



## Communist Policy and Tactics 1968 – 2, 3. hluti

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COMMUNIST POLICY AND TACTICS

NOVEMBER, 1968

SUMMARY

SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY

This has continued on both hard and soft lines. The Russians are working to improve military, political and economic co-ordination among Warsaw Pact countries. They reacted strongly to the N.A.T.O. Ministerial Meeting, asserting particularly their right to a presence in the Mediterranean. Their propaganda treatment of N.A.T.O. countries has been selective. They have made some efforts to appear conciliatory. Apart from the propaganda motive they may genuinely want limited settlements in certain areas, e.g. the limitation of strategic arms and the Middle East.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The Central Committee Meeting of 14 to 16 November to some extent bowed to Soviet pressure but the personnel changes announced afterwards cannot give the Russians much satisfaction. There have been protests against the Central Committee's proceedings in Czechoslovakia but the concessions to the Soviet Union have not yet become a landslide. At present the Russians seem prepared to bide their time.

THE FIFTH POLISH PARTY CONGRESS

The 1971 to 1975 Five Year Plan seems intended to continue the present growth rates. Gomulka supported closer integration within the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (C.M.E.A.), and emphasised Poland's links with the Soviet Union. The elections to the leading party bodies strengthened Gomulka's position. Moczar failed to gain promotion to full membership of the Politburo; the succession seems less of an immediate question.

RUMANIA

The danger of invasion by the Soviet Union has receded but the Russians will keep up their pressure on the Rumanians to conform. The Rumanians may have to accept Warsaw Pact manoeuvres in Rumania but will certainly try to limit their scope. They are not giving way on their basic principles.

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

The agreement to hold the International Communist Conference in May 1969 is a moderate success for the Russians but relations with other Communist Parties remain very strained. Disagreements are likely to emerge more clearly as the preparations for the Conference continue.

CHINA - INTERNAL

Cautious work to reconstruct the Communist Party continues. Criticism of Liu Shao-ch'i has increased. Efforts are being made to improve industrial production but a full scale "leap forward" appears unlikely. The leaders seem to be reexamining the organisational structure in the countryside.

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THE FIFTH POLISH PARTY CONGRESS

The main target of all speakers at the Congress was "revisionism", which is blamed for Poland's own difficulties especially with the students and also for events in Czechoslovakia. Zionism, which during the year has often been bracketed with revisionism, was not a principal theme.

On the economic side, Gomulka reviewed the development of the economy since the previous Congress and gave a brief outline of the next Five Year Plan, 1971-1975. The rates of growth planned for national income and gross industrial output are not very different from those of the present 1966-1970 plan which are generally being achieved and which are quite high. Gomulka referred to the serious underlying economic problems, such as the slow improvement in economic efficiency and effectiveness of investment, and the disproportionate rise in the production of capital goods as compared to consumer goods. He devoted relatively little time to the economic reforms but made it clear that they are to continue and that some change is envisaged in the pricing system. It may be significant that the leading economist Pajestka, whose name is associated with economic reform in Poland, is a member of the new Party Central Committee.

On economic cooperation, Gomulka followed what seems to be the current Bloc line of stressing the importance of closer integration within the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) to be achieved mainly through increased production specialisation. New forms of cooperation within CMEA were also hinted at by other speakers, including Ulbricht. On foreign trade Gomulka had little new to add. He emphasised that a rapid increase in exports - needed to pay for the growing amount of vital imports - called for continued modernization and reconstruction of industries geared primarily to export production. Wider application of the profitability factor to exports, particularly those to the hard currency areas, was also urged.

Gomulka announced that Poland was linked with the Soviet Union for good and ill, and in return received strong support from the Soviet Delegation led by Brezhnev. The elections to the leading party bodies strengthened Gomulka's position. More than one-third of the old Central Committee members failed to be re-elected. Apart from those dropped on grounds of health or age a number failed to be re-elected because they were Jews, were considered to be revisionists, or because their children had been involved in student disturbances. Party and manual workers from the provinces gained much stronger representation at the expense of the Central Party apparatus and the machinery of Government, but at the top the number of links between the Politburo and Secretariat was increased. The position of Gomulka's close associates remains unchanged. The promotion to the Politburo of three men who have skipped the stage of deputy membership emphasised the importance of Moczar's failure to gain promotion to full membership. The inclusion in the Politburo of the First Secretaries from Gdansk and Rzeszow means that Gierk's position is no longer unique. To this extent uncertainty regarding the eventual succession has been increased, but this does not seem to be an immediate question. Gomulka is in charge, and the increased energy which the new members of the Politburo, the Secretariat and Central Committee may bring to the conduct of affairs is likely to be limited to those fields which Gomulka prescribes.

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RUMANIA

In the third week of November there were indications of some kind of Warsaw Pact military activity involving a possible threat to Rumania. The information was patchy but could have been consistent with an intention to hold manoeuvres on the Rumanian frontiers.

No invasion took place, and none now seems likely in the near future, although the Russians may be expected to keep up their pressure on the Rumanians to conform. Nor have manoeuvres been held. Instead a meeting was held in Bucharest from 26-29 November of military representatives of all Warsaw Pact countries, including Rumania. This meeting could well have discussed, among other things, a proposal that Warsaw Pact manoeuvres be held on Rumanian territory next year. The Rumanians have recently been behaving towards the Soviet Union in a more conciliatory way than immediately after the invasion of Czechoslovakia, and the holding of the meeting in Bucharest was itself an indication of this. The Rumanians, with Czechoslovakia in mind, will probably have tried to avoid, or at least to delay as long as possible, the holding of manoeuvres in Rumania. If, as seems likely, they cannot avoid this next year, they may try to ensure that manoeuvres are only held under clearly defined conditions so as to minimise the political repercussions.

Certainly the Rumanians are not giving way on their basic principles. In a speech on 29 November President Ceausescu rejected the concept of limited sovereignty for communist countries, clearly answering criticisms of nationalism recently made in the Soviet, Polish and Hungarian press.

