s was about 750 million rubles, but exceeded 2.5 billion rubles in the early 1980s.<sup>61</sup> In 1984, total trade between the two countries rose by approximately 17 percent, reaching nearly 713 million rubles.<sup>62</sup> The DPRK imports from the Soviet Union included general facilities, oil, petroleum products, mineral ore, and cotton. The DPRK exports to the Soviet Union included such items as metal cutting machine tools, wet process metal rolled products, nonferrous metal, cement, magnesite clinker, and agricultural produce. A significant portion of these goods was shipped to Siberia and the Far Eastern region in order to meet needs in the eastern regions of the Soviet Union.<sup>63</sup>

In 1984, the Soviet Union provided continuous economic and technological assistance in building important facilities of great significance to the development of various sectors in the DPRK's economy.<sup>64</sup> In 1984, Moscow

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<sup>60</sup>Adrian Buzo, "The Moscow Factor," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 18, 1987, p. 82.

<sup>61</sup>FBIS-SOV-85-128, July 3, 1985, p. C1.

<sup>62</sup>A. Muratov, "The Friendship Will Grow Stronger," *International Affairs* (Moscow) (September 1985), p. 26.

<sup>63</sup>FBIS-SOV-85-128, July 3, 1985, p. C1.

<sup>64</sup>FBIS-SOV-85-002, January 3, 1985, p. C2.

estimated the number of Soviet technicians working in North Korea, mainly in the northeast coast industrial region, at 5,000. Also in 1984, the North Koreans completed the electrification of the rail link from the ice-free port of Najin to the Soviet border, a move that was to double the capacity of the line.<sup>65</sup>

Throughout the early months of 1984, because of the KAL 007 incident and the belligerent policies of the Reagan Administration, Soviet-North Korean relations continued to improve, especially as Soviet leaders showed signs of adopting a more accommodating attitude toward the question of political succession in North Korea. Kim Il Sung's interview with a TASS correspondent in March of 1984 clearly indicated his perception of improved relations between the two countries.<sup>66</sup> Kim Il Sung's visit to the Soviet Union in May 1984 after a 23-year hiatus marked a turning point in Soviet-North Korean relations. Thereafter, the Soviet Union began to provide North Korea with advanced weapons and military equipment, as well as economic and technological assistance. The two Communist countries reinforced their military ties. This improvement, however, proved temporary once Gorbachev assumed the helm in Moscow.

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<sup>65</sup>Adrian Buzo, "Order on the Frontier," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, March 20, 1986, pp. 136-137.

<sup>66</sup>Young C. Kim, "North Korean Foreign Policy," p. 3.

## 5. Concluding Remarks

Soviet policy toward the Korean peninsula in the pre-Gorbachev era was greatly influenced by shifting international and regional power structures. Soviet relations with the two Koreas depended largely on U.S.-Soviet relations and Sino-Soviet relations. The Korean peninsula in itself was not a significant factor in Soviet foreign policy. Soviet interests in the two Koreas were secondary and derivative; the Korean states assumed significance only in the context of Soviet relations with larger powers.

From the late 1970s, Soviet foreign policy experienced numerous setbacks, and came to face international isolation and deteriorating strategic position. Under the circumstances, the Kremlin chose to upgrade ties with North Korea in order to strengthen its power position in Northeast Asia. Consequently, security and economic ties between Moscow and Pyongyang improved remarkably in the early 1980s. In the meantime, the Soviet Union's relations with South Korea remained "cool" and distant; only limited contact and exchanges at the unofficial level were maintained. Nevertheless, Gorbachev's rise to power as the Soviet leader transformed international and regional systems, thereby changing Soviet policy toward the two Koreas.

## CHAPTER 7

### GORBACHEV RISING: THE FORMULATION OF NEW POLITICAL THINKING (MARCH 1985-SPRING 1988)

As Gorbachev's power position improved and his reform policy (new political thinking) was refined, the Kremlin's perceptions of the situation in Northeast Asia and its policy toward the two Koreas were inevitably altered. Furthermore, Soviet policy toward the Koreas became a factor in the struggle between the new political thinkers and the old political thinkers. Accordingly, as the Soviet leader's power position and political authority grew, his foreign policy toward the two Koreas correspondingly evolved. It can be divided into three phases: (1) Gorbachev rising: the formulation of the new political thinking (March 1985-Spring 1988); (2) Gorbachev ascendant: the implementation of new political thinking (Summer 1988-Summer 1990); and (3) Gorbachev in decline: the continuing momentum of the new policy (Fall 1990-1991).

With the ouster of Gorbachev and the break-up of the USSR, "new political thinking" passed into history, but the policies it yielded continued to be developed by Boris Yeltsin and the Russian Federation. This included the new policies toward the Koreas.

March 1985-Spring 1987 was a transitional period in Soviet policy toward the two Koreas from old thinking to new thinking. As Gorbachev himself stated, reformist ideas were being conceived during the first three years: "The period from the April plenary session [1985] up through January 1987 was a time of working out concepts of social and economic development."<sup>1</sup> During this period, supporters of the two contradicting positions coexisted, adding confusion and ambiguity to Soviet policy toward East Asia, particularly the Korean peninsula.

Internal and external conditions were not ready for a new policy in Korea. Internally, the Communist-dominated "old" society remained largely intact; externally, the Cold War atmosphere still persisted. The time for the implementation of new political thinking in East Asia had not yet arrived.<sup>2</sup> As a natural corollary, Gorbachev's policy toward the Korean peninsula in this period was largely a residual continuation of his predecessor's: Moscow developed close ties with Pyongyang--military and economic assistance to Pyongyang and political support of Pyongyang's arms control and unification policy. Simultaneously, Moscow

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<sup>1</sup>*Pravda*, February 26, 1987.

<sup>2</sup>From March 1985 to December 1986, it was not politically possible for Gorbachev to initiate major policy changes in either domestic or foreign policy (Sarah E. Mendelson, "Explaining Change in Soviet Foreign Policy," paper delivered at the 1991 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, The Washington Hilton, August 29-September 1, 1991, pp. 26-27).

continued to maintain unofficial contacts--cultural, athletic, and academic exchanges, and indirect trade and economic cooperation--with Seoul.

### 1. The Formulation of the New Political Thinking Amidst Power Consolidation

Gorbachev's policy toward the Korean peninsula during this period still tilted toward Pyongyang. This policy remained at the theoretical and conceptual levels; he had not yet accumulated sufficient power to put through his new policy vis-a-vis the two Koreas.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>From Eduard Shevardnadze's account of the 27th Party Congress, we can easily understand the political atmosphere in the Kremlin and the formidable influence of conservative hard-liners during this period. Although he did not mention Korea specifically, he showed how contentious policy debates on foreign policy were in the Politburo: "On February 25, 1986, Gorbachev read the Political Report to the Central Committee. The preparation of the report, a program for a new leadership of the country, reflected the widest and most contentious spectrum of opinions. . . . it was a clash of the interests and positions of the various forces represented in the Politburo, which was far from the 'monolithic unit' it claimed to be. By long-standing tradition, Politburo members receive drafts of all the most important documents and submit their comments. The draft of the Political Report to the Twenty-seventh Congress had been reworked many times, and comments were coming in almost constantly. A day before the opening of the Congress, I received a final draft of the report and discovered that it contained no mention of the need to withdraw our forces from Afghanistan. This clause, crucial in our view, had been in the earliest drafts of the speech. Why had it disappeared? At whose insistence?" (Eduard Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom*, trans. Catherine A. Fitzpatrick [New York: The Free Press, 1991], p. 47).

Gorbachev's policy toward the two Koreas should be understood in the broad context of Soviet policy in East Asia. During his first three years as the Soviet leader, Gorbachev drew a broad outline for his East Asian policy. The policy took shape through various speeches and announcements, but had yet to be implemented fully:

In the light of what Mikhail Gorbachev said in his Vladivostok speech, in his interview with Merdeka and during his visit to India, there is every reason to affirm that we have an elaborate and profound concept of APR [Asia Pacific Region] policy . . . But I must agree with those who say we must work to carry forward this concept and to lend it concrete substance.<sup>4</sup>

Gorbachev's East Asian policy was intended to break the impasse experienced by the Soviet Union that had been caused by "old political thinking" characterized by inertia and the traditional dogmas in Soviet foreign policy. Gorbachev's new political thinking, particularly his East Asian initiative, "should be understood primarily as a response to the crisis in foreign relations to which Leonid I. Brezhnev's policies had brought the Soviet Union by the early 1980s."<sup>5</sup>

The Soviet Union increasingly appreciated Korea's position as a key variable in East Asia. The Soviets' re-evaluation of the Korean peninsula's geostrategic importance

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<sup>4</sup>"The Vladivostok Initiatives: Two Years On," *International Affairs* (Moscow) (August 1988), p. 150.

<sup>5</sup>David Holloway, "Gorbachev's New Thinking," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 68, No. 1 (1988/1989), p. 66.

was based on the following points. First, stability on the Korean peninsula was an important precondition for stability in East Asia, since the situation in Korea exerted considerable influence on the political climate in the region as a whole. Second, the Korean peninsula was an area in which the national interests of three major powers--U.S., China, and Japan--intersected, in turn intersecting with those of the Soviet Union in the Asian Pacific region. Third, Korea as a whole would become increasingly important to Moscow, particularly as South Korea's economic power was increasingly viewed by Gorbachev as a source of economic support.<sup>6</sup>

Initially, South Korea itself was not a main concern of Gorbachev's; it was significant only within the framework of its global and regional policies. Soviet policy toward South Korea was significant to the extent that the latter could contribute to Soviet entry into the Asia Pacific community as a full-fledged member and become a part of Gorbachev's plan for a collective security system in the Asia Pacific region.

Did Gorbachev have a concrete blueprint for a new policy toward Seoul from the beginning? The Soviet leader does not seem to have had a clear-cut policy toward South Korea in the first three years of his rule. Gorbachev's

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<sup>6</sup>Oleg Davidov, "Soviet Policy Toward the Korean Peninsula in the 1990s," *The Korean Journal of International Studies* (Spring 1990), p. 427.

policy toward Seoul appears to have followed the "muddling through" found in the past.<sup>7</sup>

Gorbachev's continuation of Brezhnev's policy toward the two Koreas during this period was also due to his insufficient power. Gorbachev was the dominant figure in the Politburo in 1985-1986 but was not in full control. During this period, Soviet foreign and security policy was determined by the majority opinion of the Politburo where the conservative hard-liners were challenging his power and obstructing his reform policies.

Once appointed as General Secretary of the Party, Gorbachev swiftly moved to consolidate his power in the Politburo. By skillfully winning allies and putting friends in important positions, Gorbachev managed to remove his opponents and critics from power. During the first three years of Gorbachev's rule, high turnover occurred in the Politburo, Secretariat, and the High Command of the Armed Forces. Widespread personnel changes were implemented in other echelons of the Soviet system as well.

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<sup>7</sup>Cf. Peter Berton, "The Soviet Union and Korea: Perceptions, Scholarship, Propaganda," *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies* (Spring 1986), p. 25. Yu-Nam Kim argued that the Soviet Union as of late 1989 did not have a concrete plan for the Korean question because it had not established a firm and stable relationship with other major powers in East Asia, i.e., the U.S., Japan, and China (Yu-Nam Kim, "Soryon ui kugdong kunsu-anbo chungchaek kwa hanbandon ui anbo" [Soviet Security Policy in Northeast Asia and the Korean Peninsula], *Miso yongu* [Seoul], Vol. 3 [1989], p. 80).

In July 1985, Andrei Gromyko, an old thinker, was replaced as Foreign Minister by Eduard Shevardnadze, a new political thinker and close associate of Gorbachev's, and was appointed to the titular position of Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. By then, Romanov, a hard-liner and Gorbachev's chief political rival, had been removed from the Politburo. By June 1987, Aleksandr Yakovlev, a close confidante of Gorbachev's, was elevated to full membership in the Politburo. The turnover rates in the Central Committee were relatively modest and Gorbachev's control over the Central Committee was not as complete as in the Politburo. The Central Committee, where many of the holdovers from the Brezhnev era still remained, often obstructed Gorbachev's perestroika and new political thinking.

By mid-1988, Gorbachev emerged as the predominant leader. Until then, he had to accommodate the conservative leaders' position in regard to Soviet policy toward East Asian countries, including the two Koreas. In other words, even if Gorbachev had already formulated a detailed policy toward North and South Korea, he was politically restrained from implementing it.

## 2. The Legacy of the Past and the New Political Thinking in Soviet Policy Toward the Two Koreas

In 1985, at the declaratory level, the Soviet Union was still supporting North Korea's position on various issues and expressing hostile attitudes toward South Korea, especially with regard to its military relationship with the U.S. and economic and military cooperation with Japan.<sup>8</sup>

Gorbachev's new political thinking called for the recognition of existing realities. One of these realities was South Korea's rise to regional power status, sustained by its rapid economic growth. Gorbachev's Vladivostok speech of July 1986 expressed Soviet readiness to develop relations with every state in the Asia Pacific region. By doing so, Gorbachev implied his willingness to improve relations with South Korea. However, in his Vladivostok speech, Gorbachev did not make any overtures toward Seoul, and mentioned South Korea only in the context of a possible regional settlement.

In the speech, Gorbachev was still expressing support for North Korea's position on unification and on the nuclear-free zone on the Korean peninsula:

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<sup>8</sup>For example, *Pravda* (July 15, 1985) denounced the U.S. imperialists' occupation of South Korea and expressed solidarity with the Korean people in the struggle for the reunification of the country.

There is a possibility for not only relieving the dangerous tensions in the Korean peninsula, but also for beginning the solving of the national problem of the entire Korean peninsula. As far as the truly Korean interests are concerned, there are no sensible reasons for evading a serious dialogue which has been proposed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea . . . . The implementation of the proposal of the DPRK for the creation of a nuclear-free zone in the Korean peninsula would be significant contribution. The idea of creating such a zone in Southeast Asia has aroused well-deserved attention.<sup>9</sup>

Pyongyang responded positively to the Vladivostok speech, and especially to the Soviet overtures toward rapprochement with China evidenced in it. Gorbachev's Vladivostok speech was immediately excerpted in *Rodong Shinmun* (the daily newspaper of the North Korean Workers' Party) on July 30, 1986 and in *Minju Chosen* (the daily newspaper of the North Korean government) on July 31, 1986. Gorbachev's initiatives were publicly supported by Kim Young-chaе, the chairman of the Korean-Soviet Friendship Association, during his visit to Moscow in October 1986.<sup>10</sup> North Korea expected the Sino-Soviet normalization to be beneficial to its security and economy.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>"From the Speech by Mikhail Gorbachev in Vladivostok July 28, 1986," in *Security in the Asia-Pacific Region: Documents and Materials* (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1988), p. 25.

<sup>10</sup>Roy Kim, "Gorbachev and the Korean Peninsula," *Third World Quarterly* (July 1988), p. 1284.

<sup>11</sup>The Soviet-Chinese confrontation prior to the 1980s had an adverse effect on the situation on the peninsula and the economic development of the DPRK, and aggravated the latter's concern about its security (Mikhail Titarenko, "Asian and Korean Security and Stability," *Korea & World Affairs* [Summer 1989], p. 289).

In his interview with an Indonesian newspaper on July 21, 1987, Gorbachev again extolled North Korea's unification policy and stressed the need to remove foreign forces, military bases, and nuclear weapons from South Korea.<sup>12</sup> As late as May 1988, Moscow was still expressing concern about an anti-Soviet military alliance among the U.S., South Korea, and Japan. In regard to the visit of the Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff to Tokyo, *Krasnaya Zvezda* commented: "U.S.-Japan-Korea military group is working hard to form a Washington-Tokyo-Seoul military alliance . . . . What South Korea should do is to respond to the appeal for dialogue by the DPRK."<sup>13</sup>

The expressed hostility toward Seoul was partly due to frustration about its deteriorating strategic position in Northeast Asia, and partly intended to keep North Korea from tilting further toward China.<sup>14</sup> Besides, it reflected the pervasive influence of the "old political thinkers" in Soviet society and the intimate party-to-party relationship between Moscow and Pyongyang.

Despite the seemingly harmonious relationship, Moscow and Pyongyang had differences over Gorbachev's reform and North Korea's succession issue. Gorbachev's perestroika and new political thinking were frowned upon and opposed by

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<sup>12</sup>*Pravda*, October 27, 1986.

<sup>13</sup>Moscow International Service, May 5, 1988, in *FBIS-SOV-88-092*, May 12, 1988, p. 25.

<sup>14</sup>Peter Berton, "The Soviet Union and Korea: Perceptions, Scholarship, Propaganda," p. 22.

North Korea. North Koreans could not adopt democratization and marketization policies pursued in the Soviet Union and East Europe. North Koreans interpreted such reforms as "removal from the Socialist path" and "concessions to imperialism" that undermined Socialism from within. North Korea's reaction to events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union was to emphasize the strengthening of ideological discipline and tightening of measures against the possible penetration of hostile ideology in North Korea. In a speech during the First Session of the 8th Supreme People's Assembly in December 1986, Kim Il Sung warned comrades "to guard against the infiltration of the ideological poison of capitalism and revisionism into our society and resolutely struggle against all maneuvers to encroach upon the Socialist system."<sup>15</sup>

During Kim Il Sung's visit to Moscow in 1986, Gorbachev reportedly lectured him on the deplorable state of North Korea's economy: "Kim was literally called to the Kremlin and was told by Mr. Gorbachev to improve his economy. In fact, Kim got the same kind of scolding as Truong Chinh (the Vietnamese chief who succeeded Le Duan) for mismanagement of the economy and mishandling Soviet aid."<sup>16</sup>

From Shevardnadze's account of the conflict between Gorbachev and conservative leaders in East Europe in regard

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<sup>15</sup>*Rodong Shinmun*, December 31, 1986.

<sup>16</sup>*South China Morning Post*, November 1, 1986, p. 1, in *FBIS-AFA-86-213*, November 4, 1986, p. D2.

to democratic reforms, we can easily surmise that Gorbachev's new political thinking was encountering strong resistance from the essentially reactionary North Korean leaders as well:

In conversations with East European colleagues, Gorbachev was very tactful and cautious in his recommendations. With reference to our country's experience, he gave them to understand that if they did not take steps toward democratic transformations, they would inevitably face very serious problems . . . there were long, noisy sessions with head-on clashes and bitter disputes turning into personal confrontations. In Bucharest, for example, the discussion became so heated that security people felt compelled to violate the secrecy of the negotiation room: They opened the door to see what was going on.<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, the Soviets refused to openly endorse the succession of North Korean President Kim Il Sung's son and anointed a political heir, Kim Jong Il. Soviet scholars openly criticized Kim Il Sung's political ideas, and claimed that the idea of *Chuche* (self-reliance) was diametrically opposed to the "new political thinking."<sup>18</sup>

These differences notwithstanding, Soviet-North Korean relations, particularly in military and security areas, improved remarkably in the first years of Gorbachev's rule.

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<sup>17</sup>Eduard Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom*, trans. Catherine A. Fitzpatrick (New York: The Free Press, 1991), p. 117.

<sup>18</sup>Dae-Sook Suh, "Changes in Sino-Soviet Policies Toward Korea and Implications for the United States," paper delivered at the Cato Institute Conference on the U.S.-South Korean Alliance, The Capitol Hilton, Washington, D.C., June 21, 1990, pp. 12-13.

### 3. The Residual Continuation of the Old Political Thinking in Relations with Pyongyang

Soviet relations with North Korea, which had been "cool" in the 1970s, improved remarkably in the mid-1980s. After the Soviet downing of Korean Air Line's (KAL) Flight 007 on September 1, 1983 near Sakhalin Island, Seoul-Moscow relations deteriorated, providing an opportunity for Moscow and Pyongyang to warm up to one another. After the KAL incident, North Korea expressed full support for the Soviet position on the incident. Subsequently, when the Rangoon bombing incident occurred on October 10, 1983, the Soviet Union backed up North Korea by rejecting the generally held view that the North Koreans were responsible for this terrorist act.

When Gorbachev succeeded Chernenko in March 1985, he also inherited the existing state of the Soviet-North Korean relationship established by his predecessor. The new Soviet leader initially continued his predecessor's policy toward North Korea, which revolved around bilateral military cooperation, to counter the strategic encirclement of the Soviet Union. Consequently, military cooperation between the two Communist allies increased conspicuously. Good-will visits between high-ranking officials, joint celebrations, and joint naval exercises continued at an impressive pace. By 1985 more official North Korean visitors went to the

Soviet Union than to China. Cooperative activities were maintained in the fields of economy, science, and technology.

#### A. Moscow-Pyongyang Relations Warm Up

Kim Il Sung's five-day visit to Moscow that started on May 23, 1984 was a turning point in Soviet-North Korean relations. This was Kim's first visit to Moscow since 1961.<sup>19</sup> During the visit, Kim Il Sung and then General Secretary Chernenko reportedly had at least one private closed door session and two other sessions with other members of both delegations.<sup>20</sup>

The Soviet news media emphasized the accord between Chernenko and Kim Il Sung in regard to the need for increased security in light of alleged Western threats in East Asia. However, the talks produced no joint communiqué.

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<sup>19</sup>Kim Il Sung, however, went to Vladivostok in 1966 to meet with then General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev.

<sup>20</sup>Yu-nam Kim, "Soviet Strategic Objectives on the Korean Peninsula," in Ray S. Cline, ed., *Asia in Soviet Global Strategy* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1987), p. 86. The North Korean delegation included Defense Minister O Jin-U, Premier Kang Song San, Vice-Premier Lee Chong-ok, and Foreign Minister Kim Young Nam. Kim Il Sung traveled by train for 45 days to such countries as the Soviet Union, Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Romania. This was Kim's first tour of East Europe as a whole since 1956. See Roy Kim, "Gorbachev and The Korean Peninsula," pp. 1273-1274; Michael C. Williams, "North Korea: Tilting towards Moscow?" *The World Today* (October 1984), p. 398.

Disagreement between Kim and Chernenko on various issues was probably the reason for its absence.<sup>21</sup>

After the visit, Moscow resumed its shipment of advanced weapons and military equipment to Pyongyang for the first time since 1973.<sup>22</sup> The Soviets agreed to provide North Korea with some 60 MiG-23 fighter bombers, which had long been coveted by North Korea but denied to that country by the Soviet Union. Deliveries began in the summer of

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<sup>21</sup>These differences probably included a discrepancy in their strategic perceptions of China, reportedly because Kim refused to join with Moscow's public criticism of Beijing; Moscow's refusal to provide an outright endorsement of Kim's recent call for three-party talks on the Korean question between South and North Korea, and the U.S., a proposal that had gained Beijing's public support; refusal by Moscow to publicly endorse a future succession from Kim Il Sung to his son Kim Jong Il; and finally, North Korea's apparent opposition to North Korea's provocative and often unpredictable acts toward South Korea and its outrageous behavior in the world community (*The Korea Herald*, May 31, 1984, p. 4, in *FBIS-APA-84-106*, May 31, 1994, pp. E1-E2). North Korean leader Kim Il Sung reportedly pressed two demands during his visit to Moscow, i.e., a Soviet supply of MiG-23s and other modern arms to North Korea to offset South Korea's American-supplied F-16s, and recognition of the President's son, Kim Jong Il, as his legitimate heir to power (Richard Nations, "Militant Brotherhood--Kim Tilts to Moscow," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 20, 1985, p. 32).

<sup>22</sup>Both the U.S. and the USSR kept a strictly informal *modus vivendi* in an effort to prevent recurrence of another war on the Korean peninsula and refrained from delivering the most sophisticated weapons, especially offensive weapons, to both parts of Korea (Alexander V. Vorontsov, "The Ways of Overcoming the Division of Korea: Viewpoint from Moscow," paper delivered at the first Soviet-South Korean Conference of the Institute of Oriental Studies, USSR Academy of Sciences, and the Kyungnam University, ROK, on the Problems of Peace and Security in the Asian-Pacific Region and Korean Peninsula, June 3-4, 1991, Moscow, USSR, p. 3).

1985. Moscow also provided approximately 30 SA-3 surface-to-air missiles.<sup>23</sup>

In exchange for these advanced weapons, Moscow received direct access to North Korean airspace and military facilities. Soviet TU-16 Badger bombers were detected overflying North Korean airspace on three occasions from mid-December 1984 to March 1985.<sup>24</sup> Overflying North Korea allowed the Soviets to establish an air link between Vladivostok and the Danang air base in Vietnam, avoiding Japanese radar over the Korean Straits. In the past, spy planes departing from Vladivostok were required to loop far south around the Korean peninsula. But, since North Korean airspace was well covered by South Korean-based U.S. radar, the Soviet-North Korean air corridor could yield a marginal military advantage.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>*Dong-A Ilbo*, May 3, 1985, p. 1, in *FBIS-APA-85-087*, May 6, 1985, p. E1. While visiting Moscow in September 1981, then North Korean Prime Minister Li Jong-ok requested the delivery of advanced Soviet MiG-23s, pointing to President Reagan's decision to sell F-16s to South Korea. Moscow agreed to provide MiG-23s to North Korea on the condition that Pyongyang grant overflight rights for Soviet warplanes and permit installation of Soviet intelligence and communications equipment in North Korea. Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Kapitsa discussed the sale of MiG-23s, T-72 tanks, and an advanced combat helicopter with North Korean leaders during his 15-day visit to Pyongyang in November 1984, according to Vasily Matuzok, a translator at the Soviet Embassy in Pyongyang, who defected to South Korea during the Kapitsa visit (Richard Nations, "Militant Brotherhood--Kim Tilts to Moscow," p. 32).

<sup>24</sup>*The Korea Herald*, April 17, 1985, p. 1, in *FBIS-APA-85-075*, April 18, 1985, p. E3.

<sup>25</sup>Richard Nations, "China's Korea Fiasco," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, September 26, 1985, p. 56.

Soviet aircraft also were overflying North Korea to conduct reconnaissance flights against China. The regions adjacent to North Korea include some of China's most strategic areas, including its industrial heartland in Manchuria and the waters of the Bohai Gulf and Yellow Sea, which accommodate key commercial shipping lanes, the Northern Fleet headquarters at Qingdao, and the operational area of China's largest naval exercises. The Soviets reportedly conducted regular air surveillance of these areas.<sup>26</sup>

Soviet naval vessels were often spotted in North Korea's ports. Besides Wonsan, the Soviet navy reportedly had access to at least two other North Korean ports-- Chongjin and Najin on the east coast. Soviet naval vessels also were spotted at Nampo, a port on the west coast that was close to Pyongyang, raising the possibility that Moscow had gained the right to use the port facility for its naval forces.<sup>27</sup> Soviet access to Nampo Port would reduce the movement of its warships through the narrow Tsushima straits in the Sea of Japan where they were most vulnerable to detection and attack, and where the Russian Imperial Navy

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<sup>26</sup>*The Korea Herald*, April 17, 1985, p. 1, in *FBIS-APA-85-075*, April 18, 1985, p. E3.

<sup>27</sup>*The Korea Times*, August 25, 1985, p. 4, in *FBIS-APA-85-165*, August 26, 1985, p. E10. Since 1978 the Russians have paid for a new port at Najin, 25 miles from the Soviet border, where the North Koreans appear to have given them limited naval facilities, and for a rail link connecting Najin with the Soviet railway system.

suffered a disastrous defeat during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905.

Other signs indicated the upgrading of military relations between Pyongyang and Moscow. Fighter plane units from North Korea and the Soviet Union exchanged visits in early May 1985. A squadron of North Korea's MiG-21 fighters visited an air force base in Vladivostok on May 8 on a friendly visit to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Soviet people's victory against Nazi Germany. The Soviet Union reciprocated by dispatching a "goodwill mission" of ten MiG-23s that landed on May 8 at Hwangju Air Force Base south of Pyongyang for a four-day "friendship visit." The squadron, led by Alexandr Shekh, the Vice-Director of the Air Force Operational Department of the Far Eastern Military District, was reported to have returned home on May 12. But there was speculation that some aircraft may have remained behind in North Korea for demonstration and training purposes.<sup>28</sup> The visits were designed to demonstrate to the world their closer military cooperation. It was the first time that the two countries made such visits. Unlike visits by naval fleets which are often ceremonial, mutual visits of military aircraft usually mean a strengthened military relationship between the countries concerned.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>*Krasnaya Zvezda*, May 9, 1985, p. 4, in *FBIS-SOV-85-093*, May 14, 1985, p. C2; Richard Nations, "Militant Brotherhood--Kim Tilts to Moscow," p. 32.

<sup>29</sup>*The Korea Herald*, July 11, 1985, p. 1, in *FBIS-APA-85-133*, pp. E1-E2.

The Soviet quest for a closer military relationship with North Korea, however, did not derive from renewed Soviet interest in an aggressive and expansionist policy in East Asia, but by the same token, there was no sign that "Pyongyang was ready to become a stage for the Soviet Union to act out an aggressive role."<sup>30</sup> The two Communist allies reached a common conclusion that a "marriage of convenience" was necessary due to their deteriorating strategic positions. The "strategically oriented" relationship was based on multiple concessions from both sides.<sup>31</sup> The Soviets gained new access to North Korean military facilities in exchange for substantial amounts of military and economic aid.

The two Communist neighbors embraced one another for different reasons. From the Soviet perspective, the supply of advanced military hardware and the resumption of economic assistance to Pyongyang were necessary to exercise political influence over North Korea and to restore military balance on the Korean peninsula. Edward Olsen provides a thoughtful explanation of Soviet intentions:

Moscow almost certainly is offering such weapons as a means to exert influence over the nascent succession process in Pyongyang . . . . Moscow appears to be

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<sup>30</sup>Edward Olsen, "Keeping North Korea Out of Soviet Hands," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 14, 1987, p. 41.

<sup>31</sup>Joseph M. Ha and Linda Beth Jensen, "Soviet Policy toward North Korea," in Jae Kyu Park et al., eds., *The Foreign Relations of North Korea* (Seoul: Kyungnam University Press, 1987; Colorado: Westview Press, 1987), p. 154.

doing its best to build political capital and cultivate pro-Soviet elements in North Korean rule circles in hopes that these will induce a political outcome favorable to Soviet interests . . . . If we assume that Moscow does not desire renewed conflict in Korea any more than Washington, Seoul, Peking or Tokyo . . . forging stronger Soviet-North Korean ties may be a way of exerting a calming, restraining influence over a North Korean leadership that has reason to be a bit desperate about the gap that has emerged between stagnating North and the dynamic South . . . . it is entirely possible that Moscow is offering North Korea weapons because that is what the Soviet Union has and North Korea needs . . . . Moscow is anxious to offer its resources and markets to other Asian states because those are what they can use and the exchange will benefit the Soviet Union. In the light of Pyongyang's paranoia about self-reliance, it should not surprise us that Moscow might try to dole out to North Koreans they need from abroad: advanced weapons to compensate for those available to South Korea.<sup>32</sup>

In Pyongyang's calculation, the tilt toward Moscow was deemed necessary to catch up with Seoul in military and economic modernization, place a brake on China's tendency to increase contacts with Seoul, and free itself from the diplomatic isolation imposed upon it as a result of its terrorist activities.

First, Pyongyang was acutely aware of losing business to Seoul, both in economic development and military modernization. Pyongyang turned to Moscow for economic and military assistance to compensate for what Seoul already possessed.

Second, Pyongyang's relations with Beijing were strained, especially after the Rangoon bombing incident of

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<sup>32</sup>Edward Olsen, "Keeping North Korea Out of Soviet Hands," pp. 40-41.

October 1983. Beijing was unhappy with the terrorist attack by North Korea. Pyongyang, in turn, was unhappy with increasing contacts between Beijing and Seoul. China's unofficial trade with South Korea exceeded \$1 billion in 1985 whereas China's trade with North Korea in the same year totalled \$500 (see Table 1, p. 174; Table 3).

