

Around the World

Rise of USSR As Top Imperialist Dog

(This article is a Progressive Labor Party response to the ongoing debate in the Letters section about the position of the U.S. as a world power today).

In the letters section of the October 7th issue of C-D, "a reader," still clinging to the world as it was, tries to make a futile case for U.S. dominance in a world that has by-passed "a reader." However, in this article we will indicate some few facts which will show the relative development of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.

There are several ways to judge superiority. We will use the following:

- (1) Economic development;
- (2) Military development;
- (3) Political influence;
- (4) Internal morale.

Possibly the turning point in the U.S. and U.S.S.R. in terms of economic and technological development was when the Soviets were the first to penetrate outer space. The launching of Sputnik was the first hard evidence of the trend towards U.S.S.R. superiority. This feat so shocked the U.S. ruling class that it revamped the entire education system, as well as budget priorities, to play catch-up technology. More important, and probably the actual turning point, was in 1971 when the Soviets out-produced every country in the world in steel tonnage. The Soviets produced 120 mil metric tons as compared with 109 mil by the U.S. Again the U.S. bosses, mired in another cyclical slump, had to play catch-up. As of 1973, they were even with their Soviet competitors. But, and it's a very big "but," steel production in the Soviet Union is used much more for military production than in the U.S. Using auto as an indicator, the U.S. outproduces the Soviets by about 10 to 1. The Soviets produced just over one million cars in 1973.

In the vital area of crude oil production, the Soviets are completely self-sufficient. Additionally, their oil reserves are about 50 percent larger than the U.S. (1973 figures). **World Oil** magazine (Houston, Texas) reports Soviet reserves of 6.4 billion metric tons to 4.7 billion for the U.S. Soviet production is almost as much as the U.S. In 1973, it was 429 million metric tons, as compared with 454 million for the U.S. But even these figures are misleading. A much larger share of U.S. oil goes for autos, trucks, and heating oil. The Soviets use a far larger share for the military, especially vital stockpiling for use in the event of war. Most military experts acknowledge enormous Soviet reserves, while U.S. reserves are meager.

Even more significant are the vast Rumanian oil fields and reserves, geographically close to the Soviet Union. Vital oil for the modern Soviet military machine doesn't even have to cross water. Large U.S. reserves are in the vulnerable Mid-East. And while the fortunes of war there are temporarily shifting in favor of the U.S., one must remember that as of twenty years ago the Soviets weren't even a factor there.

The point is that this situation will shift again. U.S. moguls are feverishly trying to do something about their plight by rushing the completion of the Alaskan oil pipeline. Again, this line is vulnerable to the Soviets. Looking at a map, you can see that the Soviets are a short distance by plane from knocking out Alaskan oil. So in every instance regarding oil, the Soviets have the strategic advantage, no matter how rosy the tactical situation seems to be for the U.S.

Only last year, during the energy crisis, the U.S. bosses were forced to complete a deal via Occidental Petroleum (Hammer) to ship natural gas all the way from Siberia to satisfy U.S. needs for this vital substance. Other figures concerning coal and other vital resources show parity or significant leads for the U.S.S.R.

The weakest link in Soviet economic development is in the production of wheat. But increased production of Soviet tractors and a rapidly developing petro-chemical industry can be expected to solve this problem. (By the way, as was pointed out in excellent PL magazine and C-D articles, the biggest U.S. exports are foodstuffs, not machinery, etc.)

Militarily, there is not much of a contest. Even on the oceans, where the U.S. supposedly has had naval

Soviets have in tanks and artillery, including tactical cannon. In the air, the Soviets have a big edge in numbers and quality. The recent landing of the Mig 25 in Japan by a Soviet defector shocked the West because they had nothing comparable to it, and because it so easily slipped by sophisticated Japanese radar.

In terms of world-wide political influence, to see things as static is foolish. The Soviets long ago penetrated the U.S. bastion of Latin America with the Castro regime. Soviet and Cuban influence in this area, compared to what it was twenty years ago, is enormous. U.S. stooges are on the run all over Africa. Angola, a rich oil reserve, was taken over by the Soviet Cuban puppets. As was previously stated, the Soviets, not long ago a cipher in the Mid-East, have to be reckoned with seriously. In Asia, the Soviets seem to have won out in the contest with the Chinese for the loyalties of the Vietnamese. True, the Vietnamese rulers want to trade with the U.S., but this is a superficial development, not an essential one. Make no mistake about it—the Vietnamese are tied to the Soviets. The Soviets are also dominant in the sub-continent. Their influence dominates in India. During the India-Pakistan war, the Soviet Union backed India and won.