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THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

Representatives of 67 Communist Parties meeting in Budapest on 18-21 November agreed that the long-projected world conference of Communist Parties, which should have met on 25 November but had been postponed because of disunity over the invasion of Czechoslovakia, would now be held in Moscow in May, 1969. The exact date is to be fixed at a further preparatory meeting, in Moscow, on 17 March 1969. The project has thus for the moment been rescued, but with a six month delay - a fairly successful salvage operation, considering the reservations and doubts about the conference which had grown up after the invasion, especially in the West European Communist Parties.

Agreement on holding the conference does not by any means signify that relations between Moscow and the rest of the Communist world have been restored to their pre-invasion condition. The extent to which they have suffered was indicated at the Polish Party Congress in Warsaw (11-16 November). Both Gomulka and Brezhnev, who led the Soviet delegation to the Congress, admitted that it would be a lengthy task to overcome the present differences within the Communist movement, but urged that the best way to go about this would be by "open discussion". They made their position in such a "discussion" clear by bitter attacks on "revisionist", "petit bourgeois" and especially "right-wing-opportunist" influences within the movement. Indeed Brezhnev appeared to throw some doubt on the desirability of "united front" tactics by Communists, in warning strongly against the importation of views and ideas "different from the proletarian ideology".

Gomulka implied that if the West European Parties persisted in their criticism of the invasion they would be the ones to suffer. He said that they "cannot demand" that Parties in power (i.e. the CPSU and its allies) "adapt their political line to the policy pursued by the Communist Parties in Western countries at a given moment." Parties which criticized the invasion, he went on, "weaken the position of their own Party and of the entire Communist movement", whereas, he pointedly claimed, "the workers" in the West "rightly oppose these attacks on the Soviet Union and other countries of our camp, irrespective of by whom and from what positions these attacks are made."

The French Party was stung into replying that it "never dreamed of demanding that the Polish United Workers Party or any other should rally to its position. On the other hand, no-one can oblige our Party to subscribe to a military intervention decided upon without us having in any way been consulted, an intervention the consequences of which are prejudicial to the international Communist movement and which contravene its principles". The British Party, whose delegate at the Polish Congress refused to deliver his speech when asked to withdraw passages in it dealing with Czechoslovakia, issued a similar sharp reply. The Italian Party was offended by a Tass report of the Congress suggesting that its delegate was among those who had expressed approval of the invasion, and issued a prompt denial. This underlined the fact that, in talks between the Soviet and Italian parties from 13-15 November, agreement was clearly not reached on Czechoslovakia.

Thus the Western Communist Parties have come only part of the way in rallying to the CPSU. They have shown their reluctance to avoid complete disagreement but the basic differences remain and are likely to emerge more clearly as the preparations for the Conference develop. The Russians still appear to accept that the Conference should concentrate on "the struggle against imperialism", but a Pravda editorial on 25 November maintained that a prime duty of all communists was the protection of the integrity of the "socialist community". Other Communist Parties probably thus suspect that the Russians will still try to use the Conference to emphasise the need for greater conformity with Soviet wishes.

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CHINA - INTERNAL

Congresses of Party members who belong to Revolutionary Committees were held in several provinces. These meetings seem to mark the beginning of a further stage in the process of rebuilding the party organisation and preparing for the ninth national Party Congress. However, warnings voiced in several provinces against any tendency to "restore the old" suggest that the officials concerned in the work of rebuilding the Party and consolidating Revolutionary Committees are still under instructions to proceed with great caution.

In response to the Communiqué of the 12th Party Plenum, published at the beginning of the month, the press increased its campaign of criticism against Liu Shao-ch'i, now openly named. A new theme, introduced on 25 November with the re-issue of a Report delivered by Mao in March 1949, was that of mass political education drawing on the lessons of the past. A People's Daily Red Flag-Liberation Army Daily editorial declared that study of Mao's 1949 Report is relevant to current tasks. It appears that the leaders plan a programme of study based on Mao's past statements in order to promote greater allegiance to Mao's ideals and policies, as contrasted with the opposing views attributed to Liu Shao-ch'i.

Despite recent references to a new "leap forward" in the economy, there has been no suggestion of releasing mass initiative and setting ambitious targets in the same way as in 1958. In order to illustrate the "leap" now under way, the Chinese press has usually cited examples of technical reform and production increases of limited scope. The Chinese are certainly making an all-out effort to improve industrial production by the end of the year but have to overcome widespread apathy. They are also experiencing considerable difficulty in procuring State quotas of grain.

Meanwhile, some recent reports have clearly reflected the authorities' desire to tighten up discipline in the rural communes. However, there has so far been no evidence of a nation-wide policy of eliminating private plots of land, although it appears that these have been abolished in some areas, possibly due to overzealousness on the part of local cadres. There are signs that the leaders are re-examining the organisational structure in the countryside, particularly the place occupied in the system by the production brigade (the level immediately below the commune). In accordance with a recent instruction by Mao, it has already been decided that production brigades should administer primary education in the countryside; an article in the People's Daily of 14 November suggested, in addition, that each brigade should have its own Party and Government organs.

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SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY

Soviet policy has continued to combine the hard with the soft sell. The consolidation of their position in Eastern Europe remains the Russians' central preoccupation. This was evident in a speech by Politburo member Mazurov on 6 November and in Brezhnev's address to the Polish Party Congress on 12 November. Brezhnev gave the most authoritative enunciation yet of the thesis of the inviolability of the socialist community. Although stressing that military intervention was an exceptional measure, he left no doubt that in similar circumstances to the Czechoslovak situation the Russians would be ready to do it again.

There have been a number of indications that the Russians are working on plans to improve military, political and economic coordination between the Warsaw Pact countries. Mazurov spoke of the need for improvement "of forms of political cooperation and for the coordination of our foreign policies". On the economic side statements by Polish officials stressed the need for economic 'integration'. These ideas were probably discussed at the meeting in Moscow of the Executive of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (C.M.E.A.) but no details are available. Some recent Soviet statements have stressed the need for "socialist division of labour" and national "industrial specialisation". If they are pressing their rigid interpretation of ideas of this sort, they are likely to run into difficulties with some of the East European governments, particularly the Rumanians. Nevertheless, a reference by the Rumanian President on 29 November to Rumania's participation in the forthcoming summit meeting of the C.M.E.A., suggests that some kind of agreement may be possible. (This meeting has been much delayed and no firm dates for it have yet been announced).

