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Sino - Sov Dispute
 ✓ Doc # 9 - 981178c

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March 29, 1962

Summary prepared by S/P on meeting of specialists who discussed
 "Implications of the Sino-Soviet Dispute for U. S. policy"

Little likelihood dispute will be resolved in foreseeable future; good chance of further deterioration; if situation remains relatively same there are many implications deserving U. S. policy and security study.

Reconciliation undesirable; continuation of present situation has many advantages (confusion and uncertainty in other parties); complete break most advantageous (significant change in world power).

Limited resources available for U. S. to influence dispute, mainly through third parties, underdeveloped countries, international negotiation -- U. S. policy should remain aloof, not silent but give accurate publicity to dispute, do nothing to drive protagonists together, if must choose sides take USSR.

Since Soviet would not become directly involved with Chinese unless Chinese territory actually threatened, the U. S. should exercise restraint but hold to present position.

The Sino-Soviet dispute has only marginal bearing on specific issues; e. g., Berlin, disarmament -- each issue should be considered on its own merits in determining policy.

Some of group thought that relaxation of trade embargo on China would help encourage Chinese to stand firm, while others thought this would strengthen radical groups in control thus discouraging Moscow from moving toward a break.

All participants felt the Sino-Soviet dispute destroys the myth that communism is a monolithic unity. The U. S. can exploit this effectively within communist parties and among leftists throughout the world.

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STATE DEPARTMENT SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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Date: 2/2/96

Withdrawal No. 6702-7/10-54

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March 27, 1962

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TO: The Secretary

THROUGH: S/S

FROM: S/P : W. W. Rostow

SUBJECT: Conclusions of Special Study Group re Implications
of the Sino-Soviet Dispute

At the January 2 session of your Policy Planning Meeting devoted to the Sino-Soviet dispute, you suggested that the Council on Foreign Relations be asked to organize a Special Study Group to consider the depths and implications of the dispute. The Council readily agreed to undertake the task and two six-hour meetings of governmental and non-governmental specialists were held in New York under the Chairmanship of Phil Moseley on 1 and 21 February.

These discussions proved highly productive and showed a large degree of consensus as to the nature and probable course of the conflict. Time and the number of participants did not permit, however, a full exploration of the policy implications for the U.S. We decided to have a follow-up meeting in Washington of selected members of the Council Group who were fully cleared for classified information. This smaller group met in the Department for an all day session on 8 March under CIA and Departmental auspices.

The attached paper summarizes the results of this last discussion. It also gives in brief compass, and uses as its point of departure, the results of the two earlier New York meetings. It can be considered, therefore, the end product of an extensive exchange of views among an impressive group of specialists who have followed Sino-Soviet matters closely for the past several years. It of course leaves many questions unanswered, but I believe it meets in good part your wishes for a mature review of the Sino-Soviet relationship as it now stands and of the outlook.

cc w/attachment:

Mr. Ball
M : Mr. McGhee
B : Mr. Bohlen ✓
O : Mr. Johnson
FE: Mr. Harriman
EUR: Mr. Kohler

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15 March 1962

IMPLICATIONS OF THE SINO-SOVIET DISPUTE FOR US POLICY

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

1. On Thursday, 8 March, a group of government and outside specialists met in an all-day session to discuss the implications of the Sino-Soviet dispute for US policy.^{1/} This discussion was a follow-up of two meetings at the Council on Foreign Relations held in New York during February under the sponsorship of the Department.

2. The sessions in New York were largely devoted to a discussion of the nature and depth of the Sino-Soviet dispute. There was general agreement on the following propositions:

a. Relations between Peiping and Moscow, which have been deteriorating since 1958, reached their lowest point as a result of developments at and subsequent to the XXII Party Congress.

^{1/} A list of participants and the agenda for the meeting is attached at annex.

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b. There is little if any likelihood that the dispute will be resolved in the foreseeable future. In fact the dispute cannot be resolved without fundamental ideological and political concessions. Neither side is likely to do this under its present leadership.

c. There is a good chance that the dispute will further deteriorate to the point of an open break.^{2/} (Assessments of the chances of such a break ranged from about 2 in 5 to about 3 in 5).

d. Even if the situation "rocks along" at about its present level for the next year or so (perhaps more likely than an open break and certainly more likely than a reconciliation), there are many important implications for US policy and security which deserve study.

