The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe

Options for the 1980s and Beyond

John Van Oudenaren

Rand

PROJECT AIR FORCE
The research reported here was sponsored by the Directorate of Operational Requirements, Deputy Chief of Staff/Research, Development, and Acquisition, Hq USAF, under Contract F49620-82-C-0018. The United States Government is authorized to reproduce and distribute reprints for governmental purposes notwithstanding any copyright notation hereon.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Van Oudenaren, John.
The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.
"R-3136-AF."
DJK45.S65V36 1984 327.47 84-8349
ISBN 0-8330-0565-0

The Rand Publications Series: The Report is the principal publication documenting and transmitting Rand's major research findings and final research results. The Rand Note reports other outputs of sponsored research for general distribution. Publications of The Rand Corporation do not necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the sponsors of Rand research.

Published by The Rand Corporation
The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe

Options for the 1980s and Beyond

John Van Oudenaren

March 1984

A Project AIR FORCE report prepared for the United States Air Force

Rand

1700 MAIN STREET
P.O. BOX 2138
SANTA MONICA, CA 90406-2138

APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE: DISTRIBUTION UNLIMITED
PREFACE

This report was prepared as part of the Project AIR FORCE study “Soviet Vulnerabilities in Eastern Europe,” directed by A. Ross Johnson. The study seeks to illuminate the security issues posed for the United States by the problems and opportunities the USSR will face in the 1980s in Eastern Europe. It addresses economic, political, and military dimensions of the challenge to Soviet interests in Eastern Europe. The present report examines the importance of Eastern Europe to the USSR, the Soviet approach toward the region in the past, and possible future short-term and longer-term Soviet policies toward Eastern Europe.

The author would like to thank James F. Brown, Harry Gelman, and A. Ross Johnson for their comments on an earlier draft of this report, and Billie Fenton for her typing assistance.

* * * * *

The research for and most of the writing of this report were completed before the death of Yuri Andropov in February 1984. Because the report focuses on the structural problems that the USSR faces in Eastern Europe, however, there is little reason to expect that its findings will not apply to Soviet policy under Andropov’s successor.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

THE SOVIET DILEMMA

More than three years after the birth of Solidarity, Eastern Europe remains, from the Soviet perspective, in crisis. While the threat from Solidarity has been contained, there is little prospect for the quick economic and political “normalization” in Poland that Soviet leaders desire. There is less turmoil in the other countries of the bloc, but all are affected to some degree by economic stagnation and low-level political dissent.

The current crisis is simply the latest manifestation of three interrelated sets of problems that confront the Soviets in Eastern Europe:

- On the national level, the East European regimes lack full legitimacy.
- On the intrabloc level, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) and the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO) remain to some extent “paper organizations” that lag behind their Western counterparts in the integration process.
- On the East-West level, repression in Eastern Europe serves to alienate West European publics, promotes the cohesion of NATO and the European Community (EC), and thus frustrates Soviet attempts to realize a pan-European order in which the USSR could exercise a dominant influence on the affairs of the Continent.

Despite these continuing difficulties, Soviet leaders judge the benefits derived from controlling Eastern Europe worth the costs.

EASTERN EUROPE'S CONTRIBUTION TO SOVIET POWER

Eastern Europe makes a threefold contribution to Soviet global power:

- First, there is the passive contribution that the mere control of East European territory makes to Soviet power. Eastern Europe serves both as a buffer against military attack from the West and as a springboard for potential military attack on or intimidation of Western Europe by Soviet forces.
• Second, there is the active placement of economic, technological, scientific, military, and other resources at the disposal of the USSR.
• Third, Eastern Europe makes a largely political contribution by allowing the USSR to claim leadership of a world "system." This leadership role not only helps to underwrite the Soviet leadership at home, but elevates the USSR to a political status superior to that of all other countries except the United States.

THE SOVIET PREFERRED VISION FOR A EUROPEAN ORDER

In addition to making these contributions, Eastern Europe plays a vital role in the Soviet Union's long-term efforts to create by political means an "all-European" order, the basic elements of which are:

• A tightly knit, cohesive, East European bloc.
• A weak, fragmented Western Europe not closely tied to the United States.

In the Soviets' preferred order, Europe would be a loose agglomeration of small and medium powers, responsive to the USSR in security matters and willing to cooperate with the USSR in economic matters. At the same time, the USSR's "class-based" solidarity with the "People's Democracies" in Eastern Europe would insure close integration of these states with the Soviet Union.

Soviet policymakers have been continually frustrated in their attempts to move toward the realization of this pan-European vision by difficulties in Eastern Europe. Soviet leaders have sought to stabilize Eastern Europe, in part to allow the pursuit of an active policy toward Western Europe. But paradoxically, an active policy toward Western Europe, such as that pursued in the 1970s, leads to a weakening of Soviet and Communist control in Eastern Europe.

BREZHNEV'S INITIAL SUCCESSES

While Khrushchev sought to realize this "preferred vision" by proposing sweeping changes both in Eastern Europe and in East-West relations, Brezhnev adopted a more cautious, long-term approach. After the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, Brezhnev moved forward on several fronts, hoping to solve the internal, the intrabloc, and the East-West dilemmas over a period of many years. There were
three elements in Brezhnev’s East European and “all-European” policy:

- Integration in Eastern Europe at all levels.
- Limited diversity and devolution of responsibility within the bloc.
- Active détente policy based on bloc-to-bloc symmetry.

Integration in Eastern Europe

- In the political area, the 1970s were marked by ongoing efforts to place relations among the socialist countries on a stable, institutionalized basis. Political coordination among the members of the bloc was a prerequisite to the active policy toward the West and the Third World that the USSR pursued.
- In the economic area, Brezhnev embarked upon a long-term effort to achieve integration “from the bottom up” through a systematic interlocking of the basic elements of the East European economies. This effort included three main elements: coordination of plans, cooperation in long-term target programs, and CMEA investment projects.
- In the military area, the Brezhnev regime moved to increase the effectiveness of the Warsaw Pact as an alliance and its responsiveness to Soviet requirements. New Warsaw Pact institutions were formed whose purpose was to coordinate Pact military activities without provoking nationalist resentment in Eastern Europe.
- In the ideological, cultural, and national areas, the Brezhnev regime also sought to promote integration “from the bottom up.” It initiated a long-term effort to translate the principles of “socialist internationalism” into reality, attempting to lend substance to the claim that Communism is creating a true community of “peoples” that is qualitatively different from anything that has existed in history.

Limited Diversity

At the same time that it sought to increase both the pace and the scope of integration in Eastern Europe, the Brezhnev regime was willing to permit, within limits, a certain devolution of responsibility to the national leaderships within the bloc:

- In Hungary, the Soviets permitted the development of the New Economic Mechanism (NEM).
• In Poland, they tolerated Gierek’s “consumerism” and his extensive ties with the West.
• In East Germany, they permitted some economic experimentation and the development of the GDR’s special relationship with West Germany.
• In Romania, they permitted a relatively independent foreign policy.

Diversity was permissible because it developed within an overall context of tight Soviet control and universal conformance on the few key issues that the Soviet leaders regard as truly important.

This stress on unity in the context of controlled diversity was implicit in the concept of “real, existing socialism” which Brezhnev popularized. This concept serves both to legitimize the diversity that exists in the bloc and as a rationale for enforcement of strict adherence to those fundamental points upon which there can be no divergence from the Soviet position: loyalty to the USSR on foreign affairs and maintenance of the primacy of the Communist party in the domestic setting.

Détente

Aware that an active policy toward the West could lead to loss of control in the East, Brezhnev sought to base his détente policy on the explicit claim that détente was possible only because the West recognized a decisive shift in the global balance toward the Soviet Union, and with it the permanence and legitimacy of Soviet control in Eastern Europe. Brezhnev sought to enlist the West, and Western Europe especially, in underwriting the stability of Eastern Europe.

The centerpiece of this policy was the European security conference that the members of the Warsaw Pact began to promote in 1969. The 1973–1975 Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) was interpreted by the Soviet Union and its allies as the legal and political framework for new political, economic, and security arrangements between Eastern and Western Europe, the effect of which would be to increase the Soviet Union’s influence in the West without undermining its hold on the East.

Détente, as portrayed by Soviet foreign-policy specialists, was to begin a long-term process leading to the gradual decline of NATO’s military effectiveness, the steady erosion of American influence on the Continent, and growing economic ties between the two parts of Europe—in short, the creation by degrees of a de facto system of what the Soviets call “collective security.” As in the 1950s, by promoting this all-European system, the Soviet Union sought to exploit the
apparent symmetry between the Eastern and Western, Communist and non-Communist economic and political organizations in Europe.

COLLAPSE OF THE BREZHEV POLICY AND SOVIET ASSESSMENTS

Despite its initial successes, it was clear by 1980 that the Brezhnev policy had failed:

- On the *national* level, it was apparent that the policy of permitting limited diversity in the overall context of a stepped-up integration effort had not helped to legitimize Communist rule.
- On the *intrabloc* level, the integration effort was clearly failing, as individual Communist regimes were too preoccupied with their own pressing economic and political problems to take a long-term perspective.
- On the *East-West* level, the Soviets were pleased with the disarray in NATO but not confident that this was leading to the realization of their preferred pan-European order.

From the Soviet perspective, the causes for the collapse of the Brezhnev policy were both economic and political and arose from both conditions within Eastern Europe and the changing global situation. Far more than they had done even in the case of Czechoslovakia in 1968, Soviet and bloc commentators stressed the broad geopolitical significance of events in Poland. Soviet spokesmen portrayed the Polish crisis as a fundamental challenge to the Soviet Union's position in Europe and, by extension, its global “equality” with the United States.

Initially, Soviet commentators focused on external “subversion” as the cause of Poland’s difficulties. As the crisis developed, however, there was greater discussion of *internal* causes. The discussions fell into three broad categories: those that focused on the mistakes of a particular Polish leadership—usually that of Edward Gierk and his associates; those that focused on the entire pattern of postwar Polish history; and those that touched upon problems general to “building socialism,” not only in Poland, but elsewhere as well.

The longer the crisis in Poland has dragged on, the more willing Soviet analysts have been to acknowledge the deep, internal causes of Poland’s problems and the possibility that the same causes could lead to trouble elsewhere in the bloc, including the USSR itself. Elements of particular concern include:
• The persistence of pluralism, including an independent peasantry and the Catholic church.
• Weak and corrupt Communist parties.
• Failure to seal off Eastern Europe from Western influence.
• Economic dependence on the West.

The extent to which the Soviets will move to address these fundamental causes of dissent is not yet clear. At a minimum, Soviet analysis of Eastern Europe does not point in the direction of reform and liberalization, but toward greater discipline and closer adherence to the Soviet model.

LIKELY RESPONSES

Short- to Medium-Term Responses

Because the Soviets regard events in Eastern Europe in national, bloc, and East-West terms, they have acted on all three levels in their responses to the current crisis:

• On the East-West level, the response has been the most unequivocal. The Soviets blame the West and the United States in particular for Poland’s difficulties. They insist that peace itself was threatened by alleged Western efforts to subvert Poland. In what might be regarded as the economic and financial corollary to the Soviet political line, Soviet officials have made clear to Western bankers that the USSR does not consider itself bound under an “umbrella theory” to take responsibility for the external debts of Poland or other Eastern bloc states.

• On the intrabloc level, the Soviet line has been much less clear. The Soviets have taken a harder line toward the East European states on the question of subsidies. They have also pushed for intensified efforts at integration and have led an effort to solve certain sectoral problems that threaten bloc economic progress. These problem areas include food, energy, and the technological lag between East and West. Some Soviet officials are arguing that stepped-up integration within CMEA must be made a substitute for East-West ties, while others seem to acknowledge that ties with the West can complement integration efforts. For now, it appears that the Soviet Union is following a two-pronged strategy: on the one hand pressing for greater integration in order to lower vulnerability to Western sanctions, while
on the other attempting to convince the West that a sanctions policy is futile and that it therefore ought to be abandoned. The more autarkic CMEA appears, the more likely it is that autarky will not in fact be required, since political leaders in the West will conclude either that sanctions will not work or that the West has an interest in preventing the bloc from “turning inward.”

- Finally, on the internal level, the Soviets, particularly after Andropov’s succession to power, appeared to be taking a tougher line on dissidence and the admissibility of pluralism in the East European countries. Soviet statements as well as the example of Soviet actions in the USSR itself suggest that the leaderships in Poland and other bloc countries will be prodded to keep an even closer rein on dissidents than they have previously.

Despite the Soviet Union’s “troubles of empire” in Eastern Europe, it would be erroneous to conclude that the Soviet leadership has ceased to value the bloc or is about to fundamentally reconsider the place of Eastern Europe in Soviet long-term policy. For now, it appears safe to conclude that three elements persist in Soviet thinking:

- There are favorable prospects—perhaps not as favorable as those of ten years ago, but still good—for increasing the USSR’s global political influence.
- Europe is still the “main thing” in world politics, the key to cutting back U.S. and enhancing Soviet global political, economic, and military power.
- Eastern Europe has served the USSR well as a military springboard and diplomatic platform for exercising influence over Western Europe and promoting a long-term “all-European” policy.

Only if any one of these beliefs ceased to be operative would the way be opened for fundamental change in Eastern Europe, although this would by no means be guaranteed.

The Long Term

Looking to the more distant future, it is possible to imagine radically different solutions to the problems of Eastern Europe. Three alternatives are possible:
• The "solution" that the Soviets themselves prefer is the creation of a Soviet-dominated system of "collective security" in which Western Europe would in effect help to underwrite the costs of dominating Eastern Europe.

• The "solution" that many in Western and Eastern Europe would favor is a "Europe des patries" in which the East European states would have greater independence and there would be a "deideologization" of East European politics.

• The third "solution," identified simply as a Soviet empire, would not require a dramatic break with the past but could result from incremental changes in the current situation.

The third solution is the most likely, although it is not the first choice of anyone—the Soviets, the East Europeans, or the West. In such an empire, the Soviet or Russian nation-state will continue to dominate other nations, but will do so in the name of a historic mission that will be postponed indefinitely and in whose realization virtually no one any longer believes. The Soviet bloc, or the "world socialist system," may well come to resemble the USSR itself, with propaganda maintaining a facade of organic unity, while in reality a kind of mechanical unity will be imposed by the kinds of coercive controls "from above" usually associated with empires.

The Soviet empire is likely to characterized by:

• Decreased Soviet interest in establishing the legitimacy of Communism among the peoples of Eastern Europe, and corresponding emphasis on the cultivation of key elites or interest groups (e.g., the conservative party apparatuses) that are able to impose control.

• Less reliance on consumer satisfaction and attempts to "humanize" socialism in attracting popular support for regime objectives, and greater resort to police repression.

• A corresponding increase in the internal role of police and paramilitary forces.

• Maintenance and accentuation of the prevailing bilateral, "radial" pattern of economic, military, and cultural ties, rather than genuine multilateral integration.

• Continued and perhaps an increasing drain on metropolitan (e.g., Soviet) resources.

• Less intrabloc diversity.

• Periodic upheavals that will be suppressed by military means.

Soviet leaders are frustrated that Eastern Europe is not making greater positive contributions to the economic, political, and military
capabilities of the “world socialist system.” In terms of its direct contributions to Soviet economic and military power, Eastern Europe is a declining asset. The mere fact of Soviet leadership of a “system” is an asset, however, something that has become a permanent feature of the postwar international system which the West itself, with its status quo orientation, is increasingly unwilling to challenge.

This “system” has little real cohesion other than that imposed from without by Soviet military power. Instead of serving as a model for a future world order, the “system” is coming to resemble a traditional empire. As an empire, it shows little sign of breaking into its constituent national parts or developing a real respect for the sovereignty of individual nations. But like an empire, it is also too bound to a particular nation-state—the Russian—and a particular political elite to transcend its origins in the great power politics of the 1940s and present itself as a universal model that could supplant the Western-dominated system that was created after World War II.

Barring major political or economic collapse on either the Eastern or the Western side, the balance of power will be such that the USSR will be too strong to be forced to relinquish its East European empire, but too weak—in the whole range of economic, political, and other forms of power—to transform Eastern Europe into a genuine “world system” operating according to its own inner logic and drawing upon its own sources of strength.

The Soviet Union may have to devote increasing attention and resources to the mere preservation of the empire from internal corrosion and what it regards as external subversion. It will continue to pursue an active policy toward the West, but one that will have fewer and fewer of the “positive” features of Khrushchev’s and Brezhnev’s policies. The USSR will use its assets to undermine Western and particularly U.S. influence wherever it can, but probably increasingly only through direct and indirect violence rather than competition by “legitimate” means.

A stagnant, inward-looking bloc would offer little prospect of fulfilling its claim to eventually supplant the existing world “system.” The influence of the bloc on world affairs would rest, perhaps even more than it now does, on Soviet military and particularly strategic nuclear power. As a result of this turn away from reliance on nonmilitary achievements to project global influence, Eastern Europe could become increasingly marginal to global politics, except insofar as it affects attitudes in Western Europe. An Eastern Europe in turmoil could stiffen West European resistance to Soviet pressures. Alternatively, disorder in Eastern Europe, coupled with the latent threat of Soviet nuclear power, could demoralize Western Europe and lead to Soviet political gains.
CONTENTS

PREFACE ................................................... iii

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS .............................. v
   The Soviet Dilemma .................................... v
   Eastern Europe’s Contribution to Soviet Power ...... v
   The Soviet Preferred Vision for a European Order ... vi
   Brezhnev’s Initial Successes .......................... vi
   Collapse of the Brezhnev Policy and Soviet Assessments ix
   Likely Responses ....................................... x

Section
I.  INTRODUCTION ......................................... 1

II.  THE SOVIET PREFERRED VISION OF THE FUTURE
    IN EASTERN EUROPE ................................. 3
    The Stalinist Legacy .................................... 3
    Eastern Europe’s Importance to the Soviet Union .... 9
    The Soviet Preferred Vision ........................... 12

III. EASTERN EUROPE IN THE 1970s ...................... 18
    Integration Within the Bloc ............................ 20
    Devolution of Responsibility and National Diversity .. 39
    Détente .................................................. 45

IV.  ASSESSMENTS OF THE CURRENT CRISIS ............ 50
    The International Dimension .......................... 52
    The Domestic Dimension ................................ 55

V.  THE OUTLOOK ........................................... 62
    Short- to Medium-Term Responses ..................... 62
    The Long Term .......................................... 73
I. INTRODUCTION

Events in Poland since August 1980 have focused world attention once again on Eastern Europe and its relationship to the Soviet Union. Although the 1970s were a period of relative stability throughout Eastern Europe, the rise of Solidarity and its suppression by Polish militia some sixteen months later revealed the deceptive nature of the prevailing calm. These events also demonstrated once again the fundamental dilemma of East European politics: The Soviet Union is unable to integrate the region into an economically viable community with its own sources of political legitimacy, but at the same time it is unwilling to relax its grip and permit genuine autonomy. The result is political impasse and recurring violence in the heart of Europe.¹

In Poland itself, hopes for peaceful and incremental change have been dashed without any corresponding increase in prospects for stabilization on terms favorable to the Soviet Union. The prospects for "irrational" violence have thus increased, even as the futility of "rational" resistance to Communist rule seems more apparent than ever. The divisions and uncertainty among Solidarity's underground leaders, insofar as they are not entirely the product of the rigors of clandestine existence, probably reflect the inherent difficulty of responding to a situation in which neither a return to incrementalism nor acquiescence in the status quo is feasible.