Plans for improved military cooperation are also clearly under discussion. In this field, the Rumanians, although still cautious, are probably being more cooperative. The annual meeting of military representatives of the Warsaw Pact, under the chairmanship of Marshal Yakubovsky, was held in Bucharest from 26-29 November. Another Warsaw Pact meeting is planned for the near future. This may be a conference of the Political Consultative Committee, which normally meets at the highest level.

Soviet concern with Eastern Europe was reflected in their response to the NATO Ministerial Meeting in Brussels. The warning to the Soviet Union against further aggression and the concrete action taken to strengthen NATO defences obviously bothered the Russians. They have put out a considerable volume of propaganda attacking NATO and alleging the existence of a Western "threat". Their reaction to allied measures in the Mediterranean was particularly strong. A number of articles in the Soviet Press have reiterated the Soviet right to a presence in the Mediterranean, using as justification the novel concept that as a Black Sea power they are thus a Mediterranean power. In general, while asserting that their motives are defensive, the Russians have made much of the development of Soviet power in its national interest.

The Russians have used both the carrot and the stick in their efforts to weaken Western solidarity. Their propaganda treatment of NATO countries has been selective. They have for instance largely ignored the strong French criticism of the invasion of Czechoslovakia, while continuing regular and violent attacks on Britain. Towards Germany, their attitude has been rather more than usually ambivalent. Anti-German propaganda has continued, for instance in the context of the international monetary crisis. On the other hand some Soviet public statements, for instance the press conference given by Mr. Gromyko in Budapest on 18 November, have adopted a milder tone, implying a Soviet readiness to respond to any move by "reasonable" elements in the Federal Republic.

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The Russians are actively trying to promote "normal" relations with all countries. This was apparent in Gromyko's press conference and also in the Tass statement commenting on the NATO ministerial meeting. Although the Tass statement contained an ill-defined threat of Soviet action to meet NATO measures, it also referred to the Soviet wish for détente (using this word itself, which is rare in Soviet statements) in Europe and elsewhere and described Soviet policy as aimed at the discussion of problems round a table.

The initiatives which the Russians have taken towards several countries, and especially towards the United States, could be intended merely to bury the invasion of Czechoslovakia as conveniently as possible. It seems probable however that they may also genuinely want limited settlements in certain areas, which would enable them to carry on with their own consolidation more efficiently. In some cases it is directly in their interests to reach agreement with the United States and other major powers. The limitation and possible reduction of strategic missiles is one such subject. The reiteration by the Soviet delegate, Mr. Malik, in the United Nations, of Soviet readiness to engage in talks on this subject suggests that there is some pressure within the Soviet Union for an agreement on major weapons systems which would allow for substantial economies in defence expenditure. The Soviet Prime Minister took a similar line in an interview in Moscow with two U.S. Senators. (The acquiescent attitude which the Soviet Union has adopted towards the latest American moves to reach a settlement in Vietnam also goes to suggest that the Russians want to create as propitious an atmosphere as they can for serious discussions with the new U.S. Administration next year).

The Middle East is among other questions on which the Russians wish to appear cooperative. Although they remain heavily committed towards the Arab cause, they have recently shown themselves more favourably inclined towards the achievement of at least a partial settlement and towards assisting Doctor Jarring in his mission. At the same time, the Russians show no inclination to let up on their efforts to spread their influence in the Middle East and the Mediterranean area, by any means which do not increase the risk of confrontation with the West.

The conciliatory side of current Soviet policy is somewhat diminished by continuing emphasis on the need for an ideological struggle against imperialism and on the importance of preserving the purity of Soviet-style communism. The Russians are thus speaking, as they often do, with more than one voice.



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CZECHOSLOVAKIA

During November the Czechoslovak leadership has moved some way towards conciliation of the Russians. The non-Soviet invading troops and a large part of the Soviet force have left Czechoslovakia; by the middle of December only those Soviet troops whose presence is covered by the Soviet-Czechoslovak agreement should remain. A "central group of Soviet forces" has been established in Czechoslovakia under a Soviet Lieutenant-General.

The main event of the month was the Central Committee meeting on 14-16 November. The Central Committee bowed to Soviet pressure in postponing at least until 1969 the holding of a Constituent Congress for a new Czech Party as a counterpart in the Czech lands to the Slovak Party, but the bureau which it has meanwhile set up for the Czech lands contains no known pro-Soviet members and a number of known progressives. The Central Committee postponed detailed consideration of the difficult and important economic questions until December; on political questions it made a strong plea for unity in support of a policy resolution which avoided extremism of both left and right. As a whole, it leaned in the direction of calling for discipline from the progressives and of reassuring the Russians about the principles on which the Party will work in pursuing the objectives of the post-Novotny policy. This was in line with measures already adopted for tightening control of the press and limiting freedom of travel. At the same time the policy resolution referred favourably to the April Action Programme, the rehabilitation of those unjustly treated in the past and the continuation of economic reform.

The personnel changes announced after the meeting cannot have given the Russians much satisfaction. A new inner Cabinet of eight has been set up within the existing Praesidium and includes all the quadrumvirate (Dubcek, Svoboda, Cernik and Smrkovsky) on whose unity over fundamentals the chances of preserving anything of the post-January policies depends. Among the remaining four there are neither extreme progressives nor committed Moscow men. This seems to represent a consolidation of the centre of the Party as against the extreme right and left. The position of Strougal, the Deputy Premier who has now been appointed to the Praesidium, the Secretariat, and the Chairmanship of the Bureau for the Czech lands, has been much enhanced. He was Novotny's Minister of Interior, but there is no hard evidence to suggest he now enjoys Moscow's special confidence.

