Peaceful Coexistence and Detente

1. Peaceful Coexisting: 1953-1962
   Periodization of the Cold War:
   a. High Cold War, 1945-1953 (Stalin period)
      Era of confrontation
      Defining the limit of confrontation (Berlin blockade, Korean War)
      Two camp theory (Truman Doctrine, Zhdanov thesis, NSC-68)
      Nuclear issue (not decisive, although it influenced decisions—Stalin’s avoidance of confrontation
      with USA, during the Berlin blockade and the Korean War nuclear weapons deployed, but not
decisive factor.
   b. Peaceful Coexistence, 1953-1962
      How did this a change?  Oscillating antagonism (Crockatt)
      Superpower dialogue established (series of summits)
      Concrete results of relaxation (Korea, Austria, West Germany, Japan)

A. Soviet side:
   On the other hand, Khrushchev’s adventures (risk-taking)
   Why?
   (1) ideological romanticism (superiority of socialism, desire to change the world—“We will bury
you.”  But also China factor—competition for the leadership of world revolutionary movement.
   (2) Driven by strategic inferiority .  Adventurism to cover inferiority
   (3) Domestic opposition
      One must understand the domestic factor:  Khrushchev’s peaceful coexistence policy encountered
      opposition.  1957 he was almost outsted.  Only the coalition of the military and regional leaders supporting
      Khrushchev saved him.  (Malenkov, manager of power station in Kazakhstan, and Molotov became
      Ambassador to Outer Mongolia)
      Defense Minister Zhukov’s role—paramount
      In a few months, Zhukov was dismissed.  I will come back to this on the next section.
   (4) Third World competition: peaceful coexistence does not mean elimination of class struggle:
      Soviet Union supports national liberation struggle—intense competition to influence the Third
      World
      Middle East (supported Egypt, Congo—major method of aid nationalism—economic aid, but
      its consequences were not that positive.

B: American side: coincided with the two administrations: Eisenhower and Kennedy.
   New administration—Eisenhower, John Foster Dulles, did not take advantage of the new situation,
   approached new direction coming from the Soviet Union as a new propaganda offensive.  The more
   flexible the Soviet appeared, the more cautious they became, interpriting that those were more sophisticated
   propaganda activities.
   Eisenhower often depicted as a man of peace—peace offensives, Atom for Peace, Open Sky
   proposals—genuine arms control initiatives, but recent study shows that these were actually propaganda
   efforts to counter Soviet propaganda.
   American policy toward the third world—heavily dominated by cold war ideology—anti-
Communism.  American intervention—Iran, Guatemala, Congo, Middle East (Egypt, Lebanon), Vietnam,
Cuba.
   JFK’s desire to establish dialogue with the Soviet Union—thwarted by the Berlin Crisis and the
   Cuban Missile crisis,
   The Cuban Missile crisis—turning point: clear understanding of superpower dialogue—arms
   control—Test Ban Treaty, hotline set up
   But JFK’s assassination in November 1963—LBJ’s decision to escalate the war in Vietnam—
   from then the Vietnam consumed almost the entirety of US foreign policy.

Significance of the Cuban Missile Crisis—new features:
a. de facto recognition of the other’s legitimacy and consequently de-emphasis of the irreconcilable ideological differences;
b. mutually, if tacitly, agreed spheres of influence, the American sphere being both far looser and far larger;
c. no direct military conflict between NATO and Warsaw Pact forces in Europe or elsewhere, so that the major wars involving the two (Vietnam and Afghanistan) were fought indirectly or by means of proxies;
d. agreement, again tacit, not to use nuclear weapons except as ultimate resort on the vital assumption of MAD (mutually assured destruction).