As C-D has said all along, the big

by U.S. troops. Much more is made of the "conscientious objectors" than of the quiet deserters. But the fact was that the U.S. Army proved no match for the Soviet-armed Vietnamese. Prior to this war, U.S. troops took a drubbing from the North Koreans using Migs and artillery. As a matter of fact, Soviet-trained Korean pilots flying Migs wiped out most of the U.S. air fleet. Chinese "volunteers" quickly rolled back U.S. troops as they reached the Yalu River bordering China. The last serious test for Soviet troops was during WWII. All evidence shows that the Red Army was the most powerful and committed in the world. Whether or not this is still true is hard to say, but we would venture to say that this is still the case.

Recently Sen. Nunn of the U.S. Senate Armed Forces Committee forced a re-examination of NATO military strategy in order to prepare for a possible Soviet attack. To date, the examination has concluded that unless NATO's strategy is completely revised, the Soviets could take over Western Europe in days. NATO's original strategy was based on delaying the Soviets and girding for a much longer war.

Finally, it appears that the quality of life in the U.S.S.R. is, at least temporarily, moving ahead. There need be no guess work about what is happening in this country. In N.Y.C., for example, it is getting harder and harder for the ruling class to deliver even essential services, which indicate the stability or workability of any system. Education, sanitation, fire protection, and health care are in a shambles. This is the national trend. This certainly doesn't indicate a system on the way up, or even stable. It does show a system on the skids.



excellence, there is no longer much competition. Recent figures by **Janes**, leading publication on military facts, show that the Soviets now hold an advantage in all forms of assault vessels: 1,954 to 1,161. Most important, in submarines, the primary fighting vessel in atomic war, the Soviets hold at least a 3 to 1 edge: 424 to 149, (**Janes**, 1974). Mid-1970 figures show the Soviets with 3.5 million troops to only 2.5 million for the U.S. Virtually all military estimates show the Soviets with an important lead in missiles, missile development, and missile delivery. "In 1974 the Soviets had 1,587 intercontinental ballistic missiles in place; the U.S. 1,054. The U.S.S.R. reportedly had 720 submarine borne missiles; the U.S. 656. The U.S.S.R. was advancing development of multiple warhead (MIRV) missiles, and of more accurate and powerful missiles." (**World Almanac**). It is generally acknowledged that U.S. long-range bombers are a "make-profit, make-work" boondoggle. Experts generally concede that missile systems are primary.

It would be a waste of time to belabor the enormous lead the

balancing factor is a U.S./China anti-Soviet alliance. At the moment, this is the cornerstone of U.S.-China foreign policy. But again, the vast distance in miles between the Chinese and U.S. bosses makes the alliance suspect, while the Soviets share common borders with the Chinese. It is questionable what the U.S. could or would do for China in case of a Chinese-Soviet conflict.

In brief, the worldwide trend is the decline of U.S. pre-eminence and the ascendancy of Soviet power. Even Kissinger has acknowledged that it is impossible for the U.S. to continue to be the world's policeman. To conclude on this point, the Soviets' influence has soared since World War Two. Now they are an influence all over the world. Naturally, they have serious contradictions, especially as their opportunism becomes rampant imperialism. The point is that U.S. contradictions are sharper.

Internally, it is more difficult to be factual. However, the recent history of the Vietnam war cannot be shrugged off. The U.S. Army and population proved to be unreliable. There were over 500,000 desertions

Carter

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would cutting unemployment benefits create any jobs? Obviously it wouldn't.

We understand that the more capitalism develops, the more it tends to create unemployment. This is because the more capital intensive industry becomes, the fewer jobs are available relative to the growth in the labor force. (This was explained by Marx in **Capital**, v I No. XXV). But Feldstein doesn't talk about unemployment as a lack of jobs; therefore "it must be the fault of the laid-off workers."

Don't blame the system, say Carter and Feldstein; blame the victims of the system, the unemployed. It is his fault he is unemployed, either because he is not trained (we would say any worker has enough training to be an economics professor, if Feldstein is any example) or because he is whiling away the hours at the casinos of Monte Carlo or on the beaches of Tahiti on his unemployment check. And what solutions are proposed after this "analysis"—lower wages and reductions in unemployment benefits. That's Carter's great "compassion for the unemployed."