The sharp reduction in freedom of all kinds, the virtual ending of the democratisation process and the tightening of Party discipline in accordance with Moscow's wishes has been a grievous disappointment to many; to the students whose strikes and sit-ins during the Central Committee meeting must have come very close to provoking serious trouble, to the press, radio and television employees who have protested vigorously against the curtailment of their freedom and who have been heard with sympathy by Party leaders; and to the reforming wing of the Party itself, one of whose representatives was reported by Prague radio as calling the Central Committee resolution "a compromise which represents the border-line of what is tolerable".

Disappointing though these set-backs are, the downward drift towards concessions to the Russians has not yet become a landslide. Dubcek and the Party leaders themselves opposed from the start those who wanted to transform Czechoslovakian Communism into something like social democracy.

Will the Russians rest content with this? They have secured two of their immediate objectives: the indefinite presence of Soviet troops and public recognition by the Czechoslovak leadership that the mass media must be brought under strict Party control. For them too the survival of the quadrumvirate must still represent a danger that full control may elude them; but as things are at

present, an alternative government could only be imposed by force. The few Czechs and Slovaks who have publicly sided with the Russians have forfeited the respect of their countrymen. The Russians have probably not given up their aim of eventually engineering a change in the Czechoslovak leadership. But at present they seem prepared to wait on events, in the expectation that gradual erosion of the Czechoslovak experiment will continue and that they will achieve their longer term objectives with patience.

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Chronology

November

- 2 Appeal by North Vietnamese President Ho Chi Minh following U.S. bombing halt.
- 2-19 Cuban Minister of Foreign Trade visits Moscow.
- 2-6 Rumanian Prime Minister visits Iran.
- 3 Soviet Government statement on bombing halt in Viet-Nam.
- 3 Chinese "Peoples Daily" publishes without comment full text of President Johnson's statement about the bombing halt and of the North Vietnamese statement.
- 3-6 French Communist Party delegation visits Moscow for talks with CPSU.
- 4 Article in "Pravda" criticises developments in Czechoslovakia.
- 4 Madam Binh arrives in Paris to lead Liberation Front delegation.
- 5 Albanian "Zeri Popullit" attacks Yugoslavia.
- 5-12 Afghan Prime Minister visits Soviet Union.
- 6 Speech by Politburo Member Mazurov at meeting on eve of October Revolution Anniversary.
- 7 Soviet National Day.
- 7 "Tass" statement on Middle East.
- 7 Pro - and anti-Soviet demonstrations in Prague.
- 7 Sino-Pakistani Exchange of Letters on border trade.
- 7-11 Niculescu-Mizil, Secretary of Rumanian Communist Party, visits Hungary.
- 8 Statement by Czechoslovak Ministry of Interior on disturbances on 6 and 7 November.
- 8 Suspension announced of Czechoslovak periodical "Reporter".
- 8-17 Pakistani military delegation visits China.
- 10 Further attacks in Prague on pro-Soviet demonstrators.
- 10 Soviet Government resumes direct supervision of sports.
- 6 Soviet circumlunar rocket "Zond VI" launched (lands 18 November).
- 11 Kosygin receives McNamara, President of World Bank.

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November

- 11 Czechoslovak Prime Minister Cernick warns against demonstrations by Czechoslovak youth.
- 11-15 Fifth Congress of Polish United Workers Party. Speeches by Gomulka on 11 and 15 November and by Brezhnev on 12 November).
- 11-13 Meeting of World Council of Peace Presidential Committee.
- 12 In United Nations Soviet Representative Malik repeats Soviet interest in talks on arms limitation.
- 13 Czechoslovak weekly "Politika" suspended.
- 13-15 Talks between Communist Parties of Italy and CPSU.
- 14 President Ceausescu addresses Rumanian artillerymen.
- 14-16 Plenary Meeting of Central Committee of Czechoslovak Communist Party. (report by Dubcek on 14 November).
- 14-18 Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko visits Hungary.
- 16 "Tass" statement denies Soviet intention to establish base at Mers-el-Kebir in Algeria.
- 18 Press conference by Soviet Foreign Minister in Budapest.
- 18 Indonesian News Agency reports 1,425 members of Indonesian Communist Party arrested in South Sumatra since July.
- 18-20 Sit-in by Czechoslovak University and Secondary School students in protest against decisions of Central Committee.
- 18-21 Meeting of Preparatory Committee for International Communist Conference in Budapest.
- 19 Soviet Prime Minister receives two US Senators in Moscow.
- 20 United Nations General Assembly votes against admission of Peking representatives.
- 20 Sino-Albanian Economic Assistance Agreement.
- 21 Soviet-Nigerian Economic Agreement signed in Lagos.
- 21 Representatives of central and commercial banks of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance meet in Budapest to discuss international monetary situation.
- 22-28 Rumanian Foreign Minister visits Turkey.
- 23 Programme of Neo Lao Hak Xat published.
- 23 50th Anniversary celebrations of Hungarian Communist Party. Meeting addressed by Kadar.

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November

- 24 "Tass" statement on N.A.T.O. Ministerial Meeting.
- 25 "Pravda" editorial on International Communist Conference.
- 25 Republication in China of report by Mao to the 5 March 1949 Session of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. Editorial in "Peoples Daily" on "Learning from Historical Experience".
- 25 Restrictions put on foreign travel by Czechoslovakia.
- 25 Soviet-North Vietnamese Economic Military Aid Agreement.
- 26 Chinese statement criticises United States for postponement of Sino-American talks in Warsaw.
- 26-29 Annual Meeting of Representatives of Warsaw Pact Armed Forces in Bucharest.
- 26-29 Third Congress of U.S.S.R. Artists Union.
- 27 Announcement that Czechoslovak periodical "Reporter" to resume publication.
- 27-3 Dec. Chinese Party, Government and Army delegation visits Albania.
- 27 Riots in Albanian areas of Yugoslavia.
- 28 Yugoslav National Day. President Tito speaks at Jajce.
- 28 Central Committee of Communist Party of Prague Old Town protests against activities by pro-Soviet radio transmitters and publications in Czechoslovakia.
- 28-4 Dec. Rumanian Foreign Minister visits Iran.
- 29 Announcement of measures to strengthen Soviet Militia and reinstatement of name "Ministry of Internal Affairs".
- 29 Speech by Rumanian President Ceausescu on 50th Anniversary of the Unification of Transylvania with Rumania.
- 29 Albanian National Day.
- 30 Press Conference by Yugoslav President Tito.
- 30 Head of Czechoslovak Government Information Bureau says that action will be taken through diplomatic channels to obtain restriction of activities of Soviet-published periodical "Zpravy".