(5) Khrushchev’s military doctrine: (Digression)

2. Khrushchev and Soviet military Doctrine

ABC of nuclear strategy:
MAD: Mutually Assured Destruction—strategic stability. McNamara’s policy.
Second strike capability (first preemptive strike)
Counterforce vs counter city
Paradox of nuclear strategy: to kill weapons is bad, to kill humans is good. Why?
To kill weapons—more stringent requirements—stimulate arms race
Also it makes nuclear war more likely.
Defense is bad. If you are fully protected, you can attack with impunity. You are protected, you want to overwhelm your protection with lots of weapons.
Mutual hostage--

Khrushchev’s nuclear revolution: Changes Stalin’s military doctrine, and incorporated nuclear weapon into the center of Soviet military doctrine.
--1957, sputnik
--1959, creation of the Strategic Rocket Force
--1960, Jan. Supreme Soviet speech
--war no longer inevitable
--modern war—begin with crushing blow with nuclear weapons deep in enemy territory
--superiority of Soviet nuclear force—seeking nuclear superiority
--nuclear weapons—most decisive factor in modern war
--ground troops obsolete—demobilization of troops (1.2 million)—economic need

Peculiarity of Soviet military doctrine (highly scholastic)
Two aspects:
Military doctrine is the system of views that a state holds at a given time on the purpose and character of war, on the preparation of the country and the armed forces for it, and also on the methods of waging it.” Military doctrine has two aspects: the political and the military-technical. The former sets out the political purposes and character of war and the way in which these affect the development of the armed forces and the preparation of the country for war. The military-technical aspect deals with the methods of waging war, organization of the armed forces, their technical equipment and combat readiness.

The Soviet concept of military doctrine cannot be properly understood without reference to the concepts of military science and military art. Military science is defined as the system of knowledge about the character and laws of war, the preparation of the armed forces and the country for war, and the methods of waging it. Military art is the theory and practice of preparing and conducting military operations, and thus embraces strategy, operational art and tactics.
Political aspect/military-technical aspect
Political aspect has supremacy: complete subordination of the military to the political leadership: prevention of Bonapartism: Zhukov fired (1957)
Political leadership determines: who is the enemy, the major threat, nature of war (world war involving capitalists and communists? Local war limited only to Europe, or other regions in the third world? Those
are political questions determined by only by the Poliburo, in which the General Secretary has a great influence.) military’s subordination to political leaders.

But there was also a military-technical questions that only the professional soldiers can answer. Exclusive prerogatives of the General Staff—how to fight war assigned by the political leaders. Military-technical aspects: military art (strategy, operational, and tactics), military economy, military education, military history.

Tension between political leaders and military leaders:
Zhukov, later Ogarkov dismissed.
Military often sided with conservatives within the Poliburo, tipped the balance.

Sokolovsky—1962, Strategy—enunciated Soviet nuclear doctrine
--assumption: any war in Europe will escalate into world war (reacting to massive retaliation)
—first strike strategy, and counterforce strategy, emphasis on civil defense.
Asymmetrical development—US moving in the direction of MAD, centering around second strike, countercity strategy under MacNamara, limited war (escalation ladder).
In 1964, when Khrushchev was challenged, the military sided with conservatives—succeeded in ousting Khrushchev. Brezhnev never forgot this service. He abundantly rewarded the military.
Since 1964, relentless arms buildup (every year 4% increase in military budget)
Military burden—15 to 20% of GNP devoted to the military

3. Transition from Peaceful Coexistence to Détente: 1962-1968
--The positive movement for drastic reduction of tension was not exploited.
--64. Khrushchev ousted. New more conservative men in power (Brezhnev)—Neo-Stalinist ideological conformity
--64 LBJ’s election—Americanization of the Vietnam War
--65 PRC atomic bomb, 67, H-bomb, (Chinese Cultural Revolution, China in convultion)
--66 France withdrew from NATO
--68 Prague Spring, Alexander Dubcek’s Socialism in Human Face, Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia

Prague spring—Dubcek came to power, socialism in human face—this time Czech government was not interested in withdrawing from the Warsaw Pact, but incorporation of broad segment of population into government (undermining the one party dictactorship)—Soviet tanks rolled in, and installed a hard-line communist leader Husak.