**Table 3. North Korea's Trade with the USSR and China**

(Unit: in Million U.S. dollars)

	USSR			China		
	Export	Import	Total	Export	Import	Total
1980	410	420	830	303.3	374.3	677.5
1984	450	430	880	287.0	241.0	528.0
1985	500	810	1,310	268.1	238.6	506.7
1986	642	1,078	1,720	274.7	239.5	514.2
1987	683	1,265	1,958	239.9	280.9	520.8

Compiled by the author from the following sources: Sung-Chul Yang, "The 'Revolutionary Dinosaur' in the North and the Expanding Relations between Seoul and Moscow," *Sino-Soviet Affairs* (Fall 1990), p. 89; Yun-Hwan Kim, "Hanguk-ui Pukbangchungchaek-gwa Pukhan-ui taedo [South Korea's Northern Policy and North Korea]," *Sahoekwahag yongu* (Seoul: Kyunghee University), p. 24.

Furthermore, Chinese officials negotiated directly with South Korean diplomats in Hong Kong over the return of a mutinied Chinese naval vessel, to the great dismay of North Koreans. China also cut back on aid to North Korea as a result of its own internal difficulties and shortages of capital in a difficult period of economic adjustment.<sup>33</sup>

Third, Pyongyang was internationally isolated and Moscow was encircled by hostile East Asian neighbors by the early 1980s. Criminal acts ranging from smuggling and drug sales by its diplomats to the terrorist act aimed at the South Korean president in Rangoon in 1983 had turned North Korea into a pariah state. The quasi-dynastic succession process being planned to pass leadership from Kim Il Sung to his first son Kim Jong Il was frowned upon and ridiculed even by Communist countries as a version of "Socialism in one family."

#### **B. An Upgrade of Moscow-Pyongyang Relations**

Improvement of political relations between Moscow and Pyongyang coincided with their intensified military cooperation. Shortly after Gorbachev's succession to power, Kim Yong Nam, North Korea's Foreign Minister, made an official visit to the USSR on April 16-23, 1985. A treaty

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<sup>33</sup>Michael C. Williams, "North Korea: Tilting towards Moscow?", p. 399.

on the Soviet-North Korean state border and a consular convention were signed during the visit.<sup>34</sup> The Soviet Union and North Korea issued a joint communiqué at the end of Kim Yong Nam's visit, in which the Soviet side repeated its full support for North Korea's position on the Korean question.<sup>35</sup>

Kim Il Sung gave the first clear signal that North Korea intended to warm up to Moscow on April 22, 1985, at a Pyongyang rally to mark Lenin's 115th birthday: "We are grateful to the Soviets for the sincere help they gave to us, shedding blood and sweat in a time of need." North Korean Politburo member and Vice President Park Sung Chul said in a speech: "We respect the Soviet people as our

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<sup>34</sup>The new Soviet-North Korean border treaty was not designed to fix the border but to open it to bilateral trade. The treaty, initiated in Pyongyang on November 26, 1984, called for expanding trade by way of rail instead of the present maritime transport. North Korea opened the border to trade apparently in response to a Soviet offer to increase oil supplies. The Soviet Union made the offer to President Kim Il Sung when he visited Moscow in May 1984 (Tokyo Kyodo in English, November 30, 1984, in *FBIS-APA-84-233*).

<sup>35</sup>The joint communiqué reflected the common perception of the threat from the American-led military coalition in East Asia. Both sides expressed grave concern over the intensification of tension caused by imperialism's aggressive forces. The Soviet side reiterated its support for North Korea's proposal to create a Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryo (DCRK), to replace the armistice agreement by a peace agreement, and to create a North-South nonaggression declaration. The two sides opposed South Korea's proposals for the cross-recognition of the two Koreas by major powers and the simultaneous entry of North and South Korea into the United Nations. The Soviet Union and the DPRK again demanded U.S. troop withdrawal from South Korea. The two allies also condemned plans to create a new NATO-like bloc in the region incorporating Japan and the South Korean regime ("Soviet-Korean Communiqué," *Pravda*).

liberator, helper and ally." <sup>36</sup> Furthermore, Kim staged the most elaborate celebration in Asia commemorating the 40th anniversary of the victory of the "Soviet People's Great Fatherland War." On May 8, 1985, Kim sent a cable message conveying "warmest congratulations" to Mikhail Gorbachev, the newly elected Soviet leader, and dispatched high-level party and military delegations to Moscow, Berlin, and Prague, indirectly paying homage to the post-war Stalinist empire that Kim had only recently denounced as "dominationism."<sup>37</sup>

On May 22, 1985, Kim attended a banquet hosted by Soviet Ambassador Nikolay Shubnikov. This marked the first time that independent-minded Kim had attended such a gathering. In his banquet speech, Kim provided the first official confirmation that something concrete had come out of his May 1984 Moscow visit. According to the Soviet news agency TASS, Kim expressed his "profound satisfaction" over the "successful results" of his negotiations with the Soviet leaders: "We are grateful to the Soviet Union for the great many-sided aid it renders the Democratic People's Republic of Korea."<sup>38</sup>

Soviet First Deputy Premier Gaidar Aliyev led the Soviet delegation to a celebration of the 40th anniversary

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<sup>36</sup>Richard Nations, "Militant Brotherhood--Kim Tilts to Moscow," p. 32.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

of Korea's liberation in August 1985. Since brief visits by Premier Alexei Kosygin in 1965 and President Nikolai Podgorniy in 1969, no high-ranking Soviet leader had visited Pyongyang. Gromyko was expected to visit Pyongyang, but Aliyev went instead.

The massive size of the Aliyev mission--composed of twenty-three separate government delegations, high-ranking military officials, and hundreds of visitors--signaled Moscow's serious intention to upgrade relations with North Korea in its strategic competition with Washington in the Western Pacific. Aliyev seized the occasion to denounce the "notorious Pacific doctrine" of the Reagan Administration in the United States, thereby demonstrating a new hard-line response to it. In a speech in Pyongyang, Aliyev attacked "Japan's re-militarization" as the key element in U.S. plans to cobble a Washington-Tokyo-Seoul militarist alliance. Without directly mentioning China, Aliyev issued a warning directed at Beijing not to get entangled in Washington's strategic schemes.<sup>39</sup> Aliyev was accompanied by First Deputy Minister of Defense Marshal Vasiliy Petrov, the most senior Soviet military official to visit Pyongyang since the early 1970s. Petrov's talks with North Korean Defense Minister O

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<sup>39</sup>Roy Kim, "Gorbachev and The Korean Peninsula," p. 1285; Richard Nations, "Love Boat to Wonsan," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, August 29, 1985, p. 22.

Jin U on August 13 were another clear indication of upgraded ties between the two allies.<sup>40</sup>

The Soviet delegation led by Aliyev consisted mainly of the elements of the military-industry-party apparatus complex of the Soviet Union. Aliyev's hard-line rhetoric against the perceived threat to Soviet security reflected the functional and ideological interests of the complex, which emphasized military preparedness to counter capitalist encirclement and ideological unity with Socialist countries, including North Korea. The remarkable improvement of political and military ties between Moscow and Pyongyang in the first years of Gorbachev's rule was made possible through the strong influence of the conservative hard-liners within the Soviet leadership. Gorbachev as the new leader of the Soviet Union still lacked the power to overrule the position of the conservative leaders whose perspectives were based on East-West confrontation and conflicts.

During Aliyev's visit to Pyongyang, three Soviet warships made a port call in Wonsan on August 13, 1985, for the first time in Soviet-North Korean history. The naval visit was led by First Deputy Commander of the Soviet

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<sup>40</sup>There were signs of disagreement between the two countries. Aliyev's omission of Kim Il Sung's tripartite proposal for talks among Seoul, Pyongyang, and Washington was an indication of discord between the two allies (Richard Nations, "Love Boat to Wonsan," p. 23; *Krasnaya Zvezda*, August 14, 1985, p. 3, in *FBIS-SOV-85-158*, August 15, 1985, p. C2).

Pacific Fleet, Vice-Admiral Nikolay Yasakov, aboard the Tallinn, a 9,500-ton Kara-class cruiser.<sup>41</sup>

Two months after Aliyev's visit to Pyongyang, China began to send a number of delegations to Pyongyang in a bid to regain North Korea's friendship and loyalty. North Korea, however, provided a low key reception to a Chinese delegation led by Vice-Premier Li Peng who was visiting Pyongyang to mark the 35th anniversary of Chinese volunteers' entry into the Korean War. Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il participated neither in the welcoming ceremony nor at the celebrations, unlike their appearance during Aliyev's visit in August. Apparently, North Korea was tilting toward Moscow at the expense of Beijing.<sup>42</sup>

The upgraded ties between Moscow and Pyongyang continued in 1986. However, the two Socialist countries still had differences. Shevardnadze undertook the first visit to North Korea by a Soviet foreign minister in 18 years. He flew to Pyongyang from Tokyo on January 19, 1986, for a four-day "goodwill" visit. Shevardnadze, in a speech on January 20, 1986, upheld the Soviet desire for peace and stability on the Korean peninsula by emphasizing that "the peaceful Socialist construction program can be fulfilled only in conditions of lasting peace,"<sup>43</sup> implying an

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<sup>41</sup>Richard Nations, "Love Boat to Wonsan," p. 22.

<sup>42</sup>Nayan Chanda, "Pyongyang Revisited," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, November 7, 1985, p. 18.

<sup>43</sup>Pyongyang Domestic Service, January 20, 1986, in *FBIS-APA-86-013*, January 21, 1986, p. D14.

objection to Kim Il Sung's militant policy and terroristic activities against the South in the past.

Nevertheless, in public, the Soviet side expressed full support for North Korea's position in the unification and U.S. troop withdrawal issues, and for its co-hosting of the upcoming Seoul Olympics. A joint communiqué was signed by Shevardnadze and his North Korean counterpart, Kim Young Nam, on January 23, 1986.<sup>44</sup> In the communiqué, Shevardnadze condemned the build-up by the U.S. of military preparations in South Korea as a nuclear springboard, and criticized attempts to create a new NATO-type military-political alliance comprising the United States, Japan, and South Korea. He reaffirmed the Soviet Union's support for North Korea's position on Korean unification and endorsed North Korea's position regarding U.S. troop withdrawal from South Korea along with all types of U.S. nuclear weapons, and the creation of a zone of peace and a nuclear-free zone on the Korean peninsula. The Soviets also supported North Korea's proposal for joint sponsorship by Seoul and Pyongyang of the 24th Summer Olympics in 1988.

During his visit, Shevardnadze announced at a press conference on January 22, 1986, that a forthcoming exchange of visits between Kim Il Sung and Gorbachev would be

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<sup>44</sup>For the full text of the Soviet-North Korea Joint Communiqué, see *Pravda*, January 24, 1986. See also "Soothing Old Friends," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, February 13, 1986, p. 34.

arranged. The first announcement of Kim's visit was made on October 14 and the date of the visit was set for two days later, on October 16. Gorbachev reportedly accepted an invitation to visit North Korea during his meeting with Kim Il Sung in Moscow in October 1986, but his trip never materialized, much to the dismay of North Korea.<sup>45</sup>

Pyongyang's attitudes toward Moscow in 1986 also clearly indicated closer ties between the two countries. The DPRK observed the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance with the USSR with elaborate fanfare. Pyongyang also praised the Soviet Union on the occasion of the 41st anniversary of the Korean liberation for its heroic deed in liberating the Korean people. For more than two decades, North Korean efforts to establish the country as independent and self-reliant had led it not to celebrate these anniversaries.<sup>46</sup>

Exchanges of diplomatic visits between the two countries continued in 1986. Party and government delegations were exchanged--Kim Hwan from North Korea and Yuri Soloviyev from the Soviet Union--to observe the 25th anniversary of the Soviet-North Korean Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance. Military groups also were exchanged to celebrate the occasion. A North Korean

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<sup>45</sup>See Roy Kim, "Gorbachev and The Korean Peninsula," p. 1285; Dae-Sook Suh, "North Korea in 1986," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (January 1987), p. 57.

<sup>46</sup>Dae-Sook Suh, "North Korea in 1986," pp. 58-59.

air squadron led by Deputy Air Force Commander Pak Hyong-uk flew to Moscow on July 3, 1986, and a Soviet air squadron led by Lt. General V. Bulankin visited North Korea. On July 4, 1986, units from the Pacific Fleet, led by its then commander, Admiral Vladimir Sidorov, called on the post of Wonsan in North Korea to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Soviet-North Korean treaty. Furthermore, North Korean naval forces joined the Soviet fleet in a joint naval operation in the Sea of Japan.<sup>47</sup>

The greatest difference in views between Moscow and Pyongyang seems to have been in regard to the pan-Asian security conference proposed by Gorbachev in his Vladivostok speech of July 1986. North Korean Foreign Minister Kim Yong Nam said that he supported the Soviet proposal to relax tensions in the Asian and Pacific region. Basically, the Soviet plan for security in Asia was based on its recognition of the status quo in Asian countries--in particular, recognition of existing borders. This plan was based on the recognition of "two Koreas" on the divided Korean peninsula; it is likely that North Korea was forced to agree with the Soviet position.<sup>48</sup> Continuing discord on this point may have played a part in Gorbachev's refusal to visit Pyongyang as promised earlier.

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>*Hanguk Ilbo*, January 25, 1986, p. 2, in *FBIS-APA-86-017*, January 27, 1986, pp. E2-E3.

Kim Il Sung made a five-day trip to Moscow in October 1986 for the second time in two years. The visit did not result in joint communiqués, an indication of political differences between the two leaders. The summit signified efforts to renew and increase mutual interests. Military matters almost certainly topped the agenda. After Kim's visit in 1986, the Soviets agreed to supply MiG-29 and SU-25 aircraft, SA-5 air defense missiles, and the Tin Shield advanced radar designed for early warning, target acquisition, and ground control. North Korea was the first non-Warsaw pact state to receive the Tin Shield.<sup>49</sup> The supply of the sophisticated weapons seems to have been the price for Moscow's continuing access to North Korea's territory and military facilities; by November, Soviet military utilization of North Korean airfields and ports increased visibly.

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<sup>49</sup>Rajan Menon, "New Thinking and Northeast Asian Security," *Problems of Communism* (March/June 1989), p. 26. It appears that the Soviet supply of advanced weapons and military equipment to North Korea was in response to the American sale of 36 F-16s to South Korea. The performance of the MiG-23 and MiG-29 was not superior to the F-16s. The SA-3 and SA-5 were defensive weapons; SA-3 proved extremely vulnerable to Israeli countermeasures in the 1982 Lebanese War. The performance of SA-5 was largely unknown. During Kim's visit to Moscow, the Soviet side again supported North Korea's efforts to obtain the ouster of U.S. troops and nuclear weapons from South Korea, turning the peninsula into a nuclear-free, peaceful zone, and thereby ensuring the peaceful democratic unification of Korea without interference from the outside (*Pravda*, October 25, 1986, p. 1, in *FBIS-SOV-86-208*, October 28, 1986, p. C1).

Military exchanges between Moscow and Pyongyang continued into 1987. In May 1987, the Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Navy, Admiral Vladimir Chernavin, led a naval delegation to North Korea.<sup>50</sup> A detachment of Soviet warships made up of the ASW (Anti-Submarine War) cruiser "Novorosiysk," the large ASW ship "Admiral Zakharov," and the destroyer "Boyevoy" under the flag of Admiral G. A. Khvatov, commander of the Pacific Fleet, visited the Port of Wonsan from May 12 through 16, 1987, on an official friendly visit.<sup>51</sup>

Moscow's military moves in North Korea suggested that Gorbachev's leadership had not yet departed from Brezhnev's long-standing policy of acting as a stabilizer on the peninsula: ". . . the publicity given to the new Soviet-North Korean military accord [seemed] to be more a well-measured political warning than operational demonstration of new military capabilities." <sup>52</sup>

#### 4. In Search of a New Relationship with Seoul

In 1985-early 1988, Gorbachev's new political thinking vis-a-vis Seoul was being formulated at the conceptual

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<sup>50</sup>Krasnaya Zvezda, May 12, 1987, in FBIS-SOV-87-096, May 19, 1987, p. C1.

<sup>51</sup>Krasnaya Zvezda, May 9, 1988, p. 5, in FBIS-SOV-88, May 10, 1988, p. 18.

<sup>52</sup>Richard Nations, "Love Boat to Wonsan," p. 22.

level, but its actual implementation was to begin in 1988 when Gorbachev decided to have an official relationship with Seoul. In the meantime, the Soviet Union was continuing the "old" policy toward Seoul, i.e., limited relations with Seoul at the unofficial level.

While intensifying military and economic cooperation with Pyongyang, Moscow steadily increased the level of non-political contact with Seoul in the mid-1980s. Increased non-political contact eventually led to mutual contacts at the political level. In this period, Soviet policy toward South Korea was quickly shifting from non-recognition to de facto recognition. The shift in Soviet policy toward Seoul, as Yakovlev pointed out, reflected the changing international environment of the time:

. . . the de-ideologization of approaches to interstate relations, deliberately started by China in the 1970s and vigorously supported by the Soviet Union in the second half of the 1980s, provided the absolutely new opportunities for interaction between the two global systems, and thus, in particular, opens up vista for contacts and exchanges between socialist countries and South Korea.<sup>53</sup>

Beginning with Seoul's participation in the International Geological Congress held in Moscow in the summer of 1984, exchanges resumed between South Korea and the Soviet Union that had been suspended after the Soviets

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<sup>53</sup>Alexander G. Yakovlev, "Role of the PRC and North Korea in Soviet-South Korean Relations," *Sino-Soviet Affairs* (Seoul), Vol. 13, No. 3 (Fall 1990), p. 95.

shot down a Korean airliner in September 1983. In a report to South Korea's National Assembly in June 1984, Foreign Minister Lee Won Kyung of South Korea revealed that non-political contacts with the Soviet Union had been resumed recently.<sup>54</sup>

From 1985 to early 1988, Gorbachev demonstrated a flexible and pragmatic attitude toward Seoul. The Soviet handling of a fishing boat violation in Soviet waters was a good example. A South Korean fishing boat and its 26 crew members were seized by a Soviet naval vessel on October 7, 1986, for operating illegally within the Soviet 200-mile exclusive fishery zone while fishing in the waters about 120 miles southeast of Japan's northern main island of Hokkaido. The Soviet authorities showed a business-like attitude in resolving this matter and promptly released the crew members upon payment of a fine.<sup>55</sup>

Furthermore, another illustration of changing Soviet attitudes toward South Korea was the handling of the repatriation of the ethnic Koreans residing on the Sakhalin Island. In 1985, the Korean National Red Cross (KNRC) was planning to arrange home visits by Koreans living in the Soviet Union. The KNRC was contacting the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Japanese Red Cross

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<sup>54</sup>*The Korea Times*, June 4, 1985, p. 1, in FBIS-APA-85-107, p. E1. See also *Chungang Ilbo*, August 20, 1984, p. 2, in FBIS-APA-84-164, August 22, 1984, pp. E8-E9.

<sup>55</sup>*Yonhap*, November 21, 1986, in FBIS-APA-86-226, November 24, 1986, p. E8.

Society to sound out the possibility of home visits by Korean residents in the Soviet Union, a country with which Korea had no diplomatic relations.<sup>56</sup>

Since 1966, the South Korean government had requested that the Japanese government serve as the mediator for the repatriation of the Koreans living on Sakhalin Island. According to the South Korean Foreign Ministry, about 60,000 Koreans now live on Sakhalin Island (these include the victims of Japanese imperialism who were taken to the island for forced labor by Japan during World War II, and their descendants); more than 2,000 would like to return to South Korea. Between 1976 and 1985, three Koreans from Sakhalin returned to South Korea permanently, and between 1981 and 1985, 11 Koreans visited their homeland.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>*The Korea Herald*, November 20, 1985, p. 1, in *FBIS-APA-85-225*, p. E2.

<sup>57</sup>*Yonhap*, January 16, 1986, in *FBIS-APA-86-012*, January 17, 1986, p. E2. When the North Korean government was established in 1948, the Soviet Union agreed to treat the Koreans in Sakhalin as North Korean citizens. The Soviets forced them to choose between Soviet and North Korean nationality. Since most of the Koreans were originally from South Korean provinces, they had no affinity with North Korea. Many refused to choose any nationality. As stateless persons, they were at the mercy of the Soviet bureaucrats for more than four decades. Some Koreans in Sakhalin were well-to-do, maintaining large productive farms and good houses. The total number of all Koreans living throughout the USSR was estimated at 500,000; most were Soviet citizens, but now live in various former Soviet Republics, mainly in the Central Asian states. According to a survey in April 1988, 750 of the 7,000 surviving Koreans were left stateless and waiting to be repatriated. Some 43,000 Koreans were stranded when the Soviet Union occupied the Sakhalin Island after World War II (*Yonhap*, August 3, 1989, in *FBIS-SOV-89-149*, August 4, 1989, p. 12).

Whenever South Korea raised the question of repatriation, Soviet officials in the past had replied that a Korean had not applied for repatriation. Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze told Japanese Foreign Minister Abe on January 17, 1986, that the emigration of the Koreans residing in the USSR was basically a matter between Moscow and Pyongyang. The Soviet Foreign Minister, however, promised that he would study the issue to see whether there were any exceptions. On October 13, 1987, the First Secretary of the Sakhalin Party organization Trechakov said that he would allow Koreans to see their families in Japan whenever they applied through the Korean or Japanese Red Cross, but that repatriation was out of the question. Until 1988, the Soviet policy was to deal only with North Koreans and Japanese in regard to repatriation.

Soviet policy on the repatriation issue began to change in early 1988. The chairman of the Soviet Red Cross told the Japanese daily newspaper *Hokkaido Shimbun* on March 4, 1988 that Soviet passports had no clause banning travel to countries that did not have diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. It was a strong indication that Moscow might allow the Koreans living on the island to visit South Korea despite the absence of diplomatic ties. An official at the Soviet Foreign Ministry said in the same interview that Korean residents could go to South Korea via Japan:

"Although they cannot travel to South Korea directly, they

can go anywhere including South Korea after they stop in Japan."<sup>58</sup> He further stated that they could choose to live in South Korea.

In December 1988, the Soviet Union allowed 82 Koreans to return permanently to South Korea.<sup>59</sup> In August 1989, the Soviet Red Cross sent telegrams to its South Korean counterpart proposing direct talks on the repatriation of ethnic Koreans living on Sakhalin Island. The Soviets proposed to allow Koreans to send invitations to relatives or acquaintances living there for home visits or permanent settlement in South Korea. This marked the first time that the Soviet Union had defined its official position on the repatriation of Sakhalin Koreans.<sup>60</sup>

Other evidence of the Soviet Union's flexible and pragmatic policy toward Seoul was Soviet participation in various athletic competitions hosted by South Korea. From March 1985 until January 12, 1988, Moscow dispatched over 13 different sports delegations to Seoul for competition in South Korean sporting events.<sup>61</sup> A team of twelve Soviet skaters who had won gold medals at the world championships

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<sup>58</sup>*The Korea Herald*, March 13, 1988, p. 1, in *FBIS-SOV-88-050*, March 15, 1988, p. 17

<sup>59</sup>Most of them were more than 60 years old, and could not work any more. Once they left the Soviet Union, they forfeited their pensions.

<sup>60</sup>*Yonhap*, August 3, 1989, in *FBIS-SOV-89-149*, August 4, 1989, p. 12. The ROK Red Cross Society and Soviet Red Cross Society had not made direct contacts until late 1980s. Therefore, all such contacts had been made via third-party countries, especially Japan.

<sup>61</sup>*The Korea Herald*, December 12, 1987, p. 1.

in Tokyo, arrived in Seoul to participate in an exhibition on March 27, 1985, which marked the first visit by any sports figures from the Soviet Union.<sup>62</sup> Press reports from Moscow on March 29, 1985, stated that the Soviet National Olympic Committee had agreed in principle to participate in the Seoul Olympics in 1988.<sup>63</sup> Moscow also sent a team to the World Judo Championships in Seoul in September 1985 with a group of archers planning to participate in the forthcoming archery championships to be held in October.<sup>64</sup> The Soviet Union sent a track and field team to the Seoul International Goodwill Athletics Meet in October 1987. It was reported that Korean athletes would for the first time train in the Soviet Union in December 1987.<sup>65</sup> Such an agreement was in accordance with the first sports exchange agreement between the two countries in 1987.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>Jae Hoon Shim, "Sporting Overture," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 18, 1985, p. 7; Therese Obrecht, "Breaking the Ice," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 11, 1985, p. 17.

<sup>63</sup>Therese Obrecht, "Breaking the Ice," p. 17.

<sup>64</sup>Malcom Moran, "U.S. and Soviet Sign Olympic Pact," *The New York Times*, September 16, 1985.

<sup>65</sup>*The Korea Herald*, November 29, 1987, p. 11, in FBIS-EAS-87-229, p. 9.

<sup>66</sup>Glen E. Howard, "Going for the Gold: Gorbachev's Asian Initiatives and the ROK," *Sino-Soviet Affairs* (Seoul), Vol. 13, No. 4 (Winter 1989/1990), p. 120.

## 5. Double-Track Economic Policy Toward North and South Korea

Contradictions and ambiguities in Soviet policy toward the two Koreas were evident in the economic realm as well. Moscow's economic cooperation with Pyongyang increased in 1985-1987, as a result of their upgraded ties in political and military spheres. At the same time, Moscow demonstrated its pragmatic attitudes in promoting trade and economic cooperation with Seoul at the non-official level. The apparent contradiction was due mainly to the coexistence of the two contending groups with roughly equal influence within the Soviet leadership, i.e., the hard-line, conservative group representing the interests of the military-industry-party apparatus complex and the reformist, liberal group advocating a new foreign policy based on the new political thinking.

### **A. Intensifying Economic Cooperation with Pyongyang**

Soviet economic cooperation with North Korea, mainly in the forms of trade in concessionary terms, economic and technical assistance to North Korea, and joint ventures and joint production, intensified substantially in 1985-1987.

The economic cooperation between Moscow and Pyongyang increased further after North Korean Premier Kang Sung San's

visit to Moscow in December 1985. The visit resulted in the signing of a protocol for developing trade and economic cooperation from 1986 to 1990. The agreement provided that trade and economic cooperation between the two countries should be more than doubled in five years, and included Soviet economic and technical aid for the development of the important sectors in North Korea's economy, including the ferrous and nonferrous metal, machine manufacturing, energy--including atomic energy--and coal industrial sectors. In addition, an aluminum plant and a bearing plant would be inaugurated in North Korea with the help of the Soviets in 1986.<sup>67</sup>

A sign of upgraded economic relations between the two countries was increased trade volume. By 1985, the Soviet Union re-emerged as North Korea's biggest trading partner. Bilateral trade accounted for 43 percent of North Korea's total trade in 1985, compared with 24 percent in 1980. The Soviets' share of total North Korean imports and exports rose from 22.2 percent and 26.2 percent, respectively, in 1980 to 47.2 percent and 37.2 percent, respectively, in 1985. China's share for 1985 dropped to 13.9 percent for

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<sup>67</sup>Moscow Domestic Service, February 10, 1986, in *FBIS-SOV-86-032*, February 18, 1986, pp. C4-C5. It is noteworthy that, at that time, the Soviet side promised North Korean Premier Kang that it would build a nuclear power plant in North Korea under economic and technical agreements. Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program, which had initially been boosted with Soviet technical and material assistance, later became the target of the Soviets' vehement objections.

imports and 15.3 percent for exports. In 1987, the volume of mutual trade increased by 20 percent from the 1985 level, reaching 1.2 billion rubles. In 1988, the volume reached 1.5 billion rubles (see Table 3, p. 257).<sup>68</sup>

North Koreans were taking mainly light industrial goods in exchange for agricultural and fisheries products. North Korea was exporting raw and semi-processed materials to the Soviet Union, including rice, magnesia, zinc, lead, and rolled steel, while importing processed industrial goods including industrial and mining machinery, rolling stock, and oil and petroleum products. Border trade between the two neighbors was growing considerably in the mid-1980s, accounting for approximately 3 percent of total two-way trade in 1987.<sup>69</sup>

Soviet technical and material assistance to Pyongyang continued during this period as well. A Soviet report issued in April 1985 showed that North Korea's Pukchang Thermal Power Plant had started operations. The plant had a capacity of 1.6 million kW, and had been built with the economic and technical assistance of the USSR. The report also stated that, with Soviet cooperation, three other thermal power plants, i.e., the Pyongyang Thermal Power Station, the Unggi Thermal Power Station, and the Chongjin

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<sup>68</sup>V. Mikheyev, "USSR-Korea: Economic Aspects of Relations," *Sino-Soviet Affairs* (Seoul), Vol. 13, No. 1 (Spring 1989), pp. 73-74.

<sup>69</sup>Adrian Buzo, "The Moscow Factor," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 18, 1987, p. 82.

Thermal Power Plant, which were producing more than 60 percent of North Korea's total power output, were constructed in the DPRK.<sup>70</sup> According to a Soviet account, by October 1986 the Soviet Union had either reconstructed or built more than sixty industrial plants in North Korea; these Soviet-built plants produced 28 percent of North Korean steel, 29 percent of ferrous metals, 50 percent of petroleum products, and 66 percent of the total electricity in North Korea.<sup>71</sup>

Joint ventures and joint production also were important components of Moscow-Pyongyang economic cooperation. The form of the commodity exchanges between the two countries further developed in the early 1980s. Soviet firms sent cottons and fabric to the DPRK, and the DPRK, in return, exported clothing products as finished items after processing the material. The two sides agreed that Korea's industry would cooperate, for the first time, in the production of a series of ships, maritime transport means, cargo trucks, parts of certain facilities, and machine tools and other machinery products that would be delivered to the Soviet Union.<sup>72</sup>

In September 1987, Moscow and Pyongyang agreed to set up the first Soviet-North Korean joint venture known as

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<sup>70</sup>FBIS-SOV-85-063, April 2, 1985, pp. C2-C3.

<sup>71</sup>Dae-Sook Suh, "North Korea in 1986," p. 58.

<sup>72</sup>Moscow International Service, April 13, 1986, in FBIS-SOV-86-082, April 26, 1986, pp. C3-C4.

Kichhon-Gorky, which made knee-type milling machines.<sup>73</sup> The two countries also were engaged in a timber procurement venture in the Soviet Far East. North Korea provided manpower while the Soviet Union supplied the forests and machinery. The timber cut by North Koreans was distributed on a mutually advantageous basis. North Korea received some of the timber in return for labor.<sup>74</sup>

#### B. Increasing Indirect Trade with Seoul

While intensifying its economic and technical assistance to Pyongyang, Moscow was searching for new economic opportunities with Seoul. Economic exchanges were another indication of Soviet diplomatic flexibility in dealing with Seoul. As a result, indirect trade at the non-official level between the two countries steadily increased in 1985-1988.

Individual South Korean businessmen, in pursuit of their own economic interests, had energetically cultivated economic exchanges with the Soviet Union and other Socialist

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<sup>73</sup>The joint venture had a statutory fund of 79 million rubles, with the Soviet partner holding 49 percent. It turned out its first products in October 1989 (Marina Trigubenko et al., "DPRK: First Few Mixed Enterprises," *Far Eastern Affairs* [Moscow], No. 3 [1990], p. 32).

<sup>74</sup>The agreement, concluded in the late 1960s, has since been renewed three times. The first Korean timber procurement establishments were constructed in the region of the present Urgal Station on the Baikal-Amur Main Railroad. *Izvestiya*, March 19, 1987, in *FBIS-SOV-87-056*, March 24, 1987, p. C1.

countries since the 1970s. The Soviet Union as well as other Socialist countries also had a keen interest in economic cooperation and trade with South Korea. Foreign Minister Choi Kwang Su of South Korea said in an interview in November 1987 that the South Korean government would enhance economic relations with the Soviet Union, China, and Eastern European countries, with special emphasis on joint ventures and direct trade. Choi noted that some "positive" signs had emerged from the Soviets and Chinese, pointing to a willingness to promote extensive non-political exchanges with Korea in recent years.<sup>75</sup> Soviet interest in economic cooperation was intimately intertwined with the plan for economic development in the Soviet Far East. Soviet economists estimated that the development of the Far East would be an important factor in the revitalization of the Soviet economy.