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COMMUNIST POLICY AND TACTICS

DECEMBER 1968

SUMMARY

Soviet Foreign Policy

The main preoccupation of the Soviet Government continued to be the consolidation of their position in Eastern Europe. The effective coordination of policies between the Governments of the Warsaw Pact is still proving difficult and the high level meeting of CMEA, announced in March 1968, has still not taken place. In the wider field the Russians have continued in their attempts to divide the Western Alliance: Soviet policy has notably attacked the British and wooed the French.

Czechoslovakia

2. The Czechoslovak leaders are still struggling to maintain party and public unity. The Central Committee Plenum gave no indication that the Czechoslovaks have been forced to abandon the economic reforms but the leadership take a serious view of the state of the economy. Preparations for the new Federal Institutions gave rise to a debate about the balance between Czechs and Slovaks in the important posts and about the position of Smrkovsky, Chairman of the old National Assembly. The Russians appear to be playing a waiting game while exercising pressure when they can exploit differences.

Yugoslavia

3. President Tito has publicly re-stated basic Yugoslav principles of foreign policy, but he succeeded in doing so without further antagonising the Russians. There were demonstrations by Albanian minorities but these were probably the result of local nationalism rather than of subversion from Metropolitan Albania.

The Soviet Union:

4. a) Repressive Atmosphere

The current repressive atmosphere has been particularly apparent over the past month. The Ministry for preserving public order was given its old title "Ministry of Internal Affairs" (MVD). There was some further favourable publicity for Stalin's role in the war. There were attacks on the B.B.C's East European services which seemed intended to intimidate Soviet listeners.

b) The Economic Situation

Plan and budget figures released during the month did not point to any change in economic policy. 1968 was a relatively successful year. A moderate rate of growth is intended for 1969.

/Chinese

Chinese Foreign Policy

5. There is some evidence that the Chinese may be reviewing their tactics and preparing to play a more active role in world affairs. They have indicated their interest in making contact with the new American administration and have reversed their open opposition to the Vietnamese peace talks in Paris. The successful explosion of a nuclear device on 27 December was the first nuclear test to be announced by the Chinese since their first hydrogen bomb test in 1967.

China - Internal

6. The drive to send young people to the countryside has received a new boost. In many areas the authorities still face considerable problems of political and social order which are the legacy of the cultural revolution. However, determined efforts are being made to re-establish and consolidate control and the leaders appear to be firmly committed to the convocation of the 9th Party Congress early in the new year.

North Vietnam

7. Since the end of the American bombing the North Vietnamese have made efforts to repair the damage although they have concentrated on work relevant to the prosecution of the war in the south. New agreements have been signed in Moscow granting further Russian aid. There are some indications that the North Vietnamese may be trying to return to a more balanced position vis-à-vis Russia and China, following a period in which they appeared to be moving closer to the Russians.

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SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY

Although the Soviet Union took some major initiatives during December in the wider international field - notably over the Middle East and in the attacks on the United Kingdom - the main preoccupation of the Soviet Government continued to be the consolidation of their position in Eastern Europe. They seemed to be paying increasingly close attention to the wider business of consolidation in Eastern Europe as a whole, as compared with the specific problem of Czechoslovakia - though naturally the Russians kept up the pressures on that country.

Eastern Europe

The consolidation of their position in Eastern Europe, and the achievement of more effective coordination of policies between the governments of the Warsaw Pact countries may be proving harder than the Russians had hoped: equally, they may have drawn from their experience in Czechoslovakia the lesson that it is wiser to hasten slowly. There were rumours of meetings both of the Warsaw Pact Consultative Committee and of C.M.E.A. It is possible that a Warsaw Pact meeting was planned to take place in Budapest in the second week of December and was postponed at short notice. There is some doubt whether the meeting was to be held at Ministerial or Party Secretary level. Its main purpose might have been to work out a reply to the N.A.T.O. communiqué, which followed the Ministerial Meeting in Brussels in October, and to which some rejoinder from the Warsaw Pact as a whole might be thought to be due; or it may have been to discuss economic or military integration, as was implied by a report that Defence and Prime Ministers would attend. The main obstacle to a successful meeting is likely to have been Rumania's continued opposition to any measures which would include a degree of supra-nationality.

There had also been a great deal of talk throughout 1968 about improving economic cooperation, and a high-level meeting on this subject is certainly overdue. It was announced in Dresden as long ago as March 1968 that such a meeting would be held "in the nearest future". Since then, though there have been meetings to discuss the subject, these have not led to the approval of a programme which could be announced at a sufficiently high level to give the desired impression of a real step forward in cooperation. It is still possible that the forthcoming 20th anniversary of C.M.E.A. will be used to stage an important meeting of the organisation, but all the signs are rather that progress is proving difficult than that the finishing touches are even now being put to anything in the way of a substantial new series of measures.

We may therefore expect the consolidation of their position in Eastern Europe to remain uppermost in the Soviet leaders' minds for at least some months to come. Meanwhile, some gestures have been made which may be seen as modifications of extreme positions, or as the first steps towards a closer harmonisation of policies. Both the Rumanian Foreign Minister's visit to East Germany and the pause in Soviet press polemics against Yugoslavia may perhaps be seen in this light. But a closer coordination of political views may be much easier to attain than the transformation of C.M.E.A. into an effective instrument of policy. The divergent attitudes

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and objectives of members of the organisation will not easily be brought together, if at all. The longer the process of consolidation takes, the more likely it is that the Czechoslovaks will from time to time find friends among their allies, especially when it comes to adopting positions on economic policy.