^{2/} For the purpose of these discussions an open break is defined as a break in party relations (expressed as a cessation of communications between the two parties, notification to other parties of the movement -- by either or both -- that "comradely" relations no longer prevailed, and public attacks by each party on the leaders of the other), together with a highly important ambiguity in their state-to-state relations, including an ambiguity as to the status of their mutual defense agreements.

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e. Of the three possible developments that could take place in Sino-Soviet relations:

(1) A reconciliation would have the least desirable (indeed undesirable) consequence for the US.

(2) A continuation of the present situation would have many advantages for the US. (Not the least of which is the confusion and uncertainty the dispute would continue to produce in other parties).

(3) A complete break would be the most advantageous development -- indeed, it would (or could) represent the most significant change in the world's power balance since 1949 (when the Communists took power in China).

f. Granting the propositions in "e" above, the US probably has only limited resources and opportunities to affect directly and significantly the course of Sino-Soviet relations, even if it should choose to do so.

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g. Even though there are substantial limitations on our ability to influence the course of the dispute, there will be many opportunities which, if carefully exploited, would serve US interests (in the third parties, in underdeveloped countries, in international negotiations).

3. Although there were some minor differences of emphasis among the participants with respect to these propositions, it was agreed to accept them as a basis for the discussion of policy implications which took place in Washington.

4. The first major topic for discussion was the stance or over-all policy the US should adopt toward the Sino-Soviet dispute in a situation short of an open break (i.e., the circumstances currently prevailing). It is worth recalling here that, to the extent a policy has been articulated, it has been to minimize official comment on the dispute, remain officially aloof and restrict our actions to unattributable peripheral operations. The rationale behind this has been based on two assumptions: the dispute has been progressing nicely under its own steam and there is little that we could do to help it along; anything we say or do might, in fact, drive the two protagonists together.

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5. This policy and these assumptions were subjected to critical review. Underlying the discussion was the view (agreed upon by all participants) that the dispute had now gone to such lengths and the various national, ideological, and personal differences between the two sides were so fundamental, that US policy need not be inhibited by fear that our words or deeds (obviously short of anything as extreme as an attack on mainland China) could, in themselves, result in a reconciliation between Moscow and Peiping. It was agreed that the US should not publicly crow over the dispute, but also that the US should not remain silent: that accurate publicity given the dispute would, at a minimum, exacerbate problems of discipline in the world Communist movement and the individual parties, whereas silence would encourage the Communist world to believe that it could "contain" the dispute within some such formula as "non-antagonistic contradictions."

6. As to choosing sides in the dispute, the participants leaned toward the USSR, but cautioned that the choice should be made on individual issues and circumstances. It was generally agreed that Moscow's stated positions, with their emphasis on coexistence and sensitivity to escalation of wars, present less danger to the US (at least in the short run) than Peiping's stated

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strategy of militant revolutionary action. US policy should demonstrate wherever feasible that an atmosphere of "coexistence" with the USSR (being prepared to exchange concessions) is feasible and should make crystal clear that the Chinese "high-risk" policy would be countered resolutely (i.e., that such a policy will entail higher risks than the USSR, or Peiping without Soviet support, would care to accept). At the same time, it was agreed, the US should not adopt a position toward the Chinese which would tie our hands in the event of an open break; in other words, we should try to encourage favorable trends in Soviet policy now, while leaving room to encourage favorable trends in Chinese policy later.

7. The next major topic was the consideration of general US policy in the event of a break.^{3/} Two fundamental propositions provided guidelines for this discussion: the consequences of a break were so important for the US that, even if the chances of a break during this year were regarded as less than even,^{4/} serious consideration should be given to US policy in such a

^{3/} See footnote ^{2/} for our working definition of a "break".

^{4/} In fact most participants regarded the chances as at least 50-50.

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contingency; since a break was at least conceivable in the next several months, policy planning should start immediately. The participants felt that an open break would have serious implications for US policy on such questions as Chinese membership in the UN, recognition of Communist China, trade policy toward the Bloc, the status of Taiwan, and the offshore islands, etc.

8. The argument was advanced that a complete break would remove any remaining Soviet restraints on China and would intensify competition between Moscow and Peiping to prove their superior Marxist-Leninist militancy. Most participants felt, however, that while the Chinese might be more disposed to aggression after a break, their capability would be considerably reduced. In view of increased doubts that Moscow would defend them against Western retaliation, Peiping would probably have to proceed with deliberate caution. It was generally agreed that subversion and armed "liberation" activities would probably increase around China's periphery, but that this would be of a kind calculated not to provoke massive Western retaliation.