Thus, by 1968, both sides missed the opportunity to change the superpower relations drastically—peaceful co-existence—recognition of mutual spheres of influence, and importance of superpower relations (accepting the legitimacy of the other side)—managing the superpower relations—major task.

Georgii Arbatov: “Détente is not a continuation of Cold War by other, more cautious and safer, means. It is a policy that, by its nature and objectives, is opposed to Cold War, and is aimed not at gaining victory in conflicts by means short of nuclear war, but at the settlement and prevention of conflicts, at lowering the level of military confrontation, and at the development of international cooperation.”

But this was not quite accurate. Détente was like peaceful coexistence, contained an element of cooperation as well as an element of conflict. But détente was different from peaceful coexistence that was pursued in the previous two decades.

What changed?
1. Strategic parity—end of American superiority, also Soviet military capability increased.—power of projection. —arms control became the centerpiece of détente.
2. Change in international system—tendency for multipolarity—hegemon could no longer control perepheries and emergence of other centers. Diminution of powers of the USA.
Western Europe, Japan—economic power: Europe pursuing independent policy (détente in Europe was not the same as détente in US.

China—strategic triangle.

3. Third World competition. Different context—Soviet expansion with military overtone.

A. American perspectives:

Nixon-Kissinger Administration:

Détente—one way of containment. Means to pursue containment, not objective.

US deeply involved in Vietnam War, extrication from this war—major foreign policy goal of the Nixon administration, Congressional opposition to military appropriation.

(1) arms control

Soviet military buildup (since the Cuban missile crisis—Soviets pursued relentless military buildup—annual 4-5% of military budget increase—across the board, but especially missiles. By 1972, numerically, the Soviets had caught up with the United States.

1966 340
1967 720
1968 900
1969 1060

66-67, the Soviets were building ICBMs more than one a day. (like sausage)

US no resources to catch up with it. Need to put a cap on this development.

Also détente—getting Soviet help to persuade North Vietnam to come to peace negotiations.

(2) Linkage—Soviet behavior modification, by linking the Soviets into interlocking economic relations with the West—grain sale. Particularly, the US. expected the Soviets to observe the rules of the game in the international arena—especially, in the third world. (EE Europe—soviet spheres of influence—no interference—Sonnenfeldt Doctrine, but promoting economic interaction)

But most importantly linkage—economic interaction with the Soviet Union would induce the Soviet Union to behave more responsibly without expansionism. Especially in the Third World.

(3) Strategic Triangle: Using the China Card to extract concessions from the Soviet Union.

Kissinger/Nixon fairly even-handed. Played the one against the other without leaning toward the one side.

Nixon’s historic visit to China—Shanghai Communiqué

(4) Realpolitik:

Balance of power, did not attach too much importance to ideological factor

Nixon-Kissinger’s style—secret diplomacy, backfired. Jackson-Vanik amendement—Most-Favored Nation treatment did not pass. It was tied to the Jewish immigration quota.

(5) Brzezinski-Carter’s approach:

Carter’s idealism, arms control (deep cuts), and human rights (moral values injected)

This idealism was married with Brzezinski’s anti-Sovietism.

China policy—tilted heavily on China side, supplying secret military information

Also vigorous military program to counter Soviet military capabilities. (everything Reagan did except SDI originated from the Carter administration)

B. Soviet perspectives:

Why détente—correlation of forces moving in favor of the USSR.

Most important—military dimension, reaching parity, (and recognized by the other superpower) as such.

Basic Principles Agreement on US-Soviet Relations. 1972. To the Soviets, most important document—recognition that SU was a superpower. No problems in the globe can be solved without participation of the Soviet Union.

The third world: national liberation movement must be supported—one element of correlation of forces.

Rejected linkage
Détente also needed for domestic economic reasons—economic modernization by interaction, but double-edged sword. (how to cope with subversive ideas?—increasing repression and censorship—dissidents)

Thus détente concealed within itself irreconcilable differences. Too much expectations.