International Affairs

In the wider field of foreign policy, the attacks on the United Kingdom in the sharp memorandum which Mr. Gromyko handed to the British Ambassador in Moscow on 2 December; in continuing propaganda; and in the "revelations" about alleged espionage activities by the B.B.C. and British correspondents, can probably be seen as a continuation of the traditional aim of dividing the Western alliance. While the British were being attacked, the French were being wooed, and Soviet relations with the United States were left in neutral gear, probably because the Russians want to create a propitious atmosphere for serious talks with the new American administration in 1959. Although attacks on the Germans continued, their treatment was on the whole moderate.

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CZECHOSLOVAKIA

At the end of the year the Czechoslovak leaders were still meeting with difficulties in trying to maintain Party and public unity and to use the conclusions of the November Plenum as the basis for this. Intractable economic problems at home to which they had been able to devote all too little attention throughout 1968 and continuing differences of view between Czechs and Slovaks on the form of the new Federal Republic both hindered the leaderships efforts. Both, too, tended to be distorted, and so aggravated, by the revival of public debate about divisions between progressives and conservatives or supposed conflicts of interests between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. This in itself was a measure of how highly charged the atmosphere of Czechoslovak politics remains and how far the country still is from being "normalised".

The country's economic plight was discussed at a Central Committee Plenum on 12 - 13 December whose object was to give approval to the general principles of the Government's economic policies. The Plenum's resolution contained more promises of action than specific proposals, while making it plain that the leadership take a serious view of the state of the economy. Strong inflationary pressures exist and, while production has not by any means been stagnant, growth has often been in those sectors where it was least wanted. The solution to the country's problem approved by the Plenum was the further implementation of the economic reforms. Notably, the Government will introduce in the first quarter of next year new legislation on the status of enterprises, including the role of the Workers' Councils.

There was no sign that the Czechoslovaks have decided or been obliged to give up any of the essential principles of the reforms. Indeed, the Soviet Ambassador himself went on record as supporting the new economic system as a means of tackling Czechoslovakia's problems. But resolute action will be required to translate the reforming principles into practice. Not the least of the problems will be that of rationalising the price structure, which will mean higher prices in almost all sectors. Already rises in the prices of some basic commodities in November have provoked an outburst of critical comment from the Trade Unions and provided a foretaste of political difficulties ahead for the Government's economic policy.

Preparations for the establishment of the new federal institutions on 1 January 1969 gave rise during December to a growing debate about the balance between Czechs and Slovaks in leading positions in the Republic. (Previously, three of these - President, Prime Minister and Chairman of the Assembly - were filled by Czechs). The debate centred on the person of Smrkovsky, Chairman of the old National Assembly, and the Slovak desire to nominate a Slovak to the Chairmanship of the new Federal Assembly. As a symbol of the new régime and its liberal policies and as a member of the quadrumvirate responsible since the invasion for resisting extreme Soviet demands, Smrkovsky could not be sacrificed without provoking intense disillusionment and possibly a major clash between the leadership and public opinion. The volume of public support for Smrkovsky, especially among Trade Unions, some of whom threatened to strike in his support, and even among some organisations in Slovakia, was impressive. For the Slovaks, however, the question is more one of

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principle than of personalities. In this lies the main hope that some compromise acceptable to public opinion generally will be found although the odds at the end of the year were against Smrkovsky being nominated to the new post. In any event, he seems likely to retain his potentially more influential positions on the Party Praesidium and its Executive Committee. But the controversy showed clearly how near the surface are the seeds of disunity.

The Russians seem to be content to continue to play a waiting game. The Soviet press has repeatedly spoken with approval of the resolution of the November Plenum, but has also criticised signs of opposition to the resolution in Czechoslovakia itself. The Summit meeting at Kiev on 7 - 8 December must have given the Soviet leaders another opportunity to press the Czechoslovaks further back down the road to conformity. At the end of the month, the arrival in Prague of a Soviet Party Delegation headed by Katushev and Kuznetsov showed the Russian determination to ensure that the composition of the new Governments in Czechoslovakia is acceptable to them. In fact, the Russian tactic seems to be to await any development which they can exploit either to split the Czechoslovak Party or to mould its policies more closely to Soviet desires. The Czechoslovak leaders are clearly aware of this. Speaking as he said with total frankness, Dubcek made it clear on 21 December that disunity and in particular the activities of those progressives who refused to accept the programme laid down at the November Plenum, would lead inescapably to "undemocratic" measures and take Czechoslovakia far back beyond the positions gained in January 1968. Dubeck even hinted that these measures would be taken by "other leaders". The difficulties of the Czechoslovak leaders in December showed once more in their bilateral dealings with the Czechoslovaks how far time is on the Russian side and how little the Czechoslovaks have to rely on except the more fragile asset of their unity.

YUGOSLAVIA

At a press conference on 30 November at Jajce (where the 25th anniversary of the Second Session of the Anti-Fascist Council of the National Liberation of Yugoslavia had been celebrated) President Tito dealt skilfully with a wide range of questions from international journalists. While Tito was clearly not out to antagonise anyone, nothing he said implied any major modification of Yugoslav attitudes to current subjects of concern. He reiterated his belief that communism was not in danger in Czechoslovakia before 21 August; expressed himself against holding a consultative meeting of communist parties "without having definite problems to be settled"; and repudiated the Soviet thesis that Yugoslav non-alignment is possible only because of the existence of the Warsaw Pact and of the "community of socialist countries". Selective quotation, however, enabled the Soviet press to refer to the press conference with approval and the anniversary itself was marked by friendly articles in Pravda and Izvestiya which made no reference to current polemics.

The demonstrations by Albanians in the Kosmet autonomous province (where they are in the majority) on 27 November and in Tetovo (Macedonia) on 23 December were probably the result of local nationalism rather than of subversion from metropolitan Albania, though these signs of unrest were no doubt welcome to the Hoxha régime. The aim of the demonstrators appears to have been the recognition of a separate Albanian Republic within the Yugoslav Federation. In terms of constitutional amendments which have now been adopted (and which had been under discussion since August) the Kosmet becomes the Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosova, with a status approaching that of a constituent republic of the Federation.

