

mentioned phenomenon in particular is the reassertion of Great Russian ambitions. Encircled by unstable states housing Russian minorities, Russia has begun to express interventionist sentiments reminiscent of the Brezhnev doctrine.¹⁴ At the same time its military doctrine has undergone a paradoxical revision. Recently the Russians abandoned their commitment to the no-first use of nuclear weapons; an undertaking that Brezhnev had made in 1982. The irony is that the no-first-use arsenal was on hair-trigger alert throughout the 1980's. Concerned now about the growth of Chinese power, the Russians have abandoned that undertaking at the very time that they have begun to stand down more and more of their nuclear weapons.¹⁵

There is another irony in all this. While they fear the Chinese, the Russians, driven by the desperate need to acquire hard currency or to conduct trade without it, have been actively engaged in selling war materials to the People's Republic. Outwardly, however, the Russians express little anxiety about the Chinese military buildup, arguing that it will be ten to fifteen years before China constitutes a real threat.

Gorbachev's vision of Russia and the Pacific Century has been consigned to history's scrap heap for the moment. Once again, conditions in the Russian Far East are resonant of conditions in the same area after the First World War when there was talk of autonomy and local officials in Khabarovsk and Vladivostok were uncertain which claimants to back in far off Moscow. What development there is appears to be largely the result of local initiatives.¹⁶ In some respects the region has everything. Proximity to large, rich markets, abundant natural resources, and cheap labour. In other respects, it seems doomed to stagnate; tainted by economic and political instability, haunted by the prospect of hyper-inflation, and constrained by a