Ironically, much of the vacillation and uncertainty evident in Poland appears to be mirrored on the Soviet side as well. Although the Soviet leadership was decisive in declaring its support for martial law, it seems to have no clear notion of how, having destroyed Solidarity as a vehicle of discontent without eliminating the discontent itself, it can proceed to place Communist control on a more secure basis in Poland and throughout the bloc.

It cannot be stressed too strongly that the virtual collapse of Communist rule in Poland was not simply the collapse of a particular regime or of a particular set of economic policies. It was also the end of a certain set of assumptions and of policies based on these assumptions by which Soviet leaders thought, mistakenly as it turned out, that they were gradually beginning to place their rule in Eastern Europe on

¹Unless otherwise indicated, the term "Eastern Europe" is used throughout this report in a political rather than strictly geographical sense. It refers to the six smaller members of the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO): Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania.
a more stable basis. The current reticence in the Soviet press about Eastern Europe—apart from the ritual denunciations of the West for its alleged role in fomenting the crisis—probably reflects an awareness that past policies are bankrupt and that the Soviet Union is back to square one in developing a long-range plan for Eastern Europe.

The present report considers Soviet options in Eastern Europe by examining past and present Soviet policy as well as current Soviet statements on the crisis. Although the Polish situation is by far the most serious problem that the Soviet leadership faces, it is by no means an isolated case. As will be seen, the rest of Eastern Europe has also entered a period of crisis, partly as a result of the spillover effects from but more importantly in response to the same underlying causes that led to the events in Poland.

The report will examine four broad topics. First, it will analyze in some depth what might be called the Soviet Union's "preferred vision" for the future of Eastern Europe as it was articulated prior to August 1980. Although this analysis will focus on Soviet assessments of developments within the bloc itself, it will also touch upon general features of the Soviet Union's preferred vision for relations with Western Europe and the United States, both of which provide the context in which the long-term evolution of Eastern Europe must be seen. Second, the report will examine in some detail the actual policies that Brezhnev followed in attempting to translate the vision into reality. Third, the report will examine the current crisis—economic and political—in Eastern Europe, in order to isolate precisely what, in the Soviet assessment, went wrong in realizing this preferred vision. The report will ask which of the elements that contributed to the crisis are seen as subject to repair in the short to medium term, and which, if any, are seen as so deep-seated that they might encourage the Soviet leadership to fundamentally rethink its relationship to Eastern Europe. Fourth and finally, the report will examine likely Soviet responses to the current crisis.
II. THE SOVIET PREFERRED VISION OF THE FUTURE IN EASTERN EUROPE

THE STALINIST LEGACY

The death of Yuri Andropov in February 1984 put an end to whatever remained of the speculation once common in the West that his rise to power presaged a new era in Soviet relations with Eastern Europe. Andropov had come to his post with first-hand knowledge of the region, having served as ambassador to Hungary during the 1956 uprising and later as Central Committee department head responsible for relations with ruling Communist parties. More recently, his activities as head of the KGB had included close monitoring of events in Eastern Europe and a direct role in formulating the Soviet response to the crisis in Poland. These experiences, and the fact that past leadership changes in the USSR had had repercussions in Eastern Europe, raised expectations in the West about fundamental change.

It is impossible to determine to what extent these expectations were misplaced from the outset and to what extent they were simply proven wrong by Andropov's illness and the shortness of his rule. There is good reason to suspect, however, that deep-seated structural factors would have hindered even a determined drive to change the East European order. Indeed, the policy of any Soviet leader toward the region must be set against the backdrop of a strategic situation in Eastern Europe that was created by Stalin and that has remained basically unchanged since the early 1950s.

Using the occupying Red Army as a protective shield, between 1945 and 1948 Stalin encouraged the local Communist parties to cement their control over the various national governments, to eliminate political opposition, and to begin, usually under the guise of reform and the rooting out of Nazi collaborators, the process of rebuilding economy and society along Soviet and Stalinist lines.\footnote{Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, \textit{The Soviet Bloc}, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1967.} It is true that from 1944 to 1948 Stalin continued to tolerate a certain diversity within the bloc, most notably in Czechoslovakia, where elections and a considerable degree of internal democracy survived until the 1948 coup. The slow and uneven pace of Sovietization reflected a defensive concern on Stalin's part that moving too quickly could provoke American and
British intervention, as well as an offensive desire to extend Soviet influence to Western Europe, perhaps via the Sovietization of the whole of Germany or the seizure of power by the Communist parties of France and Italy. Such an extension of Communist power could occur only if a rigid division of Europe was avoided and if the United States was not deflected from its policy of gradual disengagement from Europe.

With the stabilization of Western Europe and the commitment of American resources to the Continent through the Marshall Plan, prospects for Soviet gains further to the West became all but unrealizable. Indeed, from the Soviet point of view there was some danger that Soviet positions in Eastern Europe, especially in Czechoslovakia, might be threatened. In view of both the lowered expectations of gains in the West and defensive fears of losses in the East, Stalin moved to stamp out the limited elements of pluralism and diversity that remained in Eastern Europe and sealed, in effect, the division of Europe. A key element in this process was the coup in Czechoslovakia in 1948.

From 1948 onward, Stalin’s policy was simple and brutal, designed to extract the maximum short-term economic and strategic benefit from the Red Army’s wartime conquests. East European economic resources were appropriated directly by the USSR through the formation of Soviet-East European joint stock companies, with little regard for either the long-term viability of the East European economies or the effects of economic policy on popular support for Communist rule. In the military sphere, the Soviets tapped East European manpower by establishing national armies based on universal conscription, but there was no attempt to give the national military establishments their own national identity and thus legitimize them in their respective national settings. Many of the officers in the East European armed forces were Soviet citizens, Red Army veterans of Polish, Hungarian, or Czech nationality seconded to the various East European armies. With their help and that of numerous Soviet advisers placed at different levels in the East European armies, the Soviet high command was able to administer these armies as virtual branches of the Red Army.²

In light of circumstances at the time, Stalin’s policies were understandable. Stalin himself appears to have been convinced that the USSR eventually would have to fight another war with the capitalist states. The “fatal inevitability” of another war made rapid Sovietization of Eastern Europe a highly rational policy—both for the security

---

buffer that it would provide against land invasion or air attack from the West, and because the wholesale removal of its industrial plant to Russia would speed postwar reconstruction and thus improve Soviet defense capabilities.

Whatever the successes of Stalin’s policies in consolidating the Soviet grip on Eastern Europe and extracting resources from the region for short-term benefit, however, it can be seen in retrospect that these successes were achieved at the price of creating long-term difficulties with which all post-Stalin leaderships—from Khrushchev to Andropov—have had to contend. These difficulties were apparent on three levels: the national, the intrabloc, and the interbloc or East-West. The first set of problems concerns the relationship of the peoples of Eastern Europe to their leaders. The second set concerns the relationship of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe to each other and to the Soviet Union. The third set concerns the relationship of the bloc as a whole to the outside world, and in particular to the competing political and economic system in Western Europe that was established with the support of the United States. These problems, it should be stressed, are analytically distinct, but in practice they interact with and often reinforce each other.

On the national level, the local Communist parties, often headed by Moscow-trained Comintern veterans, were unable, except in Yugoslavia, to acquire legitimacy in the eyes of their own people. In the absence of such legitimacy, the East European states were destined to remain unstable, with their leaders perceived as agents of a foreign power. The Soviet Union did little to encourage the development of legitimate regimes in Eastern Europe, as it failed to adjust its policies toward the individual East European states in ways that took account of their diversity. The East European states were transformed in effect into miniature versions of the Soviet Union, with their own autarkic economic systems, their own heavy industry and collectivized agriculture, and their own secret police forces—all presided over by dictators submissive to Stalin and with personality cults patterned after that of the Soviet leader.

On the intrabloc level, the Soviet Union did not lay any basis for the long-term integration of the East European countries into the Soviet sphere of influence. It did not create an effective multilateral structure for political, military, and economic integration. The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) was established in 1949, but its role in promoting economic integration was negligible. Its real purpose was the primarily political one of serving as a diplomatic mechanism to isolate Yugoslavia and as an Eastern counterweight to the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC), the organization
established in the West to implement the Marshall Plan. Such efforts as there were to tie the economies of Eastern Europe to the Soviet economy were mainly on the bilateral level. The Stalinist preference for economic autarky, coupled with the traditional animosities of the East European peoples toward the Russians and in many cases toward each other, assured that CMEA would remain largely a paper organization.

Finally, on the East-West level, the Sovietization of Eastern Europe assured that the USSR would be unable to extend its influence into Western Europe. While Stalin initially permitted at least the appearance of flexibility, allowing elements of pluralism to persist in Eastern Europe and continuing to discuss the reunification of Germany, it became clear in the West that Stalin was really looking for a formula that would permit both the Sovietization of Eastern Europe and the return in Western Europe to the historically "normal" situation in which the United States would disengage. In the end, Stalin placed a higher priority on cementing his control in the East than on pursuing a credible policy toward the West that might have prevented the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), the European Coal and Steel Community, and NATO.

By the time of Stalin's death in March of 1953, it was clear to many in the Soviet elite that new approaches were needed to overcome the impasse into which Stalin's policies had led on all three levels. The series of crises beginning with the riots in East Berlin in 1953 and culminating in the Hungarian uprising of 1956 and the "Polish October" of that same year pointed up the unpopularity of the regimes that had been imposed in the late 1940s. In responding to these challenges on the national level, the Soviet leadership began to permit—even to encourage—a certain diversity of political and economic development. It was hoped that this diversity would make for greater economic productivity and would permit the national Communist regimes to win the loyalty of their populations. The exploitative joint stock companies were abolished in 1954, and trade once again became a process of mutual benefit, rather than the extraction of East European resources for Soviet gain. Military establishments were "renationalized" in the 1953–1956 period, as Soviet officers were removed from command positions and certain symbolic measures such as the reintroduction of national uniforms were taken.

After removing the most onerous direct control over the economic, political, and military affairs of the East European states in the hope that doing so would help to stabilize their regimes domestically, the Soviets were forced to look to other, more subtle means of exerting control and tapping the resources of the bloc. Thus in addition to
THE SOVIET PREFERRED VISION

encouraging reforms at the national level, the post-Stalin leadership began to develop multilateral institutions that would give Eastern Europe less the appearance of a collection of Soviet "satellites" and more that of an international alliance of sovereign states. While CMEA had been founded in 1949 for largely political and propagandistic reasons, Khrushchev sought to transform it into a genuine mechanism for supranational planning and integration. There was a similar push for integration in the military and defense production fields. Exploitation of the East European economies for the benefit of the Soviet defense industry, previously a bilateral matter, became the responsibility of the Military-Industrial Commission of CMEA, established in 1957.

Although mainly designed to preserve the substance of Soviet control while permitting a loosening of the bilateral ties established under Stalin, CMEA and the WTO also had an outward-looking rationale—a part to play in the new approach to East-West relations that the post-Stalin leadership instituted along with its changed policies at the national and intrabloc levels. By the mid-1950s, the Soviet leadership had concluded that war with the West was neither imminent nor inevitable. The policy of "peaceful coexistence," proclaimed by Khrushchev at the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956 but in fact begun shortly after the death of Stalin, demanded a more relaxed, long-term approach to Eastern Europe—one that would turn the region into a stable and competitive countermodel to the West and would thus contribute to the Soviet victory in the peaceful competition with "imperialism." After 1956, the Soviets began to take steps toward strengthening CMEA and promoting integration, although even then there was little urgency about the effort.

Ultimately, Khrushchev's policies were not successful in overcoming any of the dilemmas inherited from Stalin. While it is true that after the Hungarian uprising of 1956 there was no broadly based popular revolt in Eastern Europe until the crisis in Czechoslovakia some twelve years later, no Soviet leader could be fully confident that the governments of Eastern Europe were stable and legitimate. Similarly, Khrushchev's efforts to establish a self-sustaining "socialist commonwealth" in Eastern Europe were not really successful. The reasons

---


for failure included Romania’s growing resistance to a supranational planning and integration effort that might relegate it to permanent status as an agricultural and raw-material supplier to the more industrialized members of the bloc. Romania also resisted close integration of its military forces with those of the USSR. In President Ceausescu’s view, integration would be more costly than a purely national military policy and would be tantamount to Soviet control of the Romanian armed forces.

Nor was Khrushchev successful in achieving a breakthrough in relations with the West. The initial post-Stalin détente gave way to an increasing obsession with Berlin and a heightening of East-West tension that eventually paralyzed Soviet diplomacy in Europe. A series of setbacks in Soviet foreign policy, beginning with the Sino-Soviet split and including the Cuban missile crisis, in fact weakened Soviet authority in Eastern Europe and opened the way to a period of increasing drift in East European politics that culminated in the 1968 crisis in Czechoslovakia.

Much the way Stalin left his successors dilemmas on the national, intrabloc, and East-West or interbloc levels, Khrushchev passed on to Brezhnev and Kosygin essentially the same set of problems. Similarly, the present crisis in Eastern Europe confirms that Brezhnev, despite a promising beginning in the early 1970s, passed on the same problems to his successors. The imposition of martial law in Poland attests to the continued failure of Communist regimes to attain legitimacy in their domestic settings. The economic stagnation in the bloc is at least in part attributable to the failure of integration within CMEA—a failure that was underscored in May 1983 by the clashes between Romania and the Soviet Union over the convening of a CMEA summit. And the Warsaw Pact “peace offensive” toward Western Europe, whatever its short-term prospects, has been undertaken to head off implementation of a missile deployment proposal whose very adoption attests to the failure of the Soviet Union to achieve a dramatic breakthrough in its efforts to acquire influence over Western as well as Eastern Europe. While the Soviet Union has enjoyed some success in promoting its concept of a stable and equitable European order in the peace movement and the Social Democratic parties of Northern Europe, it has not been able to block the missile deployments or to prevent the election of conservative governments in Britain, West Germany, and several of the smaller states.
EASTERN EUROPE'S IMPORTANCE TO THE SOVIET UNION

Despite the persistence of the problems outlined above, it would be erroneous to conclude that Soviet policy in Eastern Europe under Stalin, Khrushchev, or their successors has been a complete failure. The record is more mixed and must be evaluated with reference to the multiple goals that the Soviet Union has pursued in Eastern Europe. Eastern Europe has made three different kinds of contributions to the Soviet Union that have made the USSR reluctant to loosen its grip on the region.

First, there is the passive contribution that the mere control of East European territory makes to Soviet power. As has frequently been pointed out, Eastern Europe serves both as a buffer against military attack from the West and a springboard for potential military attack on or intimidation of Western Europe by Soviet forces. Moreover, because Eastern Europe incorporates part of prewar Germany, Soviet control of the region has particular uses against Germany. It prevents the recreation in any form of a German state that, with a population of some 80 million, might again threaten Russia. It also permits the exertion of pressure on West Germany from the East. Finally, the passive contribution that control of Eastern Europe makes to Soviet security is ideological and political as well as military: It provides an added buffer of Communist control in which anti-Communist ideas from the West can be blocked from entering the USSR proper.

The second type of contribution that Eastern Europe makes to Soviet power is the active placement of economic, technological, scientific, military, and other resources at the disposal of the USSR. With a population of 110 million and an aggregate annual GNP of some $720 billion, Eastern Europe is at least potentially a major increment to Soviet global power. East European manpower provides an important share of the forces that would be used initially against Western Europe in the event of war. East European scientists provide important help to the USSR in particular high-technology industries, East European intelligence services assist the KGB in its worldwide activities, and

---


7It is frequently pointed out that Eastern Europe has served as a conduit for subversive influences rather than as a buffer against them. That it has done so was surely not intended by Soviet leaders, however, who have tended to see this as a temporary problem that can be solved by changes within Eastern Europe and, as will be shown, by changes in East-West relations as well.

8In 1982 dollars, converted at purchasing-power equivalents. (CIA Handbook of Economic Statistics, 1983.)
East European economies are making large investments in the development of Soviet energy and raw-material industries. While there are economic costs associated with Soviet domination of Eastern Europe, these are mostly in the form of implicit trade subsidies that represent an opportunity cost in lost exports to the West rather than direct transfers of resources. In any case, Soviet leaders expect these costs to diminish over time.

The third and final type of contribution that Eastern Europe makes to Soviet power is largely political. While observers may question how useful a security buffer actually is in an age of intercontinental ballistic missiles or may debate the actual contribution that Eastern Europe makes to Soviet economic, military, technological, and other capabilities, these contributions may well be less important than the role that Eastern Europe plays in allowing the USSR to claim leadership of a world “system.” This leadership role not only helps to underwrite the Soviet regime at home, but it also confers on the USSR enormous political advantages in the international sphere. It elevates the USSR to a political status superior to that of all other countries (except the United States) and is, along with the possession of a huge arsenal of nuclear weapons, the Soviet Union’s main claim to the right to “equality” and “equal security” with the United States.

In general, the USSR has been most successful in exploiting the passive contribution. By inserting large armies into Eastern Europe, it has maximized the buffer and springboard functions of the region. It probably can also be said that the USSR has been least successful in extracting active contributions to Soviet power from Eastern Europe. The full extent of these contributions will be examined below; for now, we simply note that the mere fact that Western analysts sometimes question whether Eastern Europe might not be an economic or military

---


10Abraham Becker notes: “[Soviet subsidies] are implicit rather than direct subsidies and reflect the opportunity costs of Soviet-East European trade flows. To some extent, therefore, the subsidies are autonomous consequences of CEMA pricing arrangements—particularly, the lag of intra-CEMA oil prices. . . . It is evident that a large share of the subsidies generated was unanticipated and undesired. Also, as OPEC prices have stabilized [or fallen], CEMA oil prices are now catching up and producing unfavorable terms of trade changes for Eastern Europe.” (Abraham S. Becker, Economic Leverage on the Soviet Union in the 1980s, The Rand Corporation, forthcoming.)
liability is indicative of the lack of success the USSR has had in extracting such contributions.