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CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY

There is some evidence that the Chinese may be reviewing their tactics and preparing to play a more active role in world affairs as a result of recent developments in Eastern Europe, the Paris talks on Vietnam, and the impending change of Administration in the United States. Ch'en Yi, the Foreign Minister, has been absent from the scene since early October, probably because of illness.

The hints of a return to normal are not wholly new. During 1968 the Chinese welcomed a number of state visitors from abroad and also made attempts to improve relations with some, though not all, of their immediate neighbours. The Chinese used the occasion of National Day receptions to indicate the desire of their various missions to resume more normal working relations with many countries. There has as yet been no sign of a permanent return to their posts of Chinese Heads of Mission, recalled at the start of the Cultural Revolution. Visits to Nepal and Pakistan by Chou En-lai and Ch'en Yi have been agreed in principle but are unlikely to take place at an early date. A planned visit by Chou En-lai to Cambodia was cancelled.

Warsaw Talks

The Chinese statement of 26 November on the Warsaw talks no doubt indicated the interest of the Chinese in making contact in the New Year with Mr. Nixon's administration, or at least in keeping open a line. It may also have been an oblique indication of increased Chinese flexibility on Vietnam. However, it is also apparent that the Chinese statement achieved certain more immediate tactical goals: it demonstrated a positive attitude to the Warsaw talks and threw the onus for their interruption back on the Americans; it put on record again the fact that the talks in Warsaw are primarily about Taiwan (on which the Chinese position remains inflexible), thus defusing the Russian criticism that they, the Chinese, are prepared to collude with Imperialism in selling out the world revolution. Nevertheless the statement will have reminded the Russians and the other Communist Parties that in the long term an improvement in relations with the Soviet Union is not the only course open to the Chinese.

Vietnam

There is clear evidence of a new Chinese attitude to the problem of Vietnam, although it is too early to say whether the change is fundamental or simply tactical. Earlier in 1968 the Chinese were openly opposed to the discussions in Paris and appear to have exerted considerable political pressure on the N. Vietnamese to prevent their taking place. Having failed to achieve this, the Chinese have now withdrawn from an exposed position which served only to underline the limits of their influence in N. Vietnam. They marked the change by the publication, without comment, of President Johnson's statement of 31 October on the cessation of the bombing. Since then they have largely refrained from direct comment, although they continue to praise the merits of protracted war. We cannot necessarily assume that the Chinese have now adopted a more positive policy towards the solution of the Vietnam problem. But it is clear that they have moved to a position of greater flexibility from which they can

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react less rigidly to developments in Paris. Meanwhile the Chinese may be preparing to devote increased attention to other countries in Indo-China. Support for dissident elements in India and Burma also continues.

#### Albania

The visit of Huang Yung-Sheng to Albania at the head of a State/Party/Military delegation (with heavy emphasis on the military aspect) was the first formal visit abroad by a major Chinese leader since 1966. Huang also stopped over in Bucharest. The visit clearly related to events in Czechoslovakia, and formed part of Chinese attempts to capitalise on the anti-Soviet sentiment generated since 21 August. On 20 November the Chinese signed a substantial loan agreement with the Albanians followed by a number of economic protocols. Agreement to supply military equipment too cannot be ruled out. But in the unlikely event of a direct attack on Albania by the Soviet Union it is hard to see how the Chinese could contribute significantly to the latter's defence.

#### The China Seat

This year the voting in the General Assembly on both the Albanian resolution and the "Important Question" resolution again ran heavily against Peking. In 1965 voting on the Albanian resolution resulted in a tie. In 1966 the resolution was defeated by 11 votes, in 1967 by 13 votes and in 1968 by 14 votes. A similar trend against Peking has been evident in the voting on the "Important Question". Clearly Chinese conduct during the Cultural Revolution has alienated potential support, particularly among Afro/Asian states. The Chinese may now be setting out, by virtue of an overtly more reasonable manner of conducting foreign relations, to win back lost ground; but clearly there is much leeway to be made up.

#### Hydrogen-Bomb Test

China's test of a hydrogen bomb on 27 December was the first nuclear test to be announced by the Chinese since their first hydrogen-bomb test on 17 June, 1967. (A further nuclear explosion, which the Chinese did not publicise - apparently an unsuccessful nuclear test - took place on 24 December 1967). The official communiqué announcing the latest test denounced the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the proposed arrangement for limiting nuclear weapons systems as representing an attempt by the United States and Soviet Union to "maintain their already broken nuclear monopoly and to push nuclear colonialism". The communiqué said that China's test gave support to the Vietnamese and to all peoples engaged in revolutionary struggles. It repeated the assurance that China would not be the first to use nuclear weapons and China's commitment to the ultimate aim of abolishing such weapons.

SOVIET UNION

Repressive Atmosphere

The current repressive atmosphere, especially in ideological and cultural affairs, has been particularly apparent in the past month. At the end of November a decree strengthening the Militia was accompanied by the restoration of the title "Ministry of Internal Affairs" (MVD) to the Ministry for the Preservation of Public Order. This was explained by the need to reflect greater precision about its functions, but the choice of a title which harks back to the Stalin era cannot have been accidental. There was some further favourable publicity for Stalin's role in the war and a boost for the KGB in the form of a Soviet spy's memoirs telling of the uncovering of a German plot to assassinate the allied leader of Teheran. Congresses took place of the Artists' and Composers' Unions; both were notable for their aggressive philistinism and ideologically intimidating line. Attacks on the BBC's East European services seemed intended to discredit the corporation in the eyes of Soviet listeners and to discourage them from posting further letters to the BBC. While some of these events are doubtless coincidental it is clear that the regime, in its attempts to maintain discipline and ideological immunity at home is not greatly concerned that it is presenting a repressive image abroad.

Economic situation

Plan and budget figures released during the month show that 1968 was a relatively successful year, while a moderate but relatively slower rate of growth is intended in 1969. Agriculture did fairly well and is expected to improve still further. Consumer goods production will continue for a second year to enjoy a marginally higher rate of growth than heavy industry, in order to match recent increases in purchasing power. However, it seems improbable that the five year plan target will be reached in industry and almost certain that agriculture will fall short.