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9. The participants felt that the USSR, in the event of an open break, might be tempted to run greater risks in the short-term (to demonstrate its militancy), but would not wish to appear to be yielding to the Chinese and (for this and other reasons) would probably be less aggressive in the long-run. It was felt that Soviet intervention in situations in which US forces became directly involved with Chinese forces would be likely only if it appeared that Chinese Communist control over its own territory was actually threatened. Hence, the best course for the US would be to exercise restraint, but to hold firmly to present positions. ^{5/} It was agreed that, in the event of an open break as well as under present circumstances, the US should, in a broad sense, encourage the USSR to adopt in fact its stated positions in the dispute. However, the participants also again emphasized that it would be necessary to give careful study to specific situations and issues as a basis for policy decisions.

10. US policy with respect to certain specific areas and issues was then discussed. As for the specific question of policy on Berlin there were a few who thought that Khrushchev's range of maneuver had been narrowed by the Chinese challenge and a few who

^{5/} US policy in certain specific situations (e.g., Southeast Asia) is discussed below.

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thought it had been increased. The consensus, however, was that Soviet policy on Berlin would be determined on its merits, and that US policy should be similarly determined: in other words, in the case of Berlin, the Sino-Soviet dispute was only marginally relevant for both the USSR and the US. It was generally agreed that in the event of an open break the USSR might be more disposed to reach a settlement on Berlin acceptable to the West, just as the Soviet internal crisis following Stalin's death was soon expressed in a more conciliatory Soviet line in the Korean conflict.

11. There was considerable discussion on the implications of the dispute for US disarmament policy. It was agreed that Moscow might be serious about reaching a meaningful agreement on disarmament and nuclear testing. However, there is a sharp limit on the range of meaningful agreement because of Peiping's absence from the talks; the Chinese have said they would not accept an agreement which they did not participate in negotiating.

12. Some participants proposed pushing the current disarmament negotiations as far as possible and then confronting the Chinese with at least some measure of agreement between East and West. The USSR, under these circumstances, would presumably be

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associated with the West in bringing some pressures on Peiping to go along with whatever measure of agreement had been reached (our own problem with the French was noted as a possible complication). A proposal was advanced that the disarmament talks be taken out from under UN auspices as soon as it was clear that negotiations were at an impasse and that Peiping be then invited to participate. Proponents of this idea stressed the need to educate the Chinese on the technical problems of disarmament. They also felt that Chinese participation would give Moscow an added incentive to reach agreement (since an effective control among all nuclear powers would now be theoretically possible); moreover, it might exacerbate the Sino-Soviet dispute by forcing Moscow and Peiping to try to reach a common position in the talks. Even if nothing specific came out of such discussions, it was felt that they would provide a channel of communication with Peiping over and above that available in Warsaw - a channel which most participants felt was sorely needed. Failing Chinese participation in such talks, consideration should be given to a discussion with the USSR about a nuclear-free zone in Asia, a proposal which would probably not be accepted by Peiping, but discussion of which would almost certainly increase Chinese resentment and suspicions of the USSR. (Prior to such a discussion, however, our own position on this issue should be carefully reviewed).

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13. In regard to the policy question of "summitry" the participants agreed that the Sino-Soviet dispute gives us an added interest in talking with the Soviets. Summit talks would help show whether the Sino-Soviet dispute makes the USSR more conciliatory toward the West. It would also excite Peiping's suspicions of Moscow -- as orthodox "Marxists" they would oppose such contacts with the West, but, on the other hand, would resent their exclusion from the talks. However, it was strongly felt that the sum of US interests rather than the Sino-Soviet dispute per se should dictate US policy on summitry. If there were other good reasons for a summit meeting, there would probably be certain desirable spill-over effects on the Sino-Soviet dispute (particularly if Far East matters were among those discussed). There was general agreement on the obvious caveats about the need to go to a summit meeting well-prepared and to avoid arousing expectations of substantial agreements, particularly since the creation of a better atmosphere (even without any firm agreements) would in itself serve our purposes.