The success of the USSR in extracting the political advantages that derive from leadership of a socialist bloc or "system" is harder to assess but is nonetheless important and deserving of further comment. The history of Soviet policy toward Europe does seem to indicate that the leaders of the USSR only gradually came to appreciate the benefits that could be derived from leadership of a bloc. Stalin was mainly interested in the direct contributions, both passive and active, that Eastern Europe could make to Soviet power. His policy, in effect, was a continuation of "socialism in one country," with the East European states valued for the inputs they could make to the Soviet economy and armed forces. By 1948, however, Zhdanov had already developed the idea of opposing socialist and capitalist "camps," and with it the implication of a certain symmetry or parallelism between East and West. However, because Stalin's doctrine of the "fatal inevitability of wars" held that these two camps were shortly to go to war with each other, there was a limit to the degree to which Stalin's foreign policy could exploit this symmetry in peacetime diplomacy.

Gradually, the emphasis in Soviet thinking about the bloc began to shift away from the simple physical contributions that Eastern Europe could make to Soviet power and toward the political advantages that could be extracted from leadership of a bloc of states. The collective security policy that Molotov initiated in 1954 was increasingly premised on a bloc-to-bloc symmetry that made possible Soviet proposals for the conclusion of a bloc-to-bloc nonaggression pact and for the simultaneous dissolution of the blocs. Moreover, there were under Khrushchev the beginnings of the practice, subsequently developed by Brezhnev, of globalizing the significance of the "socialist commonwealth." Perhaps the clearest indication of this development was Khrushchev's behavior toward the United Nations, the significance of which has generally been neglected by Western analysts. In 1961, Khrushchev, purportedly angered by the actions of UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold, demanded that the post of Secretary General be replaced by a "troika" comprised of representatives from the "capitalist," "socialist," and "nonaligned" countries. Khrushchev's demands were backed up by the threats and bluster that accompanied the Berlin crisis.

While Khrushchev was not successful in creating a troika, his attempt to do so helped to change the fundamental character of the United Nations. As it was originally envisioned by its founders, the UN was characterized by its universality—not in the sense that it was open to all, but in the more fundamental sense that membership meant
acknowledgment of the validity of the universal principles enshrined in
the organization’s charter. While the UN remained universal in
*membership*, under Soviet pressure it gradually developed into a world
“parliament” in which the views of the socialist “camp” or “world sys-
tem” were accorded an institutional right to expression and, implicitly
if not explicitly, equal validity with those of the “bourgeois” states. To
note this change is not to argue that Soviet power was irrelevant or
that had Khrushchev not been successful in changing the character of
the UN the USSR would not have found other ways to block actions
imperilous to its own interests. It is simply to stress the role that leader-
ship of a “camp” has played in helping the USSR to promote the idea
that international politics is a contest between two “world systems.”
Acceptance of this idea at home and abroad legitimizes a special status
for the Soviet Union as one of the two leading protagonists in a great
historic struggle.

**THE SOVIET PREFERRED VISION**

Like politicians elsewhere, Soviet leaders are often forced to
improvise—to react to situations over which they have little or no con-
trol. This is particularly true in the area of foreign policy, where con-
ditions are especially uncontrollable. Soviet policy toward Eastern
Europe and toward Europe as a whole is no exception to the general
pattern. Frequently in the postwar period, Soviet leaders have rapidly
shifted positions in order to take advantage of or protect themselves
from unforeseen developments. While the record is thus one of tactical
improvisation, it must be recognized that certain themes do remain
constant in Soviet policy toward the region. The constancy of these
themes suggests that the Soviet elite has if not a “master plan” for
Europe, then certainly a fairly precise idea of what kind of European
order it thinks would best serve Soviet interests, and at least a general
idea of how to go about translating this idea into reality. Only rarely
does an important Soviet official spell out this “preferred vision” in
detail,11 but a strong case can be made that it exists and informs Soviet
thinking about Eastern as well as Western Europe. The basic outlines
of this vision probably took shape under Stalin in the immediate

---

11One example is N. N. Inozemtsev, “Les relations internationales en Europe dans les
presented at the Conference of Directors and Representatives of European Institutes of
See also the summary and analysis in Lilita Djirkals and A. Ross Johnson (eds.), *Soviet
and East European Forecasts of European Security: Papers from the 1972 Varna Confer-
postwar period, but developments in Western Europe in the mid-
1950s—specifically the FRG’s joining of NATO and the founding of the
European Economic Community (EEC)—occasioned important revi-
sions.

Stalin had little reason to expect that control of Communist coun-
tries would differ markedly from control of Communist parties. Prior
to World War II, the Bolsheviks effectively dominated the individual
parties affiliated with the Communist International. After the war,
many of the East European party leaders on whom the Soviets had
come to rely assumed a leading role in state affairs as well. The task
for the Soviet Union, at least as Stalin saw it, was to install reliable
leaders at the highest levels of the party and state administration and
to insure their continued reliability by penetrating lower levels of
the hierarchy with agents loyal to the Soviet Union. By doing so, the
USSR could control Eastern Europe through a small, like-minded elite.
At the same time that close bilateral ties among Communists would
ensure tight control of Eastern Europe, the West European Communist
parties, still very much under Soviet control, would stand ready to pro-
vide the nucleus of future Soviet-dominated governments in Western
Europe, should domestic and international conditions permit a seizure
of power. Short of outright seizure of power, the Western parties could
exert pressures on non-Communist governments in support of Soviet
diplomacy.

Nowhere in the initial Soviet scheme for Europe was there a role for
permanent multilateral organizations. Within what was to become the
Soviet bloc, Stalin’s preference was for the kind of autarky implied in
the concept of “socialism in one country.” With regard to Europe as a
whole, Stalin was true to a long tradition in Russian and Soviet
diplomacy that generally disparaged regional or subregional organiza-
tions in Europe. He opposed Czechoslovakian President Benes’ Cen-
tral European federation as well as Tito’s proposed federation of Bal-
kans Communist states. The Soviet Union and the European Commu-
nist parties made every effort to block the Marshall Plan, the forma-
tion of a European Defense Community (EDC), and, after the EDC’s
demise, the integration of West Germany into NATO. They also
opposed the European Coal and Steel Community and other early
moves toward West European economic integration. This attitude
toward subregional cooperation was based on a straightforward assess-
ment of Soviet geopolitical interests. As by far the largest state in
Europe, the USSR could gain only by keeping the other states of the
Continent fragmented, and it could lose if it failed to prevent these
states from combining their resources for political and military pur-
poses. A further reason for the Soviets to underline the importance of
strict national sovereignty was to counter the widespread belief in Eastern Europe that the Soviet Union intended to incorporate the East European states into the USSR, much as it had the Baltic republics in 1940.

Stalin’s initial policy toward Europe, while subsequently abandoned for tactical reasons, is in many ways suggestive of the kind of European order that would best suit Soviet interests and that continues to underlie Soviet thinking about the long-term evolution of the Continent. In its essentials, the Soviet Union’s preferred vision of a European order probably remains that of a collection of nominally sovereign states, each linked to the Soviet Union by close bilateral ties. As a system of states, Europe would be a loose agglomeration of small and medium powers, responsive to the USSR in security matters and willing to cooperate with the USSR in economic matters. In such an order, the sovereignty principle would be invoked to disparage the formation of multilateral organizations actually or potentially directed against the Soviet Union or of an alliance with the United States. At the same time, the USSR’s “class-based” solidarity with the “People’s Democracies” in Eastern Europe would insure close integration of these states with the Soviet Union.

Stalin was unable to carry out his policy of subverting and controlling individual European states from within through the mechanism of the European Communist parties while at the same time forestalling the formation of West European and Atlantic organizations aimed at blocking Soviet advances. It was the unforeseen emergence of a “Western Europe” along with unforeseen difficulties in absorbing Eastern Europe that occasioned changes in policy after Stalin’s death. Unable to block Western integration by direct pressure, by the early 1950s the Soviets were forced to look for other means by which to frustrate or at least gain some influence over developments in the West. Reverting to a theme that was common in the interwar period, Soviet diplomats began to promote the idea of an “all-European” order that would preserve the existing “class” division of Europe but would create a network of ties between Eastern and Western Europe. At the February 1954 four-power foreign ministers meeting in Berlin, Molotov proposed the convening of an all-European conference, the purpose of which would be to draft a treaty establishing a European collective security system. Such a system would have amounted to little more than a network of bilateral treaties and guarantees under the umbrella of an all-European declaration. It would have included full East and West German participation and thus would have implied Western recognition of the East Berlin regime and of the partition of Germany. Behind the rhetoric of the all-European order, it was not difficult to
discern the outlines of a fragmented Europe cut off from the United States and tied to the USSR by various forms of bilateral relations—in short, an order not very different from the one that Stalin seemed to prefer in the late 1940s.

It was only when these and similar proposals failed to halt West German integration into NATO that the Soviets chose to “retaliate” by establishing their own multilateral military alliance, the Warsaw Pact, in 1955. Formation of a multilateral pact in Eastern Europe by no means signaled the end of Soviet efforts to fragment Europe, however. The Pact was less important for its contribution to enhanced Soviet-East European military cooperation (which remained largely a bilateral process) than for its role as a political counterpart to NATO which the Soviets could bargain away in a simultaneous “dissolution of the blocs,” or, failing that, could use to facilitate the conclusion of interbloc agreements intended to spread Soviet influence westward.

The actual language of the Warsaw Treaty reflected the continued primacy of the earlier all-European objectives. The Preamble of the Treaty stated the desire of the contracting parties “for the establishment of a system of European collective security based on the participation of all European states irrespective of their social and political systems . . . .” Article 11 further affirmed that “should a system of collective security be established in Europe, and a General European Treaty of Collective Security be concluded for this purpose . . . , the present Treaty shall cease to be operative from the day the General European Treaty enters into force.”

In the decades since the founding of CMEA and the Warsaw Treaty Organization, the Soviets have continued to portray these organizations as potential building blocks for an all-European order. In establishing an Eastern counterpart to NATO and affirming CMEA as a counter-model to the EEC, the Soviets were careful to emphasize that unlike NATO and the EEC, in which members transfer sovereign powers to the multilateral organization, the WTO and CMEA did not have supranational powers but were “mutual” assistance organizations in which members freely associate without surrendering any of their sovereign powers. From the Soviet point of view, there was of course little need to codify Eastern Europe’s loss of sovereignty, since the USSR could for the most part exercise control from behind the scenes and through its ties with the East European Communist parties.

From a Western, non-Communist perspective, there was an obvious contradiction between what the Soviets proclaimed as desirable for

---

Europe as a whole and what they prescribed for Eastern Europe. Soviet proposals stressing the need to strictly uphold national sovereignty in the context of all-European cooperation were not accompanied by promises that the Soviets themselves would renounce their aim of constructing a tightly integrated economic and political bloc. The Soviet Union’s preferred vision for the future of Europe was thus one of a fragmented, submissive Western Europe, and a cohesive, integrated Eastern Europe governed by the “laws” of “socialist internationalism.” This preferred vision was based on a solid recognition of Soviet state interests, but it was justified in terms of Marxist-Leninist ideology that distinguished between the USSR as a state and the USSR as the embodiment of “working class” power, and based its special role in Eastern Europe on the latter rather than the former. As the embodiment of certain “class” principles, the USSR could claim to have its relations with similar states based on the laws of “socialist internationalism,” which in turn would govern a process of integration among Communist states.

The Brezhnev regime inherited this basic outlook on European politics from its predecessor. Until the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, it pursued policies in many ways similar to those of Khrushchev. In 1965, Foreign Minister Gromyko once again raised the possibility of the convening of an all-European conference. A year later, Brezhnev suggested that NATO and the Warsaw Pact agree to a simultaneous dissolution of the blocs or, as a first step, of their military organizations. At the same time that they were offering these all-European proposals, however, the Soviet leaders were undertaking policies toward Eastern Europe aimed at strengthening the web of bilateral ties between the states, their economies, and their ruling parties. Prior to proposing the dissolution of the blocs, for example, the Soviets concluded a series of bilateral mutual security pacts with the East European states. The Soviets also attempted to maintain their grip on the international Communist movement, including the parties of Eastern Europe.

Ultimately, Soviet policy in the 1964–1968 period did not succeed in bringing any closer the realization of the preferred European order. De Gaulle’s withdrawal from the NATO integrated military organization notwithstanding, Western Europe continued a slow process toward increased cohesion and integration, in continued if sometimes uneasy alliance with the United States. In contrast, Eastern Europe entered a period of intrabloc and domestic disarray. Individual East European countries were tempted to respond to the new Ostpolitik of the FRG, threatening to isolate East Germany and undermine the Soviet Union’s longstanding objective of obtaining a “settlement” in Germany on its
own terms. The disarray in Eastern Europe reached its high point during the Prague Spring of 1968, which in turn necessitated the Soviet invasion in August of that year. Ironically, the invasion, while a short-term public relations disaster for the Soviet Union, laid the basis for the much more successful East European and all-European policy of the 1970s.

The next section of this report will examine these policies and the ways in which they reflected the blend of short-term opportunism and adherence to long-term objectives that underlies the USSR’s preferred vision for Europe.
III. EASTERN EUROPE IN THE 1970s

The combined Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 ushered in a new era in Soviet-East European relations and set the stage for the development of a distinctively Brezhnevian approach to intrabloc relations. The salient element in this new approach was the public elaboration of the (Brezhnev) doctrine of limited sovereignty. This doctrine, outlined in a Pravda article and subsequently codified in a bilateral Soviet-Czechoslovak treaty,\(^1\) held that relations between allied “socialist” states were of a higher order than and took precedence over those between other states. Implicit in this doctrine was the claim that “bourgeois” international law did not apply in intrabloc matters.

The Soviet willingness to intervene militarily in order to preserve control in Eastern Europe was of course not in itself new. As has been noted, the differentiated policy toward Eastern and Western Europe adapted as early as the 1950s was premised on the claim that different “laws” applied to relations with each. What was distinctive about the Brezhnev doctrine, however, and what was to characterize Soviet policy from 1968 onward was the willingness to declare the gains of socialism irreversible owing to changed global and European military balances and to seek to base both East-East and East-West relations on explicit recognition of this irreversibility. At the 1973–1975 Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), Soviet diplomats tried to write the Brezhnev doctrine into the Final Act and thereby achieve explicit recognition from the West of its validity. Failing to do so, they nonetheless launched a propaganda campaign to promote the idea that their interpretation had been accepted by all the signatories. In October 1975, some two months after the conclusion of the CSCE in Helsinki, the Soviet Union signed a treaty with the German Democratic Republic (GDR) that was a virtual carbon copy of the 1970 treaty with Czechoslovakia that had been used to lend legal status to the Brezhnev doctrine. The object was clearly to underscore that CSCE in no way undermined Soviet and Communist control in Eastern Europe.

---

Having made clear to the Soviet domestic audience, to the East Europeans, and to governments and publics in the West the limits beyond which the USSR would not permit change, and having shown a willingness to use military means to enforce these limits, Brezhnev initiated a series of new policies, the purpose of which was to shift the basis of Soviet control in Eastern Europe from overt military and police control to closer functional cooperation in the political, economic, military, and other areas. In effect, the Brezhnev policy was not unlike that of a warden who, having thwarted a prisoner’s attempt at escape, sought to impress upon the prisoner and his sympathizers outside that his only “reasonable” course was to cooperate and to make the best of the existing situation within the prison.

Although the 1968 crisis lent a new urgency to Soviet efforts to re-establish stability in the bloc, these efforts were not in themselves new. The Brezhnev policies, while innovative in matters of detail, reflected yet another attempt to overcome problems left over from the Stalin era which Khrushchev had tried to resolve. The Brezhnev approach of seeking to create a non-coercive unity within the framework of a situation in which coercion was understood by all to be the ultimate guarantor of unity had two basic elements: a new emphasis on integration within the existing CMEA and WTO structures, and a “dialectical” emphasis on greater diversity and greater initiative for individual Communist regimes in the management of particular national situations.

In addition, Brezhnev, like Khrushchev, sought to pursue an active policy toward Western Europe, attempting to use the mere fact of Soviet leadership of a bloc to diplomatic advantage. In military and political matters, he promoted a détente based on “equal” relations between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. He also proposed the conclusion of economic agreements between CMEA and the EEC. Also like Khrushchev, Brezhnev sought to confer a global role on the bloc, and was in fact considerably more successful than his predecessor in doing so. With the adherence of Cuba (1972) and Vietnam (1978) to CMEA and the granting of observer status to countries such as Angola and Mozambique, Brezhnev could begin to speak of a “world socialist system.”

In sum, Brezhnev carried on the work, begun by Khrushchev, of attempting to overcome problems on three levels: at the national level, by permitting diversity and some reform; at the intrabloc level, by seeking to improve the scope and pace of integration; and at the

---

2The first heading of Brezhnev’s report to the Twenty-Sixth Party Congress was entitled “Development of the World Socialist System and the Cooperation of the Socialist Countries” (text of the speech in Materiały XXVI S’ezda KPSS, Izdatel’stvo politicheskoi literatury, Moscow, 1981, p. 5).
international or East-West level, by seeking to redefine the relationships between Western and Eastern Europe, NATO and the WTO, and the competing "world systems."

The remainder of this section will examine Brezhnev's policies on all of these levels, beginning with his attitude toward increased integration within the bloc.

INTEGRATION WITHIN THE BLOC

Almost immediately after the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, the Soviets moved to increase the pace and scope of integration on all levels—political, economic, military, and ideological. As noted, these efforts were not in themselves new, but were patterned on Khrushchev's earlier attempt to build a "socialist commonwealth." The leadership hoped that greater intrabloc integration would allow for more subtle and less coercive forms of control. In addition, Soviet leaders were becoming increasingly conscious of the need to participate more fully in the "international division of labor" to maintain a competitive position in the world economy. They were therefore interested in both integration within the bloc and, up to a point, integration of the bloc itself into the world market.