The economic complementarity of South Korea and the Soviet Union contributed to a mutual interest in economic cooperation and trade.<sup>76</sup> The Soviet Union possessed

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<sup>75</sup>*The Korea Times*, November 1, 1987, p. 1, in *FBIS-EAS-87-211*, p. 19.

<sup>76</sup>For the complementary nature of economic cooperation, see G. Toloraya, "Trading with the 'Dragon,'" *Argumenty i Fakty*, No. 11, March 18-24, 1989, p. 4, in *FBIS-SOV-89-056*, March 24, 1989, pp. 12-14; Mikhail L. Titarenko, "New Trends in Asian-Pacific International Situation and their Impacts on Soviet-South Korean Relations," *Sino-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (Summer 1990), pp. 17-19; V. Mikheyev, "USSR-Korea: Economic Aspects of Relations," p. 77; Yang Taek Lim, "Cooperation Between South Korea and the USSR," *Far Eastern Affairs* (Moscow) No. 1 (1991), pp. 109-110.

potential markets and rich natural resources (especially in East Siberia and the Maritime Province), as well as high-level basic technology and science, while South Korea had consumer goods, industrial technology, and marketing experience. The Soviet Union was an especially attractive partner for South Korea as a source of raw materials, including natural gas, coal, and oil. Moscow intended to channel South Korea's investment into the development of natural resources, the creation of a social infrastructure in the Soviet Far East, and increased production of consumer goods.

The potential for mutually beneficial economic relations was not the only factor that prompted Soviet economic cooperation with Seoul. First, the stagnation in Soviet-Japanese trade contributed to Moscow's move toward closer economic ties with Seoul. Although Japan was the Soviet Union's largest trading partner in East Asia throughout the 1970s, the level of Japanese-Soviet trade had dropped considerably by 1987.<sup>77</sup> In 1987, the total volume of trade between Japan and the USSR amounted to 2.6 billion rubles. Despite repeated requests from the Soviet Union to participate in development projects in Siberia, Japan refused to make a substantial investment in the region for political reasons. The Japanese insisted on the return of

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<sup>77</sup>Glen E. Howard, "Going for the Gold: Gorbachev's Asian Initiatives and the ROK," p. 124.

the four disputed Kurile Islands, which were seized by the Soviet Union after World War II, as the precondition for resuming massive economic cooperation with the Soviet Union. The Soviets were hoping that South Korean-Soviet economic cooperation would not only replace Japan's role but also exert pressure on Japan to reconsider its position. The Soviets also were hoping that technological cooperation with South Korea could overcome Japan's technological monopoly.<sup>78</sup>

Second, the Soviet Union was interested in the Chinese economic experiment and did not wish to fall behind China in tapping the potential in the booming Asian economies, especially in South Korea.<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, by extending its contacts with South Korea, the Soviet Union sought to establish itself as a major player in inter-Korean affairs and gain access to South Korea's dynamic economy.<sup>80</sup>

Third, the Soviets were eager to learn the secret of South Korea's remarkable economic achievements. The Soviets were fully aware that Seoul's economic success was made possible by its state-led, export-oriented economic development strategy, its profound integration with the

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<sup>78</sup>Chan Young Bang, "Prospect of Korean-Soviet Economic Cooperation and Its Impact on Security and Stability of the Korean Peninsula," *The Korean Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Autumn 1990), pp. 320-321.

<sup>79</sup>James W. Riordan, "Korea and Soviet Union Relations," *Korea & World Affairs* (Winter 1988), p. 772.

<sup>80</sup>Glen E. Howard, "Going for the Gold: Gorbachev's Asian Initiatives and the ROK," p. 122.

world economy, and the diligence and discipline of the South Korean worker.

Seoul-Moscow trade first started in the late 1970s and was initially conducted indirectly through third-party countries, but by December 1988, direct trade between the two countries was inaugurated as a consequence of a mutual agreement.<sup>81</sup> By the mid-1980s, trade volume between Moscow and Seoul was increasing steadily. The total trade volume between Seoul and Moscow amounted to \$36 million in 1980, and \$57 million in 1984. It more than doubled in 1985, to \$122 million. The big increase from the previous year was due mainly to Gorbachev's increasingly flexible trade policy toward Seoul. Bilateral trade continued to increase, jumping from \$164 million in 1987 to \$290 million in 1988 (see Table 1, p. 174). Soviet trade with North Korea was still greater than that with South Korea, but the gap was narrowing rapidly. As indicated in Table 1, in terms of total volume, South Korea's trade with China far exceeded that with the USSR.

## 6. Concluding Remarks

In 1985-early 1988, Soviet foreign policy toward the two Koreas was in transition. New Soviet leader Gorbachev

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<sup>81</sup>*Dong-A Ilbo* (New York Edition), December 29, 1988.

was groping for a new relationship with Seoul and Pyongyang. The Kremlin was redefining its national interests in East Asia. Gorbachev began to critically reassess its traditionally friendly ties with Pyongyang, which had been a political and economic burden to his country, and to search for increased economic ties with Seoul, which would benefit his reform policy.

This period also represented contradiction and inconsistency in Soviet policy toward Seoul and Pyongyang. During this period, Gorbachev's Korea policy manifested the traits of both the old political thinking and the new political thinking. The Soviet Union upgraded its relations with Pyongyang while increasing economic exchanges with Seoul at the unofficial level. This seemingly contradictory policy may be ascribed to two factors. Gorbachev had not yet firmly established a new policy toward North and South Korea, although he clearly enunciated the broad framework for Soviet new policy in the Asia Pacific region. Furthermore, he had yet to firmly consolidate power within the Soviet leadership, and consequently faced formidable opposition and resistance to a reformist foreign policy.

As time passed Gorbachev had to confront a basic dilemma: how should the Soviet Union reconcile its past obligation to Pyongyang with fresh opportunities in Seoul, within the context of Soviet relations with China, Japan,

and the USA?<sup>82</sup> When his power was secured and Soviet relations with the U.S., China, and Japan were improving in 1988, Gorbachev began to move to establish a formal political relationship with Seoul while downgrading the Soviet relationship with Pyongyang.

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<sup>82</sup>Roy Kim, "Gorbachev and the Korean Peninsula," p. 1267.

## CHAPTER 8

### GORBACHEV ASCENDANT: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW POLITICAL THINKING (SUMMER 1988-SUMMER 1990)

As Gorbachev accumulated power through personnel changes and by restructuring the Soviet political process and system, his new political thinking was being sequentially implemented into Soviet foreign policy. Through this new political thinking, Soviet foreign policy was assuming a new shape, rather than following orthodox ideology. Soviet policy toward East Asia, particularly the Korean peninsula, also was transformed accordingly.

Gorbachev's bold and often concessionary policies in global and regional contexts facilitated the demise of the Cold War system, ushering in an era of international cooperation. A sharp improvement in Soviet-South Korean relations ensued in 1988. Discarding its earlier pro-North Korean policy, the Kremlin began to expand and upgrade its ties with Seoul in 1988, as Gorbachev became more confident and assertive vis-a-vis his conservative opposition, whose presence had dwindled at the top level of the Soviet leadership. It was still powerfully present in the Central Committee, the bureaucracies, and the Republics.

### 1. Gorbachev's Ascendance and Changing Soviet Policy Directions

A new era arrived in Northeast Asia. By the late 1980s, a new triangular relationship was established in the region; the U.S.-China-Soviet triangle, roughly equilateral in form, for the first time could be described as being in harmonious equilibrium.<sup>1</sup> Improvement in the U.S.-Soviet relationship, as well as the rapprochement in the Sino-Soviet relationship, provided the most favorable environment for finding a new way to reduce tensions on and around the Korean peninsula.<sup>2</sup>

In his Krasnoyarsk speech on September 16, 1988, Gorbachev noted for the first time his willingness to develop economic ties with Seoul: "I think that, in the context of the general improvement of the situation on the Korean peninsula, possibilities may open up for establishing economic ties with South Korea."<sup>3</sup> The statement symbolized the application of the new political thinking to relations with South Korea.

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas W. Robinson, "The Soviet Union and East Asia," in E. A. Kolodziej and R. Kanet, eds., *The Limits of Soviet Power in the Developing World* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), p. 174.

<sup>2</sup>Alexander Yakovlev, "Role of the PRC and North Korea in Soviet-South Korean Relations," *Sino-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Fall 1990), p. 94.

<sup>3</sup>Mikhail Gorbachev, "Krasnoyarsk Speech," *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, Vol. 40, No. 38 (October 19, 1988), p. 7.

This new thinking simultaneously aimed to reduce ideological ties with North Korea and promote Soviet national interests by establishing relations with South Korea. New political thinking in regard to the Korean peninsula prescribed the following: Soviet foreign policy should be guided by concrete national interests instead of abstract ideological principles; another war in Korea should be prevented since it may escalate into an all-out war involving the Soviet Union; the Soviet Union's principle of reasonable sufficiency and defensive military posture called for arms control and disarmament in East Asia, including the Korean peninsula; the Korean question should be resolved politically through negotiations and compromises between the two Koreas; and military confrontation and ideological conflict should cease on the peninsula.

Soviet researchers increasingly refuted Pyongyang's pronouncements about the growing danger of war and the need to strengthen defenses against imminent imperialist aggression. They also worked to shed light on the differences between the new political thinking and Pyongyang's policy. These differences included the following: (1) the international aims of North Korea and the Soviet Union were at odds because the USSR had opted for a western model and North Korea was defending the Stalinist regime; (2) the North Korean leadership was opposed to a real détente between the USSR and the U.S. or between the

U.S. and China; (3) Pyongyang was still promoting a "cult of personality" which was detestable to the Soviets; and (4) North Korea's belligerent foreign policy was not conducive to tension reduction or to international cooperation in East Asia.<sup>4</sup>

The change in the direction of Soviet policy was due to Gorbachev's ascendancy as the Soviet leader. By late 1988, General Secretary Gorbachev established himself as the predominant leader in the Kremlin. With his power position increasingly secure, Gorbachev embarked upon institutional restructuring and changes in 1988. In 1988-1990, the Soviet leader restructured Party and state institutions and created new structures in order to further enhance his power position and promote his reform program.

The 19th All-Union Party Conference of June 1988 introduced drastic changes in the Party structure.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Eugen Bazhanov and Natash Bazhanov, "Soviet Views on North Korea," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 31, No. 12 (December 1991), pp. 1127-1129; Oleg Davidov, "Soviet Policy Toward the Korean Peninsula in the 1990s," *The Korean Journal of International Studies* (Spring 1990), p. 433.

<sup>5</sup>The 19th All-Union Party Conference also endorsed an important principle of the new political thinking, i.e., political solutions to international problems in order to create a favorable external environment for undertaking domestic reform. Shevardnadze stated in this regard: "I recall July 1988. The Nineteenth All-Union Party Conference had just ended, having reaffirmed the main priority for us: to secure by political means the favorable external conditions needed to bring about change inside the country" (Eduard Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom*, trans. by Catherine A. Fitzpatrick [New York: The Free Press, 1991], p. 52). During the conference, Gorbachev attempted without success to remove the Party from day-to-day involvement in government and to institute in the Soviet

Gorbachev substantially weakened the power of the Central Committee Secretariat through structural changes at the Central Committee Plenum in September 1988, in order to eliminate the resistance of the Party machine to his reform.<sup>6</sup>

In the face of persistent obstruction and resistance to his reform program from conservative Party leaders, Gorbachev began to shift the power center from the Party to the state beginning in 1988. First, Gorbachev was elected chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet in October 1988, whereby he became the titular head of the Soviet state. The Soviet Union still retained a collective head of state--the forty-two-member Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet--and the Politburo remained the central decision-making body. But, by assuming the titular Presidency of the

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system a separation of powers among three branches of government.

<sup>6</sup>In the Central Committee Plenum of September 30, 1988, Gorbachev succeeded in removing six holdovers from the Brezhnev era, including Andrei Gromyko. Gorbachev also removed his major rival Igor Ligachev from the influential post of Party second secretary. At the end of 1988, nine of the eleven full members (excluding Gorbachev) of the Politburo were Gorbachev's appointees. Gorbachev's emasculation of the Party institutions invited sharp criticism from conservative Party members. For example, at the Central Committee meeting on July 18, 1989, a number of highly placed Party officials, including Nikolai Ryzhkov, Igor Ligachev, Lev Zaikov, and Vitali Vorotnikov, urged Gorbachev to reinstate the Party apparatus in its previous powers and blamed Gorbachev for the destruction of the Party machine (Alexander Rahr, "Gorbachev Faces Revolt in Party Apparatus," *Report on the USSR* [August 11, 1989], pp. 7-10).

country, Gorbachev precluded the Politburo from achieving a rival position of power that could challenge his authority.

Second, after assuming the chairmanship of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, Gorbachev pushed through the adoption of proposals to create new legislative bodies-- a new larger authoritative constitutional super-legislature called the Congress of Peoples' Deputies and a restructured Supreme Soviet whose members were elected by the Congress of Peoples' Deputies. The creation of these new state institutions essentially deprived the Party's leading bodies, including the Politburo, of their previous exclusive right of control over politics. The Congress of People's Deputies elected Gorbachev to the post of Chairman of the newly restructured Supreme Soviet in May 1989. The Chairman of the Supreme Soviet was granted broad domestic and foreign policy-making powers, and also served as Chairman of the Defense Council, giving him command of the armed forces.

Finally, Gorbachev established an executive presidency in the Soviet Union. At the initiative of Gorbachev, the USSR Congress of People's Deputies approved the creation of an executive presidency and abolition of the Communist Party's monopoly of power on March 13, 1990,<sup>7</sup> and elected Gorbachev the first executive president of the country. As the President of the Soviet Union, Gorbachev was accorded a

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<sup>7</sup>For the constitutional changes approved by the Congress of Peoples' Deputies, see *Izvestiya*, March 16, 1990.

wide range of executive powers. From then on, Gorbachev combined the post of President with that of Party General Secretary. The creation of the presidency shifted the center of power from the Party to state authority. The Communist Party was deprived of its monopoly of power and became a political party within a system that still did not allow other political parties to function.

The move by Gorbachev to shift the power center from the Party to state institutions was motivated by policy and power considerations.<sup>8</sup> Gorbachev came to realize that the powers of Party General Secretary were not adequate to implement his reform policy successfully and that the Communist Party apparatus was not the vehicle for a solution, but part of the problem.

Gorbachev's creation of the presidency also derived from his need to secure his power position and to give legal-constitutional force to his authority. Under the old system, he could have been forced out of his position as the general secretary by party conservatives within the Party structure. There was a danger that Gorbachev might be expelled from office by Party hard-liners, just as Nikita Khrushchev was removed from power in October 1964. As Soviet President, Gorbachev became responsible to the

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<sup>8</sup>For Gorbachev's political motives behind the creation of the new executive presidency, see Elizabeth Teague, "The Powers of the Soviet Presidency," *Report on the USSR*, Vol. 2, No. 12 (March 23, 1990), pp. 4-5.

Congress of Peoples' Deputies, which was not likely to remove him from power.

With increased power and self-confidence, Gorbachev launched a new policy toward the Korean peninsula in 1988-1990.

## 2. Changing Soviet Perceptions and Attitudes Toward North and South Korea: Pragmatism over Ideology

A good indicator of the Kremlin's attitudes toward the two Koreas was the treatment by the Soviet media of Seoul and Pyongyang. Until recently, the Soviet media had been tightly controlled by the central authorities. Until 1988, Soviet media coverage of the two Koreas was grossly distorted and biased in favor of Pyongyang. Soviet newspapers and magazines traditionally displayed tolerance for Pyongyang; the Korea specialists in the USSR focused in their writings on strengthening cooperation and friendship with Pyongyang.

The Soviet media had long followed the old policy with regard to Pyongyang, which could be formulated as follows: "we [the Soviets] are not writing about you [the North Koreans] what you are not publishing in your own press." For decades, Soviet specialists on Korea had to abide by two rules; not only did they have to follow official government lines, but they had to accept and praise North Korea's

activities and interpretations as well.<sup>9</sup> Any criticism of North Korea was thoroughly crossed out in every publication on the Korean problem. Objective information on South Korea was strictly taboo and Soviet reporters dealing with international affairs were not even allowed to write about South Korea until glasnost in the foreign policy came to prevail in Soviet society.<sup>10</sup>

Official Soviet policy in previous years was largely to blame for the distorted and biased treatment of Korean issues. Faina Shabshina, a prominent Soviet specialist on the Korean problem, provided a detailed explanation from her own personal experience:

They [Soviet Korean studies] contain, unfortunately, a fair amount of cliché, dogmatism, and opportunism and I have my own work first and foremost in mind here. However, can a researcher alone be blamed for all this? He is culpable of tenacious and firmly entrenched excessive circumspection, self-censorship, and self-limitation. But this is a consequence: the cause is to be seen elsewhere. It is not through the will of scientists that the following practice made up of two basic elements became the norm: First, the author's opinion is unfailingly identified with official policy; second, a directive was issued which still holds good that it is necessary to write about a fraternal state and particularly the DPRK

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<sup>9</sup>N. Bazanova, "Soryon'aesu'ui hankuk yonku [The Soviet Studies on Korea]," *Sino-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (Winter 1989), p. 187; Eugen Bazhanov and Natasha Bazhanov, "Soviet Views on North Korea," p. 1126.

<sup>10</sup>Leonid Mlechin, "Sitting on the Fence," *New Times* (Moscow) No. 10, March 6-12, 1990, pp. 19-21. See also Moscow International Service in Korean, June 26, 1990, in *FBIS-SOV-90-127*, July 2, 1990, p. 10.

solely in a positive light, strictly adhering to its official historiography.<sup>11</sup>

A substantial change in Soviet attitudes toward Pyongyang and Seoul occurred by 1988. In the atmosphere of increasing openness and democratization of Soviet society, many Soviets began to openly criticize North Korea as a society without a future; the reformist elites in the Soviet Union especially considered it "a classical Stalinist state that was created with the direct help of the late dictator [Stalin]" and that had retained all of the heinous elements of a totalitarian state.<sup>12</sup> North Korea, to the reformist elites, was unpredictable because its behavior was determined by the will of the two men who were arousing tensions in order to control their own population. Increasingly, "such factors as unity of goals, the defense of Socialist values, inter-party ties, struggle against imperialism which traditionally cemented Soviet-DPRK strategic partnership [were] losing their importance."<sup>13</sup>

The Soviet media became increasingly critical of the North Korean system, and Soviet writings began to reevaluate North Korea's policies. Soviet historian Mikhail Smirnov

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<sup>11</sup>F. I. Shabshina, "Soviet Scientist's Opinion: Can the Korean Knot be Unraveled?", *Izvestiya*, September 2, 1989, p. 5.

<sup>12</sup>Eugen Bazhanov and Natash Bazhanov, "Soviet Views on North Korea," p. 1124.

<sup>13</sup>Oleg Davidov, "Soviet Policy Toward the Korean Peninsula in the 1990s," p. 433.

publicly stated that the Korean War was started by Kim Il Sung, refuting North Korea's official line on the issue:

The [North Korean] side prepared this war [Korean War] . . . . I think that all of this [the argument that South Korea started the Korean War] is contrary to fact. I think the fact we have persistently maintained this view for many years can only be explained by the fact that ideology has played an excessive role in the overall aspects of the study of history and, in particular, Soviet-Korean relations.<sup>14</sup>

Almost every article about North Korea carried in Soviet central newspapers or journals disturbed the North Korean authorities because of their critical tone toward the North Korean system. North Koreans repeatedly requested that the Soviet Embassy "take measures."<sup>15</sup> North Korea expelled a correspondent from the official Soviet press agency TASS in early 1990 for his articles on North Korea's economic problems.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, North Korea closed down the Soviet IAN bureau in Pyongyang and refused to accredit a *Komsomolskaya Pravda* correspondent.<sup>17</sup>

While manifesting increasingly critical attitudes toward Pyongyang, Moscow began to show favorable attitudes toward Seoul. Before 1988, the Soviet mass media rarely

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<sup>14</sup>Moscow International Service in Korean, April 21, 1990, in FBIS-SOV-90-078, April 23, 1990, p. 24. See also Victor Usov, "Who Sent the Chinese Volunteers?" *Far Eastern Affairs* (Moscow), No. 1 (1991), pp. 167-176.

<sup>15</sup>Moscow TRUD in Russian, April 13, 1990, p. 3, in FBIS-SOV-90-075, April 18, 1990, p. 15.

<sup>16</sup>*The New York Times*, May 31, 1990.

<sup>17</sup>*Pravda*, December 22, 1990, p. 4, in FBIS-SOV-91-003, January 4, 1991.

dealt with South Korea, and portrayed the country as a semi-colony of the U.S. ruled by a dictatorial regime.<sup>18</sup> In early 1988, the Soviets began to express friendly gestures toward the newly inaugurated Roh Tae Woo government of South Korea. Moscow not only called Roh's victory in the Presidential election "the first peaceful transfer of power in many years," but also warmly received the new government and supported Roh's call for "forming relations with states that have different ideology and sociopolitical systems."<sup>19</sup> By 1988, Soviet media coverage as well as scholarly writings on South Korea became not only increasingly frequent, but also were based on objective assessments.<sup>20</sup> Scholarly journals in the USSR, such as *Far Eastern Affairs*, started to publish articles that objectively described various facets of South Korean life, the roots of economic achievements, and the reasons for the current difficulties.

In this regard, Shabshina's article in *Izvestiya* on September 2, 1989 is noteworthy. The leading Soviet expert on Korea for the first time publicly called for a new policy toward South Korea; she suggested Soviet recognition of

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<sup>18</sup>Sergei E. Kudasov, "On Perception of South Korea Among Soviet Public," *Sino-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (Summer 1990), p. 70.

<sup>19</sup>FBIS-SOV-88-112, February 24, 1988, p. 21.

<sup>20</sup>Sergei E. Kudasov, "On Perception of South Korea Among Soviet Public," p. 73. In June 1987, *Literaturnaya Gazeta* began to carry detailed articles on the emerging democratic movement in South Korea. In September 1988, *New Times (Novoe Vremiya)* a Soviet weekly, carried an article on South Korean preparations for the Seoul Olympic Games.

South Korea and cross-recognition of the two Koreas by the major powers. Shabshina's favoring of Soviet recognition of South Korea was based on national interests, international prestige, and peace and security in East Asia.

For a long time, a very long time, they [national interests] were not considered in the USSR's policy toward Korea. Indeed, we had no policy of our own, we merely automatically supported the course of our ally--the DPRK--even on questions going beyond the purely internal Korean framework. For example, for a long time we stubbornly rejected economic contacts with the South which were beneficial to the Soviet Union. At the same time some other Socialist countries acted independently on the basis of their national interests and maintained such contacts (albeit indirectly) for a long time.<sup>21</sup>

Furthermore, the Soviet scholar directly contradicted Pyongyang's traditional policy against "cross-recognition" that had long been espoused by Seoul: "cross-recognition whereby we [the Soviets] recognize South Korea and the U.S. and its allies recognize the DPRK cannot be ruled out either."<sup>22</sup>

In a Foreign Ministry briefing on September 4, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Rogachev explained that the article reflected the author's personal opinion and not the official stance of the Soviet government on the matter. Rogachev stressed that the Soviet Union, while maintaining relations with South Korea on a non-governmental level mainly in trade

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<sup>21</sup>See F. I. Shabshina, "Soviet Scientist's Opinion: Can the Korean Knot be Unraveled?"

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

and economics, had no intention of exchanging diplomatic ties with South Korea.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, in private conversations, some Soviet officials acknowledged that the article represented new Soviet thinking.<sup>24</sup>

The Soviet Union's new attitudes toward North and South Korea were closely related to the evolution of its own domestic political life. In fact, "many foreign political initiatives and actions of the USSR taken in the second half of the 1980s . . . amply manifested a real influence of democratization processes in the Soviet Union upon Soviet foreign policy."<sup>25</sup> The combination of glasnost in foreign policy and democratization greatly contributed to changed attitudes. Until 1988, glasnost meant openness in the press about domestic issues only. Foreign policy and the war in Afghanistan were initially taboo subjects until the announcement of the withdrawal in February 1988. The war in Afghanistan was a turning point for glasnost in foreign policy.<sup>26</sup> The Soviet media then began a more objective treatment of the two Korean systems as well, a great

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<sup>23</sup>TASS, September 4, 1989, in *FBIS-SOV-89-170*, September 5, 1989, p. 6.

<sup>24</sup>Parris Chang, "Sino-Soviet Rivalry in Korea," in William J. Taylor, Jr. et al., eds., *The Korean Peninsula* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990), p. 170.

<sup>25</sup>Vladlen B. Vorontsov, "Development in the USSR and the ROK: Impact upon Soviet-South Korean Relations," *Sino-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (Summer 1990), p. 102.

<sup>26</sup>Sarah E. Mendelson, "Explaining Change in Soviet Foreign Policy," paper prepared for delivery at the 1991 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, The Washington Hilton, August 29-September 1, 1991, p. 38.

departure from the past when North Korea's position was supported blindly and praised by the Soviet media.

In addition to glasnost in Soviet foreign policy, increased direct contacts with South Koreans, especially during and after the Seoul Olympics of September 1988, contributed to the gradual change in Soviet perceptions and attitudes toward South Korea. After personal contacts with the South Koreans, many Soviet specialists who had direct access to Gorbachev reached "a conclusion that the social and political system in the south of the Korean peninsula was a reality which should not be ignored since it existed anyway whether we liked it or not."<sup>27</sup> Moscow's changing perceptions and attitudes toward the two Koreas also were partly a result of Seoul's nordpolitik. This policy, which was already outlined in 1987 during Roh's presidential campaign, was received favorably by the new thinkers within the Soviet leadership and perceived by the Soviets as a major departure from a policy based on anti-Communism.<sup>28</sup> Thus, as a result of the Soviet Union's perestroika and glasnost and South Korea's nordpolitik and democratization, the two countries' perceptions of one another gradually changed and improved.

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<sup>27</sup>Sergei E. Kudasov, "On Perception of South Korea Among Soviet Public," pp. 72-73.

<sup>28</sup>Vladimir Ivanov, "Perestroika in the Pacific," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, February 22, 1990, p. 24.

However, the authority of the media to present favorable images of South Korea did not necessarily result in media uniformity. The Soviet media sometimes portrayed South Korea as a dependent state of the U.S.<sup>29</sup> and often reiterated its pro-Pyongyang position: U.S. troop withdrawal and the Korean peninsula into a nuclear-free zone.<sup>30</sup> The conservative opposition, and the media under its control or influence, contrived to criticize South Korea and by inference Gorbachev's new policies.

The development of favorable perceptions and attitudes toward Seoul led to a transition in Soviet policy toward South Korea from indirect economic contacts and unofficial

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<sup>29</sup>The following examples illustrate this point: "First of all, the danger comes from the U.S. military presence in South Korea. This stems from the imperialists' endless interference in the Korean people's internal affairs . . . . The Korean question was created by U.S. interference" (Moscow International Service, September 8, 1988, in *FBIS-SOV-88-183*, September 21, 1988, p. 25). "It would be difficult to conduct high-level talks while U.S. tanks are rumbling on near the 38th parallel. Incidentally, the South seems to understand this, too. But how can it disobey its senior partner? Seoul's foreign policy course continues to be shaped in Washington. President G. Bush's visit confirmed this once again" (*Izvestiya*, March 4, 1989, p. 6, in *FBIS-SOV-89-044*, March 8, 1989, p. 23).

<sup>30</sup>For example, see *Pravda*, September 9, 1988, p. 1, in *FBIS-SOV-88-175*, September 9, 1988, p. 18. In a journal article published in 1989, Vorontsov echoed North Korea's position: "The best road to this solution would be to transfer the Korean peninsula into a zone of peace, to replace a truce agreement with a peace treaty, to stop large scale military exercises on and around peninsula and to develop a peaceful dialogue between the two parts of Korea" (V. Vorontsov, "Asia and Pacific Security: Some Problems," *Sino-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 13, No. 1 [Spring 1989], p. 87).

relations to direct economic contacts and official relations.

### 3. Realization of Gorbachev's New Policy Toward Seoul

In 1988-1990, objective national interests and economic gain, instead of ideological principles and geostrategic consideration, became the driving force behind a new Soviet policy toward Seoul.<sup>31</sup> In 1988, the Kremlin decided to move toward establishing formal relations with Seoul in pursuit of its national interests.<sup>32</sup> Instead of abruptly concluding diplomatic ties with Seoul, the Soviet leadership opted for a step-by-step approach. The Soviets first expanded and upgraded economic ties with Seoul by exchanging trade offices, and then entered into a semi-official political relationship by exchanging consular departments. Finally, a

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<sup>31</sup>Oleg Davidov, "Soviet Policy Toward the Korean Peninsula in the 1990s," p. 425.

<sup>32</sup>Alexandr Bovin, an influential *Izvestiya* commentator, implied the possibility of diplomatic ties with Seoul in an interview with a Japanese newspaper in October 1988, when he spoke approvingly of the idea of cross-recognition and the admission of both Koreas to the UN (*Mainichi Shimbun*, October 12, 1988, in *FBIS-SOV*, October 20, 1988, p. 1). Evgeni Primakov, another influential politician with close connections to Gorbachev, noted in October 1988: "we don't regard South Korea as our diplomatic or even our political partner. At the same time we must take account of reality. The reality is that South Korea is a fast-growing economic organism. All the world's other countries, including China, are also considering this" (*Pravda*, October 8, 1988, in *FBIS-SOV*, October 12, 1988, p. 12). From these statements, we can infer that in 1988 the Kremlin had decided to establish political relations with Seoul.

formal diplomatic relationship was concluded at the ambassadorial level.

Nevertheless, Gorbachev did not seem to have a clear-cut time-table for establishing a formal political relationship with Seoul. As Titarenko, the director of the Institute of the Far Eastern Studies, indicated, Gorbachev's policy toward the Korean peninsula was evolving in the spirit of new political thinking: "The Soviet Union's approach to the present Korean problem is not rigidly set, it has been developing in the spirit of new political thinking, in the light of the North-South dialogue, and changes in the world situation."<sup>33</sup>

#### **A. Formal Economic Relations with Seoul Established**

In 1988, the economic relations with Seoul that had been maintained at the private, unofficial level developed into formal relations. In a speech delivered in September in Krasnoyarsk, Gorbachev for the first time expressed the Soviet Union's willingness to establish economic relations with South Korea: "I think that, in the context of the general improvement of the situation on the Korean peninsula, possibilities may open up for establishing

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<sup>33</sup>Mikhail Titarenko, "The Situation in the APR and Soviet-South Korean Relations," *Far Eastern Affairs*, No. 5 (1990), p. 8.

economic ties with South Korea."<sup>34</sup> In fact, the idea of building economic relations with Seoul had long been considered by the Soviet leadership, as Shipayev, senior scientific associate in the USSR Academy of Sciences, stated:

It must be admitted that this question [the possibility of economic relations with South Korea] has been coming to a head for a long time. The overwhelming majority of European Socialist countries have now built economic relations with South Korea. Another example--the annual trade turnover between South Korea and China is now approximately \$2.5 billion. I have absolutely no doubt that the Soviet Union could also derive considerable benefit from this kind of cooperation.<sup>35</sup>

The Seoul Olympiad, held on September 17-October 3, 1988, provided a good excuse for the Soviets to establish political contacts with the South Koreans. The Kremlin clearly decided to establish official economic relations and quasi-official political contacts with South Korea prior to the Seoul Olympic games.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Mikhail Gorbachev, "Krasnoyarsk Speech," *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, p. 7. In Gorbachev's Vladivostok speech on July 1986, he declared Soviet willingness to develop relations with every state in the Asia Pacific region, but fell short of specifically mentioning South Korea.