The defence budget was increased substantially, though at a lower rate than the growth of the economy as a whole. The increase was presented in a way designed to create an impression abroad of moderation.

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CHINA - INTERNAL

The drive to send young people to the countryside has received a new boost in the form of an instruction by Mao. He has pointed out that officials and other town-dwellers should be persuaded to send their children to be "re-educated" by the poor peasants. He has also called upon persons living in the countryside to welcome the newcomers. There have been many reports indicating opposition to this campaign not only by the young people but also by the members and officials of rural communes who feel daunted by the problems of providing food, accommodation and employment for large numbers of town-bred youth.

There have been several more references to the prospect of a "new leap forward" in 1969 arising from developments in the Cultural Revolution. In practice, these statements may indicate in the main merely an effort to encourage local initiative within well-defined limits and not a massive campaign on the 1958 model. There is evidence that the leaders are still committed to a policy of economic planning based on practical criteria. Despite optimistic official claims, the 1968 results for agricultural production appear to be mediocre. Industrial production has, particularly in the last quarter, begun to recover from the adverse effects of the Cultural Revolution but the results for the whole year are likely to be rather poor. In general, it seems that the conditions for a really ambitious new economic leap do not at present exist.

In many if not all areas, the authorities still face considerable problems of political and social order, which are the legacy of the mass campaign. Political difficulties are particularly evident in Chekiang and Inner Mongolia where they have led to splits in the Revolutionary Committees. These difficulties may result from the increasingly strong measures to re-impose effective methods of administration, accompanied by the resentment of Red Guards and Rebels, now largely deprived of influence. It seems clear, however, that the leaders are determined to press on rapidly with the work of re-establishing and consolidating an effective machinery of control. The circulation of a draft Party Constitution, approved by the October Plenum, suggests that the leaders are now firmly committed to the convocation of the Ninth Party Congress early in the New Year and that they view the work of rebuilding the Party with some urgency.

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NORTH VIETNAM

Since the end of American bombing on 1 November the North Vietnamese have made efforts to repair the damage which the bombing caused. They have, however, concentrated on work relevant to the prosecution of the war in the South, and in particular on the transport field - railway and port facilities etc., more than on increasing industrial output even though the tempo of this has also increased. Meanwhile the North Vietnamese have publicly expressed concern about the level of coal production, which plays an important part in the domestic economy and as a foreign exchange earner, and agricultural output. Nevertheless so dominant is the part of external aid in the North Vietnamese economy and war effort that there is no likelihood that their ability to carry on the war will be substantially affected by ups and downs in the domestic industrial and agricultural scene. In November new agreements were signed in Moscow granting further Russian aid.

There are some indications that the North Vietnamese may be trying to return to a more balanced position vis-a-vis Russia and China, following a period in which they appeared to be moving closer to the Russians. For example the Hanoi party newspaper Nhan Dan carried the Russian and Chinese congratulatory messages to the National Liberation Front on its eighth Anniversary side by side on its front page. For their part the Chinese appear to be devoting increasing attention to the NLF, perhaps at the expense of the North Vietnamese. This was noticeable in the acclaim given to Tran Buu Kiem, who passed through Peking on his way to Paris to head the NLF delegation at the peace talks.

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CHRONOLOGY

December

- 2 Soviet Memorandum on Anglo-Soviet relations.
- 2-3 Talks between the Austrian Communist Party and the C.P.S.U.
- 3 Pravda Editorial on the Middle East.
- 5 Meeting of the Central Committee of the French Communist Party.  
Publication of manifesto.
- 5 N. Korea-USSR trade protocol signed.
- 6 West Germany Economic Minister announces expansion of East/West German Trade.
- 6 Tass statement on Rhodesia.
- 7-8 Meeting of Soviet and Czechoslovak leaders at Kiev.
- 9 Plenum of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.
- 9 U.S. destroyers enter the Black Sea.
- 10 British reply to the Soviet memorandum on Anglo-Soviet relations.
- 10-13 Meeting of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. Announcement of the budget for 1969 and five-year plan.
- 10-14 Visit of Rumanian Foreign Minister to E. Germany.
- 11 25th Anniversary of the Soviet/Czechoslovak Friendship Treaty.
- 11 Cardinal Wyszynsky returns to Poland from Rome.
- 11 N. Korean-Albanian Trade Agreement for 1969 signed in Tirana.
- 12-13 Plenum of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party.
- 12-13 Czechoslovak Minister of the Interior visits Moscow.

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December

- 13-14 Foreign Minister of Mali visits Moscow.
- 15-16 N.L.F. delegation visits Moscow.
- 16 Soviet Naval Squadron visits Dar-Es-Salaam.
- 16 Statement by S.V.N.L.F. representative in Peking.
- 16-17 Plenum of the Rumanian Communist Party.
- 16-20 Fourth Congress of the U.S.S.R. Composers' Union.
- 17 Party changes in Rumania.
- 17 Soviet and Bulgarian leaders meet in Moscow.
- 17-22 Chairman of U.S.S.R. Gosplan, Baibakov, visits Prague.
- 18 Opening of Czechoslovak National Assembly.
- 19 Message from Chinese leaders on 8th Anniversary of S.V.N.L.F.
- 20 Government changes in Poland announced.
- 21-24 Mr. Gromyko visits Cairo.
- 21 N. Korean trade delegation arrives in China.
- 21 Chinese trade mission starts visit to Pakistan.
- 21-27 Rumanian Foreign Minister visits Tunisia.
- 22 Demonstrations by Albanian minorities in Yugoslavia.
- 23 Pueblo crew released by N. Koreans.
- 26 Sino-Pakistan economic agreement signed.
- 26 Government and Party changes in Bulgaria.
- 27 C.P.S.U. delegation, led by Katushev, visits Prague.
- 27 China explodes a nuclear device.
- 31 The U.S.S.R. successfully test-flies the TU 144.

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