As was suggested earlier, integration is a problematic concept for the USSR and its Communist client states. When Western writers use the term integration, they generally mean a process by which different national entities—armies, industries, or other types of organizations—develop cross-national ties at many levels in order to gain economies of scale and the benefits of specialization. Integration is more than simply an additive process. It involves creating a whole that is greater than the sum of its individual parts, but in which the parts lose much of their former autonomy and freedom of action.

In a traditional military alliance, allied states combine their forces in pursuit of common objectives, but the forces themselves do not change; integration begins when the alliance members begin to restructure the forces themselves in response to the needs of their partners and the common enterprise. In an integrated military force, some national military units are enlarged, while others are diminished or abolished altogether. Similarly, in an integrated economic community (such as the EEC), national industries with export potential expand, while those that compete with imports may contract or disappear as integration proceeds. In contemporary market economies, firms carry the process of integration even further. Different elements of the production
process may take place in many different countries, thereby achieving economies of scale and the benefits of comparative advantage.²

While Soviet ideologists have adopted the view that integration is an "objective" process associated with the "internationalization of production" in advanced societies, it is a process that remains in many ways incompatible with the Communist mode of economic and political organization. All Communist systems, with their hierarchical structures and their centralized planning, are inherently biased against integration. In the centralized Soviet economy, there is little spontaneous pressure toward the formation of horizontal linkages between economic units. Central planning and the lack of free markets encourage a vertical hierarchy of autarkies—from the plant level, where managers hoard parts and labor, to the individual ministries, and on up to the national economy, where planners are wary of having to produce for or depend upon foreign markets that they do not control.

Unlike in the EEC, where the governmental contribution to integration is largely one of removing (often government-imposed) barriers to flows of labor, capital, products, and ideas, in the centrally planned Communist systems, constant positive impetus to integration on the part of governments is required. Because of this dependence on political agreement, "integration" within CMEA mainly consists of the multiplication of bilateral agreements across national boundaries. These agreements are often framed in such a way as to minimize the amount of internal adjustment required to respond to the internationalization of production.³ As a consequence, the "whole" that CMEA integration produces equals little more than the sum of the parts that comprise it. Indeed, with the inefficiencies introduced by this cumbersome administrative process, it may result in a good deal less.

While there is greater need for a political impetus to integration in the East than in the West, there is at the same time often less prospect of generating this impetus. In theory, political decisions to "integrate" can be taken in two ways: One way is for the members of the bloc to agree among themselves on ad hoc measures that all or some will take to increase the number and scope of economic, military, and other ties. This is in fact the approach that the bloc has taken, and it has proven slow and ineffective. Not only are agreements to integrate difficult to reach, but once reached, they may not result in much practical action, since implementation depends entirely on the actions of national governments that may have opposed agreement in the first place.

²A Western electronics company, for example, may conduct research in the United States, fabricate labor-intensive components in the Far East, and assemble the final product in Europe.

³The integration of the Pact defense industries, about which much remains unknown in the West, may be a partial exception, as these industries may have achieved a more rational division of labor under Soviet guidance.
The other way to generate political support for integration is to create a genuinely supranational organization with executive powers that can override the powers of the member states. Establishment of supranationality requires a one-time surrender of sovereign powers to the supranational body. As was noted above, for ideological reasons, the Soviets claim to have no interest in creating supranational bodies. In reality, however, the USSR has long pressed for the creation of supranational economic planning bodies and a supranational joint military command that could override national decisionmaking. With varying degrees of intensity, nearly all the East European states at one time or another have resisted moves in this direction.

Whenever they have tried to increase the pace of bloc integration, Soviet governments have confronted two fundamental problems: They have had to face up to the contradiction between integration and the tendencies toward autarky that are inherent in the planned economy, and they have had to overcome the resistance to integration that results from the huge size differential between the USSR and the other East European states.

The nature of the planned economies makes it especially hard for integration to take place at the lower levels of the production process. While in a market economy a plant manager can easily purchase on the open market foreign-source parts or components that may be cheaper or of better quality, the absence of a market makes this process difficult if not impossible within CMEA. Exchanges of components must be seen in advance and accounted for in the national plans of two countries. Soviet and bloc awareness of this problem is indicated by the planners’ frequent calls for the need to “reinforce direct ties between production organizations.” Not surprisingly, such “direct production ties” appear to be most developed in the automotive industry, where the very nature of the product lends itself to standardization and mass production of components.

Given the disparity in size between the Soviet Union and its partners, supranationality and integration in CMEA inevitably become something of a one-way street. The restructuring and loss of independence that integration entails affects the Soviet Union very little but results in major changes for the East Europeans. Thoroughgoing economic “integration” in CMEA, if it ever comes about, will amount to the virtual absorption by the Soviet Union of the economies of Eastern Europe. Similarly, genuinely supranational planning by a CMEA organization with real executive powers would inevitably be dominated by the USSR and would mean virtual administration by the USSR of the economies of the other states. The CMEA executive would become an instrument of Gosplan, the Soviet planning organization.
Military integration also presents problems, for both the Soviet Union and its East European partners. It entails a loss of national autonomy that in the absence of a very high degree of consensus on the nature of the external threat sovereign states generally resist. In Eastern Europe as a whole, there is no underlying agreement on the nature of the threat, and hence there is resistance to military integration. Perhaps the greatest degree of convergence has occurred among the states of the “iron triangle,” East Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, although even here differences have developed since the treaties of the early 1970s with West Germany and the waning of the “revanchist” threat. Soviet doubts about the possible unreliability of the East European forces also encourage caution in assessing the degree to which the USSR should integrate elements of its own forces with those of its allies. While the Soviet Union seeks to control and exploit East European capabilities, it must treat these capabilities as extensions of or supplements to its own forces, rather than as an integral part of a combined multinational force in which the Soviets themselves might lose some freedom of action.

Despite all its drawbacks, integration was an important objective of the Brezhnev regime and remained so under Andropov. The Brezhnev approach to political, economic, military, and ideological integration in the bloc is examined below.

**Political Integration.** “Integration” of foreign-policy formulation within the Warsaw Pact is one of the most important objectives of the Soviet leadership in its policies toward Eastern Europe. It is also probably one of the easiest to accomplish. With the significant exception of Romania, the East European countries generally accept the fact that a public display of absolute fidelity to the Soviet Union in foreign-policy matters is the irreducible minimum of adherence to “socialist internationalism.” Moreover, because foreign-policy formulation is, at least in authoritarian states, a process that involves only a small group of people, it presents few of the obstacles to integration that are evident in economic and military areas, where integration requires the participation of thousands of individuals and organizations.

Foreign-policy coordination in the Warsaw Pact serves two purposes: It assures a unified bloc posture toward the outside world, and it lends at least superficial credibility to the claim that relations among the bloc countries are governed by the principles of “socialist internationalism.” In addition, ongoing efforts in the 1970s were directed

---

5As Brezhnev stated in his report to the Twenty-Sixth Party Congress, “Together with [the countries of socialism] we are building a new socialist world, a type of relations
toward placing relations among the socialist countries on the same kind of stable, institutionalized basis that marked relations between the Soviet Union and the countries of the West. Regular meetings at various levels of the leadership, the development of a web of functional ties, and the conclusion of numerous bilateral and multilateral agreements and communiques were all hallmarks of the Brezhnev policy that combined both activism and a "businesslike" approach to foreign relations.

Political coordination among the members of the bloc was a prerequisite to the active policy toward the West and the Third World that the USSR pursued in the 1970s. While the Brezhnev leadership placed great emphasis on the multilateral character of the bloc for propaganda purposes, much of the real decisionmaking probably continued to take place through close bilateral consultations. The Central Committee Department for Relations with Socialist Countries, headed by Konstantin V. Russakov, probably maintained close bilateral contacts with the party leaderships in Eastern Europe. The East European ambassadors in Moscow also played a role in coordinating policy, as did the various Warsaw Pact mechanisms in the military sphere. These channels of communication were no doubt used by the Soviets to insure that multilateral meetings would come off smoothly and would serve as a stage for bloc unity.

The main vehicle for projecting common positions was the Political Consultative Committee (PCC) of the Warsaw Pact, which after the invasion of Czechoslovakia met more frequently than it had in the 1960s. The PCC was a useful vehicle for presenting collective bloc proposals on such matters as the convening of a European security conference. On occasion, the PCC was probably also used to expose Romania, which sometimes resisted Soviet efforts to work out consensus positions in advance, to the combined pressure of the bloc members in the multilateral setting. In these instances, the PCC did play a part in fashioning bloc policies, although there was a corresponding loss in its usefulness as a vehicle for promoting the image of bloc solidarity.

In addition to the positions adopted by the bloc as a whole, initiatives were also undertaken individually by the various East European states, but these initiatives clearly had been approved if not suggested in advance by the Soviet authorities. The members of the bloc appear to have worked out among themselves a certain division of labor in their efforts to promote the Helsinki conference, with different

between states which is unprecedented in history, relations which are just, equal, and fraternal." (Materialy XXVI S"ezda KPSS, p. 5.)
members, depending upon particular interests and traditional regional roles, focusing on different issues. Within the context of overall foreign-policy coordination, there was an ongoing division of labor in the broad post-Helsinki “peace offensive.” Bulgaria became active in promoting a nuclear-free zone in the Balkans, East Germany pursued its special relationship with the FRG, and Poland proposed the convening of an all-European Conference on Military Détente and Disarmament, a precursor of sorts to the 1984 conference in Stockholm.

This division virtually presupposed Soviet confidence in the degree of overall foreign-policy coordination in the bloc. The vehicle for this coordination remained the PCC. In 1976, it proposed the conclusion of a no-first-use agreement between all the CSCE signatory states. In 1980, it endorsed Poland’s proposal that the Madrid follow-up conference concentrate almost exclusively on convening a special European disarmament conference. In January 1983, as part of the Soviet campaign to block the scheduled deployments of U.S. intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) missiles in Europe, the PCC proposed the conclusion of a “nonaggression” treaty between NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

As another aspect of bloc political integration, regular summer meetings were held between Brezhnev and the party leaders of Eastern Europe in the Crimea beginning in 1971. In his report to the Twenty-Sixth Congress, Brezhnev stated that there had been 37 such meetings in the Crimea, all “without the formalities of protocol and in a comradely atmosphere.” Also included in this total were meetings with the leaders of Laos, Vietnam, Cuba, and Mongolia, whose inclusion in the Crimean summits was indicative of Brezhnev’s efforts to promote the concept of a “world socialist system” that extended beyond the confines of Europe.

There is some evidence to suggest that the Soviets would like to formalize the Warsaw Pact’s extra-European role, possibly by welcoming non-European members into its ranks, but more likely by obtaining pledges from the East European states to “defend the gains of socialism” outside Europe. So far the Soviets have not managed to overcome East European resistance to such an idea.6 Nonetheless, the USSR continues in its numerous attempts to symbolically reaffirm the

6The Soviet Union may also have its own reasons for choosing CMEA rather than the WTO as the institutional embodiment of the “world socialist system.” The Soviets are probably reluctant to extend security guarantees to Cuba and other states that are potentially vulnerable to Western or U.S. attempts at “rollback.” The Soviet leaders also do not want to legitimize a possible extension of NATO beyond Europe, or to undercut their propaganda proposal aimed at freezing the membership of the “blocs” in Europe (for a long time directed at Spain’s membership in NATO). Finally, CMEA, as an economic organization, better embodies the concept of a “system” based on the domestic “social” and political order.
existence of a “world socialist system.” Perhaps the most dramatic of these symbolic actions was the series of joint space missions in the late 1970s that involved not only the East European states, but Cuba, Vietnam, and other countries as well.

**Economic Integration.** The crisis in Czechoslovakia convinced Soviet leaders of the need for a renewed effort to achieve multinational economic integration in Eastern Europe.

In this effort, the Brezhnev regime was more cautious than its predecessors. While Stalin had relied on a network of highly exploitative bilateral relations, and Khrushchev on the attempted imposition of integration from above through supranational planning, Brezhnev embarked upon a long-term effort to achieve what J. F. Brown has called integration “from the bottom up” through “a systematic interlocking of the basic elements of the Eastern European economies.”

At a special April 1969 CMEA session, Premier Alexei Kosygin revived many of Khrushchev’s earlier proposals, although he was careful not to imply Soviet support for supranational planning—the element that had stirred such Romanian resistance. The Kosygin proposals initiated a debate within CMEA that culminated in 1971 with the adoption of a CMEA “Comprehensive Program for Integration.” This program remains the landmark document for CMEA integration. It focuses on three new areas of joint action: coordination of plans, cooperation in long-term target programs, and CMEA investment projects.

Under the provisions of the Comprehensive Program, in 1971 CMEA established a “Committee for Cooperation in Planning Activity.” Its members included the chief planners of each CMEA country, who were supported by a permanent working bureau of lower-ranking officials. Drawing upon the Committee’s work, in June 1975 CMEA adopted its first jointly coordinated economic plan. Previous efforts to coordinate plans had amounted to little more than exchanges of information, since national investment decisions had been taken long before blocwide discussions began. Under the new arrangements, member states were to begin exchanging plans for investment three years before the end of the current five-year plan period, thereby, it was hoped, eliminating

---


needless duplication of investment and encouraging production specialization on a blocwide basis. Moreover, it was agreed in 1973 that following the adoption of a joint plan, all members would include special sections in their national plans detailing how they intended to comply with the goals of the joint plan. For the 1976–1980 period, special sections were drafted by planners in all CMEA states except Romania.

The objective of the second major post-1971 initiative, the long-term target programs (LTTPs), was to single out key economic sectors and to make these the cutting edge of cooperative efforts extending beyond the general-level integration in the bloc. Within these sectors, members agreed to coordinate forecasting and planning for 15- to 20-year periods, to establish joint research and development plans, and to facilitate the continuous exchange of information. At the thirty-second and thirty-third CMEA sessions (1978 and 1979), five sectors were singled out for LTTPs: fuel and raw materials; agriculture and the food industry; engineering; the production of consumer goods; and transportation.¹⁰

Despite the hopes the Soviets have riding on the LTTPs, it remains to be seen whether these programs will significantly speed and intensify the integration process, since they can be implemented only by the cumbersome process of bilateral agreement among the CMEA states. The LTTPs reflect the traditional project-oriented rather than market- or exchange-oriented approach to integration favored by Soviet planners, albeit on a grander scale. Under the LTTPs, an entire sector of industry becomes, in effect, a “project.” High-level political attention and the creation of permanent multilateral coordinating machinery may speed integration somewhat, but the basic approach differs little from that pursued in lower-priority sectors of the economy.

The third major post-1971 initiative was the launching of joint investment projects, particularly in the production of energy and raw materials. Progress in this area was facilitated by the establishment in 1970 of a CMEA investment bank. In part due to the bank’s centralizing role, joint projects were initiated in atomic energy, oil exploration, transportation, computers, and numerous other fields.

The largest of these joint undertakings was the gas complex at Orenburg and the pipeline connecting Orenburg with the Soviet-Czechoslovak border. In this project, estimated to have required between $5 and $6 billion in capital, the East European partners provided equipment and participation in joint financing in exchange for

long-term deliveries of Soviet natural gas. Other cooperative energy ventures include nuclear power and oil exploration. In 1975, the governments of Poland, the GDR, and the Soviet Union signed an agreement that established an organization to undertake offshore oil exploration along the Baltic coast of the three participating countries. Headquartered in Gdansk, “Petrobaltik” coordinated geophysical work by scientists between 1976 and 1979. By 1980, it had acquired a floating rig and was drilling off the coast of Poland.\textsuperscript{11}

The CMEA states concluded separate agreements on nuclear power-station construction and electricity distribution for the period 1981–1990.\textsuperscript{12} These agreements were intended to establish a division of labor in the production of systems components among the member states. Cooperation among the CMEA states was to extend to the association and enterprise levels, with plants in the USSR, the GDR, Czechoslovakia, and elsewhere dealing directly with each other, somewhat in the manner of Western firms that cooperate, on a transnational basis, in joint ventures and other forms of production sharing.\textsuperscript{13}

Beginning in the early 1970s, the USSR also made special efforts to coordinate the research and development activities of all the CMEA states, particularly military R&D.\textsuperscript{14} According to Soviet sources, one-third of all major research projects undertaken in the USSR between 1971 and 1976 involved the participation of the other CMEA countries.\textsuperscript{15} The military rationale for increased cooperation in R&D was underscored by the creation in 1969 of a WTO technical committee. This committee probably took over many of the former responsibilities of the CMEA’s Military-Industrial Commission.\textsuperscript{16}

While the 1971 program certainly increased the scope of integration efforts in CMEA, it did not resolve the fundamental tension between autarky and integration in Eastern Europe. The wording of the program appeared to reflect an effort to paper over conflicting views on the proper scope of and means toward integration. As a result of these

\textsuperscript{11} Interview with T. G. Vekilov, USSR Deputy Minister of the Gas Industry, Pravda, June 2, 1980.


\textsuperscript{13}“Sotsialisticheskoe sodruzhestvo na putiakh tvorchestva i progressa (Socialist Cooperation on the Path of Creativity and Progress),” editorial, MEiMO, No. 10, October 1982.


\textsuperscript{15} Checinski, A Comparison of the Polish and Soviet Armaments Decisionmaking Systems, op. cit., p. 17.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., p. 13.
ambiguities, debates went on within CMEA for the remainder of the decade on how best to "implement" the agreed decisions of the 1971 Program. It was in the "implementation" stage that the Soviets used their relative economic and political weight—which tended to be enhanced over the decade as energy prices rose and the terms of trade between the USSR and Eastern Europe shifted to an unexpected degree in the favor of the former—to see to it that the actual integration process would conform more to Soviet than to Hungarian, Romanian, or other conceptions.

In pushing for a qualitative leap forward in the integration process, the Soviets encountered two types of resistance from their East European partners. First, the Romanians remained opposed to supranational integration in principle. Second, the Hungarians and others in Eastern Europe, while they did not object to integration as such, preferred a market-oriented approach rather than the Soviet approach based on centralized coordination of plans and the bilateral exchange of physical commodities.

The Soviets, seeking to meet both of these sets of objections, in effect settled for a compromise agreement that allowed for progress toward what might be called "quasi-integration." The USSR obtained a major commitment in principle from the CMEA states, including Romania, to bloc integration. In exchange, the six smaller members received verbal assurances and institutional safeguards against the abuse of the integration process to the detriment of particular national interests. The chief safeguard adopted was the "interested country principle," under which any country could declare itself not interested in a particular multilateral effort and hence opt out of participation. This formula neatly defused the issue of Romanian intransigence, allowing the integration process to go forward on an ad hoc basis. For their part, the Hungarians and their less vocal allies in CMEA received a Soviet commitment to ruble convertibility and greater enterprise-to-enterprise exchange.