<sup>35</sup>V. Shipayev, "Page Tree Mailbag: From Silence to Contracts," *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, October 25, 1988, p. 3, in *FBIS-SOV-88-209*, October 28, 1988, p. 17.

<sup>36</sup>During a seminar held on the eve of the Seoul Olympiad at Hanyang University in Seoul, Mikhail L. Titarenko, director of the Institute of Far Eastern Studies, USSR Academy of Sciences, predicted that the Soviet Union and South Korea would "promote, step by step, mutual beneficial trade and economic relations" (Seoul Yonhap, September 12, 1988, in *FBIS-SOV-88-178*, September 14, 1988, p. 11).

Moscow's decision to participate in the Seoul Olympics was secretly reached in November 1985 when the sports ministers from 13 Soviet-bloc nations met in Vietnam. "Publicly, they declared their support for Pyongyang's demand for co-hosting but privately they decided to attend the Seoul Games, no matter what finally happened."<sup>37</sup> On January 11, 1988, Moscow officially announced its intention to participate in the 24th Olympiad in Seoul. The Soviet decision was reportedly made by the Communist Party's ruling Politburo after Gorbachev's visit to Washington in December 1987.<sup>38</sup>

Pyongyang's vehement protests notwithstanding, Gorbachev decided to participate in the Seoul Olympics in order to seek new opportunities in Seoul even at the risk of neglecting Soviet obligations toward North Korea. Soviet

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<sup>37</sup>*The Christian Science Monitor*, January 13, 1988, p. 8. During the U.S.-Soviet summit in December 1987, Gorbachev and Reagan expressed a "hope for Seoul Olympics success." As late as late 1984, the Soviet Union was expressing reservations about its participation in the upcoming Seoul Olympics. On November 19, 1984, in the first public criticism, M. Gramov, the President of Soviet National Olympic Committee, told a delegation of Japanese members of Parliament that South Korea was an inappropriate site for the Olympics because of the U.S. troop presence and CIA operations in the country. He also opposed Seoul's hosting of the 1988 Olympics by citing threats made by terrorists against Soviet athletes. He further echoed North Korea's proposal to co-host the Olympics; he hinted that Moscow might reconsider its attitude if some Olympic events were held in North Korea. According to press reports from Moscow on March 29, 1985, the Soviet National Olympic Committee allegedly agreed in principle to participate in the 1988 Seoul Olympics (Therese Orbrecht, "Breaking the Ice," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 11, 1985, p. 17).

<sup>38</sup>*The Christian Science Monitor*, January 13, 1988, p. 8.

participation in the Olympic games was based on a number of considerations: Moscow did not want to risk improving relations with the West and Asia by boycotting the Olympics; the remarkable economic performance and skilled diplomacy of South Korea favorably affected the Soviet decision to join the Seoul Olympics; and Seoul also was viewed as an attractive trading partner and economic model for the Soviet economics.<sup>39</sup>

However, the Soviet elite was still divided between the new political thinkers who energetically promoted closer ties with Seoul, and the conservative leaders who were reluctant to fully endorse Moscow's new policy toward Seoul. First, Soviet media coverage of South Korea prior to and during the Seoul Olympics indicates that Soviet society was not fully open-minded toward South Korea. Throughout the run-up to the Olympics, no informative material appeared in the Soviet media beyond the current political events occurring in the host country. No attempts were made by the 91 Soviet reporters in Seoul to educate the Soviet public in regard to Korean culture, everyday life, sports amenities, or the developing relations between the host and Eastern Europe.<sup>40</sup> Second, the decision by the Soviet authorities to print commemorative stamps for the 24th Seoul Olympiad without mentioning the host city, Seoul, was another sign of

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<sup>39</sup>James W. Riordan, "Korea-Soviet Relations," *Korea & World Affairs*, pp. 759-762.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 776.

the persistent influence of the conservative leaders in the USSR.<sup>41</sup>

Nevertheless, the Seoul Olympiad served as the catalyst for improved relations between Moscow and Seoul.<sup>42</sup> The exchange of trade offices with Seoul that soon followed after the Olympics was a direct result of government-to-government contacts and negotiations between the two countries prior to and during the Seoul Olympiad.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>This decision drew criticism from the Soviet government organ, *Izvestiya*. See *The Korea Times*, September 15, 1988, p. 7, in *FBIS-SOV-88-180*, September 16, 1988, p. 12.

<sup>42</sup>Negotiations for an aviation agreement started on the eve of the Olympics. The Soviet government allowed the Korean Air Line to fly through Soviet territorial airspace to transport athletic teams during the Seoul Olympics. Vice President of Korea Air Lines Chang Sam-ko revealed that IOC President Samaranch initiated a plan for an air route between Seoul and Moscow: "Aeroflot and ourselves have moved persistently toward setting up this air route for almost two years. It all began as far back as the eve of the 1988 Olympic games, when the idea of conveying the sportsmen and guests of the Seoul games vis an aerial Trans-Siberian Railway was born. IOC President Samaranch came out in support of creating such an air link and sent a letter to the Soviet leadership. Permission was received for Korean Air flights over Soviet territory" (*Izvestiya*, April 8 1990, Morning ed., p. 6, in *FBIS-SOV-90-074*, April 17, 1990, p. 19). Boris Bikhachov, deputy director of the International Commercial Department of the Soviet Civil Aviation Bureau, confirmed the fact that cooperation between the Soviet Union and the ROK on air routes began during the Seoul Olympics in 1988. Soviet and Korean airplanes could fly from Moscow and East European countries to Seoul directly or via Shanghai or from Khavarovsk to Singapore via Seoul (Moscow International Service, March 17, 1990, in *FBIS-SOV-90-056*, pp. 10-11). Furthermore, an agreement was reached in regard to a direct shipping sea route between Pusan and Vladivostok, USSR, in December 1988 (*Dong-A Ilbo* [New York Edition], December 29, 1988).

<sup>43</sup>*The Washington Post*, September 11, 1988; *The New York Times*, September 14, 1988.

In August 1988, Moscow and Seoul agreed to exchange a note verbale allowing the Soviet consular corps to perform consular functions during the Olympic period. A group of Soviet officials accompanying the Soviet Olympic team met with the Korean Trade Promotion Corporation (KOTRA) to discuss an exchange of trade offices between Moscow and Seoul. On October 11, a Soviet delegation led by Vladimir Golanov, vice chairman of the Soviet Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI), arrived in Seoul to further talks on reciprocal trade offices and Siberian investment goals. Subsequently, an agreement for an exchange of trade offices with consular functions was signed on December 2, 1988, in Moscow between Lee Sun-ki, president of KOTRA, and V. I. Malkevich, chairman of the Soviet CCI.<sup>44</sup> An exchange of trade offices between KOTRA and CCI was designed to promote direct trade between Seoul and Moscow. The main function of

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<sup>44</sup>*The Korea Times*, October 8, 1988, p. 1; October 18, 1988, p. 1. The agreement to exchange trade offices was reportedly reached during the visit of President Roh's emissaries (Park Chul-on and Yom Don-chaе) to Moscow in September 1988 (*Hanguk Ilbo*, December 29, 1988; *Dong-A Ilbo* [New York Edition], December 29, 1988). The agreement envisaged establishing the exchange of economic information on a reciprocal basis, the holding of fairs and specialized exhibitions, seminars and symposiums on economic subjects, assistance in the implementation of various economic, scientific and technical projects, and the opening of the offices of the two organizations in Moscow and Seoul (TASS, December 2, 1988, in *FBIS-SOV-88-234*, December 6, 1988, p. 23). According to Valeri Nazarov, head of the USSR Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the practical work of establishing trade and economic ties between the Soviet Union and South Korea began after Gorbachev's speech in Krasnoyarsk (Moscow Domestic Service, April 3, 1989, in *FBIS-SOV-89-064*, April 5, 1989, p. 18).

the trade office was to render assistance to those wishing to establish contacts between South Korean firms and Soviet enterprises. Subsequently, South Korea's KOTRA opened its office in Moscow on July 7, 1989, and the USSR CCI (headed by Nazarov) opened its office in Seoul on April 3, 1989.

On January 16, 1989, the Soviet authorities disclosed that, closely timed to coincide with the establishment of a trade mission in Seoul, they had studied the question of establishing a Seoul bureau for a Soviet press agency and of stationing correspondents there, and had unofficially informed the Korean government of their intention. *Novosti* would prudently examine the question of changing its practice of calling Korea "South Korea" in its coverage and using its official name, "Republic of Korea."<sup>45</sup>

For all practical purposes, the Soviet Union granted de facto recognition to South Korea when it exchanged trade offices endowed with consular functions. The Soviet side, however, emphasized the unofficial nature of the trade offices, claiming that the Soviet Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which had reached the agreement with the South Korean side, was not a government organization.<sup>46</sup> Soon

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<sup>45</sup>*Chungang Ilbo*, January 19, 1989, p. 1, in *FBIS-SOV-89-013*, January 23, 1989, p. 32.

<sup>46</sup>Vladimir Golanov, vice president of the Soviet Chamber of Commerce and Industry, made it clear that the Soviet Union had no intention of upgrading the trade offices to government-level trade representatives or permanent missions in the near future. Gennadi Gerasimov, USSR government spokesman and chief of the USSR Foreign Ministry Information Department, stated in an interview with a Japanese TV

thereafter, however, Moscow expressed its intention to upgrade its relations with Seoul to a political level by inviting South Korean opposition leader Kim Young Sam in June 1989.

#### **B. Moscow-Seoul Relations Upgraded to the Political Level**

In an effort to initiate political relations with Seoul, the Kremlin decided to contact Kim Young Sam, chairman of the opposition Reunification Democratic Party (RDP), who in a speech delivered at a special session of the South Korean National Assembly in June 1988 had expressed his willingness to go anywhere including Moscow and Beijing for peace and unification.<sup>47</sup> In August 1988, Kim Young Sam proposed a "six nations parliamentarians conference"

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program in January 1989: "We do not have political or diplomatic relations with South Korea and we have no intention to have them. But South Korea is also one of the newcomers to the international economic market, so to say, so we cannot really ignore it. And so, on a nonpolitical, nondiplomatic, commercial level we are ready to develop relations with South Korea, too" (Tokyo NHK General Television Network, January 4, 1989, in *FBIS-SOV-89-003*, January 5, 1989, p. 11).

<sup>47</sup>The Soviet officials explained to Kim Young Sam's envoys, who had been sent to Moscow to prepare for Kim's visit, that the Soviet decision to invite Kim Young Sam instead of other South Korean politicians was based on the following considerations: (1) Kim was a prominent opposition leader in South Korea with moderate ideological tendencies and a broad base of political support; and (2) he was most likely to become the next President of South Korea (interview with Huh Yong Sang [then Kim Young Sam's personal secretary] in July 1991 in Seoul).

(*tongbuk-a yukgaikuk uiwonhypech'e*) comprising the U.S., the USSR, China, Japan, and the two Koreas, at a press conference at Tokyo's foreign press club. The following day, V. Obshanikov, correspondent of the weekly magazine *Novoe Vremiya* (*New Times*) to Tokyo came over to Kim's hotel to interview him about his new proposal.

Vitali Ignatenko and Obshanikov, who were in Seoul to cover the 24th Olympic Games, visited Kim Young Sam and invited him to visit Moscow in order to discuss peace and unification on the Korean peninsula, as well as other issues in Northeast Asia.<sup>48</sup> In the meantime, Kim's interview with *Novoe Vremiya* in Tokyo was published in the first week of October 1988.

Upon Ignatenko's return to Moscow in October, the question of Kim's planned Moscow visit was discussed in the Central Committee of the CPSU. Two questions were raised at the Central Committee: what format and procedure should be taken to invite a politician from a country that had no diplomatic relations with the USSR?; and, what benefits and losses would result from an invitation to Kim? The Kremlin decided that Kim would not be invited by the Soviet government or the CPSU, but by a research institute involved in Soviet foreign policy, the IMEMO (the Institute for World

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<sup>48</sup>During the meeting, Ignatenko also showed Kim the rough draft of Gorbachev's Krasnoyarsk speech for the next day and asked for Kim's opinion about the draft (*Tong'il Minchu Tang* (Reunification Democratic Party), *Pyonghwa'wa tongil'ui yomyon'eul an'go* (Seoul, 1989), pp. 16-18.

Economics and International Relations of the USSR Academy of Sciences).<sup>49</sup> The Kremlin had used IMEMO before to normalize relations with a hostile country. IMEMO had played an indirect role in improving relations between West Germany and the USSR, and West Germany and East European countries, by inviting Willy Brandt, the Social Democratic Party leader of West Germany, to Moscow in the 1960s.<sup>50</sup>

Subsequently, Kim Young Sam in his capacity as the President of the opposition Reunification Democratic Party (RDP) visited Moscow on June 2-10, 1989 at the invitation of the IMEMO.<sup>51</sup> Kim's Moscow visit marked the beginning of the normalization process between the two countries. During Kim's visit, the Soviets agreed in principle to normalize its relations with Seoul. However, at that time, a detailed discussion was not held in regard to a concrete time table

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<sup>49</sup>The Soviets conveyed their invitation to Kim through the Soviet embassy in Tokyo in early December 1988 (ibid).

<sup>50</sup>In private talks during Kim Young Sam's first visit to Moscow, then IMEMO Director Primakov explained to Kim Young Sam that IMEMO had played an important role as the mediator in Soviet-West German normalization. Primakov further stated that it took about three years between Willy Brandt's Moscow visit and the Soviet-West German normalization, but that he expected Soviet-South Korean normalization not to take as long (interviews with Huh Yong Sang in July 1991 in Seoul and with Chung Jae Moon [then South Korea's Parliamentarian, and Kim Young Sam's confidante who was sent to Moscow as Kim Young Sam's secret envoy on several occasions to prepare for Kim's Moscow visits] in June 1991 in Seoul).

<sup>51</sup>For background on Kim Young Sam's Moscow trip, see Tong'il Minchu Tang (Reunification Democratic Party), *Pyonghwa'wa tongil'ui yomyon'eul an'go* (Seoul, 1989), p. 16.

for the normalization.<sup>52</sup> Kim's first Moscow visit resulted in a joint statement by IMEMO and RDP that contained an understanding that regular contacts would occur between the two bodies "in order to promote mutual understanding about the processes underway in the USSR, the ROK, Northeast Asia and Asian-Pacific Region as a whole."<sup>53</sup> In October 1989, the IMEMO delegation visited Seoul at the invitation of RDP, and reconfirmed the agreement contained in the IMEMO-RDP joint statement.

Gorbachev decided to upgrade Soviet-South Korean relations and initiate political contacts with Seoul prior to issuing the invitation to Kim Young Sam. Ignatenko was a major proponent of the new Soviet foreign policy, and had strong connections with Gorbachev. It is highly likely that a concrete Soviet plan for a new policy with Seoul preceded Ignatenko's decision to publish Kim's interview in *Novoe Vremiya*. Furthermore, during Kim's Moscow visit, Soviet officials demonstrated their flexibility toward the possibility of normalizing relations between Moscow and Seoul.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>The Soviet side simply stated that Seoul-Moscow normalization would take place in the near future (interview with Chung Jae Moon in July 1991 in Seoul).

<sup>53</sup>For the Joint Statement by IMEMO and RDP, see Tong'il Minchu Tang (Reunification Democratic Party), *Pyonghwa'wa tongil'ui yomyon'eul an'go*.

<sup>54</sup>For example, during Kim's visit, the Soviet government, the CPSU, or IMEMO did not express a view regarding U.S. troop withdrawal from South Korea (*Joongang Ilbo*, June 19, 1989).

Significantly, Moscow began to connect the issue of a political relationship with that of economic cooperation, departing from its previous position of separating politics from economics.<sup>55</sup> In this connection, Karen Brutents, first deputy director of the International Department of the Central Committee, emphasized the political significance of Kim's trip to Moscow: "Initially, we planned to develop economic cooperation first and then to try normalization of political relations with Seoul. But doesn't the fact that Kim Young Sam visited the Soviet Union and the Central Committee of the CPSU . . . mean political contact?"<sup>56</sup>

The exchange of consular departments was another significant step toward Moscow-Seoul normalization. Seoul and Moscow signed a protocol of agreement in Singapore on November 17, 1989, to upgrade their bilateral relationship

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<sup>55</sup>In September 1989, during their visit to Seoul at the invitation of Daewoo, Georgi Arbatov and Mikhail Kapitsa hinted that the Soviet Union was interested in finding a breakthrough in the political linkage insisted upon by Seoul. They were reportedly re-examining Seoul's cross-recognition proposal (Shim Jae Hoon, "Push for Recognition," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, September 28, 1989, p. 36.)

<sup>56</sup>"Hanso chungchichug kaesun'ui tolpagu" [Breakthrough in the Seoul-Moscow Political Improvement], *Hanguk Ilbo*, June 13, 1989. Primakov, then IMEMO Director and Central Committee member, told Kim that he would attach more "political" than economic meaning to Kim's Moscow visit. Mikhail Titarenko also emphasized the political significance of Kim's Moscow visit: "We attach much importance to the negotiations held between the former chairman of the Reunification Democratic Party Kim Young Sam and a delegation of the Institute of World Economics and International Relations of the USSR Academy of Science in Moscow and Seoul, which could in no sense be called nonpolitical" (Mikhail Titarenko, "The Situation in the APR and Soviet-South Korean Relations," p. 14).

by converting trade missions into consular departments.<sup>57</sup> The two countries agreed to exchange diplomats who would establish consular departments in Moscow and Seoul by endowing the two countries' trade missions, which had opened earlier, with consular functions.

The consular departments, staffed with three to five persons, would carry out limited consular functions including protection of their citizens' interests, consular service, the granting of visas and related documents, registration of citizens staying in the USSR or South Korea, and consular service to ships, airplanes, and their crews.<sup>58</sup> The consular departments, however, were not identical to the consular offices established according to international law. The diplomats working at the consular departments enjoyed privileges and rights stipulated by the Vienna Convention, with the sole exception being the use of radio communications.<sup>59</sup> Besides, flags could not be hung outside consular departments.<sup>60</sup>

The Soviet Union still maintained the appearance of non-official political relations with Seoul. The Soviet

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<sup>57</sup>Yonhap, March 23, 1990, in *FBIS-SOV-90-057*, March 23, 1990, pp. 10-11.

<sup>58</sup>Moscow TASS, January 5, 1990, in *FBIS-SOV-90-005*, January 8, 1990, p. 13.

<sup>59</sup>*Izvestiya*, February 7, 1990, in Morning ed., p. 4, in *FBIS-SOV-90-027*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>60</sup>Moscow International Service, December 13, 1989, in *FBIS-SOV-89-240*, December 15, 1989, p. 11. South Korea opened its consular department in Moscow in February 1990, and the Soviet Union established its consular department in Seoul in March 1989.

side maintained that the exchange of consular departments did not imply the establishment of official consular relations with Seoul.<sup>61</sup> Although the exchange of consular departments clearly indicated the political relations between the two countries, the bilateral relations remained at the non-official level as long as the Kremlin insisted on the non-official nature of the relationship. By doing so, the Kremlin tried to allay North Korea's vehement objection to official relations between Seoul and Moscow.

### C. A Diplomatic Relationship Established with Seoul

In early 1990, the Kremlin openly expressed its willingness to establish a formal diplomatic relationship with Seoul. The real breakthrough occurred during Kim Young Sam's second visit to Moscow on March 20-27, 1990. Kim's second Moscow visit was significant in two respects. First, in contrast to his first Moscow visit, Kim was invited in his capacity as the chairman of South Korea's ruling

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<sup>61</sup>In a newspaper interview, Gong Ro Myung, then chief of South Korea's consular department in Moscow, recalled that initially he received poor treatment from the Soviet Foreign Ministry and experienced enormous difficulties in meeting with important Soviet government officials (*Chosun Ilbo* [New York Edition] January 21, 1992, p. 3). The Soviet neglect of South Korean diplomats at that time was probably a result of North Korea's strong protest against improved relations between Seoul and Moscow and the persistent influence of conservative Soviet officials who were obstructing the improvement of Seoul-Moscow relations.

Democratic Liberal Party (DLP).<sup>62</sup> By inviting the leader of South Korea's ruling party, the Kremlin clearly recognized the political entity of the Republic of Korea. Furthermore, a meeting between Kim and Gorbachev was arranged, in which he conveyed President Roh Tae Woo's hope that a summit meeting between the two countries would materialize in the not-too-distant future.<sup>63</sup> During the meeting, Gorbachev expressed his belief that no obstacle existed to diplomatic relations between the two countries.<sup>64</sup>

Second, Kim visited Moscow, leading the working-level delegation of South Korea, including a cabinet-level minister, the Minister for Political Affairs Park Chul-on, and South Korea business leaders. In Moscow, the South Korean delegation was engaged in practical negotiations for

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<sup>62</sup>The ruling party (Democratic Justice Party) and two opposition parties (Reunification Democratic Party and New Democratic Republican Party) merged into the Democratic Liberal Party (DLP) in January 1990. As a result, Kim Young Sam, the president of RDP, became a chairman of the ruling DLP. The IMEMO-RDP joint statement, issued at the end of Kim's first Moscow visit, noted agreement on regular contacts between IMEMO and RDP. Since RDP was absorbed into the ruling DLP as a result of the three-party merger, Kim Young Sam was invited to Moscow in March in his capacity as the leader of South Korea's ruling party.

<sup>63</sup>Kim was abruptly summoned to the Kremlin just before attending a reception held by Karen Brutents on the evening of March 21, 1990 (*Yonhap*, March 22, 1990, in *FBIS-SOV-90-056*, March 22, 1990, pp. 8-9).

<sup>64</sup>See Minchucha'yutang [Democratic Liberal Party], *Hanbando tong'ilgwa sekae'pyonghwa'ui yomwon'ul an'go* [In Pursuit of Korean Unification and World Peace] (Seoul, April 1990), p.

normalization and economic cooperation between the USSR and the ROK.<sup>65</sup>

When Kim Young Sam made his second visit to Moscow, the Kremlin clearly intended to conclude a diplomatic relationship with Seoul at the earliest date. The Soviets amply expressed their readiness for a formal political relationship with Seoul. Aleksandr Yakovlev, then Politburo member and a member of the Presidential Council, was quoted by Hwang Byung-tae, a close associate of Kim Young Sam, as saying: "There is no insurmountable barrier to smoothing relations between the two countries."<sup>66</sup> Vladlen Martynov, the successor to Primakov as the director of IMEMO, hinted that diplomatic ties between the two countries were nearing when he said that Gong Ro Myung, the head of South Korea's consular department in Moscow, would be "ambassador extraordinary-plenipotentiary to Moscow in the future."<sup>67</sup>

The joint communiqué by DLP and IMEMO issued during Kim Young Sam's second Moscow visit clearly stated that Moscow

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<sup>65</sup>The inclusion of South Korea's business leaders in Kim's delegation was mainly in response to the Soviet request for closer economic cooperation with Seoul (interview with Chung Jae Moon in July 1991 in Seoul; Huh Yong Sam in July 1991 in Seoul).

<sup>66</sup>Yonhap, March 22, 1990, in *FBIS-SOV-90-056*, March 22, 1990, pp. 8-9. Yakovlev made a similar comment in an interview with *The Korea Herald*, March 23, 1990, p. 2, in *FBIS-SOV-90-057*, March 23, 1990, pp. 11-12. See also Shim Jae Hoon "Diplomatic Drive," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 5, 1990, p. 17.

<sup>67</sup>Yonhap, March 24, 1990, in *FBIS-SOV-90-058*, March 26, 1990, pp. 19-20.

and Seoul had reached a clear understanding to establish diplomatic relations in the near future:

Reappraisal by both the ROK and the USSR of their foreign policy practices and national interests in general eventually has led two countries to the understanding that it is desirable to establish official government level relations. Nowadays there are good prospects for an early establishment of such a relationship. In the meantime both sides should carry on necessary consultations, negotiations and other efforts in order to expedite the coming of full normalization.<sup>68</sup>

Furthermore, the joint communiqué publicly accorded de facto recognition to South Korea by the USSR by using the term "sovereign" in reference to the ROK and the USSR: "Relations between the ROK and the USSR should be built upon such evident universal principles as mutual respect of *sovereign* [Italics added] right to choose one's own model of development, noninterference in domestic affairs of each other, nonuse of force." As contained in the joint communiqué, Kim Young Sam's second Moscow visit not only facilitated the South Korean-Soviet interchange, but also "virtually brought [the] two countries within the range of establishing official governmental level relations."<sup>69</sup>

Nevertheless, the Kremlin did not provide a clear timetable for normalization. Yakovlev stated that the timing

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<sup>68</sup>For the DLP-IMEMO Joint Communiqué, see Minchucha'yutang [Democratic Liberal Party], *Hanbando tong'ilgwa sekae'pyonghwa'ui yomwon'ul an'go* [In Pursuit of Korean Unification and World Peace], pp. 36-37.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.; *Chosun Ilbo* (New York Edition), March 29, 1990.

for diplomatic recognition would depend on the political judgments made by the two sides:

If cooperation in various fields such as politics, economics, society, culture and science increases, the circumstance will arrive in which quantity will turn into quality . . . . When quantitative change turns into qualitative change will depend on political judgment of both sides.<sup>70</sup>

In fact, the timing of normalization emerged as a thorny issue between the two countries because of their different priorities. South Korea made political ties the first priority, rather than economic cooperation. It took the position that diplomatic relations should be a prerequisite to economic cooperation because it could conclude investment guarantees and double taxation avoidance agreements with the Soviet Union after normalization. The South Korean government tried to upgrade its ties with Moscow to a full diplomatic level at the earliest possible date. South Korea officially proposed that the two nations immediately establish diplomatic relations and suggested that if it was difficult to do so immediately, then a cooperative body of government officials should be formed led by a cabinet minister from each side, to discuss

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<sup>70</sup>Minchucha'yutang [Democratic Liberal Party], *Hanbando tong'ilgwa sekae'pyonghwa'ui yomwon'ul an'go* [In Pursuit of Korean Unification and World Peace], p. 4; *Dong-A Ilbo* (New York Edition), March 24, 1990.

establishing diplomatic relations and economic cooperation simultaneously.<sup>71</sup>

In contrast, the Soviet Union's first priority was economic cooperation. As a corollary, Soviet officials proposed that Seoul and Moscow first upgrade their consular departments to consulate generals in summer 1990, as a prelude to opening full diplomatic ties.<sup>72</sup> Concerning the protection of Korean firms' investments in the USSR, "the Soviet side contended that a guarantee on future equity investment is provided by mutual trust based on the irreversible processes of Perestroika and democratization . . . in Soviet and South Korean societies."<sup>73</sup> Discarding its previous position on a strict separation between economics and politics, the Soviet Union was pursuing a new policy vis-a-vis South Korea that linked economics and politics. To put it differently, the Soviets now tried to extract as many economic concessions from South

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<sup>71</sup>Yonhap, March 26, 1990, in FBIS-SOV-90-058, March 26, 1990, p. 21.

<sup>72</sup>Yonhap, March 23, 1990, in FBIS-SOV-90-057, March 23, 1990, p. 10. There was discord between Kim Young Sam and Park Chul-on who joined Kim Young Sam's delegation in his capacity as South Korea's cabinet-level minister, regarding the Soviet proposal for the establishment of consulate generals. Kim responded positively to the Soviet proposal, whereas Park refuted Kim by saying that South Korea's official position was to directly establish full diplomatic ties without exchanging consular generals first (Yonhap, March 23, 1990, in FBIS-SOV-90-057, March 23, 1990, pp. 10-11).

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

Korea as possible, in exchange for granting diplomatic recognition to the country.

These divergent priorities resulted from different foreign policy goals. South Korea's goal was to conclude final diplomatic relations with the USSR at the earliest date as part of its nordpolitik. The South Koreans believed that economic profits were secondary to political gain, i.e., diplomatic relations. Therefore, Seoul preferred to go directly to ambassador-level diplomatic ties without going through consulate-level ties. On the other hand, the Soviets were interested primarily in the successful implementation of its reform program and Siberian development. The Soviets were eager to first get a commitment from South Korea to provide investment and technology to improve its deteriorating economy.

Interestingly enough, *Izvestiya* denied completely that the Soviet Union was discussing diplomatic relations with South Korea:

However, we are not conducting any discussion on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. This topic was not even broached at an official level in the talks with the politician Kim Young Sam, who was in Moscow along public-scientific lines. As regards the prospects of establishing diplomatic relations between the USSR and the ROK, we believe that on a practical plain this question can be considered only in the context of the general development of the situation on the Korean peninsula.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>G. Charodeyev, "Unconfirmed Rumors," *Izvestiya*, April 13, 1990, Morning ed., p. 5, in *FBIS-SOV-90-077*, April 20, 1990, p. 9.

Such a discrepancy between policy and public statement is intriguing, and suggests that strong opposition was coming from both North Korea and the Soviet Union's internal conservative opposition.

Kim's second Moscow visit was soon followed by the first summit between South Korean President Roh Tae Woo and Soviet President Gorbachev in June 1990 in San Francisco.<sup>75</sup> Roh and Gorbachev discussed issues of peace and stability in the Korean peninsula and the inter-Korean dialogue. The San Francisco meeting marked the first Soviet-South Korean summit in the history of both countries. Furthermore, it was significant in being a meeting between the leaders of two states that did not yet have diplomatic relations, and

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<sup>75</sup>Dobrynin, then foreign affairs advisor to Gorbachev, visited Roh Tae Woo at the Blue House on May 25, 1990. At that time, no agreement was reached regarding the place, time, attendants, or openness of the summit meeting between Roh and Gorbachev. Gong Ro Myung, then head of South Korea's Consular Department in Moscow, revealed that the U.S. government had played the role of good offices in organizing the San Francisco summit (USSR-South Korea: A Southward Turn," *Far Eastern Affairs* [Moscow], No. 1 [1991], p. 155). China expressed a positive attitude toward the Roh-Gorbachev summit. Yuan Mu, spokesman for the PRC State Council, declared: "We followed the meeting of M. S. Gorbachev and No Tae-u [Roh Tae Woo] at the time of the Soviet leader's U.S. visit. The Chinese Government welcomes any actions by any country if they promote the North-South dialogue and positive processes on the Korean peninsula" (*Pravda*, June 9, 1990, p. 7, in *FBIS-SOV-90-112*, p. 19). For the Soviet assessment of the San Francisco summit, see Vsevolod Ovchinnikov, "Asian Echo of American Meetings," *Pravda*, July 1, 1990, p. 7, in *FBIS-SOV-90-129*, July 5, 1990, p. 16.

in being the first summit in the history of both countries.<sup>76</sup>

At the San Francisco meeting, the two summits agreed on the exchange of diplomatic recognition in principle. After the summit, Roh quoted Gorbachev as saying, "The meeting itself indicates the beginning of the normalizing process."<sup>77</sup> In exchange for diplomatic recognition, the Soviet side requested economic assistance. It was reported that the Soviet side initially requested "several billion dollars" in loans.<sup>78</sup> Kim Chong In, senior presidential secretary for economic affairs, visited Moscow in August 1990 as head of South Korea's official delegation, and opened the first round of negotiations on the amount of economic assistance to be provided to Moscow by Seoul and

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<sup>76</sup>"USSR-South Korea: A Southward Turn," p. 151.

<sup>77</sup>Moscow in Mandarin to Southeast Asia, June 5, 1990, in *FBIS-SOV-90-111*, June 8, 1990, pp. 23-24.