14. The discussion on the implications of the dispute for US policy toward Vietnam and Laos revealed considerable differences of view. As regards Vietnam, in line with our over-all position in the

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Sino-Soviet dispute, we should try to persuade the Communists that aggression there cannot succeed; indeed there would be serious danger that a war there would escalate. Such a position would be aimed at exploiting Sino-Soviet differences on local wars and might be particularly effective applied to Vietnam, since the Chinese contend that the US will not take significant risks in underdeveloped areas. It was generally agreed that this policy would be most effective in the event of an open break between Moscow and Peiping; a credible threat of escalation would give Ho Chi Minh the disagreeable alternatives of being defeated or (at a minimum) accepting Chinese control, and confronted with such alternatives, Ho would probably reduce Viet Cong activities in South Vietnam. It was recognized, however, that the situation in Vietnam is very complex, certainly deserving more than the brief attention we gave it, and it was agreed that we should not pretend that we had confidence in our hasty conclusions about it. We were unable to reach agreement on any important proposition in regard to Laos.

15. There was similar lack of agreement about China policy in a situation short of a break. A few felt that the US should begin now to relax the trade embargo on China so as to help the Chinese stand firm in the dispute, looking toward the eventual triumph of rightist forces in China and a Yugoslav-type foreign

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policy in the event of a break. Others argued that a conciliatory policy toward Peiping would merely strengthen radical elements which now dominate the regime, and would discourage Moscow from moving toward a break (in that a break would, in a sense, represent the ultimate form of pressure against China, and there would be less point in exerting this pressure if Peiping were already receiving support from other sources). Some maintained that, even in the event of a break, the US should wait for the Chinese to turn toward the right before helping them. The participants disagreed as to whether there was any reasonable hope of "buying off" the Chinese at this time with grain or other economic inducements (i.e., whether the Chinese could be discouraged from acts of aggression in this way). Proponents of wheat sales argued that by "building bridges to China" the US could hope ultimately to gain some economic leverage. Opponents of such measures contended that this would only reward the wicked in China and strengthen the radicals at a critical time, failing to assist in any way the forces necessary to a rightward turn. There was little time, unfortunately, for discussion of the question of whether the US should help the Chinese right-wing to power -- a question which would have to weigh the considerations that (a) the right-wing

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would probably modify Chinese positions in the dispute which are offensive to us, but (b) the right-wing also represents the "Soviet team" in China and would probably act to improve the Sino-Soviet relationship.

16. In conclusion, the participants felt that an important result of the Sino-Soviet dispute is the destruction of the myth that communism is a monolithic unity, an undivided wave of the future which inexorably sweeps over the capitalist world. The US benefits from the confusion and doubt occasioned by the dispute and can exploit this effectively within Communist parties and among leftists throughout the world (particularly in the underdeveloped areas). Widespread dissemination of factually accurate documentary material (especially by covert means) would greatly assist polycentric tendencies observable in the world Communist movement and within individual parties since 1956.

17. The participants agreed that it would be very useful for a similar group -- or perhaps smaller groups -- to meet periodically to discuss developments in the Sino-Soviet dispute and their implications for specific questions of US policy.

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ANNEX A

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ANNEX A

Participants in the Discussion of the Implications for US
Policy of the Sino-Soviet Dispute, held at the Department
of State, 8 March 1962

Government Participants

Theodore Achilles, Department of State
Mose Harvey, Department of State
Robert Barnett, Department of State
Allan Whiting, Department of State
Colonel Thomas Wolfe, Department of Defense
Chester L. Cooper, CIA - Chairman
W. P. Southard, CIA

[REDACTED]

Non-Government Participants

Alexander Dallin, University of Columbia
Zbigniew Brzezinski, University of Columbia
Henry Roberts, University of Columbia
Alexander Eckstein, University of Michigan
Donald Zagoria, Rand
William Griffiths, MIT
John Lindbeck, Harvard University
John Campbell, Council on Foreign Relations

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ANNEX D

ANNEX D

A. What stance or over-all policy should the US adopt toward the Sino-Soviet dispute in a situation short of an open break?

B. What stance or over-all policy should the US adopt in the event of an open break?

C. How, if at all, does the Sino-Soviet dispute affect Soviet and Chinese behavior and policies in specific situations or with respect to specific issues? For example:

- (1) Berlin
- (2) Disarmament
- (3) Summitry
- (4) Laos and South Vietnam

D. How, if at all, should US policy with respect to these situations or issues be influenced by the Sino-Soviet dispute?

E. What specific US policies or tactics do you think would have the effect of

- (1) Intensifying the dispute?
- (2) Increase the deleterious effect of the dispute among other Communist parties in general or selected parties in particular.
- (3) Blunting or dissipating the thrust of Bloc, Soviet, or Communist policies (internal or foreign).

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