While Romania's vocal opposition to Soviet plans has gained more attention in the West, the Hungarian objections go more directly to the heart of the difficulties inherent in CMEA integration. Because the planning process is so inflexible, whenever centrally planned economies move to increase trade, they try to impose their own economic model on their trading partners in order to minimize the disruptive effects of trade on the domestic economy.

As the USSR has increased its economic ties with the West, its leaders have called for a "restructuring of international economic relations" that would amount in effect to a change in the way international trade and investment are carried out so that they are more compatible
with Soviet domestic requirements. (Concrete elements that go into this restructuring include Western agreement to barter and buyback provisions, long-term economic agreements, and so forth.) In dealing with the CMEA states, the Soviet Union responds in a similar manner but of course has far more political power to impose its own ways of doing things on its partners. It is thus perfectly understandable that the Soviets should try to impose their project-oriented approach to integration on the Hungarians. Meanwhile, the Hungarians also try, if not to impose, at least to suggest a more market-oriented approach.

Not surprisingly, the Soviets have generally been more successful in adapting trade to their internal system than have the smaller CMEA states. For the most part, Gosplan has been able to insure that CMEA integration would take place largely by means of improved plan coordination and the adoption of joint investment projects. East European investments in Soviet natural-resource ventures were spelled out in terms of physical items to be supplied (tons of pipe, man-years of labor), while the Soviet payback on this investment was similarly spelled out in terms of physical quantities (cubic meters of gas, tons of oil).17

Another source of friction between the USSR and its East European allies was the Soviet effort to engage the latter in supporting Soviet policy outside Europe with economic aid. One of the declared objectives of CMEA integration has always been the “leveling-up” of the least-developed CMEA economies to the level of the more-developed countries. While Soviet ideologists have long proclaimed “leveling” within the socialist bloc as an inevitable outcome for the same reasons that they endorse various kinds of leveling within individual economies (e.g., between city and country, agriculture and industry), in practice the Soviets often found the demands of Romania (and China, prior to the Sino-Soviet split) extremely awkward, since they justified large claims on the USSR, as one of the wealthier CMEA states. In the 1970s, however, the Soviets adopted the leveling argument with greater enthusiasm, as it provided a rationale for shifting some of the burden of subsidizing Cuba, Vietnam, and now Nicaragua18—a burden that the USSR would shoulder in any case for military and political reasons—onto the relatively wealthy East European countries. The concept of a “world socialist system” was important not only for its political implications, but because it provided a political and ideological rationale


18In March 1983, Bulgaria concluded a $165 million three-year trade and assistance agreement with Nicaragua, the focus of which was the construction of a deep-water port on the Atlantic coast. (*The New York Times*, March 14, 1983.)
beyond those contained in CMEA and WTO documents for sharing the economic burden.

Soviet pressures to obtain greater support outside Europe were partly successful. Eastern Europe's gross aid disbursements rose from $325 million in 1975 to $594 million in 1981, mostly to Cuba and Vietnam. The aid effort remains unevenly distributed throughout Eastern Europe, however, with East Germany the only really enthusiastic donor. The USSR continues to account for some 80 percent of CMEA aid, and the GDR for another 10 percent. The other countries give very much lower sums. The size of the GDR's contribution is significant, however, for its indication of what the Soviet Union might actually prefer its allies to do if it could somehow overcome their resistance. On a per capita basis and on the basis of share of GNP, East German aid is disproportionately higher than that of the Soviet Union.19

More important than its monetary contribution to the CMEA aid effort is Eastern Europe's contribution of skilled technicians. While the USSR supplies 80 percent of CMEA aid measured in rubles, it provides only half the personnel. East Europeans are well suited to contribute to Soviet foreign-policy goals in this manner, since they are less politically provocative than the Soviets and are in some cases more readily adaptable to local conditions.

Military Integration. Complementing the new efforts to promote integration and institutionalized economic cooperation during the Brezhnev period were attempts to upgrade the status and effectiveness of the Warsaw Pact as a military organization. As in the economic sphere, there was a debate and hard bargaining following the crisis in Czechoslovakia about the need for both closer military cooperation and, somewhat paradoxically, greater national protection against the abuse of the integration process. This debate resulted in the establishment, at the March 1969 PCC meeting in Budapest, of three new institutions: a Committee of Defense Ministers, a Military Council, and the above-mentioned Committee for the Coordination of Military Technology.20

The 1969 measures were undertaken in response to pressure both from the East Europeans for greater consultation in Pact matters and from the Soviet leadership for closer military and political cooperation. To the extent that the elimination of national resentments could facilitate closer coordination within the bloc, the Soviets were probably not

---

19Calculating CMEA aid figures is extremely difficult. These figures are derived from a study by the OECD Secretariat. (OECD, Observer, May 1983, pp. 19–21.)

completely opposed to the desire of their allies for more formal definitions of intrabloc obligations and responsibilities. Just as conflicting Soviet and East European interests in the economic sphere led to a compromise process of "quasi-integration," Pact military affairs during the 1970s were characterized by a mix of increased emphasis on supranational integration, reassertion of the interests of the member states, and the codification of safeguards against the abuse of supranationality by the Soviet Union.

There is considerable debate and uncertainty among Western specialists as to what the Soviets intended by the 1969 "reforms" and what in fact they would like to accomplish over the long term with the East European military forces. During the Stalin period, the USSR encouraged the reconstruction of national military establishments but administered these establishments as virtual branches of the Red Army. Whatever "integration" there was in the Pact was the result of the Soviet Union's power to compel the political leaders of the individual countries to act in accordance with Soviet wishes.

There is some evidence to suggest that the Soviets may have wished to go beyond this level and to create an integrated standing force under the direct control of the Soviet military authorities, circumventing the authority of the national political leaderships. Article 5 of the Warsaw Treaty stipulates that the contracting parties "have agreed to establish a Joint Command of the armed forces that by agreement among the Parties shall be assigned to the Command, which shall function on the basis of jointly established principles." 21

Little has come of these plans, however. To an even greater extent than in the economic sphere, military "integration" in the Warsaw Pact is an unbalanced process. In an integrated Warsaw Pact force, the Soviet forces would undergo little or no internal readjustment and would surrender none of their freedom of action, while the forces of the smaller states would be transformed by a process of integration that would make them mere appendages of the Soviet forces.

In effect, in the event of war, the USSR would administer the non-Soviet forces of the Pact in a manner not fundamentally different from that envisioned by Stalin and his generals—as virtual branches of the Red Army centrally directed from and dependent upon Moscow. To facilitate greater control of these forces, the USSR has undertaken measures that make the operation of the East European forces dependent on those of the Soviet Union. As Malcolm Macintosh has observed,

The most important feature of the Warsaw Pact's military organization, as far as we can tell, is that the Headquarters has no operational capability in peacetime. It has for example no logistic branch, and no transportation or supply services organizations. All these are provided by the Soviet Ministry of Defense. Moreover, the air defense of the buffer zone is the responsibility of the Soviet Homeland Air Defense Command [PVO Strany]. . . .

In wartime the Soviet High Command, supported by the Soviet General Staff, would take command of whatever East European forces were available, properly trained, and considered politically reliable for the task at hand.22

There are indications that the Soviet Union's ability to reach into the East European military establishments at will may be increasing, particularly in air defense. As Mackintosh noted, since 1955 the air defense components of the East European states have been under the control of the Soviet Union. Since the air defense forces of the ground forces were not considered part of homeland air defense, in Eastern Europe or the USSR, the East European states retained control over a large portion of their air defense assets. Some observers surmise that this may now change, as the homeland air defense forces and the forces located in army units will coordinate their activities more closely and may even merge. Although there is as yet little direct evidence of the effects this closer coordination will have on the autonomy of the East European armies, at least one former officer in the Soviet and Polish armies believes it will result in an unprecedented degree of direct Soviet influence in the affairs of individual military units.23

In addition to reaching into the East European forces in this manner, the Soviets are also engaged in promoting certain forms of military integration "from the bottom up," in the manner of CMEA economic integration. There was a dramatic increase during the 1970s of ties between the Soviet and East European military establishments at lower and middle levels of command. These ties included joint meetings of senior officers, joint command-staff exercises, and exchanges of military visits.24 In the short to medium term, these efforts to promote "fraternal" ties among the Warsaw Pact military forces may amount to little more than a propaganda exercise designed to obscure the extent to which the East European forces are under


Soviet control. Over the long term, however, Soviet ideologists and political officers probably see these efforts at "integration" as necessary steps toward the creation of a worldwide socialist "community of peoples." Just as the armed forces serve as an important instrument of political indoctrination in the USSR itself, they can also serve, on a blocwide basis, for the inculcation of friendship toward the Soviet Union.

It should also be noted that Soviet claims about the increased pace of political and military integration of the Warsaw Pact are in part motivated by developments in Western Europe and in NATO. There can be little doubt that the Soviets, whatever their views on the NATO-WTO military balance, have been impressed with NATO's adoption of genuinely multilateral and collectively financed projects, such as the NATO Advanced Warning and Control System (AWACS) and the various infrastructure projects, including that for the scheduled 1983–1986 INF deployments. They were also impressed, at least initially, with the NATO decision in favor of annual 3 percent increases in real defense spending by its member states.

While the Soviets know they cannot emulate NATO's movement toward "supranationality" (which they would like to undermine by their "peace policy"), they have felt a need to respond on the political and propagandistic level.25 At the November 1978 meeting of the WTO in Moscow, Soviet representatives apparently tried to gain agreement on stepped-up integration efforts and increases in defense expenditures by member states. These efforts were denounced by Ceausescu of Romania, who made a public appeal for support against Soviet pressures. In light of its economic difficulties, Poland, while it did not publicly oppose the Soviet position, was apparently exempted from these demands and did nothing to reverse the decline in the ratio of defense spending to GNP that had persisted throughout the decade.26

---

25Reviewing the past decade, the official history of Soviet foreign policy stated that "the significance of coordinating the international actions of the socialist community nations grew steadily, especially in view of the fact that despite their inter-imperialist contradictions the Western powers were continuing to coordinate their actions, particularly those directed against socialist countries." (A. A. Gromyko and B. N. Ponomarev (eds.), Soviet Foreign Policy: 1917-1980, Vol. 2, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1980, p. 442.)

26Poland's defense spending as a share of GNP dropped from 4.34 percent in 1970 (the second highest in the WTO, behind East Germany), to a low of 2.94 percent in 1978 (fourth, behind the GDR, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria). (Data based on calculations by Thad Alton, Military Expenditures in Eastern Europe, Post World War II to 1979, Research Project on National Income in East Central Europe, New York, 1980; and Alton, The Structure of Gross National Product in Eastern Europe, Research Project on National Income in East Central Europe, New York, 1980.) For an alternative view that Poland's military spending increased even after August 1980, see Michael Checinski, "Poland's Military Burden," Problems of Communism, Vol. 32, No. 3, pp. 31-44. It must
Ideological, Cultural, and National Integration. Just as the Brezhnev regime sought to promote economic and to some extent military integration "from the bottom up," it initiated a long-term effort to develop an ideological consciousness in Eastern Europe that would make possible the long-term integration of the bloc on the basis of the principle of "socialist internationalism." The Soviet leaders probably shared with the East European regimes the feeling that while in the short run it might be necessary to "buy" domestic stability by promoting rapid rises in living standards, over the longer term Communist rule and allegiance to the Soviet Union had to be based on at least tacit acceptance of Communism's legitimating claims.

There is no evidence to suggest that the Soviets were any more successful than they had been previously in inculcating Communist ideology in the peoples of Eastern Europe, but they were successful in creating a network of horizontal ties among the elites responsible for ideological matters. In December 1973 the first conference of party secretaries responsible for ideology and interparty ties was held in Moscow.27 Such conferences, attended by Ponomarev and Rusakov of the Soviet party, were subsequently convened on a regular basis. While these top-level "exchanges of information" do little to solve the problem of the gap between official Communist orthodoxy and the political values of the populations in Eastern Europe, they are no doubt useful for dealing with potential ideological divergence between ruling parties. These meetings may well serve as the functional equivalent of a new Cominform, without, however, generating the political costs that a Soviet effort to reestablish such an organization would entail. The top-level conferences were paralleled by blocwide conferences of lower-level officials active in ideology, education, and the media. Party secretaries responsible for ideology met on a regular and multilateral basis, as did journalists, trade union leaders, writers, media executives—in short, anyone concerned with ideological indoctrination in Eastern Europe.

Despite these efforts, the gap between reality and ideological pretense is enormous. Soviet claims that the Warsaw Pact is becoming a "community of peoples"28 belie the fact that the political and

---

27J. F. Brown, Relations Between the Soviet Union and Its Eastern European Allies, op. cit., p. 49

28In his report to the Twenty-Sixth Party Congress, Brezhnev stated that "since olden times relationships between states have been called international [mezhdunarodny] but it is only in our times, in the world of socialism that they really become relations between peoples [mezhdru narodami]." (Materialy XXVI S'ezda KPSS, p. 6.)
economic systems of Eastern Europe have not only failed to promote integration "among peoples," but may have actually hindered it. Just as in the Western world, particularly in Western Europe, the spontaneous process of economic integration has gone much further than its planned counterpart within CMEA, so in the sphere of human contacts (travel, education, marriage across national borders), the spontaneous development of "relations among peoples" in Western Europe has far outstripped the analogous processes in Eastern Europe.

Despite—or rather, because of—the lag in integration, the East European states are joining with the Soviets in an effort to lend substance to the claim that Communism is creating a true "community of peoples," but they are doing so in a specifically Communist fashion. They are promoting extensive, albeit controlled and organized, contacts between public organizations and subnational governments throughout the bloc. Local officials meet their counterparts from other bloc countries; journalists, scientists, and trade unionists meet for various conferences or joint activities; joint publications are sponsored; exchange programs are initiated; and so forth. These contacts are probably more important than is realized in the West for giving Soviet citizens a sense of being part of a dynamic, creative, international movement. Without such contacts, the regime would find it difficult to sustain the claim that the USSR and its "world socialist system" constitute a dynamic community in the vanguard of historical progress, rather than an isolated, aberrant development cut off from the outside world.

The question of integration among "peoples" in the "world socialist system" is of course also related to the sensitive question of relations among the nationalities in the USSR itself. After the revolution, Soviet ideologues proclaimed that Communism "enhanced" the independence and national cultural identity of all nationalities, including the minorities. In the 1950s, this doctrine was modified, as Khrushchev declared the emergence of a new "Soviet" people. According to the new doctrine, the peoples within the USSR were said to be undergoing a process of drawing together (sblizhenie) and fusion (sliianie) into a new, supranational (and presumably Russian) community. The basis for this gradual withering away of national distinctions is the classless character of Soviet society. Soviet interest in these two concepts is primarily determined by domestic concerns, particularly by the current assessment of nationality problems in the USSR, but there is some relevance for Eastern Europe.

It was logical that in time the same "laws" would be invoked to predict the fate of national differences in the bloc as a whole, and
indeed in the entire "world socialist system." Just as the USSR was said to be a "community of peoples" united under Communism, Eastern Europe, organized by the same class principles, belongs to the same "community" and is a part of the same long-term process of drawing together and merging. There is of course an enormous gap between Soviet claims about the future evolution of the "socialist system" and reality. No Soviet leader can have illusions about the speed at which the Poles, for example, are "merging" with the fraternal Soviet people—particularly since the existence of a Soviet people is itself largely theoretical. The importance of long-range, "utopian" elements in Soviet doctrine should not be discounted altogether, however, since these are the elements that ultimately lend coherence to Marxist-Leninist policies and justify the Communist party's very existence.

The question of the future of national differences under Communism may have particular significance for East Germany, the only "East European" state that was formed out of a larger nation that remains part of the West. From its founding as a state until the early 1970s, East Germany defined itself as a "workers' and peasants' state" of the German nation, thereby emphasizing its roots in pre-war German Communism and its pretensions to pan-German leadership in the name of the national proletariat. Since about 1970, East Germany has redefined itself as a nation in its own right, cut off from the German-speaking nationality to the West. According to Soviet and official East German thinking, over the longer term the GDR is participating in the

---

29 See Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, "Socialist Internationalism—A New Stage," Survey, No. 98, Winter 1976, p. 39. Predictions about the CMEA states are generally confined to their drawing together. According to Ponomarev, "The party and the Soviet state consider this their most important task to develop cooperation with the socialist countries... This means... improvement in political cooperation... attainment of a higher level of economic integration, and ideological drawing together of our fraternal peoples." (B. N. Ponomarev, "Sovremennaya obstanovka i rol’ demokraticheskoi pechat’i," Kommunist, No. 17, November 1983, p. 18.)

30 The subject of the merger of nationalities is hotly debated in the Soviet Union. In recent years, a modest approach that downplays the "merger" element has apparently been adopted, although not without resistance from some quarters. The 1977 Constitution simply refers to the "all around development and drawing together of all nations" (Article 19). Brezhnev revealed in a speech that "some comrades... propose to introduce in the Constitution the concept of a single nation and to abolish the union and autonomous republics, depriving them of the right to secession and the right to engage in foreign relations... I believe that the erroneousness of such proposals is clear. The social-political unity of the Soviet people does not signify the disappearance of national differences... we would be taking a dangerous road if we would artificially force this process of national rapprochement." (Report at the session of the Supreme Soviet, October 4, 1977, reprinted and translated in F.J.M. Feldbrugge, The Constitutions of the USSR and the Union Republics: Analysis, Texts, Reports, Sijthoff & Noordhoff, Alphen aan den Rijn, 1979, pp. 208–209.)
gradual process of fusion into the Eastern bloc, thus transforming the political separation of Germany that occurred in 1945 into a national and presumably linguistic separation as well.\textsuperscript{31} For now, however, the eventual fusion of East Germany with the rest of the bloc remains a theoretical concept devoid of practical content. Indeed, efforts to establish a separate East German “nation” have taken the paradoxical form of a campaign to stress the distinctively German—if not Prussian—virtues of the East German regime, and to establish a link between Communist values and such German historical figures as Luther, Clausewitz, and Bismarck.

**Integration: A Balance Sheet.** In the economic, military, ideological, cultural, political, and other spheres, the policies of the past decade have furthered the process of “quasi-integration.” This process has resulted less from conscious design than from the emergence of a compromise between conflicting Soviet and East European desires. In economic and military matters, the USSR has obtained broad commitment from all the bloc members to the principle of long-term integration. In practice, however, CMEA and the WTO remain to some extent paper organizations, with integration really limited to the expansion of the network of bilateral agreements through which the USSR is able to tap into particular capabilities of the member states. In this respect, the “socialist system” resembles those traditional empires in which the main force of cohesion was the network of bilateral ties emanating from the metropole to the periphery.