<sup>78</sup>In return for the loan guarantees, Moscow allegedly (1) committed in writing to supporting South Korea's admission to the UN; (2) promised that offensive weapons would no longer be supplied to North Korea; and (3) pledged that it would no longer assist North Korea with its nuclear development program. According to the Blue House official, the Soviet side initially requested \$5 billion in aid (Mark Clifford, "Gamble on Glasnost," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, February 7, 1991, p. 44). Primakov denied that any deal had been made between Roh and Gorbachev during the summit: "It would be incorrect . . . to consider the Soviet-Korean summit meeting as some kind of deal along the lines that Moscow is out for political contacts to obtain loans, equipment, and consumer goods for this. As someone who was present at this meeting, I can testify that during it there was no discussion of such accords" (TASS, June 18, 1990, in *FBIS-SOV-90-118*, June 19, 1990, p. 10). Although the two leaders did not specifically discuss a "deal" during their meeting in San Francisco, South Korea's promise of economic aid to the Soviet Union certainly facilitated normalization.

the establishment of a diplomatic relationship between the two countries.<sup>79</sup> President Roh revealed in an interview with South Korean newspapers that during Kim Chong In's visit to Moscow in August 1990, the two sides agreed that economic cooperation and normalization of relations between the two states should be advanced simultaneously; this agreement was very successful in expediting the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.<sup>80</sup>

On September 30, 1990, a South Korean-Soviet foreign ministerial meeting was held at the UN and diplomatic relations were formalized. The road from the San Francisco summit to Seoul-Moscow normalization, however, was not

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<sup>79</sup>In addition, during Kim Chong In's Moscow visit, talks were held on an exchange of visits between the two countries' presidents, the expansion of economic cooperation, the signing of agreements on investment guarantees and the elimination of dual taxation, and also on the establishment of direct channels of communication between Moscow and Seoul (*Izvestiya*, August 1, 1990, Morning ed., p. 4, in *FBIS-SOV-90-149*, August 2, 1990, p. 11). Kim's visit to Moscow was in response to a letter from Gorbachev to Roh in early July in which the Soviet leader expressed hope for official contacts that would promote bilateral relations (*Yonhap*, August 2, 1990, in *FBIS-SOV-90-149*, August 2, 1990, p. 10). Kim Chong In conveyed Roh's letter to Gorbachev during his Moscow visit in August. The letter from Roh contained: an invitation to Gorbachev to visit Seoul in the very near future; an appeal for normalization between Seoul and Moscow within the shortest possible time; thanks to Gorbachev for his active role in developing relations between South and North Korea; and a request for further support in setting up a summit between South and North Korea (*Izvestiya*, August 1, 1990, Morning ed., p. 4, in *FBIS-SOV-90-149*, August 2, 1990, p. 11).

<sup>80</sup>Moscow International Service, September 27, 1990, in *FBIS-SOV-90-193*, October 4, 1990, pp. 19-20.

smooth. Even after the San Francisco summit resulted in the agreement on the exchange of diplomatic recognition in principle, the Soviet Foreign Ministry procrastinated on implementing the decision to normalize. In a newspaper interview, Gong Ro Myung, then head of South Korea's consular department in Moscow, recollected that Soviet Foreign Ministry officials did not rush to establish diplomatic relations with South Korea after the San Francisco summit. Gong made many attempts to meet with Shevardnadze to talk about normalization, but failed because mid-level bureaucrats obstructed his efforts. He finally managed to meet with Shevardnadze on September 4, 1990, and explained to him the need for a meeting of foreign ministers between South Korea and the Soviet Union. Shevardnadze accepted this suggestion on the spot, and agreed to hold a meeting with South Korean Foreign Minister Choi Ho Jung.<sup>81</sup>

A war of nerves occurred between the two sides concerning the effective date of the formal diplomatic relationship: the Soviet side insisted on January 1, 1991 whereas the South Korean side favored September 30, 1990.<sup>82</sup> The Soviet position prevailed and the two sides agreed on

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<sup>81</sup>For a first-hand description of the process from the San Francisco summit to formal diplomatic ties, see the newspaper interview with Gong Ro Myung in *Chosun Ilbo* (New York Edition), January 21, 1992, p. 3.

<sup>82</sup>The Soviets probably wanted to postpone the effective date of normalization until the first day of the following year so that they could secure South Korea's economic assistance in more favorable terms.

January 1, 1991. Instead of January 1, 1991, as initially planned, the accord came into effect immediately after the diplomatic document was signed on September 30. The change of date was finally decided at a relatively short meeting between Shevardnadze and Choi Ho Jung on September 27 in New York.<sup>83</sup> Thus, the foreign ministers signed an accord to establish formal diplomatic relations between the two countries on September 30, 1990.<sup>84</sup>

#### D. Evaluation of Moscow-Seoul Normalization

According to Vladimir Ivanov, the Kremlin had three options in regard to its relations with South Korea: (1) establishment of non-official contacts and development of economic ties with Seoul (China's model); (2) promotion of economic and full-scale political relations with Seoul while downgrading relations with Pyongyang (Hungary's model); and

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<sup>83</sup>A. Shalnev, "Fruitful Day for Soviet Diplomacy," *Izvestiya*, October 2, 1990, Morning ed., p. 1, in *FBIS-SOV-90-196*, October 10, 1990, p. 16. Choi's last-ditch effort to persuade Shevardnadze in this matter shortly before signing the accord bore fruit mainly because of Shevardnadze's open-minded and flexible attitude. For intimate details of the Choi-Shevardnadze meeting, see Choi Ho Jung, "Hansosugyo'ui maghubihwa [The Secret Story behind the Seoul-Moscow Normalization]," *Wolganchosun* (Seoul) (September 1992), pp. 452-465.

<sup>84</sup>Tsarist Russia established diplomatic relations with Korea in 1884. The Russian mission in Korea was closed soon after Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905. In 1925-1946, the Soviet Consulate General was in operation in Seoul (*Izvestiya*, February 7, 1990, Morning ed., p. 4, in *FBIS-SOV-90-027*, pp. 11-12).

(3) development of comprehensive ties with Seoul and pursuit of an active role in the resolution of the Korean problem, including the maintenance of the balance on the Korean peninsula and the encouragement of an inter-Korean dialogue.<sup>85</sup> Gorbachev's San Francisco summit with Roh Tae Woo in June 1990 indicates that the Soviets opted for the third choice. Gorbachev's new Korea policy aimed not only at the development of economic relations and various contacts with South Korea, but also was a wider approach to a divided Korea and stability in Northeast Asia. The Soviet Union was seeking to play a middleman role in the inter-Korean dialogue and in emerging contacts between the DPRK and other states of the Asia Pacific region--the U.S. in particular.<sup>86</sup>

A few points should be made in regard to Soviet policy on Moscow-Seoul normalization. First, Gorbachev began to move to establish political relations with Seoul in 1988, which coincided with the consolidation of his political power within the leadership. A dominant power position was a prerequisite for the implementation of new political thinking in the face of formidable opposition from conservative leaders. In early 1990, Gorbachev became the first executive President of the Soviet Union, and

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<sup>85</sup>Vladimir I. Ivanov, "The Soviet Union and the Asia-Pacific Region in the 1990s: Evolution or Radical Changes?", *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* (Seoul), Vol. 2, No. 2 (Winter 1990), pp. 57-58.

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.*

thereafter enjoyed almost unrestrained power in foreign policy. The movement of Soviet foreign policy toward normalization with Seoul since 1988 can be seen as a result of Gorbachev's strengthened power position and the victory of his new political thinking. In addition, U.S.-Soviet détente, Sino-Soviet normalization, and the on-going inter-Korean dialogue all provided favorable conditions for Moscow-Seoul normalization.

Second, Gorbachev's new policy toward South Korea was greatly influenced by the new political thinkers around him. Since 1988 Soviet foreign policy toward the two Koreas had been decided mainly by Gorbachev and these new thinkers who formed the inner core of Gorbachev's foreign policy-making group. After Gorbachev secured his political power and carried out the institutional restructuring, the institutional setting was no longer crucial. Gorbachev's policy toward the Korean peninsula was largely determined by his inner circle of confidantes and advisors, who had direct access to the Soviet leader.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>87</sup>Vladimir O. Rakhmanin, Counselor at the Russian Embassy in Washington in charge of the Far East, stated that Gorbachev's confidants and advisors largely determined Soviet foreign policy toward the Korean peninsula. According to him, the jurisdictional rights of foreign policy-making institutions, especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the International Department of the Central Committee, were mostly irrelevant in establishing political contacts with South Korea (interview with Rakhmanin in January 1993 at The Pennsylvania State University).

Ignatenko, Evgenii Primakov, Aleksandr Yakovlev, and Georgi Arbatov constituted this inner core and exercised enormous influence on Gorbachev's Korea policy. Ignatenko, editor-in-chief of *Novoe Vremiya* and later spokesman for Gorbachev, opened political contacts with Seoul by inviting Kim Young Sam to Moscow in 1989. After Ignatenko opened political contacts, Primakov, then Director of IMEMO, served as the key link for continuing political contacts with Seoul. Initially, Primakov and several academicians at IMEMO held talks with Kim Young Sam concerning Moscow-Seoul normalization during Kim's first Moscow visit in July 1989.<sup>88</sup> Aleksandr Yakovlev, who was part of Gorbachev's inner circle, was personally involved in the process of normalizing relations with Seoul. Yakovlev handled most of the negotiations between Moscow and Seoul in the absence of formal government-to-government relations.<sup>89</sup> In a newspaper interview shortly after the Roh-Gorbachev summit in San Francisco in June 1990, Arbatov indicated that he had been a key advocate of Soviet-South Korean normalization:

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<sup>88</sup>The personal connection and friendship between Kim Young Sam and Primakov was an important factor facilitating the improved political relationship between the Soviet Union and South Korea. Kim Young Sam's political contacts with the Soviets started with Ignatenko's interview with Kim in Tokyo in 1988. Kim was later connected to Primakov through Ignatenko during his first Moscow visit. Through Primakov, Kim gained the acquaintance of prominent Soviet academicians and reform-minded politicians, including Yakovlev (interview with Huh Yong Sang in July 1991 in Seoul).

<sup>89</sup>Jae Hoon Shim, "Diplomatic Drive," p. 17.

I am very satisfied [with the San Francisco summit] because something I had hoped for a long time was arranged. Moreover, I myself have made efforts in this direction for a long time. This is very desirable for the mutual interests of the Soviet Union and Korea. I have so far expressed my opinion to the Soviet leadership.<sup>90</sup>

Third, Gorbachev's new policy toward South Korea met with substantial resistance from conservative Soviet leaders. The "military-industry-party apparatus complex" opposed the new policy concerning South Korea. When *Novoe Vremiya* published its interview with South Korean politician Kim Young Sam in October 1988, Ignatenko, its chief editor, received numerous phone calls complaining about the editorial decision. In response, Ignatenko said that *Novoe Vremiya* published an article "about a right man, at a right time."<sup>91</sup> The invitation to Kim Young Sam for a Moscow visit was approved by the Central Committee following a controversial debate. It can be easily surmised that the decision to establish political contact with South Korea which started with Kim's Moscow visit in 1989 was controversial within the Soviet leadership. Furthermore, the Politburo was split over the issue of normalization with Seoul, as Aleksandr Yakovlev revealed.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup>*Hangyore Sinmun*, June 1, 1990, p. 3, in *FBIS-SOV-90-109*, June 6, 1990, pp. 44.

<sup>91</sup>Tong'il Minchu Tang (Reunification Democratic Party), *Pyonghwa'wa tongil'ui yomyon'eul an'go* [In Search of Korean Unification and World Peace], pp. 17-18.

<sup>92</sup>Yakovlev made this statement during his talk with Kim Young Sam in March 1990 (*Dong-A Ilbo* [New York Edition], March 24, 1990).

Other evidence indicates resistance from conservative hard-liners. As late as June 1990, Soviet political news analyst Yuri Kornilov denied that the Soviets intended to forge political ties with Seoul, and maintained that Soviet-South Korean normalization could only be considered in the context of further improving the political situation in the region and in the Korean peninsula.<sup>93</sup> Soviet media coverage of the San Francisco summit between Roh and Gorbachev also was indicative of the conservative influence on Gorbachev's new policy toward Seoul. Despite the significance of the summit, the meeting was largely neglected by the Soviet mass media, much of which was still under the control of conservative partisans.<sup>94</sup>

Finally, South Korea's offer of \$3 billion in aid facilitated the normalization process between Moscow and Seoul. The \$3 billion loan package was finalized in Seoul on January 22, 1991.<sup>95</sup> South Korea agreed to provide the Soviet Union with credits worth \$3 billion over three years. According to Kim Chong In, presidential senior advisor for

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<sup>93</sup>TASS, June 7, 1990, in *FBIS-SOV-90-111*, June 8, 1990, p. 23.

<sup>94</sup>"USSR-South Korea: A Southward Turn," p. 150.

<sup>95</sup>Moscow TASS International Service in Russian, January 22, 1991, in *FBIS-SOV-91-014*, January 22, 1991, p. 14. The amount of South Korea's economic assistance to the Soviet Union was not finalized as late as the Moscow summit between Roh and Gorbachev in December 1990. During the summit, the Soviets wanted President Roh to announce the amount of the economic assistance, but Seoul replied that it would be decided soon through negotiations (Choi Ho Jung, "Hansosugyo'ui maghubihwa" [The Secret Story behind the Seoul-Moscow Normalization], pp. 464-465).

economic affairs, South Korea's offer of economic assistance played a major role in prompting the Soviet Union to establish formal ties with South Korea:

Our approach to the Soviet Union was not possible without economic cooperation. When the ROK-USSR summit was held in San Francisco, high-ranking U.S. government officials told us that without economic cooperation, talks would not be realized. The Soviet Union insisted on economic cooperation first and diplomatic relations next. Later, it changed its policy.<sup>96</sup>

At a press conference after his ten-day visit to Moscow in August 1990, Park Chul-on clearly implied that Seoul's economic assistance to Moscow was the key issue in normalization by stating that Gorbachev was asking too much for normalization.<sup>97</sup>

The primary motive behind the Soviet decision to establish diplomatic relations with South Korea was economic in nature. The Soviets intended to improve their ailing economy with South Korea's economic assistance. As economic cooperation and trade with South Korea expanded, the Soviet government came to realize that formal political ties were

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<sup>96</sup>*Chosun Ilbo*, April 22, 1991, p. 5, in *FBIS-EAS-91-078*, April 23, 1991.

<sup>97</sup>Park attempted to use the "Yeltsin card" against Gorbachev. He invited Russian President Yeltsin, Gorbachev's major political rival at that time, to Seoul in order to prod Soviet President Gorbachev to speed up Seoul-Moscow normalization. The Yeltsin card could not be utilized in the face of the strong opposition from Kim Young Sam who emphasized continued cooperation with the Soviet central government. As a result, Yeltsin visited Seoul in summer 1990 at the invitation of a private research institute, instead of the South Korean government.

necessary to further enhance economic cooperation. In addition, Gorbachev was eager to join the Asia Pacific community as a full member mainly for economic reasons. In his scheme South Korea would serve as the bridge linking the Soviet Union with those in the dynamic economic club in the Pacific rim. Oleg Sokolov, the first Soviet ambassador to Seoul, stated at a news conference upon his arrival that the economy was the primary motive behind the Soviet decision to normalize relations with Seoul: ". . . the normalization of Soviet-Korean relations is an outcome of the affirmative development of the situation in Asia and the rest of the world. First of all, the primary concern is economic cooperation with Korea. Korea's economic success has been publicly recognized."<sup>98</sup>

#### **E. High Expectations and Limited Success in Economic Relations**

Soviet-South Korean economic cooperation in 1988-1990 did not progress as rapidly as initially expected due to many obstacles. The Soviet system lacked the legal and institutional infrastructure for external economic transactions. The Soviet Union needed a more efficient cost accounting system, price reforms, and a freely convertible

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<sup>98</sup>Moscow International Service in Korean, December 9, 1990, in *FBIS-SOV-90-237*, December 10, 1990, p. 19.

ruble. The red tape in the Soviet bureaucracy meant additional difficulties for economic cooperation with the Soviet Union. The industrial ministries and central agencies had different views on ways to ensure greater predictability for foreign investors seeking business opportunities.<sup>99</sup>

The absence of diplomatic relations until September 1991 provided additional uncertainty and instability to South Korean businessmen and constituted a serious impediment to prospective economic cooperation between these two countries. South Korean entrepreneurs and businessmen considered it too risky to do business with the Soviet Union without agreements covering investment guarantees and profit repatriation.<sup>100</sup> South Korean businessmen demanded government-to-government agreements to guarantee investment, profit repatriation, and avoidance of double taxation.

Cultural dissimilarity between the two countries, lack of information about the Soviet Union among the South Koreans, and an absence of South Korean experts in the Soviet economy also contributed to the sluggish pace of economic cooperation between the USSR and the ROK.

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<sup>99</sup>Vladimir I. Ivanov, "The Soviet Union and the Asia-Pacific Region in the 1990s: Evolution or Radical Changes?", p. 66.

<sup>100</sup>An agreement between South Korea and the Soviet Union on trade, investment guarantees, avoidance of double taxation, and cooperation in science-technology was not signed until December 1990.

Nevertheless, South Korea's business conglomerates were aggressively pursuing economic cooperation and trade with the Soviets. After direct economic cooperation and trade started in December 1988 and a series of bilateral agreements were concluded in the following years, economic ties increased steadily between the two countries.<sup>101</sup>

In January 1989, Hyundai and the Soviet Primorremrybflot production amalgamation signed the first joint venture agreement between South Korea and the Soviet Union to set up a joint ship-repair plant.<sup>102</sup> Wonyang Fisheries Company of South Korea started a joint fishery operation with the Soviet Union in February 1989 in the Sea of Okhotsk, off Kamchatka.<sup>103</sup> In March 1989, the Jindo Corporation concluded a joint venture agreement with the Soviets, and in June 1989, the Hyundai Business Group

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<sup>101</sup>In early 1989, the two sides agreed on a bilateral port opening. Under the agreement the Soviet Union would open Vostochny, a port on Sakhalin Island, and Nakhodka to South Korean ships, while South Korea would open its ports of Pusan and Incheon and allow Soviet ships to undergo repairs and refueling. Seoul and Moscow also agreed to establish a regular direct sea lane between the two countries (Yonhap, January 25, 1989, in *FBIS-SOV-89-016*, January 26, 1989, p. 28). An air route connecting the Soviet Union and South Korea opened in March 1990 (Moscow TASS, February 22, 1990, in *FBIS-SOV-90-039*, February 27, 1990, p. 15).

<sup>102</sup>Moscow TASS, January 5, 1990, in *FBIS-SOV-90-005*, January 8, 1990, p. 13.

<sup>103</sup>The Korean ship would introduce into Korea or process on board \$33 million worth of Alaska pollock in exchange for repairs to the Soviet 18,000-ton-class factory ship "Spassk" operating from Vladivostok (Yonhap, January 4, 1989, in *FBIS-SOV-89-003*, January 5, 1989, p. 13).

reached an agreement to develop forests in Svetlaya in the Maritime province of the Soviet Union.<sup>104</sup>

In contrast to the limited success in economic cooperation and investment, direct bilateral trade increased substantially since December 1988. Bilateral trade reached \$599 million in 1989--an increase of more than 100 percent over the previous year. The trade volume recorded \$889 million in 1990, up 48 percent from the previous year.

South Korea's exports to the Soviet Union increased 86 percent in 1989 and 150 percent in 1990, compared with the previous year (see Table 1, p. 169). During the second half of 1989, South Korea's exports of consumer goods to the Soviet Union sharply increased. South Korea imported from the Soviet Union unprocessed goods and raw materials such as marine products, coal, lumber, fur, cotton, pig iron, scrap iron, nickel bars, and pulp. Since 1989, the imports from the USSR of manufactured products such as fertilizers, inorganic chemicals, textile fiber and fabrics, rubber products, and machine tools increased<sup>105</sup> (see Table 4). In 1989, South Korea imported \$424 million worth of energy from Socialist countries (mostly the Soviet Union and China) which accounts for 4.8 percent of South Korea's total energy

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<sup>104</sup>Kim Sun-ok, "Pukbang Kurae'ui ilban" [Exchanges with Northern Countries], *Pukbang Kyungche* (February 1991), p. 40.

<sup>105</sup>Yang Taek Lim, "Cooperation Between South Korea and the USSR," *Far Eastern Affairs*, No. 1 (1991), p. 106.

Table 4. Breakdown of Soviet-South Korea Trade (in %)

South Korea's Exports	1988	1989	1990 (Jan.-Oct.)
Necessities (soap, toothpaste, etc.)		6.3	4.5
Textiles, Shoes	25.0	31.7	20.6
Electric, Electronics Products	35.0	11.8	34.2
Heavy Industry Products (Steel Products, Machinery)	13.6 (13.6)	44.2 (17.5) (7.3)	36.3 (6.0) (5.7)
Others	26.4	5.9	4.5
South Korea's Imports	1988	1989	1990 (Jan.-Oct.)
Groceries (mainly Fishery Products)	17.5	16.3	16.7
Timber, Textiles (including Raw Materials)	19.1	14.1	9.3
Coal, Oil	27.1	13.9	21.8
Heavy Industry Products (Steel and Non-ferrous Metals)	23.4	38.0	37.5
Others	12.9	17.7	14.7

Source: International Private Economic Council of Korea (IPECK) cited from Chung Hangu, "Hanso kyungje korye," Pukbang Kyungjae (February 1991), p. 53.

imports.<sup>106</sup> Moscow agreed to provide South Korea with a maximum of 40 tons of enriched uranium per year, which amounted to 27.6 percent of South Korea's total demand, for a period of ten years (1990-1999).<sup>107</sup>

#### 4. Widening Distance in Moscow-Pyongyang Relations

While improving relations with Seoul, the Kremlin was urging Pyongyang to adopt reform policies and open its closed society to the outside world. Soviet reform policy and its tilt toward Seoul emerged as the major source of conflict and friction in Moscow-Pyongyang relations in 1988-1990.

The implementation of the new policy resulted in an increased gap between Moscow and Pyongyang. Nevertheless, the Kremlin chose not to totally alienate Pyongyang; instead

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<sup>106</sup>Kim Sun-ok, "Pukbang Kurae'ui ilban" [Exchanges with Northern Countries], *Pukbang Kyungche*, p. 36. See also Chung Hangu, "Hanso kyungchae kurae" [Economic Exchanges between South Korea and the Soviet Union]; Kim Sun-ok, "Pukbang Kurae'ui ilban" [Exchanges with Northern Countries], *Pukbang Kyungche* (February 1991), *Pukbang kyungchae* (February 1991), pp. 51-56; Ahn Chungyoung, "Hanchung kyungchae kurae" [Economic Exchanges Between South Korea and China], *Pukbang kyungchae* (February 1991), pp. 45-50; Chung Kapyong, "Hantongku kyungchae kurae" [Economic Exchanges Between South Korea and East Europe], *Pukbang kyungchae* (February 1991), pp. 57-61; Lim Yangtaek, "Pukbang chungch'aek ui hyunhwang kwa Palchun Panghyang" [Northern Policy and its Direction], *Minchok Chisung* (August 1989), pp. 44-50.

<sup>107</sup>*Dong-A Ilbo*, March 8, 1990.

it sought to maintain political influence through diplomatic persuasion and military/economic assistance.

#### **A. Diplomatic Persuasion and Consultations with Pyongyang**

In 1988-1990, Soviet diplomatic efforts vis-a-vis Pyongyang were remarkable in two respects: (1) the efforts to persuade Pyongyang's hard-line, conservative Communists to adopt Soviet-style reform, and (2) the continued consultations with North Korean leaders in an effort to allay their anxiety and misgivings in regard to Seoul-Moscow normalization.

While preaching the new political thinking to the North Koreans, the Soviets made deliberate efforts to keep the North Koreans informed about the new policy toward Seoul and sought Pyongyang's understanding in advance. The Soviet decision to participate in the 1988 Seoul Olympics caused friction in Moscow-Pyongyang relations. The Soviets discussed their participation beforehand with the North Koreans.

In an attempt to assuage Pyongyang's anxiety over Soviet participation in the Seoul Olympics, the Kremlin reassured North Korean Foreign Minister Kim Young Nam, who was visiting Moscow in May 1988, of its intent not to

establish a diplomatic relationship with Seoul.<sup>108</sup> A few weeks after Kim Young Nam's visit to Moscow, Gorbachev sent an ambassador extraordinary to Kim Il Sung to brief him about the Soviet-American summit meeting.<sup>109</sup>

Parallel with consultations, the Soviets attempted to persuade the North Koreans to adopt reform policies. KGB chief Viktor Chebrikov was sent as head of the Soviet delegation for the 40th anniversary of North Korea's founding in September 1988 to discourage Pyongyang from disrupting the Seoul Olympics.<sup>110</sup> While in Pyongyang, the Soviets repeatedly underlined the importance of political thinking in the current international environment and underscored peaceful settlement of the Korean problem. The Soviet greetings to North Korean leaders to celebrate the 40th anniversary of North Korea's foundation in September 1988 clearly contained such a message:

An urgent demand of present-day international life is the assertion of the new political thinking and the socialist states' increasingly active involvement in shaping peace policy. A constructive approach toward the settlement of the situation on the Korean peninsula based on national reconciliation and a balance of

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<sup>108</sup>Joachim Glaubitz, "The Soviet Union and the Korean Peninsula," *Aussenpolitik* (Hamburg), Vol. 43, No. 1 (1992), pp. 83-84.

<sup>109</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>110</sup>President Andrei Gromyko's scheduled visit to Pyongyang in September 1988 was canceled at the last minute, and KGB Chief Chebrikov came to Pyongyang as his substitute to the dismay of North Koreans (Tokyo, Kyodo in English, in *FBIS-SOV*, September 12, 1988, p. 23).

interests creates possibilities for safeguarding peace and stability in that area.<sup>111</sup>

Shevardnadze's visit to Pyongyang in December 1988 seems to have been intended to increase North Korea's understanding about the direct economic relations between Seoul and Moscow that rapidly expanded after the Seoul Olympics. At that time, the Soviet Foreign Minister assured North Korean leaders that, despite the direct economic relations, his country would not establish a formal diplomatic relationship with Seoul. In regard to Shevardnadze's Pyongyang visit, Deputy Foreign Minister I. Rogachev commented in a press conference:

The talks in Pyongyang touched on the question of Soviet relations with South Korea. We explained our reasons for developing trade and economic ties with that country and confirmed that official recognition of the South Korean authorities or establishment of diplomatic relations with them do not enter into our plans.<sup>112</sup>

The North Korean leadership apparently accepted the inevitable movement toward closer economic relations between Moscow and Seoul. At Rogachev's press conference, Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Yuri Gremitskikh further explained that Pyongyang showed an understanding that "the

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<sup>111</sup>*Pravda*, September 9, 1988, p. 1, in *FBIS-SOV-88-175*, September 9, 1988, p. 18.

<sup>112</sup>*Izvestiya*, January 5, 1989, in *FBIS-SOV-89-006*, January 10, 1989, pp. 20-21.

Soviet Union was interested and in need of developing contacts with South Korea along certain lines."<sup>113</sup>

Thereafter, Pyongyang shifted its policy directions from thwarting any official contacts between Seoul and Moscow to foiling Soviet diplomatic recognition of Seoul. Vasily Mikheyev shed light on this point:

. . . there are changes in the North Korean attitude towards economic cooperation with the South and contacts by other socialist countries with the ROK. Up to the end of 1988, Pyongyang's reaction to these contacts was absolutely negative. But later the criticism of such contacts in non-political spheres became weaker. The main focus of Pyongyang's diplomacy now is not to allow such contacts to grow into political recognition.<sup>114</sup>

During the 1988 Pyongyang visit, Shevardnadze also advised the North Koreans to take a realistic view of inter-Korean relations based on the principle of balance of interests: "What is necessary to solve the problem on the Korean peninsula are a dispassionate review of existing realities and constructive approaches based on principles of national reconciliation and balanced interests."<sup>115</sup> The Soviet Foreign Minister told the North Koreans that reform

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<sup>113</sup>Ibid. Commenting on Soviet-South Korean economic contacts in April 1990, a representative of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that "the DPRK understands that it is beneficial and necessary for the Soviet Union to have contacts with the ROK to a certain extent" (Moscow International Service in Korean, April 7, 1990, in *FBIS-SOV-90-069*, April 10, 1990, p. 20).

<sup>114</sup>Vasily V. Mikheev, "A Korean Settlement: New Political Thinking vs. Old Ambitions," *Korea & World Affairs* (Winter 1989), p. 677.

<sup>115</sup>Dong-A Ilbo (New York Edition), December 29, 1988, p. 13.

in their country was necessary to further strengthen a balanced brotherly Socialist relationship between Moscow and Pyongyang.

In the joint statement signed at the end of Shevardnadze's visit to Pyongyang, the Soviet Union reiterated its support for North Korea's unification policy by explicitly disavowing the two Koreas' simultaneous entry into the UN and the mutual recognition of the two Koreas by the major powers. Nevertheless, in a speech delivered at a reception, Shevardnadze expressed reservations about Pyongyang's militant policy vis-a-vis Seoul by emphasizing the impermissibility of terrorism and violence to achieve political goals and calling for Korean reunification based on "existing realities."<sup>116</sup>

In reaction to Moscow's increasingly closer ties with Seoul and its implementation of reform policies at home, Pyongyang shifted its policy directions. In external relations, Pyongyang sought to strengthen its ties with conservative Communist countries, particularly China.<sup>117</sup> On October 25, 1989, commenting on Chinese participation in the Korean War 39 years ago, *Rodong Sinmun* lauded friendly

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<sup>116</sup>TASS in English, December 23, 1988, in *FBIS-SOV*, December 27, 1988, p. 12.

<sup>117</sup>On October 7, 1989, North Korea's *Rodong Sinmun* commented: "under the current circumstances, it is very important to fight and destroy the invasion of the imperialists' anti-Communism and anti-Socialism by means of uniting the forces of all Socialist countries . . . sticking to the revolutionary principles of the working classes and to the doctrine of anti-imperialism."

relations with China and stressed that North Korea would make strenuous efforts to strengthen ties with China "by all means possible."<sup>118</sup> On November 5-7, 1989, North Korean leader Kim Il Sung paid an unexpected visit to China and held several talks with Chinese leaders about the political changes in Eastern Europe and future Chinese policy. Concerning the East European situation, Kim argued strongly that recent developments in Eastern Europe sounded a serious warning to all Socialist countries and that a too permissive open door policy was detrimental to the Socialist cause. Chinese leaders confirmed China's "determination to maintain the Party leadership and to continue to follow the Socialist road."<sup>119</sup> Kim assured China's leaders that he would not change his system and lauded Chinese action taken in the Tiannanmen incident in May 1989.

Kim Il Sung and Deng Xiaoping, however, did not see eye to eye in regard to reform and opening up to the outside world. Kim's request to Chinese officials to exclude the South Korea team from the Beijing Asian Games to be held in 1990 unless both Koreas formed a single team was rejected outright.<sup>120</sup>

Gorbachev never made a trip to Pyongyang although Kim Il Sung visited Moscow twice from 1984 on. This fact

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<sup>118</sup>*Rodong Sinmun*, October 25, 1989.

<sup>119</sup>North Korean Central Broadcasting Station, November 13, 1989.

<sup>120</sup>FBIS-EAS-89-234, December 7, 1989, p. 5.

reflects the fact that North Korea was a low priority on Gorbachev's foreign policy agenda. The North Koreans hoped that Gorbachev would visit Pyongyang in May 1989 after his visit to Beijing. Nevertheless, "reportedly Gorbachev asked Foreign Minister Shevardnadze to tell the North Koreans that he was too busy and that he was tired of Pyongyang's complaints about Soviet participation in the 1988 Olympics and growing economic relations with Seoul."<sup>121</sup> In contrast, Chinese leaders including Deng Xiaoping, Hu Yaobang, Zhao Ziyang, and Li Peng visited Pyongyang. China's Party leader Jiang Zemin visited Pyongyang in March 1990 to reaffirm the friendship and alliance between Beijing and Pyongyang. North Korean leaders also visited Beijing more frequently than Moscow.