In its public pronouncements, the Soviet Union claims that the “world socialist system” is in fact a system in which integration is a spontaneous and organic process that corresponds to analogous processes in the West (i.e., the “world capitalist system”) but that is based on different and nonexploitative class principles. While the actual extent of economic, military, and other forms of integration within the Soviet bloc lags considerably behind the level of integration in the West, it is important for political purposes for the USSR to uphold the fiction of symmetry (on all but the level of “class” or ideology) between the two “world systems.” Hence, while in practice the USSR relies on its relative weight in its bilateral ties with the CMEA states to promote a form of “quasi-integration,” it is anxious in its political dealings with the outside world to give the impression of genuine multilateral integration in the bloc. Not surprisingly, the political level is the one on which the bloc has been most unified and most able to present itself as a cohesive “world system” to outside observers.

As this analysis has stressed, the Soviet vision of an integrated and yet diverse East European system was not without inherent contradictions. The relatively favorable domestic and international situation confronting Brezhnev in the early 1970s simply gave grounds for optimism about the prospects for resolving or at least managing these contradictions. As the decade proceeded, however, this optimism was put to the test by changes in external conditions. The Soviet leaders were slow to grasp the implications of these changes for Eastern Europe, in part because the changes initially appeared to affect only the West and thus, if anything, confirmed Soviet optimism and with it a certain complacency about Eastern Europe. The oil crisis of 1973–1974, for example, was an enormous political and economic windfall for the Soviet Union and a corresponding blow for the West. As the decade developed, however, energy and the pricing and supply of oil were to become major challenges to the cohesion the Soviet bloc itself. Similarly, the massive inflow of credits from Western banks to the East, a partial by-product of the energy crisis, looked like yet another windfall for the Soviet Union. In time, however, these credits, along with Western inflation and the severe recessions of the late 1970s and early 1980s seriously affected Eastern Europe, especially Poland, and presented yet another challenge to the bloc.

DEVOLUTION OF RESPONSIBILITY AND NATIONAL DIVERSITY

At the same time that it sought to increase both the pace and the scope of integration in Eastern Europe, the Brezhnev regime was willing to permit, within limits, a certain devolution of responsibility to the national leaderships within the bloc. As with multilateral integration, there was a basic similarity between the Khrushchev and the Brezhnev approaches to devolution. The policies of both leaders reflected a wish to overcome the harmful effects of the Stalin period in which alien and unpopular Communist leaderships were imposed on the satellite countries.

In addition to the general set of preferences for a European order outlined above, the Soviet Union’s overall approach toward Eastern Europe could not avoid being heavily influenced by traditional Soviet and Russian thinking about the individual countries of the region, particularly about Poland and Germany. While the Soviet Union has generally treated Poland and, except where all-German issues were
involved, East Germany\textsuperscript{32} exactly the same as the other members of the bloc, both of these countries present special problems, and each has particular importance for Soviet policymakers. East Germany in particular has played an ambiguous role in Soviet policies. Soviet control of East Germany has been vital for the maintenance of what might be called the Soviet Union's minimum security requirement in Europe—prevention of the reemergence of a strong German state that could challenge the Soviet Union as happened in the two world wars. At the same time, East Germany has at times played a negative part in Soviet efforts to achieve more ambitious goals in Europe, as in the late 1960s, when the East German state resisted Soviet efforts to conduct a new Westpolitik. While this particular problem was solved with the installation of a more pliant leadership, the mere existence of an East Germany within the bloc continues to complicate Soviet policies aimed at securing greater influence over Western Europe and West Germany in particular. At times, East Germany is an asset, as in the recent efforts to appeal to an "all-German" interest in blocking the INF deployments, but it can as easily be a liability as well. In either case, it requires particular attention from the Soviet leadership.

In the aftermath of the invasion of Czechoslovakia, there were widespread fears that the Soviet Union might move to suppress Romanian autonomy or even to enforce the Brezhnev doctrine against Yugoslavia. It did neither. It also permitted the Hungarian economic reforms (the New Economic Mechanism (NEM)) to go forward, although there was Soviet pressure in 1972–1974 to cut back the pace of reform. In 1970, rather than intervening themselves, the Soviets preferred to watch the Polish authorities quell the widespread rioting that followed the imposition of price rises. They followed the same policy under similar circumstances in 1976. And finally, in 1981 the Soviets obviously preferred to have General Jaruzelski use Polish forces to suppress Solidarity than to invade the country themselves. Soviet "forbearance" in all of these cases attests to a Soviet understanding that limited devolution of authority within the bloc—with respect to both domestic reforms and suppression of internal dissent—is less costly in political, military, and economic terms than direct Soviet intervention.

Soviet toleration of limited diversity within Eastern Europe would not have been possible without the overall stabilization of the bloc that occurred after 1968, and without, it should be added, the upsurge in

\textsuperscript{32} After 1970, the Soviets in any case declared that such issues no longer existed, since the German problem had been settled once and for all by the recognition of two sovereign German states.
Soviet self-confidence that was evident in the 1970s. During the first two decades or more of Soviet rule in Eastern Europe, the Kremlin was forced to deal with leaders and personalities who had at least some claim to independence from Moscow and a record of struggle for Communism that predated the Soviet occupation.\(^{33}\) By 1971, the prewar generation (with the exception of Tito) had left the scene, leaving in Eastern Europe a set of pliant apparatchiks known for their loyalty and perceived effectiveness. The Soviet leaders could be confident that national leaderships understood the limits of Soviet toleration and would do their utmost to avoid the fate of Dubcek. Accordingly, they were prepared to allow trusted figures like Gierek, Husak, Honecker, and Kadar to adopt policies that would promote economic growth and political stability. For their part, the East European leaders were eager to show that national innovations, if coupled with absolute fidelity to the USSR in foreign policy and ideological matters, would actually strengthen the bloc and serve Soviet interests.\(^{34}\)

In addition, the strong role that Brezhnev played in foreign and domestic affairs in the 1970s, along with the overall commitment within the Politburo to collective leadership, facilitated a more relaxed attitude toward diversity in Eastern Europe in that it narrowed the scope for the kind of cross-party intrigue that characterized the Khrushchev period. Factional infighting within the Soviet leadership had allowed the formation of alliances between East Europeans and different factions in the Soviet leadership. (It is rumored, for example, that in the early 1960s, Khrushchev’s rival Kozlov conspired with East German leader Ulbricht against the Soviet Premier.) Brezhnev himself had been forced to contend with a challenge to his policies from Piotr Shelest, the party leader of the Ukraine, who is reported to have opposed détente with the United States and West Germany, and who in the 1968 crisis made common cause with Czechoslovak hardliners such as Vasil Bilak.\(^{35}\) Certainly after 1973, however, when Shelest was removed from the Politburo, there was no serious challenge to Brezhnev’s ability to conduct his own foreign policy.

In permitting a certain amount of diversity within the bloc, the Soviets occasionally found themselves opposing dogmatic positions and urging greater flexibility on various East European leaders (as had

\(^{33}\)Ulbricht, in his speech at the Twenty-Fourth Party Congress, irritated Soviet leaders by recalling his personal acquaintance with Lenin.

\(^{34}\)The fact that China was now completely outside the Soviet-dominated Communist bloc also lowered the scope for East European maneuvering. Romania, which maintained good relations with China, was as ever an exception.

Khrushchev when he embarked on the policy of de-Stalinization. When Ulbricht sought to resist the general Soviet foreign-policy line by taking a dogmatic position on ties between East and West Germany, the Soviets, after initially hesitating, eventually removed him. In an effort to create a more popular, if somewhat less subservient, leadership in Czechoslovakia, the Soviet regime went so far as to withhold all-out support for pro-Soviet dogmatists such as Bilak and Alois Indra.\textsuperscript{36} In other cases, the Soviets tolerated certain reforms that might have conflicted with ideological orthodoxy. Such was probably the case in Hungary, where the Soviet leaders nonetheless seemed pleased with Kadar’s popular acceptance and the relative success of his economic reforms. Limited Soviet toleration of the Hungarian experiment was only a specific case of a more general policy during the 1970s of allowing the national leaderships to buy, in effect, domestic stability by promoting “consumerism” and a rapidly rising standard of living. In Czechoslovakia after 1968, and in Poland after the December 1970 riots, governments undertook policies aimed at improving economic conditions, hoping thereby to head off demands for political reform.

It is difficult to judge how much of the diversity in Eastern Europe developed under Soviet scrutiny, and how much simply came about as a result of Soviet neglect. Certainly there was a great deal of the latter. The Soviets themselves have come close to acknowledging their negligence in overseeing the developments in Poland that were to lead to chaos at the end of the decade. There can be little doubt, however, that even the diversity that came about as a result of Soviet negligence was possible only because of the overall context of tight Soviet control and universal conformance on the few key issues that the Soviet leaders deem to be truly important. This stress on unity in the context of controlled diversity was implicit in the concept of “real socialism,” which Brezhnev worked to popularize. This concept, first widely used in the early 1970s, served as both a legitimizing concept for such diversity as exists in the bloc and a rationale for prohibiting divergence on two minimum requirements: strict loyalty to the USSR in foreign affairs and maintenance of the primacy of the Communist party in domestic affairs.

The “real” in “real socialism” is ambiguous, meaning both (1) actual or existing and (2) genuine or in conformance with law or an ideal type. To Western and especially “Eurocommunist” critics of the Soviet and East European models, the ideologues of real socialism stressed that not only were the CMEA states true to the theoretical teachings

of Lenin, but in contrast to the "armchair" socialists of the West, they were actually engaged in the titanic task of building Communism. Real socialism thus both justified the enhanced role of the party and the suppression of its critics, even as it provided a rationale for the existing faults and shortcomings of the Soviet model. The latter were portrayed as understandable but temporary by-products of the party's pathbreaking work in building Communism.

Real socialism, in focusing on only the bare essentials of Communist control, allows for and in fact elevates diversity to something of an absolute virtue—a proof of the "dynamic" character of the bloc. The doctrine of real socialism is, in a sense, a corollary to the Brezhnev doctrine, in that it justifies the Soviet system and the actions of the Soviet state by referring not to the tenets of classical Marxism-Leninism, with its utopian ethos, and still less the tenets of bourgeois law or morality, but to the fact of Soviet power itself. As Zdenek Mlynar has observed,

The totalitarian power no longer argues that its system is the best one from the point of theory, but that it is the sole existing one, that all other socialist alternatives are illusions. The only socialism is the Soviet one, because it is the only real one. ... Communist theory has ceased to be the criterion of the correctness of political practice. Instead, the reality of political power has become the ultimate criterion of righteousness.\(^{37}\)

By the late Brezhnev period, Soviet spokesmen were extolling the diversity in the bloc as evidence of the "creativity" of socialism. In his report to the Twenty-Sixth Party Congress, Brezhnev took note of this diversity, particularly as it manifested itself in the economic sphere:

During the years of socialist construction the fraternal countries have accumulated diverse, positive experiences in the organization of production, management, and the resolution of national economic problems. We know, for example, how skilfully the work of agricultural cooperatives and enterprises in Hungary has been organized and how valuable is the experience of rationalizing production and saving energy, raw and other materials in the GDR. There is much interesting and valuable experience in the social security system in Czechoslovakia. Bulgaria and a number of European socialist countries have found useful forms of agroindustrial cooperation.\(^{38}\)

\(^{37}\)Mlynar continues: "Actually, the state ideology now corresponds entirely to the practice of the state itself; the tendency towards this state of affairs, already strongly apparent in Stalin's time, has therefore not only not been repudiated (as the reformist communists wished) but has also won definitely and completely." ("The Rules of the Game: The Soviet Bloc Today," The Political Quarterly, Vol. 50, No. 4, October-December 1979, p. 407.)

\(^{38}\)Materiały XXVI Szczepla KPSS, p. 7.
The call to learn from the fraternal countries (Poland excepted) was also echoed by Andropov in his “inaugural” speech.

It is difficult to judge the extent to which Soviet praise for the “creativity” of the different East European countries represents mere rationalization for developments that the Soviets themselves regard as at best a necessary evil, and the extent to which it reflects genuine appreciation in the USSR that East European innovations have positive features and indeed could have some relevance for the USSR itself. There is probably an element of both in Soviet attitudes toward alternative “roads to socialism.”

On the one hand, Soviet political leaders and economic planners seem to be genuinely interested in adopting East European innovations, at least at the enterprise or production association level. They have shown particular interest in Hungary’s agricultural policies, as well as in Hungarian and East German efforts to increase managerial autonomy and responsibility at the enterprise level in the manufacturing sector. On the other hand, it does not appear that the Soviets are interested in elevating East European experience to the level of general principles. The emphasis is on “perfecting” the mechanisms of the Soviet economy, the fundamentals of which are regarded as completely sound. Hence there is no hint of altering the fundamentals of strict centralized planning on the basis of physical quotas of goods or of moving toward “market socialism” in any form.

Perhaps the most important reason for the Soviet reluctance to consider Hungarian or other types of economic reform is resistance from the entrenched Soviet party bureaucracy, whose power would inevitably diminish in a reformed economic system. Publicly, however, Soviet writers give several other reasons for the inappropriateness of East European models for the Soviet Union. They argue, for example, that the Soviet economy is simply too large to function under the kinds of systems that have emerged in East Germany and Hungary. Soviet planners also realize that important features of the Hungarian economic system are deliberately adapted to integration with the Western market. Such an approach is not only impractical for the much larger Soviet economy, but probably unacceptable for ideological and security reasons as well. The Soviets also have ideological reasons for not adopting a great deal of East European experimentation. Although the USSR can learn selectively from East European experience, it bases its control of Eastern Europe partly on the claim that it

---

is the “leading” member of the “world socialist system” and that it has accumulated “vast experience in building Communism.” If certain economic problems are difficult to solve in Soviet-type economies, this is all the more reason to uphold their ultimate solubility and to emphasize the USSR’s responsibility to persist in its “leading role.”

DETENTE

No matter how stable and cohesive the Soviet “empire” in Eastern Europe may be at a given moment, Soviet policies cannot be judged only by their success or failure in Eastern Europe. A second criterion is the effectiveness of these policies in promoting Soviet influence outside the bloc, particularly in Western Europe.

By 1970, the Brezhnev regime, having consolidated its grip in Eastern Europe by its action in Czechoslovakia and having vastly improved its military position relative to the United States, adopted a much more active policy toward the West. While many short-term considerations no doubt entered into the Soviet decision to pursue détente, these considerations did not preclude the parallel pursuit by the Brezhnev regime of the long-term objective of an all-European system of collective security. It did so by cultivating bilateral relations with the individual West European states and by working to convene the all-European conference on somewhat different terms than those suggested by Molotov or even by the Brezhnev regime itself in its defensively militant phase of the mid-1960s.

The basic flaw in the various Soviet schemes for collective security had always been the fundamental fact that Germany—the ostensible object of Soviet collective security proposals—no longer commanded the most powerful military force on the Continent or posed the greatest threat to other states. The leading military power was the USSR itself. While it is true that until the conclusion in the early 1970s of treaties between West Germany and Poland and West Germany and Czechoslovakia the USSR was perceived by the Poles and the Czechoslovaks as a guarantor of their territory against a potentially resurgent Germany, the USSR was not able to entice any of the Western states—with the very partial exception of France—into a collective security system aimed implicitly at the FRG and its transatlantic ally.

Whereas previous attempts to establish a new order in Europe envisioned radical steps such as the simultaneous dissolution of the blocs, the precipitate withdrawal of the United States from the Continent, or the conclusion of a nonaggression pact between the two
blocs, the policy of the 1970s proceeded from short- and medium-term acceptance of the blocs. Détente, however, as it was portrayed by Soviet foreign-policy specialists, was to begin a long-term process leading to the gradual decline of NATO's military effectiveness, the steady erosion of American influence on the Continent, and growing economic ties between the two parts of Europe—in short, the creation by degrees of a de facto collective security system. As in the 1950s, the Soviet Union, in promoting this all-European system, sought to exploit the apparent symmetry between the Eastern and Western, Communist and non-Communist economic and political organizations in Europe. But unlike in the 1950s, when the all-European order was to come about by the simultaneous dissolution of both blocs, in the 1970s the order was portrayed by the Soviets as the product of a gradual rapprochement between them. By focusing on rapprochement between existing blocs, the Soviets not only made their policy more credible to the West, but made a virtue out of the perceived necessity for closer Soviet-East European integration.

The centerpiece of this policy was the European security conference that the members of the Warsaw Pact began to promote in 1969. The effort to promote a European security conference might have ended up like one of the campaigns of the 1950s and mid-1960s had it not been for important changes in the West, particularly the willingness of the Social-Liberal coalition in West Germany to reach an accommodation with the East on terms largely favorable to it. The "solution" of the German problem was probably an unexpected windfall for the Soviet leaders at the time. Once the Soviet-West German rapprochement was established, however, the Soviets took the initiative in adapting the new détente to their preexisting efforts to realize their "preferred vision" of a new and more favorable European order.

As noted, Soviet and bloc representatives (with the exception of the Romanians) claimed that the Helsinki Final Act ratified not only the immutability of Europe's territorial borders (and hence Soviet conquests), but the immutability of its political order as well. It was, in short, a multilateral affirmation of the validity of the Brezhnev doctrine. In addition to this defensive aspect, CSCE was interpreted by the Soviet Union and its allies as the legal and political framework for new political, economic, and security arrangements between Eastern and Western Europe, the effect of which would be to increase the Soviet Union's influence in the West without undermining its hold on the East.

Certain changes in Soviet policy toward economic integration are particularly revealing of the link between Brezhnev's day-to-day policies and the preferred vision for a European order that has remained
fairly constant in Soviet thinking. For many years, the Soviets strongly denounced the EEC and predicted its early breakup. Soviet commentators characterized the organization as an "economic NATO" that would lead inevitably to German or American domination of Europe. This line softened somewhat in the early 1960s, as the Soviets realized the EEC's collapse was not imminent. The Soviets remained hostile to EEC's supranationality and its subregionalism, but began to hint a willingness to come to terms with the EEC if it agreed to be part of an all-European system and if it relinquished all pretensions to a supranational political identity.

This line of thinking eventually led Brezhnev to declare that it would be possible to establish "some form of business relationship between the inter-state commercial-economic organizations which exist in Europe . . . , if the EEC states refrain from discrimination and encourage the development of natural bilateral links and all-European cooperation."40 The Soviet Union's preferred formula, that of bilateralism in an all-European context, was evident when the Soviets finally put forward in 1976 a formal proposal for a CMEA-EEC accord. As one Soviet commentator expressed it, the CMEA members were interested in "a flexible combination of multilateral and bilateral relations between Europe's East and West, on the basis of equality among partners. In particular, there is a possibility of concluding special bilateral and multilateral agreements between CMEA member states and the EEC organs and between EEC member states and the CMEA bodies as well as between the two international organizations."41

A "flexible combination" of this type would strike at the heart of the EEC's supranational competence by undercutting powers already transferred to Brussels by the member states. Under the CMEA plan, the EEC states would conclude bilateral trade agreements with the CMEA members in contravention of EEC rules. Such agreements would thus serve to supplant West European integration with a more diffuse all-European arrangement. The other part of the proposed agreement, a CMEA-EEC umbrella accord, would help to establish the de facto supranational character of CMEA and thereby further undermine the autonomy of the East European states. At a minimum, such an accord would allow the USSR to regulate the bilateral ties between the East European states and the EEC. It would also head off any possibility of Romania, Hungary, or other states concluding separate agreements recognizing the EEC, as they appeared ready to do in the 1970s.


The Soviet pursuit of both political and economic advantages by means of an agreement with the EEC was also evident at CSCE. At Helsinki, Soviet negotiators sought Western agreement on the creation of an all-European economic body that would in effect supersede strictly regional ventures such as the EEC. While no such organization was created, the Soviets interpreted the "Basket Two" provisions of the Final Act as a mandate for all-European cooperation. Accordingly, in the aftermath of CSCE, they issued a stream of proposals that were said to follow from the Helsinki "mandate," including the CMEA-EEC accord proposed in 1976.

In addition to the effort to promote direct CMEA-EEC ties under the auspices of CSCE, the Soviet Union also attempted to use CSCE as a framework for various types of functional and economic cooperation. Speaking in Poland in 1975, Brezhnev proposed the convening of special follow-up conferences to discuss all-European cooperation in the areas of energy, transportation, and environmental protection. These conferences would represent not only a political affirmation of CSCE as an ongoing process, but would also be a means of extending existing patterns of cooperation within CMEA—much of it already in the areas of transportation and energy—to Western Europe as well.

While the Soviets have not had success in convening these top-level conferences, they have made some progress in building a network of USSR-East European-West European infrastructural energy projects. It is noteworthy that the largest CMEA joint project of the 1976–1980 period, the Orenburg gas complex and pipeline, was also the largest Soviet-West European project of the period, as CMEA became in effect a conduit by which East European countries channeled West European finance and equipment into the Soviet economy. More than 40 percent of the cost of the Orenburg project—over $2 billion—was raised by CMEA's International Investment Bank in syndicated Eurocurrency loans. These loans enabled CMEA to obtain some $2 billion worth of Western pipe and compressors for the project.\(^{42}\) Similarly, the controversial Urengoi-Uzhgorod pipeline currently under construction not only binds together the distribution networks of the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and Western Europe, but also involves Soviet, East European, and West European firms and governments in its construction and financing.

Ultimately, détente and "international cooperation" accomplished far less than was envisioned at the beginning of the 1970s. The failures of détente policy and their relationship to the internal

problems that were facing Eastern Europe became an important topic for consideration when Soviet analysts began, after August 1980, to assess the circumstances that led to the disastrous events in Poland. These assessments are surveyed in the next section.
IV. ASSESSMENTS OF THE CURRENT CRISIS

The Brezhnev policy toward Eastern and Western Europe was, as the previous section has suggested, more sophisticated in concept and more subtle in its implementation than those pursued by previous Soviet leaderships. Nonetheless, it was a policy that by 1980 was largely in ruins. From the Soviet perspective, the causes for the collapse of the preferred policy were both economic and political, and they arose from both conditions within Eastern Europe and the changing global situation.

After a period of good economic performance in the early 1970s, economic growth slowed dramatically and had all but ceased by 1980. Whereas in the 1971-1975 plan period East European “produced national income” grew at an average annual rate of 7.3 percent, in 1976-1980 it slowed to 4.0 percent, with Poland, the largest East European state, registering only a 1.6 percent average annual gain. By 1981, economic growth within the bloc had turned negative. In retrospect, it became clear that the 1971–1975 boom, particularly in Poland and Romania, had been fueled largely by imported capital from the West that was invested in projects of questionable long-term economic value.

Even before the full magnitude of Eastern Europe's economic problems became apparent, the Soviets had to contend with what they saw as the loss of forward momentum toward the creation of the all-European order that was integral to Soviet bloc policy during the 1970s. While there is no evidence to support the view that the Soviet leaders actually regretted CSCE because of the impetus the human-rights provisions (“Basket Three”) of the Final Act gave to the various dissident groups, human rights did become a lever by which, in the Soviet view, Western “enemies of détente” could slow and even partially reverse its momentum. At the Belgrade CSCE review conference, Brezhnev's proposals for all-European conferences in the areas of energy, transportation, and the environment were pushed to the background amid controversy over Soviet compliance with the human-rights provisions of the Helsinki document. At Madrid, recriminations over

---

1See Jan Vanous, “East European Economic Slowdown,” Problems of Communism, Vol. 31, No. 4, July-August 1982. “Produced national income” is an East European measure that probably overstates economic growth. Using its own figures for GNP, the CIA estimates that East European growth turned negative in 1980 (−0.1 percent), and continued on this path in 1981 (−1.0 percent) and 1982 (−0.2 percent). (Handbook of Economic Statistics, 1983, p. 35.)
human rights in Poland dashed Soviet hopes for an early convening of the Polish-sponsored all-European conference on disarmament.

The deterioration of U.S.-Soviet relations in the late 1970s and NATO's new emphasis on rearmament also had implications for Soviet policy in Europe. While Soviet propagandists made serious efforts to exploit tensions between the United States and Western Europe and hoped to derail the 1979 NATO dual-track decision, these opportunistic efforts were at best a substitute for the gradual, controlled evolution toward a Soviet-dominated collective security system that had been envisioned in the early 1970s. Increasingly, Soviet diplomatic and propaganda efforts were devoted to maintaining past gains and preserving the favorable military balance in Europe, rather than to pushing forward with "creative" new proposals that would build upon previous gains and shift the global balance in a favorable direction.

Perhaps most worrisome from the Soviet point of view was the situation in Poland. Until the imposition of martial law in December 1981, the possibility existed that the Soviets would have to invade the country to reestablish Communist control. Even after the December action, the continuing resistance to martial law and the ongoing economic stagnation ruled out the kind of quick "normalization" that had occurred after the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia. More ominously, from the Soviet point of view, the crisis in Poland seemed to raise fundamental questions about issues central to the entire Communist enterprise. These issues included the relationship of the party to the people, the role of the military in Communist states, and the persistence of "contradictions" in societies that are said to be "building Communism."

In light of the depth and scope of the problems that were evident by 1980, it is somewhat surprising that Soviet policymakers did not foresee their emergence earlier and take or at least try to take preventive action. This could have occurred as early as 1975 or 1976. Instead, in the late Brezhnev period, Soviet policy toward Eastern Europe entered the same state of paralysis that was evident in Soviet domestic affairs. Soviet propagandists continued to invoke the same slogans, but it was clear by 1976 that the ambitious schemes for an integrated East European bloc and an all-European order were being realized very slowly, if at all.

It could be argued that the contrast between the activism of the early Brezhnev period and the paralysis of the later years is more apparent than real. In retrospect, it seems that the successes of Soviet "policy" in the early 1970s may have had less to do with the merits of the policy itself than with a convergence of fortuitous circumstances for which Brezhnev simply claimed credit. Under these circumstances,
Brezhnev’s approach toward Eastern Europe remained fairly passive, based as it was on a “scientific” assessment that historical trends were leading to the kind of order in Europe that the Soviets desired in any case. In the early 1970s, the Soviet Union and some of the East European states benefited from unusually strong and vigorous political leadership. Western economic difficulties both made the Eastern bloc look relatively good in comparative terms and induced the West to take measures that in the short term at least spurred the economies of the bloc. Eastern Europe also benefited from German Ostpolitik, which helped to stabilize and legitimize the leaderships of East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Poland.

Almost until the very end of the decade and the onset of deep crisis in Poland, it was possible for Soviet propagandists to interpret most developments in Eastern Europe, whether foreseen or not, as fitting into the general scheme outlined early in the decade. Well-worn propaganda lines thus became obstacles to analysis of the region’s real problems. By the time the crisis in Poland began to develop in August 1980, however, Soviet commentators could no longer avoid making assessments of what was wrong in Eastern Europe. The remainder of this section will examine these assessments, distinguishing between those that focused on the international aspects of the crisis and were intended for international audiences and those that dealt with the situation in Poland itself and appeared designed to encourage Polish Communists to take corrective actions.

THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

During the 1970s, Soviet leaders perceived themselves as benefiting from a mutually reinforcing process in which Eastern Europe, like the USSR itself, not only made rapid progress in building up its economic, military, and other forms of power, but also played a vital political role in the USSR’s pursuit of détente on the basis of “equality” between the two “world systems.” The claim made by Soviet and bloc propagandists that CMEA was the world’s most dynamic international economic grouping reflected a belief that the industrial growth of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany, no less than that of the USSR itself, was a factor working to shift the world “correlation of forces” in favor of the “world socialist system.” At the same time, Eastern Europe’s growing role in the world economy, its contribution to the conventional military power of the Warsaw Pact, and its activism on a global basis (epitomized by East Germany’s emergence from relative isolation at the beginning of the 1970s to its active Third
World policy at the end) had begun to constitute a political reality in itself that lent credence to Soviet claims regarding the emergence of a “world socialist system.”

By the early 1980s, however, increasing East European weakness was becoming apparent to the Soviets and to the outside world. Where the major industrial states of Eastern Europe had for a long time been closing the gap between themselves and the larger economies of Western Europe, at the beginning of the 1980s the East European economies faced the prospect of themselves being overtaken by the more dynamic newly industrializing countries such as South Korea and Taiwan. What had previously been a mutually reinforcing “virtuous” cycle, with the internal development of the bloc enhancing its external role, now threatened to become a vicious cycle, with the weakening of the bloc, and above all the economic and political collapse in Poland, not only proving troublesome in its own right, but providing the United States with a lever by which to tear down a détente process based on Western acceptance of bloc-to-bloc “equality” and symmetry. Just as the stabilization and institutional reform that took place in the bloc following the invasion of Czechoslovakia laid the groundwork for a concerted and more active policy toward the West, so the chaos in Poland—the second largest member of the “world socialist system”—set the stage for what many Soviet commentators feared would be a rollback of the political prestige of the bloc that would necessitate a more inward-looking and defensive posture.

Far more than was even the case in Czechoslovakia in 1968, Soviet and bloc commentators stressed the broad geopolitical significance of events in Poland, portraying the Polish crisis as a fundamental challenge to the Soviet Union’s position in Europe and by extension its global equality with the United States. According to Vadim Zagladin, deputy head of the CPSU Central Committee’s International Department, “the attempts of certain Western sectors to support and encourage the antisocialist forces in Poland are now more than evident, and their objective is also clear: to shift Poland’s position within the European context, to remove it from the alliance of socialist countries.” This line was later adopted by the Polish leaders themselves. As General Jaruzelski told the Central Committee plenum of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP) in early 1982,

Poland is being regarded as a tool, as a lever for putting pressure on the Soviet Union, on the socialist community . . . . It has been allotted the role of a detonator under the edifice of peace which is founded on the agreements signed in Yalta and Potsdam which

---

2 Vadim Zagladin, interview in La Repubblica, December 11, 1980.
cannot be separated from each other. A disintegration of the socialist community, a reverse of European history, a whole era backwards were to have been started in Poland.

While it is unlikely that anyone in the Soviet leadership actually believed that the United States was trying to wrest Poland from the Warsaw Pact (and while Soviet propagandists had a strong motivation for exaggerating the danger of a Polish breakaway), this claim masked a deeper, unexpressed fear about what the United States would be able to accomplish by "exploiting" the crisis in Poland. The main fear was probably that the United States would be able to use the issue of Poland as a device to mobilize its West European allies against the Soviet Union and to arrest and even reverse the détente process of the 1970s.

In reviewing the Soviet press, particularly the pronouncements by those individuals most familiar with the West (Arbatov, Zagladin) and whose job it is to influence Western audiences, it is hard not to detect a note of intense bitterness at the Polish crisis and at perceived American efforts to exploit it. In response, the Soviets seemed determined to resist these American efforts and to dispel any notions that the USSR could be isolated. As a Soviet official told a visiting American journalist, "We are not going to be bogged down in Poland and Afghanistan and cut off from the rest of the world for a hundred years. We can draw closer to China. We can bring back Yugoslavia and Rumania. You will see many things happening in Eastern Europe."

In the Soviet perspective, isolation of and disintegration within the bloc are twin dangers that Soviet policy must work to avert. Concern about the threat of isolation would explain Soviet efforts to bring about some kind of reconsolidation of the world Communist movement. This would serve as an insurance policy as well as a deterrent against a toughened Western policy. The Soviet Union has made repeated and unsuccessful attempts to establish a dialogue with Albania, as well as attempts to subvert the Albanian Communist party from within. It has also tried to exploit the weak economic position of Yugoslavia by guaranteeing long-term delivery of oil supplies in exchange for industrial goods. The Sino-Soviet dialogue that began in the last year of Brezhnev's life and that has continued under his successors also appears aimed at breaking out of a potential isolation led by the United States under the Reagan administration and made more likely by the election of a series of leaders—Thatcher, Mitterrand, Nakasone, and Kohl—all less détente-minded than their predecessors.

---

The Soviets have been somewhat disappointed that in the face of what they portray as the new U.S. challenge, it has proven difficult to mobilize the CMEA states and to use U.S. policy as an impetus to closer bloc integration. The tensions generated within CMEA over the integration issue have in fact provoked a new discussion about the nature of “contradictions” in the “world socialist system.”

Soviet commentators have made use of Lenin’s theory that “socialism,” while it eliminates “antagonisms” (which can only be based on objective, “class” factors), does not abolish all “contradictions.” Hence the phenomenon of nonantagonistic contradictions within the “world socialist system.” According to one Soviet author:

[There can be] a certain discrepancy between the objective requirement for unity and the far from identical awareness of that requirement in different socialist countries, between the development of socialist relations within the framework of each country and the development of socialism as a world system. As a result a contradiction can and sometimes does arise between international requirements and national interests, between the objective need for an increasing degree of socialist integration and the interests of socialist building within the national state framework.

It is a characteristic of these contradictions that since they are not antagonistic by their nature, they are capable of being resolved within the framework of the new [i.e., existing] system . . . .

Obviously the subjective factor has a major role in overcoming the contradictions which arise. Decisions based on the principles of socialist internationalism are always capable of bringing the positions and interests of socialist states closer together and reducing to a minimum the differences in viewpoints on a particular issue.5

This analysis amounts to little more than a demand for further self-sacrifice and deference to the Soviet Union on the part of the East European states, even if their national interests might be harmed by acquiescence to Soviet, i.e., “world socialist system,” demands. The rationale is that the only “objective” international reality is the struggle with “imperialism.” Economic and political decisions that do not subordinate all other considerations to this objective reality are the product of “subjectivism” and “voluntarism.”

THE DOMESTIC DIMENSION

The longer the crisis in Poland dragged on, the more Soviet commentators had to move beyond vilification of Poland’s external enemies and offer explanations for the internal conditions that made possible

such external “subversion.” It was also necessary to point out the incompetence and mistakes of the Polish leadership in order to induce the Poles themselves to change their policies.

Soviet statements on the internal causes of Poland’s difficulties fall into three broad categories: those that focus on the mistakes of a particular Polish leadership—usually Edward Giełek and his associates; those that focus on the entire pattern of postwar Polish history; and those that touch upon problems general to “building socialism,” not only in Poland, but elsewhere as well.

Initially, Soviet commentators, in addition to stressing the international origins and implications of the crisis, tended to confine their analysis to the first of these categories. There no doubt was genuine anger in the Soviet leadership at the political and economic mismanagement of the Giełek regime. Polish sources were often cited to discredit the former leadership. According to Konstantin V. Rusakov, the Central Committee secretary in charge of bloc relations, “the Polish United Worker’s Party and the fraternal Marxist-Leninist parties are unanimous in holding that the main cause of the crisis development in Poland were the big mistakes and miscalculations of the former Polish leadership in economic and social policy and the flagrant departures from the integral regularities and principles of building socialism in Poland in recent years.”

Soviet commentators also objected to Poland’s management of its economy, specifically its “extremely risky” financial-economic relations with the West and its “reckless” borrowings at “high and simply exorbitant rates of interest.” The main Soviet criticisms, however, were reserved for the political aspects of the crisis. Rusakov, for example, harshly condemned the Polish authorities for allowing KOR, “an avowedly counterrevolutionary grouping . . . to operate in the country essentially legally.”

Soviet commentators were also disturbed by the virtual breakdown of censorship and the government monopoly on information. According to Rusakov, “Anti-socialist elements are increasingly breaking through to the mass information media. Having obtained a variety of printing and duplicating equipment in the West, they are literally filling the country with leaflets of a hostile, inflammatory nature.” The loss of party control over information was also linked by Soviet

---


7In reality, Poland, like many of the developing countries, was encouraged during the 1970s to borrow heavily, in part because interest rates were extremely low or at times even negative after discounting for the effects of inflation.
analysts to the unacceptable degree of Polish contact with the West. According to an analysis in Partinaia zhizn',

Since World War II in Poland there have been about 15,000 translations of publications by Western authors with a total print run of over 270,000,000; about 16,000 Western-produced movies have been shown and over 3,300 productions of plays by Western authors have been staged. It is indicative that the exchange of students between the United States and Poland is, for instance, five times greater than the relevant exchange between the United States and the USSR.8

The analysis goes on to catalogue tourist, business, diplomatic, and other types of exchanges, with the clear implication that subversion is directly correlated with the level of contact with the West.