In inter-Korean relations, Pyongyang shifted its policy direction in favor of an economic open-door policy in an effort to improve its domestic economy with outside help. In January 1989, North Korea invited Hyundai Group founder Jung Joo Young to Pyongyang to discuss joint ventures and various other projects, including Soviet-DPRK-ROK economic cooperation in the Soviet Far East. Pyongyang reacted positively to the idea of forming a Seoul-Pyongyang joint venture for the development of the Mt. Kumgang area, which

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<sup>121</sup>Parris Chang, "Sino-Soviet Rivalry in Korea," in William J. Taylor, Jr. et al., eds., *The Korean Peninsula* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), p. 169.

is located northeast of the DMZ near the East Sea (Sea of Japan), for tourism.

In 1989, South Korea's nordpolitik, combined with the rapid transformation of East Europe, resulted in Seoul's diplomatic ties with most East European countries. Pyongyang's reaction was totally negative. *Rodong Sinmun* condemned Hungary when the latter became the first East European country to open diplomatic ties with Seoul on February 1, 1989, and called the act a "betrayal of the principles of the revolutionary causes of the working class."<sup>122</sup> North Korea expressed its displeasure by recalling its Ambassador to Hungary and downgraded diplomatic relations to the level of charge d'affaires on the following day. Yugoslavia's decision to exchange diplomatic ties with Seoul brought about a similar reaction from North Korea.<sup>123</sup> On November 1, 1989, when South Korea opened diplomatic relations with Poland, *Rodong Sinmun* characterized it as an "unjustified act" and claimed that the Polish crisis was caused by imperialist ideological and cultural infiltration.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup>*Rodong Sinmun*, September 19, 1989.

<sup>123</sup>*Rodong Sinmun*, November 25, 1989. By the end 1990, all East European countries except Albania opened diplomatic relations with South Korea.

<sup>124</sup>*Rodong Sinmun*, November 3, 1989. In an attempt to contain the spread of reformist ideas among North Korean students, North Korea brought back 100 students in Hungary in Summer 1989 and recalled all 800 students and technical trainees in Czechoslovakia in late December 1989. North Korea also recalled students from the Soviet Union.

In 1989, the Kremlin began to move toward establishing a political relationship with Seoul; by early 1990, Seoul-Moscow normalization became imminent. The issue of Seoul-Moscow normalization became a source of great friction between Moscow and Pyongyang.

On September 2-3, 1990, Shevardnadze visited Pyongyang after his trip to China to inform the North Korean leadership of the imminent conclusion of diplomatic ties with Seoul.<sup>125</sup> Shevardnadze and North Korean Foreign Minister Kim Young Nam held talks on September 2-3. The two foreign ministers discussed not only the issues of impending Soviet-South Korean normalization and the two Koreas' UN membership but also Soviet-North Korean cooperation. After Shevardnadze informed North Korean leaders of Soviet policy to open diplomatic ties with Seoul, he received a six-item memorandum from the North Korean side that listed grounds for opposing the Soviet move.<sup>126</sup> Among others, the memorandum indicated North Korea's willingness to develop

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<sup>125</sup>The Soviet Foreign Minister recalled his trip to Pyongyang in his memoirs: "Several days later in Pyongyang, I tried to convince the leaders of North Korea that the forthcoming establishment of diplomatic ties between the Soviet Union and South Korea would serve to overcome division and reunite the country" (Eduard Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom*, p. 164). Shevardnadze told journalists accompanying him on his Far East tour before arriving in Pyongyang, "we will develop relations with South Korea, acting primarily on the basis of Soviet interests" (M. Yusin, "Are Seoul and Moscow Ready to Establish Diplomatic Relations?", *Izvestiya*, September 12, 1990, Morning ed., p. 5, in FBIS-SOV-90-177, September 12, 1990).  
<sup>126</sup>Alexandre Bovin, Moscow International Service, October 11, 1990, in FBIS-SOV-90-200, October 16, 1990, p. 8.

nuclear weapons if the Soviet Union opened a diplomatic relationship with South Korea:

All this will turn the Pyongyang-Moscow treaty [of 1961] into a nominal one and then the DPRK will have to take measures for manufacturing certain kinds of weapons [nuclear weapons] using its own reserves . . . the South Korean authorities will become more arrogant and will try to engulf the North following the pattern of German unification.<sup>127</sup>

The North Koreans showed an emotional and hostile reaction to the Soviet move and Shevardnadze had a tough experience with the North Koreans in Pyongyang. Radio Moscow's diplomatic correspondent Viktor Levin commented on Shevardnadze's visit to Pyongyang: "To judge by what the Pyongyang newspapers are writing and what I personally heard from Korean diplomats . . . the words puppet regime of U.S. imperialism was one of the milder expressions used. I suspect the negotiations were difficult."<sup>128</sup> Soviet diplomats who were present at the talks noted that Shevardnadze's experience in Pyongyang was possibly the most

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<sup>127</sup>Moscow Television Service, October 1, 1990, in *FBIS-SOV-90-191*, October 2, 1990, p. 19. According to Vladimir O. Rakhmanin who accompanied Shevardnadze on the Pyongyang trip, the North Koreans also expressed their intent to manufacture nuclear weapons clearly during the talks (interview with Rakhmanin in January 1993 at The Pennsylvania State University).

<sup>128</sup>Radio Moscow, September 3, 1990, cited from Suzanne Crow, "Shevardnadze's Asian Tour: Mixed Results," *Report on the USSR*, September 14, 1990, p. 6. Sidrova, who accompanied Shevardnadze to Pyongyang, confirmed that the talks in Pyongyang were very complicated (excerpt from *Novoe Vremiya* by Galina Sidrova, Moscow International Service, September 15, 1990, in *FBIS-SOV-90-181*, September 18, 1990, p. 13).

difficult in all of Shevardnadze's years as Foreign Minister and demanded colossal effort.<sup>129</sup>

Furthermore, the North Koreans did not arrange a meeting between Shevardnadze and Kim Il Sung, which was unprecedented in the history of the two countries, indicating North Korea's strong displeasure with the status of Seoul-Moscow relations.<sup>130</sup>

Pyongyang's disappointment and anger resulting from the Soviet move also were evident in its newspaper articles. *Minju Chosun*, the North Korean government newspaper, carried an article on September 19, 1990 that criticized *Izvestiya's* article which had maintained that South Korean-Soviet normalization would promote inter-Korean relations and peaceful unification on the Korean peninsula.<sup>131</sup> *Minju Chosun*, on the eve of Seoul-Moscow normalization, castigated the planned exchange of diplomats between South Korea and the Soviet Union as "an undisguised hostile act."<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>129</sup>M. Yusin, "Are Seoul and Moscow Ready to Establish Diplomatic Relations?", *Izvestiya*, September 12, 1990, Morning ed., p. 5, in *FBIS-SOV-90-177*, September 12, 1990, pp. 19-20.

<sup>130</sup>A. Platkovsky, "Pyongyang True to Itself," *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, September 4, 1990, in *FBIS-SOV-90-171*, September 4, 1990, pp. 25-26.

<sup>131</sup>*Izvestiya* September 25, 1990, Morning ed., p. 5, in *FBIS-SOV-90-191*, October 2, 1990, p. 19.

<sup>132</sup>Moscow in Japanese in Japan, September 29, 1990, in *FBIS-SOV-90-191*, October 2, 1990, p. 17. Despite the stormy talks, the two sides expressed agreement on the issues of the complete withdrawal of nuclear and chemical weapons from Asia, the establishment of nuclear-free, peace zones there, and the renunciation of large-scale war games in the region.

Under the circumstances, Pyongyang turned to Beijing for support. After Shevardnadze left Pyongyang, Kim Il Sung secretly visited China and talked with Deng Xiaoping in Shenyang. As diplomats confirmed, Kim Il Sung secured Deng's promise of unwavering support for North Korea's foreign policy lines. At the same time, Kim Il Sung made efforts to improve relations with Japan, discarding his previously hostile rhetoric against the country.

Pyongyang's friendly gesture toward Tokyo was a desperate attempt to improve its economic condition at home by inducing Japan's capital and technology, and to counter close Moscow-Seoul relations. Kim invited a high-ranking Japanese delegation to Pyongyang shortly after Shevardnadze's Pyongyang visit. After the visit by the Japanese delegation to Pyongyang, Pyongyang and Tokyo agreed to open talks as early as November to establish diplomatic relations between Japan and North Korea.<sup>133</sup>

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They also called for the reduction of conventional weapons and dismantling of foreign military bases on foreign territories. Shevardnadze and Kim Young Nam signed a treaty on the regime of the Soviet-Korean state border and a protocol on the demarcation of the 39.4-kilometer Soviet-Korean state border, ending a century-long dispute (TASS, September 3, 1990, in *FBIS-SOV-90-171*, September 4, 1990, p. 25; Suzanne Crow, "Shevardnadze's Asian Tour: Mixed Results," *Report on the USSR*, September 14, 1990, p. 6).<sup>133</sup> Moscow International Service, October 9, 1990, in *FBIS-SOV-90-196*, October 10, 1990, p. 20.

## B. Continued Military and Economic Assistance to Pyongyang

The Soviet Union continued its strategic cooperation with the DPRK. Moscow continued to supply new-type weapons to North Korea in 1988-1990.<sup>134</sup> Joint Soviet-North Korean military exercises in the East Sea that had started in 1986 ceased after September 1989.<sup>135</sup> By doing so, the Soviets probably wanted to maintain some degree of political influence over the recalcitrant ally while restoring the military balance on the Korean peninsula that was tilting in Seoul's favor.<sup>136</sup> In an interview with a South Korean newspaper, Vladimir Tikhomirov noted that the Soviet supply of weapons to Pyongyang was closely related to the U.S. supply of advanced military equipment to Seoul and urged the U.S. and the Soviet Union to agree to stop the supply of weapons to North Korea and South Korea, respectively.<sup>137</sup> A continued shipment of military items from Moscow to Pyongyang partly resulted from earlier commitments<sup>138</sup> and

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<sup>134</sup>Andrey Pichugin, "Mosckovskiye Novosti, Moscow International Service, September 13, 1990, in *FBIS-SOV-90-179*, September 14, 1990, p. 10.

<sup>135</sup>*Chungang Ilbo*, October 30, 1991, p. 1, in *FBIS-EAS-91-210*, October 30, 1991, p. 18.

<sup>136</sup>Parris Chang, "Sino-Soviet Rivalry in Korea," p. 168.

<sup>137</sup>*Chosun Ilbo*, May 31, 1989, p. 4, in *FBIS-SOV-89-109*, June 8, 1989, pp. 10-11.

<sup>138</sup>Mikhail L. Titarenko, "New Trends in Asian-Pacific International Situation and their Impacts on Soviet-South Korean Relations," *Sino-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (Summer 1990), p. 22; Dae-Sook Suh, "Changes in Sino-Soviet Policies Toward Korea and Implications for the United States," paper prepared for a Cato Institute Conference on

partly stemmed from the persistent influence of the military-industry-party apparatus complex within Soviet society that favored continuing military ties with North Korea.

As in the military field, the Soviets continued economic assistance and cooperation with Pyongyang, but at a substantially reduced scale. While the Soviet economic system adopted elements of a market economy as a result of perestroika, the North Korean economy maintained a Stalinist planned economy. The incompatibility between the two economic systems contributed to reduced economic transactions, especially in joint enterprises, between the two neighbors.

The bilateral trade between Pyongyang and Moscow dropped from 1.6 billion rubles in 1988 to 1.47 billion rubles in 1989. It further decreased to 1.34 billion rubles in 1990.<sup>139</sup> The Soviet Union remained the most important trading partner to Pyongyang. In 1990, North Korea's trade with the Soviet Union accounted for about 58 percent of North Korea's total trade compared with 13 percent with

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the U.S.-South Korean Alliance, The Capital Hilton, Washington, D.C, June 21, 1990, pp. 12-13.

<sup>139</sup>Nataliya Bazhanova, "Economic Cooperation Between North Korea and Russia has Virtually Ceased," *Kyungnyang Sinmun*, January 25, 1992, p. 4, in *FBIS-EAS-92-019*, pp. 41-42. See also *Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 10, 1991, p. 75; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 9, 1991, p. 15; *Chosun Ilbo*, December 1, 1990.

China.<sup>140</sup> The Soviet Union was one of the important suppliers of crude oil to North Korea. In 1989, North Korea imported 2.6 million tons of crude oil--500,000 tons from the Soviet Union, 1.14 million tons from China, 920,000 tons from Iran, and 40,000 tons from Libya.<sup>141</sup>

Moscow continued to support light industry factories in North Korea and joint ventures,<sup>142</sup> and to underwrite the biggest North Korean projects, including nuclear and coal-fueled power plants, metal refineries, mine expansion, and oil exploration.<sup>143</sup> The Soviet Union's continued economic assistance to North Korea also can be explained as an attempt to maintain some influence over Pyongyang through economic leverage.

In 1988-1989, a number of Pyongyang-Moscow joint ventures were set up on Soviet territory: the Phyton joint venture in Chita, which produced oriental medicinal preparations; a joint venture in fisheries at Nakhodka specializing in seurchins; joint venture restaurants, *the Pyongyang* in Moscow, and *Moranbong* in Vladivostok; the Rolling Stock Plant in Wonsan which produced freight cars for export to the Soviet Union; and joint development of the

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<sup>140</sup>Byung-joon Ahn, "South Korean-Soviet Relations," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 31, No. 9 (September 1991), p. 823.

<sup>141</sup>*Yonhap* in English, April 14, 1991, in *FBIS Daily Report-East Asia*, April 18, 1991.

<sup>142</sup>Marina Trigubenko and Georgi Toloray, "The Korean Imperative," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, March 22, 1990, p. 22.

<sup>143</sup>*Far Eastern Economic Review*, August 23, 1990, p. 54.

Unpa mine for lead and zinc. In addition, both sides cooperated in the construction of the Taedonggang dry battery plant and in the production and processing of magnesia clinker.<sup>144</sup> In August 1989, North Korea agreed to build a fisheries complex and a 10,000-unit apartment building for fishery workers in Vladivostok. North Korea also agreed to build a 25-story apartment complex, the tallest building in Vladivostok. The proceeds from these construction projects would be used to reduce North Korea's debt to the Soviet Union.<sup>145</sup>

#### 5. Concluding Remarks

In 1988-1990, Gorbachev's foreign policy toward the two Koreas shifted its direction with the implementation of new political thinking toward Northeast Asia, particularly the Korean peninsula. The Kremlin moved to normalize relations with Seoul through three stages: (1) the establishment of formal economic relations by exchanging trade offices at the end of 1988; (2) the establishment of informal political relations by inviting South Korea's prominent politician Kim Young Sam to Moscow and exchanging consular departments in

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<sup>144</sup>Marina Trigubenko et al., "DPRK: First Few Mixed Enterprises," *Far Eastern Affairs*, No. 3 (1990), p. 32; Moscow International Service, May 28, 1987, in *FBIS-SOV-87-105*, June 2, 1987, pp. C4-C6.

<sup>145</sup>Radio Moscow, December 7, 1988, in *FBIS-SOV-89-239*, December 14, 1989, pp. 12-13.

1989; and (3) the conclusion of formal diplomatic ties in September 1990. The new Soviet policy toward Seoul naturally caused friction and tension in Moscow-Pyongyang relations.

However, the Soviets did not consider Soviet relations with the two Koreas to be a zero-sum game; they sought to forge a formal political relationship with Seoul without abandoning their traditional neighborly ties with Pyongyang. Thus, Gorbachev's new policy toward the Korean peninsula sought to establish a balanced relationship with both Pyongyang and Seoul. At the same time, Gorbachev hoped to play an active role in peace and security on the Korean peninsula, which was essential to the stability of Northeast Asia and a prerequisite for the successful implementation of his reform program at home. The Soviet Union's even-handed approach toward the two Koreas and the projection of its image as mediator for the Korean problem were key to understanding Gorbachev's new policy toward North and South Korea. The new political thinking, which emphasized national interests and pragmatism, served as the guiding principle in the pursuit of new policy.

During this period, Moscow-Pyongyang relations gradually deteriorated as Gorbachev's new policy placed less emphasis on traditional ideological and military ties with Pyongyang and more emphasis on economic and political ties with Seoul. For a long time, Pyongyang's opposition to any

kind of formal relationship between Moscow and Pyongyang had been the major obstacle in Moscow-Seoul normalization. The pervasive influence of the Soviet military-industry-party apparatus complex that had maintained friendly ties with North Korea's Communist Party also obstructed Gorbachev's new policy to establish formal political relations with Seoul. As Gorbachev progressively increased his power through tactful political maneuvers, he gained the self-confidence and political clout needed to implement new policy toward Seoul as well as in other parts of the world.

## CHAPTER 9

### GORBACHEV IN DECLINE:

#### THE CONTINUING MOMENTUM OF NEW THINKING

(FALL 1990-1991)

As Gorbachev became the first executive President of the USSR in early 1990, he was, *ex officio*, accorded with unprecedented powers in both domestic and foreign policy. But the domestic crisis that loomed large by late 1990 increasingly narrowed the President's latitude of policy choice. Deteriorating economic conditions at home and the spreading secessionist movements by various constituent nationality groups within the Soviet Union posed a direct threat to its territorial integrity and Constitutional order. The potentially formidable powers of the President as stipulated in the new Soviet Constitution became increasingly unusable; consequently, Gorbachev's new foreign policy was set adrift. It is paradoxical that the moment Gorbachev's Constitutional power reached its apex, his real power began to erode rapidly.

Soviet foreign policy became increasingly de-ideologized, leaving the Kremlin without specific guidelines

for foreign policy.<sup>1</sup> During this period, the new political thinking increasingly became obsolete as a guide to Soviet foreign policy as improvised pragmatism took over. Soviet foreign policy behavior was no longer constrained and regulated by the new thinking, but was overwhelmed by the rapid political developments at home and abroad. Thus, Soviet foreign policy became increasingly reactive.

Despite internal turmoil and confusion, the Soviet Union continued to build a friendly and cooperative relationship with Seoul on the basis of common interests. Simultaneously, Soviet-North Korean relations became increasingly tenuous as the ideological and military ties vanished that had bonded the two neighbors together. In late 1990-1991, Soviet Korea policy was characterized by an undisguised tilt toward Seoul, often at the expense of Pyongyang. Moscow's alliance relationship with Pyongyang

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<sup>1</sup>In an effort to give more structured shape to foreign policy, the Soviet Foreign Ministry issued guidelines for Soviet foreign policy in the broadest terms in its report on Gorbachev's foreign policy published in *International Affairs* in March 1991. The report defined Soviet national security requirements as: "The defense against foreign and domestic threat, steadfastness against unfavorable influences from without, the safeguarding of those internal and external conditions that are conducive to the existence of the country and that guarantee the opportunity for the stable, comprehensive progress of society and its citizens." It further defined Soviet national interests as: "the formation of a truly democratic society based on civil law in which the political, social, economic and spiritual interests and rights of all of its members will be safeguarded by the utilization of the material benefits possible in the present stage of civilization" (*International Affairs* [Moscow] No. 2, 1991, p. 14).

became anachronistic under the changed circumstances and the Moscow-Pyongyang relationship was transformed into a normal state-to-state relationship.

**1. The Erosion of Gorbachev's Power and the Continuation of the New Policy by Momentum**

In 1990, the shift in political power from the Party to the state was completed when Gorbachev became the first President of the Soviet Union in March 1990. Not only did the creation of the executive presidency undermine the power base of the Communist Party, but it also weakened the central government's grip on the republics and eventually placed the very existence of the Soviet state in jeopardy as secessionist movements within the USSR gained momentum.

The Soviet leader destroyed the "old system" by undermining the authority of the CPSU and the centrally planned economic system without creating a viable alternative. Through his reforms, Gorbachev inadvertently encouraged a radical devolution of central power to the republics and regional governments and eventually destroyed the very political structure on which his own power depended. Gorbachev himself acknowledged this point in an interview held after his fall from power:

I believe that there was not the necessary coordination between the dismantling of the old structures (which

for better or for worse serve to sustain society and the economy) and the creation of new structures. And this was also my fault as president. But many of the republican presidents were in error, too, in their struggle for sovereignty, because, in seeking to affirm their sovereignty, they did not think about what was needed in this country . . . to foster and create new mechanisms to represent the republics but sought to enforce change from above.

It was essential that there be new mechanisms affording concord and cooperation. The lack of this coordination is therefore a general and very serious failing.<sup>2</sup>

Gorbachev initially introduced glasnost as a means of directing popular pressure against those elements of the old order. Glasnost created an explosion of popular political activity and an atmosphere conducive to independence movements in the Soviet republics. Furthermore, his economic reform program proved to be a disaster; the shortage of daily necessities and economic dislocation exacerbated already serious tensions arising from political changes, expediting the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Most importantly, Gorbachev's vacillation in the ideological spectrum from left to right, which was a desperate attempt to form new coalitions and alliances to reinstate law and order at home, was directly responsible for his demise as the Soviet leader and the collapse of the Soviet state.

Faced with domestic turmoil and crisis, Gorbachev turned to conservative forces in Fall 1990. Gorbachev changed his policy goals from perestroika and glasnost to

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<sup>2</sup>"Mikhail Gorbachev Interviewed in Munich," *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 1, No. 12 (March 19, 1992), p. 55.

social order and territorial integrity. Gorbachev's highest priority now shifted from the implementation of a reform policy to preservation of his political power and arresting of Soviet Union's disintegration. His new goal coincided with those of the KGB, the MVD, the army, and the Communist Party. He co-opted conservative leaders in the hope that the Soviet Union's domestic order and territorial integrity could be preserved with their cooperation.

Gorbachev's lean toward the right became obvious by November 1990.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, he indicated his intention to bolster the role of the internal police forces. Simultaneously, Gorbachev strengthened the presidency so that he would be empowered to apply some sort of direct presidential rule involving martial law or states of emergency in trouble spots. In the midst of Gorbachev's lean toward the right and his formation of a coalition with the conservatives, Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze resigned on December 20, 1990, after warning of an imminent right-wing coup in the country.

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<sup>3</sup>On November 27, 1990, he granted military personnel the right to fire on civilians to protect themselves from attack (TASS, November 27, 1990). On December 2, 1990, he appointed two hard-liners, KGB Major General Boris Pugo and Army Colonel General Boris Gromov (the former commander of Soviet troops in Afghanistan), to head the ministry responsible for maintaining public order (*Izvestiya*, December 3, 1990). Gromov was probably given control of the MVD's military operations, which meant a shift in emphasis from the use of Soviet military capabilities against external enemies to their use against internal ones (TASS, December 3, 1990).

As a result, in early 1991, the conservative hard-liners gained considerable influence over Soviet policy, both domestic and external. With regained influence, conservatives sought not only to undo the USSR's support for the U.S.-led campaign against the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait but also to turn the Gulf War to Moscow's advantage.<sup>4</sup> In Spring 1991, Gorbachev again shifted to a neutral position between right-wing conservatives and left-wing reformists. The Soviet leader made a last-ditch effort to arrest further devolution of power from the center to the republics and to reverse the secessionist movements sweeping throughout the country by concluding a new union treaty with Republican leaders that would form a new type of Soviet federalism, replacing the 1924 Union Treaty. Under the new union treaty, the power and autonomy of the Republics were to increase substantially and the authority of the central government was to be reduced substantially. The conservatives found the new union treaty to be a direct threat to their own interests.

In August 1991, when the conclusion of a new union treaty was imminent, the "military-industrial-party apparatus complex" rebelled and attempted a military coup against him. Although it failed, the coup highlighted the formidable force of the conservatives, who could still

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<sup>4</sup>For the role of the conservatives in Soviet foreign policy, see Suzanne Crow, "The Twilight of All-Union Diplomacy," *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (January 3, 1992).

assert themselves when their material and ideological interests were in jeopardy. After the abortive coup, the conservative forces in the Soviet leadership were completely wiped out. In addition, power and political authority further shifted from the center to the Soviet constituent republics and secessionist movements throughout the country intensified.

The internal crisis during this period led Gorbachev to become increasingly preoccupied with domestic problems. The abortive coup and ensuing confusion and turmoil further accelerated the inward orientation of Gorbachev's foreign policy: ". . . while in the first half of 1991 it was still the policy of a great power with vast external interests, at least in its outward manifestations, after the August coup attempt it grew more and more inward looking and became governed mostly by domestic concerns." At the same time Soviet foreign policy became pluralistic and decentralized, with former Soviet republics promoting their specific interests in international relations.<sup>5</sup>

After the coup, Gorbachev became incapacitated as the Soviet leader and Boris Yeltsin, President of the Russian Republic, emerged as the most powerful political figure in the Soviet Union and completely overshadowed Gorbachev. After the coup episode, the political situation in the

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<sup>5</sup>Gennady Chufurin, "The USSR and Asia in 1991," *Asian Survey* (January 1992), p. 12.

Soviet Union lacked strong central authority and clear policy directions. Finally, the state of the Soviet Union ceased to exist after the leaders of the three Slavic Republics (Russia, Ukraine, and Byelorussia) formed the Commonwealth of Independent States on December 8, 1991, declaring their independence from the Soviet Union. Subsequently, Gorbachev resigned as Soviet President.

Gorbachev's vacillation from the right to the center between Fall 1990 and August 1991 and all the domestic turmoil and upheavals following the August coup did not leave a visible mark on Soviet foreign policy toward the two Koreas. Four factors contributed to the relative continuity and consistency of the Soviet Union's Korea policy during this period. First, Seoul and Moscow had developed interdependent and mutually beneficial economic ties. Because Seoul had already pledged \$3 billion in economic aid to the USSR, Seoul-Moscow relations were economically beneficial to the Soviet Union.

Second, unlike its relationship with Japan, there were no salient issues between the Soviet Union and South Korea that might become a source of conflict, except North Korea's displeasure, which was marginalized. Thus, Soviet policy toward Seoul was hardly susceptible to domestic pressure from conservative and ultra-nationalist leaders who advocated the maintenance of law and order internally and the preservation of territorial integrity and the

restoration of the powerful Soviet empire externally. The cooperative and relatively stable relations between Moscow and Seoul during this period were in stark contrast to the friction and fluctuations in Moscow-Tokyo relations resulting from the increasingly formidable influence of conservative leaders and Russian nationalist groups who constantly obstructed the Kremlin's efforts to reach a compromise on the Kurile Islands issue.

Third, the gap between the Soviets and the North Koreans in terms of mutual attitudes and perceptions was widening as Soviet society democratized and adopted political pluralism while North Korean society stuck to a totalitarian Communist system.

Furthermore, the traditional friendship that characterized Moscow-Pyongyang relations was evaporating rapidly as the ideological unity and party-to-party connections between the two former Communist countries was no longer relevant after the disempowerment of the CPSU and economic reform in the Soviet Union:

Pyongyang can no longer make use of party channels, can no longer call on "class and anti-imperialist fidelity," to get the Soviet party structures to give orders to Soviet institutions to provide the DPRK with unilateral or, at least, greater benefits . . . . In the economic sphere, the administrative basis of cooperation has disappeared almost completely. The essence of that basis was that Soviet enterprises and institutions which had business relationships with the DPRK developed them not on the basis of their commercial benefit, but according to administrative

orders . . . . Dismantling of the Soviet command economic system destroyed these principles.<sup>6</sup>

In 1990, the CPSU's constitutional monopoly as the "leading and guiding force" of Soviet society was abolished and the right of all political parties to enjoy equal opportunities was proclaimed in the Soviet Union. Even before the total eclipse of the CPSU in Soviet society after the August coup, the era of Socialist internationalism was over in 1990.<sup>7</sup> Soviet development of diplomatic ties with Seoul in September resulted from its renunciation of Socialist internationalism. After the coup attempt failed, the CPSU was banned as an illegal organization in the Soviet Union for its role in the coup. Once the Communist Party was made illegal in the Soviet Union, traditional party-to-party connections between Moscow and Pyongyang were irrevocably severed.

Fourth, once Moscow and Seoul established a formal diplomatic relationship through a mutual exchange of recognition, there was no way to return to the past.

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<sup>6</sup>Vasily V. Mikheyev, "New Soviet Approaches to North Korea," *Korea & World Affairs*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Fall 1991), pp. 447-448.

<sup>7</sup>Chufrin viewed the Sino-Soviet and Soviet-Vietnamese summits between Gorbachev and Chinese General Secretary Jiang, and Gorbachev and Vietnamese General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh in 1991 as "the last attempts of the Soviet Communist Party to retain its former role as a state party and as a political organization directly participating in running Soviet international relations, in spite of the formal abolition of such provisions in the Soviet constitution" (Gennady Chufrin, "The USSR and Asia in 1991," *Asian Survey* [January 1992], p. 14).

Juridically, Soviet recognition of the ROK as a legitimate political entity was irreversible. After Moscow-Seoul normalization, the Soviet Union maintained normal state-to-state relations with South Korea, which practically precluded the possibility of returning to the "honeymoon" with North Korea it had experienced during the Cold War era.

## 2. Stabilization of Soviet Perception and Attitudes Toward Seoul and Pyongyang

Seoul-Moscow normalization and social-political changes in the Soviet Union resulting from glasnost and democratization totally changed Soviet attitudes toward and perceptions of Seoul and Pyongyang. In the minds of many Soviets, South Korea was a friendly country with remarkable economic achievements and progressive political democratization. Important political elites in the Soviet Union no longer considered North Korea to be ideologically, politically, and economically valuable to Soviet interests. The Soviet people followed the views of its political elites and adopted new attitudes toward Pyongyang. The Soviets publicly denounced North Korea for its lack of freedom, regimentation of life, personality cult, closed character of the society, and unreasonable positions in foreign affairs.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Eugen Bazhanov and Natash Bazhanov, "Soviet Views on North Korea," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 31, No. 12 (December 1991), p. 1125.

After the normalization between Seoul and Moscow, the Soviet media freely covered various aspects of South Korean society since it was rid of censorship. The Soviets began to reevaluate past Soviet policies and events, including the KAL 007 incident of 1983 which became the object of detailed investigation by Soviet journalists.<sup>9</sup> Many Soviets increasingly manifested critical and intolerant attitudes toward North Korea's totalitarian regime.<sup>10</sup> North Korea's one-man dictatorship and dynastic succession process from Kim Il Sung to his son Kim Jong Il became the target of mockery and ridicule in Soviet newspapers and magazines.

The Soviet attitude toward U.S. troop withdrawal changed as well. Some Soviet scholars concluded that North Korea's demand for immediate and total withdrawal of the U.S. troops from South Korea was not practical<sup>11</sup>:

Until recently, there was wide consensus among Soviet Korea watchers that the realization of this aim would benefit the USSR, as the American war potential near the Soviet Far East always was an unwelcome phenomenon

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<sup>9</sup>In January 1991, the Soviet government newspaper *Izvestiya* published a 10-part series on the incident by staff reporter Andrei Illyesh, exposing Soviet mendacity on the issue (Sophie Quinn-judge, "Salvaging the Truth," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, February 1, 1991, p. 15).

<sup>10</sup>Vasily V. Mikheyev, "New Soviet Approaches to North Korea," p. 445.

<sup>11</sup>Eugen Bazhanov and Natash Bazhanov, "Soviet Views on North Korea," p. 1131. See also E. Bazhanov, "Changing Impetus," *Pravda*, January 16, 1990; V. Lukin, "Pacific-Asian Region: A Dialogue is Needed," *Izvestiya*, January 4, 1988. In the past, Soviet support for U.S. troop withdrawal was based on the perception that the U.S. military presence in the immediate vicinity of its Far Eastern borders was a threat to its security.

for Moscow. After 1985, however, when Pyongyang's stand on inter-Korean relations started to be seriously scrutinized, some specialists noted that the North Korean demands, although good in principle, were not practical; Americans were not going to leave the South, especially in the manner Pyongyang wanted them to go-- completely and at once.

Some Soviet academics expressed doubts about the usefulness of withdrawing U.S. troops from the Korean peninsula and maintained that U.S. troop withdrawal should coincide with the reduction of tension between the two Koreas on the grounds that it might (1) heighten tensions in Korea by facilitating the arms race between the two Koreas; (2) lead to Japan's re-militarization; and (3) invite China's violent reactions.<sup>12</sup> They further justified the value of the U.S. military presence in South Korea in ensuring stability: "American guarantee of the country's security is an integral part of military and political security and balance in the Northeast Asia and therefore they contribute to maintaining stability in the region."<sup>13</sup>

North Korea's unification formula for a "Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryo," which had been officially endorsed by the Soviet Union, also became a subject of

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<sup>12</sup>Cf. A. Bogaturov and Mikhail Nosov, "The Asia-Pacific Region and Soviet-American Relations," *International Affairs* (Moscow) (February 1990), pp. 109-117.

<sup>13</sup>Oleg Davidov, "Soviet Policy Toward the Korean Peninsula in the 1990s," pp. 432. While visiting Seoul, Vladimir Tikhomirov, chief of the Asia-Pacific Department of the Oriental Studies Institute of the Academy of Sciences had stated on May 15, 1989, that "a phased withdrawal of the U.S. forces is desirable" (*Chosun Ilbo*, May 31, 1989, p. 4, in *FBIS-SOV-89-109*, June 8, 1989, pp. 10-11).

Soviet criticism. Soviet specialists on Korea began to express support for South Korea's unification policy that called for people-to-people contacts, trade, and an exchange of information between the two Koreas before proceeding to political and security issues.<sup>14</sup>

### 3. Forging Cooperative Relations with Seoul

Gorbachev's policy toward the two Koreas after Moscow-Seoul normalization (September 1990-December 1991) centered around three themes: promoting friendly and cooperative relations with South Korea, particularly economically in order to alleviate dire economic conditions at home; adjusting relations with North Korea from a military alliance to a normal state-to-state relationship; and diplomatic efforts for peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and the political settlement of the Korean problem.<sup>15</sup>

After the relations between Moscow and Seoul normalized in September 1990, the Soviet Union forged a friendly state-

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<sup>14</sup>Moscow also advocated an international conference on Korea to guarantee peace on the Korean peninsula. Some Soviet specialists on Korea defended the idea of "a democratic, neutral and united Korea" that can play a balancing role in superpower relations in the Far East. See Eugen Bazhanov and Natash Bazhanov, "Soviet Views on North Korea," p. 1130.  
<sup>15</sup>Oleg Davidov, "Soviet Policy Toward the Korean Peninsula in the 1990s," *The Korean Journal of International Studies* (Spring 1990), p. 427; Vasily Mikheyev, "New Soviet Approaches to North Korea," p. 443.

to-state relationship with South Korea. Gorbachev's policy toward Seoul centered around two issues: early implementation of pledged South Korean economic assistance to the Soviet Union, and a positive role as an objective mediator in resolving the Korean question.

In the midst of rapidly deteriorating economic conditions and political instability at home, Gorbachev turned to foreign countries, including South Korea, for economic assistance that was deemed necessary to boost his political influence and authority. Consequently, in 1990, the economic dimension of Soviet foreign policy in the Asia Pacific region began to overshadow "the hitherto unmistakably dominant military dimension of that policy."<sup>16</sup> That economics was Gorbachev's highest priority in Soviet-South Korean relationship was clearly demonstrated during the Roh-Gorbachev summits in Moscow and Cheju Island. Parallel with the economic goal, Gorbachev pursued the role of honest broker in inter-Korean relations in an effort to enhance the Soviet Union's status and influence in the Korean peninsula and Northeast Asia.

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<sup>16</sup>Gennady Chufirin, "The USSR and Asia-Pacific in 1990," p. 20.

#### A. The Roh-Gorbachev Summits in Moscow and Cheju

South Korean President Roh Tae Woo paid a four-day official visit to Moscow in December 1990 to hold the second summit with Gorbachev. During the Moscow summit, the two sides firmly established a legal and institutional framework for bilateral relations by signing the inter-governmental documents that contained the concrete thrusts of the bilateral ties. The joint communiqué issued at the Moscow summit (the so-called "Moscow Declaration") contained the basic principles of the bilateral relations.<sup>17</sup>

In the communiqué, the two leaders concurred on the rejection of use or threats of force in settling regional conflicts, which was obviously directed toward North Korea's militant policy toward South Korea. In the communiqué, the Soviet side again expressed its intention to maintain a normal state-to-state relationship with Pyongyang by stating that Moscow's opening of diplomatic ties with Seoul should in no way be seen as an abandonment of its treaty obligations to Pyongyang.<sup>18</sup> These seemingly contradictory

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<sup>17</sup>For the full text of the joint communiqué, see *Pravda*, December 15, 1990, pp. 1, 5, in *FBIS-SOV-90-243*, December 18, 1990, pp. 16-18.

<sup>18</sup>At one of their meetings, Roh and Gorbachev agreed that the new era of peace and cooperation that had emerged in the wake of the Malta U.S.-Soviet summit and the recent Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in Paris, should also be introduced in the Korean peninsula and the Asia Pacific region (Shim Jae Hoon and Sophie Quinn-Judge,

positions reflect the Soviet Union's desire not to totally alienate geo-strategically located neighboring North Korea, while opposing North Korea's military adventurism against the South.

This summit also opened a new chapter in bilateral relations by putting unhappy memories in the past and starting a new relationship. Foreign Minister Shevardnadze, at a separate meeting with South Korean Foreign Minister Choi Ho Joong, expressed regrets about the downing of the Korean Airliner in 1983. In reference to Stalin's role in the Korean War, Shevardnadze called the Korean War "a tragedy that should never be repeated." Choi accepted the statement as an official apology on the part of the Soviet Union.<sup>19</sup>

Gorbachev not only implied that he would increase pressure on North Korea for reform and openness but also concurred with Seoul's approach to arms control on the Korean peninsula.<sup>20</sup> Roh pleased his host by expressing support for the Soviet proposal for an Asian foreign ministers' meeting to be held in Vladivostok in 1993 that would focus on the Asia Pacific security system.<sup>21</sup>

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"Red Carpet Treatment," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, December 27, 1990, p. 6).

<sup>19</sup>*Izvestiya*, December 17, 1990, p. 3, in *FBIS-SOV-90-243*, p. 25.

<sup>20</sup>*Chosun Ilbo* (New York Edition), December 19, 1990, p. 21.

<sup>21</sup>Shim Jae Hoon and Sophie Quinn-Judge, "Red Carpet Treatment," p. 7.

In addition, both sides established the contractual and legal basis for an expansion of bilateral trade and economic cooperation. At working level sessions, trade and finance ministers signed a set of four agreements: reciprocal Most Favored Nation treatment in trade, protection of investments, repatriation of profits, and avoidance of double taxation.<sup>22</sup>

In January 1991, Soviet First Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Maslyukov visited Seoul leading a Soviet delegation in accordance with the agreement reached at the Moscow summit.<sup>23</sup> In Seoul, both sides agreed to organize an intergovernmental committee on the economic and scientific-technological cooperation, and signed a fisheries agreement.

The terms of South Korea's economic aid to the Soviet Union were also finalized. South Korea agreed to grant a \$3 billion loan to the Soviet Union. The aid package included \$1.5 billion for the purchase of South Korean consumer

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<sup>22</sup>Moscow TASS International Service in Russian, December 14, 1990, in *FBIS-SOV-90-243*, December 18, 1990, p. 10.

<sup>23</sup>Moscow International Service in Korean, January 24, 1991, in *FBIS-SOV-91-020*, January 30, 1991, p. 12. In an interview with a Soviet reporter, Maslyukov explained the nature and achievements of his Seoul visit: "Our visit to the ROK this time was made according to an agreement reached at the talks between the presidents of the SU and the ROK. In the talks we sought to subdivide the fields of cooperation between the two countries, sounded out the actual conditions of ROK business circles, and discussed the terms of ROK loans to be provided to the SU. The talks also discussed ways to strengthen economic, scientific, and technological cooperation bet our two countries" (Moscow International Service in Korean, January 24, 1991, in *FBIS-SOV-91-020*, January 30, 1991, p. 12).

goods, \$1 billion as bank credit to be used without condition, and \$500 million for the purchase of South Korean capital goods.<sup>24</sup>

During his stay in Seoul, Maslyukov stated at a press conference that Moscow had been delivering defensive weapons to Pyongyang and implied that it would continue to do so: ". . . any country has the right to defend its country by purchasing necessary means of defense. We have not supplied offensive weapons to the DPRK and there is no plan to supply them in the future, too."<sup>25</sup> This statement indicated that the Soviet Union had not severed its military ties with North Korea completely; the continued military cooperation between Moscow and Pyongyang became a source of potential friction between Seoul and Moscow.

The third summit between Roh and Gorbachev took place on Cheju Island off the southern coast of South Korea when

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<sup>24</sup>Moscow Domestic Service in Russian, January 24, 1991, in *FBIS-SOV-91-031*, February 14, 1991; Mark Clifford, "Gamble on Glasnost," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, February 7, 1991, p. 44. The three-year loan package, the price for Moscow's diplomatic recognition of Seoul, provided a big boost to bilateral trade. The \$3 billion loan to the Soviet Union was to be reimbursed in five-year annual installments with a three-year grace period, with payment guaranteed by the Soviet government. Because it did not have sufficient funds, Seoul delivered the loan package after borrowing internationally. The ROK provided the Soviet Union with \$500 million in bank loans (the first batch of the \$1 billion) in May 1991 and \$800 million tied loans (the first batch of the \$1.5 billion) to purchase raw materials and consumer goods from South Korea in April and May, 1991 (Yonhap, July 24, 1991, in *FBIS-EAS-91-143*, July 25, 1991, p. 27).

<sup>25</sup>Moscow International Service in Korean, January 24, 1991, in *FBIS-SOV-91-020*, January 30, 1991.

Gorbachev decided to stop over in South Korea on April 19, 1991, after a four-day visit to Tokyo.<sup>26</sup> Gorbachev's trip to Japan and South Korea was intended to induce economic assistance from South Korea and Japan for domestic economic reform and to drum up support for his East Asian initiative, especially his Asian collective security proposal. In contrast to his fruitless trip to Tokyo, Gorbachev's Cheju visit resulted in numerous agreements and promoted further friendly ties between Seoul and Moscow.

During Gorbachev's overnight stay in Cheju, the summit talks revolved around two issues: bilateral economic cooperation and the Korean question. Gorbachev's primary concern was the promotion of bilateral economic cooperation and trade. Gorbachev asked Roh to multiply bilateral trade and expedite pledged economic aid to the Soviet Union. The two agreed to multiply trade tenfold over the next five years in order to assist the Soviet Union's faltering

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<sup>26</sup>Initially, Gorbachev did not intend to visit South Korea after his trip to Tokyo. The Soviet Union formally notified the Seoul government on April 4, 1991, that Gorbachev did not plan to visit South Korea (Tokyo NHK General Television Network in Japanese, April 4, 1991, in *FBIS-SOV-91-066*, April 5, 1991, p. 7). According to then Foreign Minister Lee Sang Ok of South Korea, Moscow notified Seoul on the morning of April 11, 1991, of its decision to visit South Korea (*The Korea Herald*, April 11, 1991, p. 1, in *FBIS-EAS-91-070*, April 11, 1991). The two sides decided on Cheju Island off the southern coast of South Korea as the summit site partly to head off a harsh response from North Korea (*The Korea Herald*, April 19, 1991, p. 1, in *FBIS-EAS-91-076*, April 19, 1991, p. 34).

economy.<sup>27</sup> The two sides also promised to cooperate on the joint development of natural gas reserves on Sakhalin Island. South Korea announced that it would do its utmost to help the Soviet Union and North Korea join the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) group during the 3rd APEC ministers' meeting in Seoul scheduled for October.<sup>28</sup>

In return for economic cooperation, Roh sought Gorbachev's help in securing peace on the Korean peninsula. At the Cheju summit, Roh asked Gorbachev to make efforts to improve inter-Korean relations and stimulate a peace settlement in Korea. Roh's major concern was to secure Soviet support for South Korea's bid to join the UN and the Soviet cooperation for the resolution of North Korea's nuclear weapons development program. Gorbachev promised his support for Seoul's effort to join the UN and expressed his willingness to make efforts to resolve the North Korea nuclear problem.<sup>29</sup>

In doing so, Gorbachev clearly indicated that he was ready to act as mediator between the two Koreas. During the

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<sup>27</sup>*The New York Times*, April 21, 1991; *Chosun Ilbo* (New York Edition), April 22, 1991, p. 1.

<sup>28</sup>APEC, established in November 1989, had twelve members at that time. Each state is represented by its foreign or economic minister (Yonhap in English, April 22, 1991, in *FBIS-EAS-91-077*, April 22, 1991, p. 29).

<sup>29</sup>The statements of the two summits' spokesmen revealed the two sides' different emphases: Ignatenko, Gorbachev's spokesman, stressed the agreement to upgrade bilateral trade to \$10 billion by the mid-1990s whereas Lee Soojung, Roh's spokesman, almost neglected the economic aspect (Yonhap in English, April 20, 1991, in *FBIS-EAS-91-077*, April 22, 1991, pp. 28-29).

summit, the Soviets not only provided information to Seoul about the status of their assistance to North Korea, but also briefed Seoul on their consultations with China over the two Koreas' UN entry issue and North Korea's nuclear problem.<sup>30</sup>

During his visit to Japan, Gorbachev renewed his call for a new collective security system in Asia, but the Japanese did not give serious thought to it.<sup>31</sup> In regard to Gorbachev's proposal for a new security mechanism for the Asia Pacific region, Roh stated that it was essential for various outstanding international issues to be resolved, including a settlement of the Korean question, before its realization.<sup>32</sup>

At the Cheju summit, Gorbachev abruptly proposed to Roh a Treaty of Good Neighborhood, Partnership, and Cooperation between Seoul and Moscow in order to provide a broad legal and institutional framework for bilateral relations. Roh replied that the proposal was basically good and should be discussed between the foreign ministers of the two countries.<sup>33</sup> Commenting on Gorbachev's proposal for a

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<sup>30</sup>*Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 9, 1991, p. 15.

<sup>31</sup>*The Korea Herald* (supplement), April 19, 1991, p. 1, in *FBIS-EAS-91-076*, April 9, 1991, pp. 36-37.

<sup>32</sup>*Yonhap in English*, April 20, 1991, in *FBIS-EAS-91-077*, April 22, 1991, p. 29; *The Korea Times*, April 21, 1991, p. 2, in *FBIS-EAS-91-077*, April 21, 1991, pp. 25-26.

<sup>33</sup>South Korea hoped that the pact could be modeled after the treaty signed between West Germany and the Soviet Union shortly before German unification in 1990. The Bonn-Moscow treaty, called the Treaty of Good Neighborhood, Partnership, and Cooperation, also contains clauses on restraint of

Seoul-Moscow treaty, Foreign Minister Lee Sang Ok stated that Seoul would not sign it if it contained any clauses with military implications. Understandably, South Koreans were suspicious that the proposal might be intended to neutralize U.S. military influence in Korea.<sup>34</sup>

The two sides were groping with the possibility of military cooperation. The Seoul side, however, maintained a cautious attitude about this issue and preferred to maintain its current close military and security ties with Washington.<sup>35</sup> After the coup, high-level military officials of the two countries exchanged visits. Lt. Gen. Yong Yong-Il, chief of South Korea's National Defense Ministry Intelligence Directorate, visited the Soviet Union in October 1991 and met with Soviet Defense Minister Yevgeni Shaposhnikov. The next month, the commander of the Soviet Far Eastern Military District, Lt. Gen. Viktor Novozhilov,

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military force for other purposes than self-defense (Yonhap in English, April 24, 1991, in *FBIS-EAS-91-079*, April 23, 1991, p. 19).

<sup>34</sup>Yonhap in English, April 23, 1991, in *FBIS-EAS-91-078*, April 23, 1991, p. 25. On May 3, 1991, Oleg Sokolov, Soviet ambassador to Seoul, explained that the treaty proposed by Gorbachev was neither designed to be a military pact nor intended to cause any damage to existing political and security arrangements (Yonhap, May 3, 1991, in *FBIS-EAS-91-086*, May 3, 1991, p. 11).

<sup>35</sup>The Soviet government indicated in early 1991 through unofficial channels their intentions to sell not only the MiG-29 but also the MiG-31 aircraft to Seoul, with the revenues from the sales to be used to purchase Korean-made light industrial products (*Kukmin Ilbo*, April 4, 1991, p. 1, in *FBIS-EAS-91-067*, April 8, 1991, p. 38).

visited Seoul to participate in a joint seminar on Asia-Pacific security problems.<sup>36</sup>

#### B. The August Coup and Its Aftermath

The South Korean government initially reserved any comments on the coup in August 1991.<sup>37</sup> It issued a mild statement about the coup only a few hours before the coup's collapse.<sup>38</sup> Soviet presidential envoy Vadim Medvedev arrived in Seoul shortly after the coup attempt, conveyed Gorbachev's appreciation for South Korea's support during the coup, and asked South Korea to deliver its \$3 billion aid package as planned.<sup>39</sup> Clearly, the Soviet Union's primary concern now was the resumption of Seoul's economic aid that had been suspended during the coup.<sup>40</sup> Seoul resumed economic aid to Moscow after the coup, but

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<sup>36</sup>*The Korea Herald*, November 5, 1991, p. 3; Yonhap, November 6, 1991, in *FBIS-EAS-91-217*, November 8, 1991, p. 28.

<sup>37</sup>Yonhap, August 19, 1991, in *FBIS-EAS-91-161*, August 20, 1991, p. 31.

<sup>38</sup>The South Korean government in a statement expressed its hope that "the state of the affairs in the Soviet Union would be normalized as quickly as possible in a peaceful manner without violence or bloodshed" (*The Korea Times*, August 23, 1991, p. 2, in *FBIS-EAS-91-164*, August 23, 1991, p. 28).

<sup>39</sup>Yonhap, September 19, 1991, in *FBIS-EAS-91-182*, September 19, 1991, p. 26.

<sup>40</sup>In an interview with a South Korean newspaper in September 1991, Soviet Foreign Minister Pankin stated that what the Soviet Union wanted most from South Korea at that time was for Seoul to carry out its economic agreement with the Soviet Union as soon as possible (*Hanguk Ilbo*, September 26, 1991, p. 1, in *FBIS-EAS-91-188*, September 27, 1991, p. 21).

redirected part of its aid to the Soviet republics, many of which sent high-level officials to Seoul to plead for assistance.<sup>41</sup>

The trend toward decentralization of Soviet foreign policy became clear after the coup. The Soviet republics became more actively involved in dealings with South Korea. Byelorussian Prime Minister Vyacheslav Kebich arrived in Seoul in early September to discuss cooperative ties with South Korea. Byelorussia proposed signing a treaty with South Korea guaranteeing each other "most-favored condition" on economic and commercial cooperation and investment protection.<sup>42</sup> South Korean Foreign Minister Lee Sang-ok and his Ukrainian counterpart Anatoli Zlenko met at the UN on September 18, 1991, and agreed to promote bilateral economic cooperation.<sup>43</sup> Vladimir Lukin, chairman of the Foreign Policy Committee of the Russian Republic's parliament, paid a three-day visit to Seoul in November 1991. Through his special envoy Lukin, President Yeltsin of the Russian

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<sup>41</sup>Peggy L. Falkenheim, "Gorbachev and Post-Gorbachev Policy Toward the Korean Peninsula: The Impact of Changing Russian Perceptions," paper presented at the International Studies Association 33d Annual Convention, Atlanta, Georgia, April 1, 1992, p. 17.

<sup>42</sup>Byelorussia declared its independence from the Soviet Union on August 25, 1991 (Yonhap, September 9, 1991, in *FBIS-EAS-91-174*, p. 17).

<sup>43</sup>Yonhap, September 19, 1991, in *FBIS-EAS-91-182*, September 19, 1991, p. 26.

Federation requested South Korea's participation in a project to develop natural resources in Russia.<sup>44</sup>

When major Soviet republics declared their independence from the USSR in 1991, the South Korean government decided to promote bilateral relations with Soviet republics, including the Russian Federation and Ukraine, while maintaining existing relations with the Soviet Union.<sup>45</sup>

### **C. Expanded Trade and Economic Cooperation with Seoul**

After the institutional and legal basis for bilateral economic cooperation was laid down in December 1990 and Seoul's \$3 billion aid package to Moscow was finalized in January 1991, bilateral trade and economic cooperation picked up.

Economic transactions between the two countries were mostly in the form of trade; South Korea's investment in the Soviet Union was limited and increasing slowly. Bilateral trade in 1990 totaled \$889 million up from \$599 million in the previous year. In 1991, bilateral trade amounted to \$1.2 billion and Seoul recorded a \$48 million trade surplus

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<sup>44</sup>*The Korea Times*, November 17, 1991, p. 2, in *FBIS-EAS-91-222*, p. 16.

<sup>45</sup>*Yonhap*, December 3, 1991, in *FBIS-EAS-91-233*, p. 18.

with the Soviet Union.<sup>46</sup> By the mid-1990s, the annual trade was expected to reach some \$10 billion.<sup>47</sup>

South Korea's investment in the Soviet Union started in 1989, mostly in the services and electronic sectors and resource development. Initially, South Korean business firms were engaged in indirect investment through a third country, but beginning in 1990 indirect investment was replaced rapidly by direct investment. However, South Korean businessmen took a cautious attitude toward investment in the Soviet Union because of political instability and economic uncertainty.

In early 1991, South Korean businessmen, who were primarily interested in the development of Siberian resources, were investigating the feasibility of investing in the USSR on over 20 items, including Svetlaya forests, Yakutsk natural gas, and natural gas off the coast of Sakhalin. In early 1991, South Korean corporations were involved in two joint ventures with the Soviet Union--the Jindo Fur Corporation near Moscow, and Hyundai's forest development project in the maritime province.

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<sup>46</sup>Changjae Lee, *Hanru kyungchehyryuk'ui hyonhwangkwakwachae* [The Present Situation and the Tasks of Korea-Russia Economic Cooperation] (Seoul: Hanruch'insunhyup'uihoe, May 19, 1993), p. 3. In comparison, South Korea's trade deficit with China in 1991 was over \$2 billion (*Chosun Ilbo*, January 27, 1992, p. 1).

<sup>47</sup>*Far Eastern Economic Review*, February 7, 1991, p. 45; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, December 3, 1993, p. 16.

Hyundai, South Korea's largest business corporation, was the only South Korean company to show an interest in large-scale investment in the Soviet Union. The company concluded contracts on joint projects to develop forest, gas, and mineral resources in the Soviet Far East. In Summer 1991, it sent the first shipment of logs from its timber venture in Svetlaya to South Korea.<sup>48</sup> In July 1991, Hyundai began to construct a 12-story, 250-room office-hotel complex in Vladivostok.<sup>49</sup> It was also engaged in a large-scale project to build a gas pipeline to link South Korea with Sakhalin via North Korea. Possible targets of Hyundai's investment in the Soviet Union included a gas pipeline from Yakutsk in eastern Siberia to Seoul, fisheries projects, coal mining, ship repairs, consumer goods, and apartments construction.<sup>50</sup> In December 1990, other South Korean firms were involved in joint projects in the Soviet Union: Samsung announced a contract with the Soviets worth \$897 million to build several plants for the production of electronic equipment in the Soviet Union; Goldstar signed a contract to build a plant to produce color TV sets in the Soviet Union (worth \$250 million).<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>*Far Eastern Economic Review*, August 15, 1991, p. 40.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>50</sup>Mark Clifford, "Friends in Need," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, September 20, 1990, p. 88.

<sup>51</sup>TASS, December 4, 1990, in FBIS-SOV-90-234, December 5, 1990, pp. 8-9.

Cooperation was underway between Seoul and Moscow in the field of science and technology. Moscow offered to transfer over 100 items of advanced technology to South Korea and requested South Korea's participation in the conversion of the military industry into a consumer goods industry. Kim Chong In, Roh's senior secretary for economic affairs, revealed in an interview shortly after the Cheju summit that the level of technological cooperation between the two countries amounted to 48 projects.<sup>52</sup> In June 1991, South Korea and the Soviet Union agreed on the details of technology transfers, commercialization, scientific and technological cooperation, and exchanges of science and technology personnel. The science and technology ministers of the two countries agreed to start the transfer and commercialization of nine technologies of the 48 selected for joint research and commercialization.<sup>53</sup>

In the same month, the first direct sea route between the two countries opened, connecting Pusan with Vostochny. With the opening of the first direct sea route, transportation costs for bilateral trade cargo were greatly reduced and transportation was facilitated for tied-loan

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<sup>52</sup>*Chosun Ilbo*, April 22, 1991, p. 5, in *FBIS-EAS-91-078*, April 23, 1991, p. 26. In May 1991, Valeri Nazarov, President of the Soviet Chamber of Commerce and Industry, expressed Soviet willingness to transfer technology to produce fighter planes and helicopters to South Korea (*Yonhap*, May 1, 1991, in *FBIS-EAS-91-085*, May 2, 1991, p. 19).

<sup>53</sup>*Yonhap*, June 5, 1991, in *FBIS-EAS-91-108*, June 5, 1991, pp. 38-39.

commodities to the Soviet Union.<sup>54</sup> In September 1991, South Korea and the Soviet Union signed a fisheries agreement that allowed South Korean ships to operate in Soviet fishing zones and led to cooperation in fishing technology.<sup>55</sup>

South Korea's economic cooperation and trade with the Soviet Union were temporarily suspended during the August coup. Shortly after the coup attempt, the South Korean government decided to fulfill its pledge of \$3 billion economic aid to the Soviet Union as planned.<sup>56</sup> Political turmoil in the Soviet Union in the wake of the coup obstructed bilateral economic cooperation. Many of the Soviet Republics declared independence from the Soviet Union, and sought economic cooperation with the outside world separately from Moscow.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>*The Korean Times*, July 10, 1991, p. 9, in *FBIS-EAS-91-132*, July 10, 1991, p. 38.

<sup>55</sup>*Yonhap*, September 16, 1991, in *FBIS-EAS-91-179*, September 16, 1991, p. 30.

<sup>56</sup>By that time, Seoul had already sent \$500 million in cash loans to the Soviet Union. After the coup, Seoul decided to send the remaining \$500 million in cash loans by the end of September, and deliver \$800 million worth of consumer goods as scheduled (*Yonhap*, September 16, 1991, in *FBIS-EAS-91-179*, September 16, 1991, pp. 29-30). The aid was extended to the central government, but would be distributed and paid back by the Soviet Republics instead of Moscow (*Yonhap*, September 14, 1991, in *FBIS-EAS-91-179*, September 16, 1991, p. 30). However, delays in opening letters of credit and issuing payment guarantees on the Soviet side obstructed prompt implementation of South Korea's economic aid.

<sup>57</sup>Under the circumstances, South Korean trading companies were uncertain whether the Soviet Bank for Foreign Economic Affairs and the Export-Import Corporation would continue to be the major channel for external trade, and who could speak for the Soviet Union in economic negotiations in the absence of a strong central government (*Yonhap*, September 10, 1991, in *FBIS-EAS-91-175*, September 10, 1991, p. 29).

Faced with the imminent collapse of the Soviet Union, South Korea decided to seek contract and payment guarantees from individual Soviet Republics for the remaining economic aid that had been pledged to the Soviet Union. South Korea sought to receive new guarantees for its economic aid from whoever represented the old Soviet system. By December 1991, Seoul provided \$1 billion in cash loans and part of the \$800 million in tied loans to the Soviet Union. When the dissolution of the Soviet Union was clearly going to occur, the South Korean government decided to withhold exports to the Soviet Union.<sup>58</sup>

#### 4. Degeneration of Moscow-Pyongyang Relations

In late 1990-1991, the Kremlin was seeking to reestablish its relationship with Pyongyang. The prominent changes in bilateral relations included drastically reduced aid from Moscow to Pyongyang and reinterpretation of the bilateral military alliance treaty of 1961.

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<sup>58</sup>Yonhap, December 18, 1991, in *FBIS-EAS-91-243*, December 18, 1991, p. 15. On December 24, South Korea's Export-Import Bank resumed approval of tied loan exports to the eight republics of the former Soviet Union that confirmed that they would pay their debts to South Korea (Yonhap, December 24, 1991, *FBIS-EAS-91-247*, p. 19).

### A. Sharp Reductions in Moscow's Aid to Pyongyang

Soviet relations with Pyongyang during this period were based on national interests. After normalization between Seoul and Moscow, Soviet relations with North Korea continued to degenerate. To the Soviets, Pyongyang was no longer a military ally, but a normal neighboring state.<sup>59</sup> Moscow did not discard its ties with Pyongyang completely; it chose to maintain some ties with North Korea. The Soviets were still providing limited economic and military aid to the North Koreans in order to retain some political influence over the recalcitrant regime and to maintain military balance on the Korean peninsula. Nevertheless, the amount of Soviet aid to Pyongyang decreased drastically after 1990 as a result of Seoul-Moscow normalization and deteriorating economic conditions in the USSR.

The limited flow of aid into Pyongyang reflected the strained political relationship. Between Foreign Minister Shevardnadze's visit in early September 1990 and Russian President Yeltsin's special envoy Igor Rogachev's visit in January 1992, no high-ranking Soviet official went to North Korea. The lack of high-ranking personnel exchanges was a good indication of friction between the two countries.

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<sup>59</sup>Byung-joon Ahn, "Soviet-South Korean Relations," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 31, No. 9 (September 1991), p. 822.

Seoul-Moscow normalization and subsequent summits between Roh and Gorbachev brought sharp criticism from Pyongyang. At the inter-Korean prime ministerial talks held in Seoul in December 1990, North Korean Prime Minister Yon Hyong Muk denounced Roh's Moscow visit by calling it "flunkeyism to a bigger state" and "an extremely provocative act of seeking to force us to change our institutions on the strength of others."<sup>60</sup>

After the abortive coup in August 1991, Soviet-North Korean relations became further strained. When the coup was announced, North Korea clearly showed its support for the coup leaders by repeatedly broadcasting their statements in detail through the mass media. When the coup failed, North Korean Foreign Minister Kim Yong Nam proclaimed that the internal matters of the Soviet Union should be resolved by the Soviet people.<sup>61</sup> On August 22, Kim told the Soviet ambassador to Pyongyang: "It is our consistent stand to hope that everything will go well and be stabilized [in the USSR]."<sup>62</sup> That statement was obviously intended to dispel the impression of its support for coup leaders. In an attempt to belatedly please Moscow, Pyongyang reported on

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<sup>60</sup>*The Korea Times*, December 13, 1990.

<sup>61</sup>KCNA (Pyongyang), August 22, 1991, in *FBIS-EAS*, August 23, 1991, p. 15. In contrast, South Korea initially kept silence without issuing an outright condemnation of the coup (*The Korea Times*, August 23, 1991, p. 2).

<sup>62</sup>*Far Eastern Economic Review*, September 5, 1991, p. 11.

August 26 the dissolution of the CPSU and other events, promptly and in relative detail.<sup>63</sup>

Gorbachev appeared to have been displeased with the North's support for the coup. The Soviet Union withheld an invitation to the North Korean ambassador to a session of top envoys from 25 countries, including South Korea, on the failed coup. Furthermore, Radio Moscow did not mention North Korea's comments about the abortive coup when it reported similar comments by Asian countries, including South Korea and Japan.<sup>64</sup> After the abortive coup, the Soviet Union terminated its limited economic aid to Pyongyang.<sup>65</sup>

Economic ties with North Korea had been a drain on the Soviet economy. By April 1991, North Korea's debt to the Soviet Union amounted to \$4.6 billion and was rapidly growing.<sup>66</sup> In the past, Pyongyang could pay in its own currency (won) or get credit for imports. From January 1991 on, the Soviet Union demanded payment in hard currency in

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<sup>63</sup>*Dong-A Ilbo*, August 27, 1991, p. 2, in *FBIS-EAS*, November 5, 1991, pp. 15-16.

<sup>64</sup>*The Korea Times*, August 28, 1991, p. 1, in *FBIS-EAS-91-167*, August 28, 1991, p. 36.

<sup>65</sup>Vasily Mikheyev, "USSR-Korea: Economic Aspects of Relations," *Sino-Soviet Affairs* (Seoul), Vol. 13, No. 1 (Spring 1989), p. 74.

<sup>66</sup>The heavy debt partly resulted from North Korea's arms imports from the USSR. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, North Korea purchased an average of \$200 million worth of military hardware from the Soviet Union annually, but since the mid-1980s the amount increased to \$400 million with an accumulated total of more than \$3 billion for the decade (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 23, 1991, p. 17).

accordance with a trade agreement signed between the two countries in November 1990.

This seriously hurt North Korea's economy, as more than 50 percent of its total annual trade up to 1991 was with the USSR.<sup>67</sup> North Korea's trade with the Soviet Union dropped sharply in 1991 due to its lack of hard currency. Bilateral trade dropped sharply to 400 million rubles in 1991 from 1.34 billion rubles in 1990. Moscow and Pyongyang used to exchange some 100 types of goods. In 1991, North Korea supplied only three types of goods to Russia--magnesite, bricks, and textiles--and the Soviet Union supplied less than ten types of goods to North Korea, including oil, coal, and cars.<sup>68</sup>

As a result of the Soviet demand for hard currency for services and commodities, Soviet deliveries of oil products, cotton, and steel at friendly, bargain prices ended in January 1991.<sup>69</sup> The Soviet Union, however, continued to send North Korea oil, despite an earlier decision to sell it for hard currency. The Soviet Union initially promised to supply 300,000 tons of oil to North Korea for 1991, but

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<sup>67</sup>Sang-Woo Rhee, "North Korea in 1991," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (January 1992), p. 59.

<sup>68</sup>Nataliya Bazhanova, "Economic Cooperation Between North Korea and Russia has Virtually Ceased," *Kyunghyang Sinmun*, January 25, 1992, p. 4, in *FBIS-EAS-92-019*, pp. 41-42. See also *Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 10, 1991, p. 75; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 9, 1991, p. 15; *Chosun Ilbo*, December 1, 1990.

<sup>69</sup>Mark Clifford, "Caught in a Vice," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, November 29, 1990, p. 30.

actually provided 50,000 tons.<sup>70</sup> During the first half of 1991, the North's crude oil imports from the Soviet Union were 45,000 tons, compared with 440,000 tons in the same period of the previous year.<sup>71</sup>

Evidence of downgraded economic ties abound in other areas. In fishery talks in February 1991, the Soviet Union stripped North Korea of that year's quota of 200,000 tons. North Korea forfeited permission to take 200,000 tons of fish annually from Soviet waters free of charge by illegally reselling part of the quota to Japan. The forfeiture of the quota appeared to be a practical annulment of the core of the Moscow-Pyongyang fishing accord.<sup>72</sup> North Korea sent some 30,000 woodcutters to the Khabarovsk area of the Soviet Far East in a joint venture deal with the Soviet Union. The lumberjacks became a human rights issue in South Korea and Russia when *Moscow News* revealed torture and executions by North Korean security agents of the North Korean workers who had attempted to escape. The Soviets also blamed the North Korean woodcutters for illegally taking Soviet materials.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>Nataliya Bazhanova, "Economic Cooperation Between North Korea and Russia has Virtually Ceased," *Kyunghyang Sinmun*, January 25, 1992, p. 4.

<sup>71</sup>*The Korea Times*, October 19, 1991, p. 2, in *FBIS-EAS-91-204*, October 22, 1991, p. 22.

<sup>72</sup>*Yonhap*, September 9, 1991, in *FBIS-EAS-91-174*, September 9, 1991, pp. 20-21.

<sup>73</sup>*Korean Newsletter*, March 30, 1991; Sophie Quinn-Judge, "No Longer Welcome," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 4, 1991, p. 14; *Chosun Ilbo*, May 18, 1991, p. 1.

Joint manufacturing projects between the Soviet Union and North Korea were completely suspended because the Soviet Union did not have raw materials to supply to North Korea. The construction of a nuclear power station in North Korea did not materialize because North Korea failed to pay the Russian nuclear technicians. As of late 1991, only a few small-scale joint ventures between the Soviet Union and North Korea were in operation. At the end of 1991, economic cooperation between the Soviet Union and North Korea virtually ceased.<sup>74</sup> Increasingly, Kim Il Sung turned to China for assistance, but China was no substitute for the USSR as a source of aid.<sup>75</sup>

#### **B. A Reexamination of the Mutual Assistance Treaty Between Moscow and Pyongyang**

The 1961 Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance between Moscow and Pyongyang, which was aimed at South

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<sup>74</sup>These included an oriental medicine and medical counseling firm in Chita, Pyongyang Restaurant in Moscow, Moranbong Restaurant in Vladivostok, a maritime products storage plant in Nakhodka, and a fish processing plant in Gamhin (Nataliya Bazhanova, "Economic Cooperation Between North Korea and Russia has Virtually Ceased," *Kyunghyang Sinmun*, January 25, 1992, p. 4).

<sup>75</sup>When Prime Minister Yon Hyong-Muk visited Beijing in December 1990, China reportedly promised about \$300 million (mainly foodstuffs and oil). China sent about one million tons of oil to North Korea by the end of November 1991. When Kim Il Sung visited Beijing in October for additional aid, his request was not granted (*Vantage Point*, October 1991, pp. 17-19).

Korea, became anachronistic when Moscow established diplomatic relations with Seoul in September 1990. Therefore, a reexamination of the treaty was inevitable.

In January 1991, a Soviet military delegation led by First Deputy Defense Minister General Konstantin Kotechev visited Pyongyang. In an interview with Radio Moscow, Kotechev stated that military relations with North Korea should be reevaluated in view of the changing international environment and that the treaty of mutual assistance with Pyongyang should be administered in accordance with the national interests of the two countries.<sup>76</sup>

The Soviet Union and North Korea revealed different views on the treaty of mutual assistance. On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the treaty in July 1991, North Korea emphasized the fulfillment of its responsibilities as stipulated by the treaty, while the Soviet Union pointed out that the treaty was based on the existence of two states on the Korean peninsula. The Soviet side further stated that Korean unification should be achieved by peaceful means and through political negotiations.<sup>77</sup>

In late December, Russian Foreign Ministry official Valeri Ermolov stated that dissolution of the Soviet Union would inevitably lead to a review of the 1961 Treaty of

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<sup>76</sup>Joachim Glaubitz, "The Soviet Union and the Korean Peninsula," *Aussenpolitik* (Hamburg), Vol. 43, No. 1 (1992), p. 90.

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 90-91.

Friendship and Mutual Assistance with Pyongyang. He further stated that review of the pact should not mean the virtual collapse of their relationship "for such a development would only destroy the strategic security system on the Korean peninsula and in Northeast Asia." He believed that Article 1 of the treaty should be revised or eliminated since it stipulated automatic military assistance in time of war between the Soviet Union and another country, or between North Korea and any other country.<sup>78</sup>

While the treaty was reevaluated by the Soviets, Soviet-North Korean military cooperation continued in early 1991, but at a substantially reduced scale. The Soviet Union ceased joint military exercises with North Korea after 1989 and stopped supplying North Korea with offensive weapons after establishing diplomatic ties with Seoul in September 1990.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>Yonhap, December 24, 1991, in *FBIS-EAS-91-247*, December 24, 1991, p. 19.

<sup>79</sup>When South Korea decided to provide \$3 billion in economic aid to the Soviet Union, it asked the Soviet Union not to supply offensive weapons to North Korea (*Chungang Ilbo*, October 30, 1991, p. 1, in *FBIS-EAS-91-210*, October 30, 1991, p. 18). In an interview on November 6, 1991 in Seoul, Lt. Gen. Victor Novozhilov, commander of the Soviet Far East Military District, revealed that large-scale military exercises conducted by the Soviet Union and North Korea in the mid-1980s were partly aimed at producing a political effect. He further stated that, despite the discontinuation of the joint military exercises, the two countries continued to exchange military delegations, composed of six to ten people, to inspect each other's military activities and discuss theory (Seoul KBS-1 Television Network, November 6, 1991, in *FBIS-EAS-91-217*, p. 28).

In January 1991, North Korean and Soviet military chiefs signed an accord calling for strengthened military cooperation.<sup>80</sup> The Soviet Union repeatedly pronounced its intention to continuously sell defensive weapons to North Korea in order to maintain a military balance on the Korean peninsula.<sup>81</sup> It is believed that Soviet technicians were dispatched to North Korea to maintain Soviet-supplied MiG-23, MiG-29, and Su-25 jets. In early 1991, North Korea signed an agreement to produce the state-of-the-art MiG-29s under license from the USSR.<sup>82</sup>

In May 1991, a North Korean military delegation visited Moscow to discuss military cooperation with the Soviet Union. A few weeks later, the Soviets made a return visit to Pyongyang.<sup>83</sup> In early June, a Soviet naval delegation headed by Admiral Konstantin Makarov, First Deputy Commander-in-Chief and Chief of Staff of the Soviet Navy, visited Pyongyang.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>80</sup>*Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 23, 1991, p. 16.

<sup>81</sup>Yuri Vanyin at the Institute of Oriental Studies, the USSR Academy of Sciences, said that North Korea could depend on Soviet military aid for defensive weapons continuing at current levels (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, November 29, 1990, p. 34).

<sup>82</sup>*Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 23, 1991, p. 17.

<sup>83</sup>Joachim Glaubitz, "The Soviet Union and the Korean Peninsula," p. 90.

<sup>84</sup>Pyongyang KCNA, June 3, 1991, in *FBIS-EAS-91-106*, June 3, 1991, p. 26.

## 5. Diplomatic Efforts to Ensure Peace and Stability on the Korean Peninsula

Gorbachev's diplomatic efforts toward peace and stability on the Korean peninsula centered around two issues: the two Koreas' simultaneous entry into the UN and North Korea's nuclear weapons program. By playing a central role in both issues, Gorbachev sought to enhance the status and influence of the Soviet Union in Korea and Northeast Asia. In late 1990-1991, the Soviet Union still retained some leverage over the North Koreans because it was the only major power with diplomatic ties with both Koreas (until China established diplomatic relations with South Korea in early 1992) and North Korea badly needed Soviet economic and military aid.<sup>85</sup> The Soviet Union's influence over North Korea was necessary to Gorbachev's diplomatic maneuvering in regard to the Korean problem.

### **A. Admitting the Two Koreas to the UN**

In the past, the Kremlin had blindly supported North Korea's official policy toward Korean unification.

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<sup>85</sup>There were signs that North Koreans might be adopting a pragmatic policy toward the Soviet Union. Although Pyongyang publicly denounced Moscow for abandoning its former ally, North Korean diplomats in Moscow tried to maintain pragmatic relations with Moscow (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 9, 1991, p. 14).

Accordingly, the Soviet Union had long respected North Korea's objection to the two Koreas' simultaneous entry into the UN. The exchange of diplomatic ties between Seoul and Moscow in September 1990, however, made Soviet objections to South Korea's entry into the UN obsolete. The Soviet Union's recognition of South Korea as a member of the international community made it unlikely that it would veto South Korea's bid to join the international organization as a member of world community.

The UN entry issue was discussed between Roh and Gorbachev during the Cheju summit in December 1990. On this occasion, Gorbachev agreed to the simultaneous entry of the two Koreas into the UN based on its principle of universal membership.<sup>86</sup> Roh and Gorbachev agreed that if North Korea continued its objection to the simultaneous admission of the two Koreas into the UN, it would be necessary for the ROK to join the UN alone.<sup>87</sup>

Seoul had to acquire support from Beijing as well as Moscow for UN membership because as a permanent member of the UN Security Council it could veto Seoul's bid for entry. During the Cheju summit in April 1991, Roh asked Gorbachev to try to convince China not to obstruct Seoul's bid for UN entry. This discussion was to take place at the Sino-Soviet summit scheduled for the following month. Roh also

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<sup>86</sup>*Chosun Ilbo* (New York Edition), December 19, 1990, p. 22.

<sup>87</sup>Seoul KBS-1 Television Network in Korean, April 20, 1991, in *FBIS-EAS-91-077*, April 22, 1991, pp. 21-22.

requested an explicit statement of support for Seoul's admission to UN membership; Gorbachev responded by endorsing South Korea's campaign to gain membership in the United Nations.<sup>88</sup> Subsequently, Seoul and Pyongyang applied for UN membership as separate political entities and became members of the international organization in the fall of 1991. The two Koreas' simultaneous entry into the UN due to support and cooperation from the Soviet Union and China as well as other permanent members of the UN Security Council.

#### **B. North Korea and the Nuclear Issue: The Soviet Position**

Gorbachev did not want North Korea to become a nuclear power, but neither did he want nuclear weapons in South Korea. The Soviet Union under Gorbachev advocated a nuclear-free zone in the South Pacific, the Indian Ocean, East Asia, and the Korean peninsula to increase its political influence and prestige in the international community and to reduce the military threat from the U.S. in these areas.<sup>89</sup>

Pyongyang joined the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 1977 and signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation

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<sup>88</sup>*The New York Times*, April 21, 1991.

<sup>89</sup>The Soviet Union supported the Rarotonga Treaty to create a nuclear-free zone in the South Pacific. This treaty was signed by the 13 members of the South Pacific Forum on August 6, 1985. The Soviet Union demanded that the principle be applied to other parts of the world (Vsevolod Ovchinnikov, "Siloj Primera," *Pravda*, February 6, 1986).

Treaty (NPT) in December 1985. By doing so, the North pledged not to build or acquire any nuclear weapons.

Pyongyang received a 44-megawatt large nuclear reactor from the Soviet Union on the condition that it would observe the NPT regulations. Any state signing the NPT is required to sign a safeguards accord with the IAEA within 18 months.

After Seoul-Moscow relations improved and Pyongyang delayed signing the safeguards accord with the IAEA, the Soviet Union doubled its efforts to urge North Korea to renounce its nuclear weapons program. The North had initially developed its nuclear program with Soviet help and its nuclear program was heavily dependent on technology and nuclear materials from the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union stopped supplying nuclear fuels to the North in September 1990.<sup>90</sup> Thereafter, Pyongyang accelerated its nuclear program independently.<sup>91</sup>

Seoul and Moscow shared a common interest in preventing a nuclear-armed North Korea. The South Korean government repeatedly asked for the Kremlin's cooperation in attempts to abort Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program.<sup>92</sup> Gorbachev showed a keen interest in North Korea's nuclear weapons

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<sup>90</sup>Seoul *Shinmun*, July 11, 1991.

<sup>91</sup>For information on North Korea's nuclear weapons program, see Tae-Hwan Kwak and Seung-Ho Joo, "The Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula: Problems and Prospects," *Arms Control* (London), forthcoming.

<sup>92</sup>For example, Roh asked Gorbachev to stop supplying North Korea with plutonium and other nuclear materials during the Cheju summit in April 1991 (Yonhap in English, April 15, 1991, in *FBIS-EAS-91-072*, April 15, 1991, p. 19).

program. The Soviet Union used economic pressure to force North Korea to comply with IAEA inspection.<sup>93</sup> Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze expressed Soviet willingness to provide international guarantees of Korea's nuclear-free status.<sup>94</sup> Boris Pankin, who succeeded Shevardnadze as Soviet Foreign Minister, revealed on October 1, 1991 that his country had urged North Korea to sign the nuclear safeguards accord at an early date and stated that it would continue to urge Pyongyang to do so.<sup>95</sup>

## 6. Concluding Remarks

In late 1990-1991, Gorbachev's foreign policy was greatly circumscribed by domestic crises. His diplomatic efforts focused on securing economic aid and political

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<sup>93</sup>On the eve of the Cheju summit in April 1991, Gorbachev's spokesman Vitaly Ignatenko revealed that the Soviet government had warned North Korea that the Soviet Union would stop all kinds of supplies to and cooperation with the North unless the North allowed the IAEA inspection (Yonhap in English, April 18, 1991, in *FBIS-EAS-91-075*, April 18, 1991, p. 32).

<sup>94</sup>Eduard Shevardnadze, "The Dynamics of Positive Changes Are Geared to Destroying Confrontation," *Izvestiya*, October 3, 1990, p. 5, in *FBIS-SOV-90-192*, October 3, 1990, p. 21.

<sup>95</sup>*Chosun Ilbo* (New York edition), October 3, 1991, p. 31. Yielding to mounting international pressure, North Korea allowed the inspection of its nuclear facilities and materials by the International Atomic Energy Agency in May 1992. However, North Korea had yet to completely renounce its nuclear weapons program. It refused to dismantle the nuclear reprocessing plant at Yongbyon and opposed mutual inspection of nuclear facilities and military bases in North and South Korea.

support from foreign countries, including South Korea, which was necessary to allay the rapidly deteriorating socioeconomic conditions in the Soviet Union. Gorbachev's latitude of choice in foreign policy became more and more restricted as he became increasingly susceptible to mounting pressures from various domestic groups.

Despite the confusion and turmoil at home, Soviet policy toward Seoul remained stable. During this period, Soviet-South Korean relations finally came of age. Gorbachev's main concern during this period was the strengthening of economic cooperation and trade with Seoul to alleviate worsening domestic economic conditions.

The Kremlin sought a new relationship with Pyongyang on the base of national interests, discarding an alliance relationship. As a result, the Soviet Union's economic cooperation and military ties with Pyongyang shrank rapidly, and political tension and friction heightened between the two countries. The August coup accelerated this trend.

Gorbachev became actively involved in diplomatic efforts to resolve the Korean problem after the Soviet-South Korean normalization. In an effort to contribute to peace and stability on the Korean peninsula, the Soviet Union fully supported the two Koreas' separate entry into the UN. It also made serious efforts to resolve North Korea's nuclear weapons problem. The Soviet Union dissolved in

December 1991 before it could act fully as a mediator  
between Seoul and Pyongyang.

## CHAPTER 10

### CONCLUSION

The Cold War atmosphere and the continuing Sino-Soviet conflict in Northeast Asia during the pre-Gorbachev era largely directed the general trends and goals in Soviet foreign policy toward the Korean peninsula. Soviet foreign policy during this period was influenced greatly by its ideological affinity with and the geostrategic importance of Pyongyang. Since the North Korean regime had been established under the Soviet Union's auspices in 1948, the Soviets had been keenly interested in its survival and had sustained the fraternal party-to-party links between the CPSU and North Korea's Korean Workers' Party. North Korea was considered to be a revolutionary trophy that had to be defended in the name of world revolution.

Furthermore, the Soviets had long considered the survival and prosperity of Communist North Korea to be crucial in turning the Soviet-American strategic equation toward their favor in the worldwide Cold War confrontation with the U.S. The development of the Sino-Soviet conflict in the late 1950s further enhanced North Korea's strategic importance. Its geostrategic location between the USSR and

China made North Korea an important country that could not be lost to China.

Moscow had long supported North Korea's "one Korea" policy and refused to recognize Seoul as a legitimate political entity. In line with North Korea's official policy, the Soviet government had opposed South Korea's "cross recognition" formula and supported North Korea's position that "cross recognition" would perpetuate the present division of the Korean peninsula. Although Moscow began limited economic, cultural, and sports contacts with Seoul from the early 1970s on, it had strictly limited its relations with Seoul to the non-political, non-official level, insisting on separating politics from economics.

Gorbachev's foreign policy direction and behavior vis-a-vis the two Koreas moved from a pro-North Korean policy, which called for a sustained alliance relationship with Pyongyang and a limited non-official relationship with Seoul, to a new policy that demanded the establishment of official relations with Seoul to promote the Soviet Union's national interests. Gorbachev's foreign policy toward the Korean peninsula departed greatly from past policy.

This shift reflected changes in the Soviet Union's foreign policy goals and priorities, which in turn were affected by Gorbachev's "new political thinking." New political thinking called for a new relationship with the U.S. and other capitalist countries, including South Korea.

The ultimate goal of new political thinking was a peaceful and predictable international environment for the Soviet Union's domestic reform. Gorbachev's new policy toward the Korean peninsula unraveled in the broad context of the new political thinking.

Gorbachev's new political thinking on foreign and national security policy included the following: First, survival of mankind and prevention of a third world war takes precedence over the promotion of ideological interests; second, the idea of war as the midwife of revolution is too dangerous in the nuclear age because of the enormous destructive power of nuclear weapons; third, competition between Socialism and capitalism should be carried out peacefully; fourth, mutual cooperation and exchanges between Socialist and capitalist countries are required in an interdependent world; fifth, Soviet security policy should be based on the principle of sufficiency and a defensive military posture; and sixth, Soviet foreign policy toward the Third World should be shaped by "national interests" instead of ideological interests.

Gorbachev's new policy toward East Asia and the Korean peninsula was reflected in his statements in Vladivostok and Krasnoyarsk in 1986 and 1988, respectively. His East Asian initiatives called for the re-establishment of Soviet economic and security relations with East Asian countries based on balance of interests and mutual understanding. His

new economic policy in the region was aimed at overall economic development in the Soviet Far East and Siberia by integrating the Soviet economy into the structure of the rapidly developing Asia Pacific world. His security policy in the Asia Pacific region centered around his Asian collective security proposal. By returning to the idea of Brezhnev's Asian collective security system, Gorbachev sought to bring stability and predictability to international relations in Asia and to play a central role in determining the future shape of the region.

Gorbachev's new foreign policy served as the catalyst for international and regional systemic changes. The rapprochement between the Soviets and Americans, the normalization of Soviet-Chinese relations, and improvement in Soviet-Japanese relations eventually led to a new structure and process in the East Asian regional system. Sino-Soviet normalization had especially significant implications for Soviet relations with North and South Korea. In the wake of the normalization, North Korea's strategic value to Moscow became marginalized. At the same time, Seoul, with its economic prowess and vitality, became increasingly valuable to Gorbachev's reform efforts at home.

South Korea's nordpolitik (open door policy toward Socialist countries) also facilitated the establishment of diplomatic ties between Seoul and Moscow. South Korean President Roh Tae Woo sought to improve inter-Korean

relations and create a peaceful and stable international environment in Northeast Asia through nordpolitik. He utilized two types of foreign policy instruments to induce Moscow to accord diplomatic recognition to his country: economic interdependence and secret diplomacy. Economic interdependence between the two countries paved the road to increased political contacts, while Roh's secret diplomacy provided a political breakthrough that led to the early conclusion of diplomatic ties between Seoul and Moscow.

The newly emerging international environment and South Korea's nordpolitik provided favorable conditions for Gorbachev's new policy toward the Korean peninsula. More importantly, Soviet foreign policy behavior under Gorbachev was related closely to his power position and the group/factional conflict between the new thinkers and the conservative hard-liners.

Definitions of Soviet national interests and Soviet policy directions were determined by the type of philosophy that prevailed at the top--old political thinking or new political thinking. The old political thinking embraced the view that relations between the two opposing socioeconomic systems (capitalism and Socialism) were a zero-sum game; the two systems could not co-exist peacefully forever because of their incompatibilities. In contrast, the new political thinkers worked from the basis of the need to resolve conflicts through a balance of interests and compromises,

and assumed the priority of common human values. Consequently, this views reflected a de-ideologization of international relations.

Gorbachev's perestroika and new political thinking led to the polarization of the Soviet leadership into reformers and conservatives. The reformers consisted of Gorbachev, his inner circle, reform-minded academics, and intelligentsia, while the conservatives came primarily from the Soviet military-industry-party apparatus complex. The conservatives' material interests and ideological values were adversely affected by Gorbachev's reform policies, causing them to line up against Gorbachev and his policies. They resisted and obstructed Gorbachev's reform policies, including his new foreign policy, in order to protect their vested interests, interests that had long been nurtured under the old Soviet system.

The two philosophies had completely incompatible views of the two Koreas. The new approach viewed Soviet-Korean relations in the context of normalizing the situation in the region. A guarantee of peace and security and the reduction of conflict in the region were valued. The new political philosophy also emphasized the need to recognize existing realities. In Korea, such a reality was the existence of a powerful South Korea, which wielded substantial political influence in the Asia Pacific region.

Soviet foreign policy toward the Korean peninsula was closely linked to Gorbachev's power position and his new political thinking. In March 1985-early 1988, the Soviet leader consolidated his political power and delineated a new policy toward East Asia and the Korean peninsula. The Kremlin was groping to improve relations with Seoul while reinforcing its ties with Pyongyang. In this transitional period in Soviet foreign policy, the remnants of the Brezhnev period intermingled with elements of the new thinking in Soviet foreign policy behavior. Soviet foreign policy during this period was a residual continuation of Brezhnev's policy; it was directed toward increased security ties with Pyongyang and limited non-official ties with Seoul.

Gorbachev was fully aware that the conservatives (military-industrial-party apparatus complex) were a threat to his political power and reform policy and that he did not have the political clout to push through a new foreign policy. In the face of formidable resistance and obstruction from the conservatives, Gorbachev sometimes forged compromises with adversaries, and sometimes built a coalition in support of his reform policy. When Gorbachev's power and authority became limited within the Soviet leadership, he had to compromise with his opponents while waiting for an opportune moment to further the new foreign policy. From this perspective, Gorbachev's new policy

toward the Korean peninsula was a function of the delicate balance between the need to survive as a politician and the need to implement new political thinking.

The Soviet leader succeeded in isolating the conservatives' influence in foreign policy by replacing the holdovers from the Brezhnev era with his allies and followers and by radically restructuring the Soviet foreign policy-making process. As a result, Gorbachev successfully consolidated his power by late 1988. Thereafter, he was able to implement the new policy without being challenged by the conservative hard-liners. Between the summer of 1988 and the summer of 1990, a new foreign policy began to be implemented that was in line with the new political thinking. Gorbachev's foreign policy direction toward Northeast Asia and the two Koreas changed during this period as well.

However, Moscow was cautious in implementing the new foreign policy toward Seoul; it moved one step at a time toward establishing formal political relations with Seoul. First, the Kremlin exchanged trade offices with South Korea in December 1988 shortly after the Seoul Olympics, resulting in formal economic ties between the two countries. Second, it established informal political relations with Seoul by inviting South Korea's prominent opposition leader Kim Young Sam to Moscow and later exchanging consular departments with

Seoul in 1989. Finally, the Soviet Union exchanged diplomatic recognition with Seoul in September 1990.

Soviet-North Korean relations deteriorated steadily during this period. The Kremlin tried to avoid completely alienating Pyongyang by continuing its consultations with North Korean leaders in regard to policies toward Seoul and by maintaining its leverage over the recalcitrant regime through military and economic assistance.

The Soviet Union's cautious approach to Seoul-Moscow normalization during this period is due to two factors. Initially, the opposition from the conservative hard-liners within the Soviet leadership and the vehement protests from North Korea deterred an early normalization of relations with Seoul. After Gorbachev became the first President of the USSR in early 1990, neither consideration was central to Soviet policy toward Seoul. From then on, the Kremlin sought to elicit economic assistance from Seoul through diplomatic negotiations; the negotiating process delayed Seoul-Moscow normalization.

From 1990 on, the domestic crisis in the Soviet Union that stemmed from deteriorating economic conditions and political de-centralization became Gorbachev's major concern. In the midst of this domestic turmoil and confusion, Gorbachev's influence eroded rapidly, despite his position as Soviet President. His foreign policy was increasingly overtaken by events at home and abroad, and new

political thinking became obsolete as a guide for Soviet foreign policy. Soviet foreign policy was adrift.

After Seoul-Moscow normalization, the new policy toward Seoul continued via momentum. Moscow's ties with Seoul improved rapidly while Moscow's relationship with Pyongyang became increasingly tenuous. Gorbachev's immediate goal was to facilitate South Korea's economic assistance, thereby alleviating the Soviet Union's domestic crisis. Nevertheless, the political uncertainty and economic chaos in the Soviet Union slowed Seoul-Moscow economic cooperation and trade.

During this period, the Soviet leader assumed the role of mediator between the two Koreas and attempted to resolve the Korean problem. He took on this role to enhance the Soviet Union's influence and status in Northeast Asia. With Soviet help, both South and North Korea became members of the UN in 1991. The Kremlin also made serious efforts, in close consultation with Seoul, to dissuade North Korea from developing its own nuclear weapons.

The complete severance of party-to-party ties between Moscow and Pyongyang during this period, which stemmed from CPSU's fall from power as well as Seoul-Moscow normalization, transformed the Moscow-Pyongyang relationship from an alliance to a normal state-to-state relationship. Moscow reassessed its mutual alliance treaty with Pyongyang in order to re-establish its relations with the country on

pragmatic grounds. During this period, Moscow's relations with Pyongyang degenerated rapidly. The August coup and the subsequent dissolution of the USSR further weakened the ties between Moscow and Pyongyang.

This examination of Gorbachev's foreign policy toward the two Koreas largely confirms the proposition that domestic needs and group/factional conflict within the Soviet leadership were key to explaining Soviet foreign policy behavior. A sense of imminent crisis deriving from economic malfunctions and social decay in the Soviet Union prompted Gorbachev to initiate perestroika and the new political thinking. Under Gorbachev, foreign policy served largely as an instrument for domestic reform efforts. As the domestic crisis deepened after 1990, the salience of domestic factors in Soviet foreign policy behavior became even more obvious as Gorbachev pursued economic diplomacy vis-a-vis Seoul.

The implementation of the new Soviet policy, particularly toward the two Koreas, was related closely to Gorbachev's power position and group/factional conflict between reformers and conservatives. Gorbachev's foreign policy toward the two Koreas often seemed to be contradictory and inconsistent. Incompatible views and interests between reformers and conservatives within the Soviet leadership and their relative power position were largely responsible for this perception. The Soviet

decision to establish formal diplomatic ties with Seoul was made after Gorbachev firmly established himself as the Soviet leader. Therefore, it can be argued that Gorbachev's power consolidation was necessary to the improvement of Seoul-Moscow relations.

Even after Gorbachev and his reformist followers dominated the Soviet leadership, the end result of Soviet foreign policy was not always what they had originally intended. The new political thinking drew power of differing intensities to various levels of the Soviet foreign policy-making process. Conservative mid-level bureaucrats in state and party structures often arbitrarily reinterpreted the meaning of policies decided at the top level so as to obstruct the implementation of the new political thinking. The mid-level bureaucrats in the Soviet Foreign Ministry resisted and obstructed early efforts to normalize relations between Seoul and Moscow.

The new political thinking's role in Soviet foreign policy fluctuated. It initially set new directions and goals for Soviet foreign policy and led to revolutionary changes in Soviet foreign relations, including normalization between Moscow and Seoul. As events unraveled rapidly in the Soviet Union, the new political thinking became obsolete and was no longer able to guide Soviet foreign policy.

In retrospect, Gorbachev's "New Political Thinking" was initially formulated within the context of being the most

up-to-date version of Leninist ideology. It emerged, first, as a transition from Leninist ideological epistemology to more traditional modes of cognitive analysis, and second, as a bridge between the Soviet past and the post-Soviet future. Once the USSR collapsed into its component parts, the last tie with the Leninist legacy was sundered and the "New Political Thinking" automatically lost its reason for existence and evaporated. Nobody talks about the "New Political Thinking" in the former Soviet Union any longer, now that thinking in the Soviet Union is no longer constrained by an official ideology.

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