In these statements, it is difficult to separate analysis—what the Soviet leaders really think—from what is simply said to limit the damage to Soviet ideology posed by the crisis and to direct the Poles to mend their ways. The attacks on KOR and on Polish officials for permitting limited freedom of the press no doubt were intended to create a distinction for Soviet readers between “the workers,” who purportedly joined Solidarity out of frustration with the “mistakes” of the leadership, and those, mainly in the West but also including KOR, who aimed to “confuse” or “mislead” the workers for counterrevolutionary purposes that the workers themselves did not share. According to Rusakov, “Yes, Solidarity does include millions of people. But the views and beliefs of the absolute majority of them are far from the antisocialist goals of Solidarity’s counterrevolutionary advisers.”

In addition to criticizing the mistakes of the Gierek regime during the 1970s, authoritative Soviet assessments point to the failure of the Polish Communist leadership throughout the postwar period to fully collectivize Poland. According to a Kommunist editorial, the Polish leaders were guilty of “a certain underestimating of the international experience of world socialism” and of “the violation of the universal laws governing the building of socialism.” The violation of these laws, it is said, “led to incomplete socialist changes and even to retention of some elements of the transitional period.”9 How widely the dogmatic assessment is shared in the Soviet hierarchy is difficult to determine, but if it is widespread, it could mean pressures over the long term on the Polish leadership to eliminate the limited elements of pluralism that have survived in Polish life.

---


9“Sozidatel’naia mooshch’ kollektivnogo opyta (Creative Power of Collective Experience),” editorial, Kommunist, No. 5, March 1982, p. 11.
Soviet authors comment frequently on the existence of social pluralism in Poland. There seems to be some uncertainty as to whether social pluralism is in itself unacceptable, or whether the real difficulty is that because of the mistakes and weakness of the Polish party (and external “subversion”), social pluralism has led to demands for political pluralism. The latter is of course totally unacceptable to all Soviet authors—although not, in the Soviet view, to some of the reformist elements in the Polish party itself.

In May 1983, there was a sharp attack by the Soviet weekly Novoe Vremia on the Polish publication Polityka over the pluralism issue. Certain authors in the review had suggested that the Polish reform process might require some sharing of power with elements that had backed Solidarity. The Soviet author countered by claiming that pluralism already existed in Poland: “What is in question is pluralism as regards world outlook. It would seem that its proponents are hammering at a long open door. For besides the PUWP, Poland has also a functioning United Peasants’ Party, a Democratic Party and three Catholic mass organizations.” But, the Soviet author continued, these groupings “pluralism of world outlook” did not mean that they refused to “work together with the PUWP and not against the socialist system.” Solidarity and KOR, in contrast, claimed that “the basis of the democracy of the Republic is pluralism of world outlook and social, political and cultural pluralism”—a totally unacceptable formulation from the point of view of both the Soviets and Polish party leaders.

One of the more significant aspects of the Soviet discussion of the role of social pluralism in Poland is its implications for Soviet and Polish government relations with the Catholic church. Soviet spokesmen have generally been cautious in attacking the church directly and have even hinted of a possible papal visit to Lithuania. Occasionally, however, there are sharp criticisms that reveal Soviet concerns.

Asked about the position of the church in Poland, Leonid Zamyatin, chief of the International Information Department of the Central Committee, gave a largely negative answer. According to Zamyatin,

\[
\ldots [F]or ages the Polish Roman Catholic Church has played a definite role among the Polish people. It has its own traditions. At the same time, the Polish Roman Catholic Church was to some extent on the side of the counterrevolutionary forces during the August events.
\]

A certain section of the clergy took and continues to take a position of struggle against socialism in Poland. Another section of the

---


clergy, more sober-minded, understands that Poland is a socialist country and that the church must build its relations recognizing the existing realities, that is: socialism in Poland. It favors a certain cooperation with the Polish government.

With respect to the Pope himself, Zamyatin was also negative:

... [A]fter the Roman Catholic pope's visit to Poland, the situation became somewhat complicated.

The aggressive part of the church that comes out for a conflict with the government and the socialist state became more active. Its antisocialist sermons also became more virulent. Now the forces which came out against socialism, even if they are atheistic forces, seek a union with these Roman Catholic Church figures and are forming some kind of definite unified system of struggle with them....

... [F]rom my point of view, after the Roman Catholic pope's visit certain aggressive circles in the Polish church became considerably more active.\footnote{12}

The third general category of Soviet statements on Poland are those that suggest that developments in Poland are not simply the result of a particular leadership's mistakes or of the peculiar course of Polish development after World War II, but may in fact have relevance to Communist systems everywhere. These statements have surfaced more recently—after the situation in Poland stabilized and it was perhaps possible to reflect on the ideological implications of a crisis that was less acute than in 1980 and 1981 but in some ways perhaps more deep-seated than was believed at that time.

Discussions of this kind are of course extremely sensitive, in that they touch upon the question of whether the kind of unrest that affected Poland has relevance for the Soviet Union itself. Some Soviet writings suggest that it does. In early 1983, the head of the Estonian Communist Party Central Committee published an article in Kommunist in which he revealed that in his republic, letters circulated that promoted selective strikes, "similar to those promoted in Poland by Solidarity."\footnote{13} According to the Estonian's analysis, the similarity to the situation in Poland was not the product of geographic proximity alone, but of underlying features that were common to both Poland and


Estonia and that accounted for both nations’ susceptibility to external “subversion.”

In general, however, Soviet publications reject suggestions that Poland has any similarities to the USSR. Those “objective” conditions for revolt in Poland simply do not exist in the more advanced Soviet society. According to R. Kosolapov, a leading Soviet ideologist:

In Poland of the time before the crisis and still more in Poland now, it is not possible to regard the tasks of the transitional period as being completely resolved or Polish society as having coped with the task of building socialism. The existence there for several decades, alongside the socialist structure, of stable privately owned agriculture and a capitalist sector and of influential antisocialist ideological current indicates the contrasting mosaic of the base and the superstructure, and thus the existence of objective causes for antagonistic class contradictions.14

The intimation by a Soviet theorist that socialism in Poland is threatened, not only by external subversion, but by internal, objective conditions, is in itself quite remarkable and presumably can only be made in conjunction with other statements that clearly establish the impossibility of anything similar happening in the Soviet Union. The author continues:

Can anything of the kind be said about the Soviet Union and those socialist countries which, alongside nationalized large-scale industry have large-scale, highly mechanized collective agriculture? The degree of integration of the socialist social system here achieved . . . gives weighty guarantees against the emergence of negative trends of a critical nature—provided, of course, that the machinery of planned management of economic and social development is functioning normally and the stuffing up of problems long since solved is not permitted. The ability to see the difference in kind between societies which are still forced to deal with the question “who will come out on top” [i.e., Poland] and societies which no longer have the class struggle is one of the most important prerequisites for a scientific understanding of the processes taking place.15

What is significant about this passage, apart from indicating how gravely the Soviets assess the weakness of Polish Communism, is its implications for economic reform in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. While the Soviets know that consumer shortages have lead to dissent in Eastern Europe and dissatisfaction at home, an awareness of the dangerous persistence of “objective” sources of opposition within

15Ibid.
Communist society suggests that the Soviets are unlikely to reprivatize significant amounts of economic activity simply to obtain increases in the supply of consumer goods and services.

At the same time, however, many Soviet commentators argue that the "objective" sources of anti-Communism in Poland, while they took the Soviet leaders by surprise, derive their real strength from external subversion. *Kommunist*, quoting a dogmatic Polish source, asks the rhetorical question troubling the Soviet leadership:

> How did it come to pass, then, that 37 years after the party assumed power in Poland the rightist forces turned out to be so strong? Why have they succeeded in utilizing the mistakes which were made and in guiding the dissatisfaction of the working people? Where are the sources of those processes which began with putting forward demands to create new trade unions and finished with plans to usurp power?16

This same article goes on to cite a number of reasons for the strength of the opposition, including the relatively immature class outlook of younger urban workers recruited from the peasantry. It concludes, however, that

> Under present conditions, the internal prerequisites for counterrevolution are so threatening and dangerous that they have become an object of manipulation for the anti-Communist centers abroad. Without support from outside, the internal counterrevolutionary forces would not have attempted an attack, knowing that it was without hope.

The analysis thus comes full circle to the external dimension of the Polish crisis. In doing so, however, it does not claim that external forces caused the internal opposition, but merely that they offered the opposition "hope." Implicitly, the analysis points to the link between the stability in Eastern Europe and the East-West order—a subject that will be explored in the next section.

---

V. THE OUTLOOK

SHORT- TO MEDIUM-TERM RESPONSES

Soviet difficulties in Eastern Europe, either in the form of popular opposition to governments pursuing policies that are otherwise acceptable to Moscow (i.e., Poland), or in the form of resistance by governments to Soviet demands (i.e., Romania), represent fundamental challenges to Soviet power. The Soviet Union’s failure to make Eastern Europe into a viable, attractive model for a future “world socialist system” must be regarded as a major blow to Soviet hopes to expand the USSR’s global influence in the next decade.

It would be erroneous, however, to conclude that the Soviet leadership has ceased to value Eastern Europe or is about to fundamentally reconsider its place in Soviet policy. For now it appears safe to conclude that three elements persist in Soviet thinking: (1) There are favorable prospects—perhaps not as favorable as ten years ago, but still good—for increasing the USSR’s global political influence; (2) Europe is still the “main thing” in world politics, the key to cutting back U.S. and enhancing Soviet global political, economic, and military power; and (3) Eastern Europe has served the USSR well as a military springboard and diplomatic platform for exercising influence over Western Europe and promoting a long-term “all-European” policy. Only if any one of these beliefs ceased to be operative would the way be opened for fundamental change in Eastern Europe, although such change would be by no means guaranteed.

For the next several years, the Soviet leadership is likely to adopt an approach toward Eastern Europe that is highly active on the level of propaganda and proposals (disarmament, nuclear-free zones, all-European conference, NATO-WTO umbrella agreements), but somewhat inward-looking and perhaps even defensive in substance. If the Soviets are both lucky and skillful, they may be able to exploit divergences in the West—both between Western Europe and the United States and between Western governments and their domestic opponents—to gain long-term military and economic advantages. Such advantages could not only make the USSR’s troubles of empire in Eastern Europe appear inconsequential in comparison, but they might help to stabilize the empire itself by securing needed economic inputs from the West and making resistance to Soviet power seem yet more hopeless in the East.
While aware of these possibilities, for now the Soviets do not appear to be counting on their realization. Soviet policymakers appear to have little interest in taking risks in the East in pursuit of “all-European” gains. They seem to be more concerned with stabilizing the political and economic situation in Eastern Europe, revitalizing growth throughout CMEA, and stiffening resistance to possible pressures from the West.

In pursuing these objectives, Soviet leaders are still in a sense trying to resolve problems at the national, intrabloc, and East-West levels that date from Stalin’s consolidation of Soviet power in Eastern Europe. The Soviets correctly perceive that these problems are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Turmoil at the national level undermines bloc cohesiveness, which in turn undermines the ability of the Soviet Union to pursue an effective policy toward the West and Western Europe in particular. By the same token, the Soviets see the solutions to any one set of problems as linked to the other two. An East-West collective security system would stabilize the bloc, while a more stable bloc would in turn promote cohesion at the national level. Conversely, stable national Communist regimes at the national level would mean a stronger bloc, which in turn would make possible a more effective East-West policy. Because the Soviets regard events in Eastern Europe in national, bloc, and East-West terms, they have responded to the current crisis with actions on all three levels, each of which will be considered below.

The East-West Level

The most unequivocal Soviet response has been on the East-West level, where the Soviets have made clear their view of the link between events in Poland and Soviet relations with the outside world. It was noted earlier that in the early 1970s, the Soviet Union sought to base its relations not only with Eastern Europe but also with the West on explicit recognition, codified in international “law,” of the irreversibility of socialist gains resulting from World War II. By the end of the decade, as the Communist government in Poland came under attack from the Polish people, the Soviet leadership adhered to what was in effect the same line, claiming that under the rules of détente, the West was obligated, at a minimum, to refrain from lending support of any kind to Solidarity. Beyond this minimum demand, Soviet spokesmen often implied that the West was obliged, by international agreement and by its own self-interest, to actually assist the USSR and the Polish Communists in restoring control in Poland.
The Soviet line was extremely tough, amounting to an insistence that peace itself was threatened by alleged Western efforts to subvert Poland. According to Zagladin,

The Helsinki charter [sic] and the entire détente process are based on the recognition of the changes that took place in Europe following World War II . . . . The strengthening of socialism in Poland contributes to the strengthening of détente. Consider the negative role played by prewar Poland in European politics and then consider Poland today—Gierek's role in the Brezhnev-Giscard meeting in Warsaw which gave a new thrust to the dialogue between the two Europes, or the plan for a disarmament conference submitted by the Poles in Madrid.1

In what might be regarded as the economic and financial corollary to the Soviet political line, Soviet officials also made clear to Western bankers that the USSR did not consider itself bound under an "umbrella theory" to take responsibility for the external debts of Poland or other Eastern bloc states.2 Not only did the Soviet Union refuse to increase its aid to Poland, but there is evidence to suggest that the USSR actually decreased its subsidies as the economic and political crisis deepened.3 Where Western observers expected a net flow of resources from the Soviet Union to Poland and then, at least eventually, to the West (as creditors), the Soviets appeared determined to reverse this flow—to make the Poles bear the economic hardships directly and push whatever they could not bear onto the West.4 So far, this policy has proved quite successful, as the Soviets have avoided a massive bailout of Poland while the Poles themselves, through various rescheduling deals with Western commercial banks and their refusal to service government-guaranteed debt, have strictly limited their repay-

---

1Vadim Zagladin, interview in La Repubblica, December 11, 1980.
3In 1982, Soviet imports from Poland increased by 14 percent, while exports to Poland dropped by 4 percent. (Ekonomincheskaia gazeta, No. 35, August 1982.) “Moscow compelled the Polish regime to pay back the Soviet bloc countries for credits received earlier, thereby siphoning off Poland’s export earnings.” (Zbigniew Fallenbuehl, “Command Performance,” The Wilson Quarterly, Vol. 7, No. 2, Spring 1983, p. 76.) In the first six months of 1983, Soviet imports from Poland were up 26.7 percent, while exports increased by only 9.8 percent over 1982. (Ekonomincheskaia gazeta, No. 33, August 1983.)
4The Soviets claim they provide large amounts of aid to Poland, and Western analysts to some extent support these claims. Soviet aid, however, has largely been in the form of "implicit" subsidies that are general to CMEA. There has been less direct support of Poland in terms of additional transfer of resources. See Elisabeth Goldstein, "Soviet Economic Assistance to Poland, 1980–1981," U.S. Congress, Joint Economic Committee, Soviet Economy in the 1980s: Problems and Prospects, op. cit.
ments to the West since the declaration of martial law in 1981. The motive for such a policy was not simply the usual Soviet economic opportunist or the momentary economic difficulties in the USSR itself (although both probably contributed somewhat), but rather a calculated effort to make the West bear the costs of—and implicitly accept responsibility for—its alleged role in subverting “People’s Poland.”

The Soviets have also backed the Poles in their claim that Western sanctions against the Jaruzelski regime are not only politically unacceptable, but in fact “illegal,” and that Polish enterprises are entitled to compensation for any losses incurred as a result of the sanctions. According to Pravda, U.S. sanctions

... contradict the basic principles and norms of international law. They are a serious violation of the provisions of the UN Charter, in particular, Article 1 Item 2, as well as the provisions contained in the Helsinki Conference Final Act, especially Principle I concerning sovereign equality and respect of the rights inherent to sovereignty, Principle VI on non-interference in internal affairs, and Principle IX concerning cooperation between states.6

Pravda goes on to state that “the Polish government has reserved the right to raise the questions of the damage caused to Poland as a result of the U.S. Administration’s illegal measures.”7

The Intrabloc Level

While the Soviet response to Eastern Europe’s crisis has been unreservedly harsh at the East-West level, there has been somewhat less certainty about what should be done within the bloc to improve conditions. There have been discussions in Soviet publications about long-term adjustments in policy, but clearly the main focus has been on managing the most immediate economic and political problems.

The Soviet leaders, admittedly in part because of their own economic problems, are beginning to force the East Europeans to make difficult choices. The Soviet Union has taken a tough line toward the East European states on the question of subsidies. It has cut back the volume and raised the prices of oil, natural gas, and uranium provided to Eastern Europe. By cutting back the volume of shipments, the Soviets have forced the East Europeans both to curb their domestic use and to find alternative sources, most of which require hard-currency

6TASS dispatch, Pravda, November 5, 1983.
7Ibid.
payment. In raising the prices of these items, the Soviets, following
world market trends, have shifted the terms of trade between them-
selves and Eastern Europe so that they command a larger volume of
machinery, consumer goods, and agricultural products for each unit of
energy provided. The Soviets have indicated that in the future they
will be unwilling to tolerate large trade deficits between themselves and
the various East European states and may in fact begin demanding
trade surpluses to repay debts amounting to billions of rubles incurred
during the 1975–1981 period.5

This new Soviet posture is forcing the East European states to
abandon the unrealistic expectations of the early 1970s. Many of the
economic problems in Eastern Europe during the 1970s were aggra-
vated by a lack of realism on the part of local leaderships and the ten-
dency to postpone difficult choices. These choices can no longer be
avoided. The Soviet leadership would like to see the East European
states bring their own economic problems under control in order to sta-
bilize their domestic political situations and head off repeats of the
Polish crisis. Economic stabilization would end the disruption of joint
CMEA plans—and of the Soviet economy—that occurred as a result of
the events in Poland and would stop the drain on Soviet resources that
the weak East European economies represent. More ambitiously, the
Soviet leaders would like to be able to turn to Eastern Europe as a net
provider of qualitative and quantitative inputs for the Soviet economy.

Soviet and bloc planners realize that in order to accomplish either of
these objectives they must make dramatic progress on certain sectoral
problems that have long resisted solution. The inability to satisfy
domestic food requirements is both a cause of internal instability and
an external vulnerability of the bloc as a whole. In the late 1970s,
Eastern Europe became heavily dependent on grain imports, which rose
from an annual average of 4.6 million tons in 1966–1970 to 12.2 million
tons in 1976–1979.6 Of the East European countries, only Hungary has
achieved self-sufficiency in grain production and thereby avoided the
debilitating foreign-exchange costs of high imports. Both Poland and
East Germany have had to liquidate flocks and herds in order to
preserve hard currency previously expended for animal feed imported
from the West, even though doing so meant heightened sacrifice for
the population.7

5Frederick Kempe, “East Germany Exploits Its Bonn Ties,” Wall Street Journal,
December 7, 1982.
7Hans Herbert Gotz, “Die DDR hat Angst vor dem Winter,” Frankfurter Allgemeine
Another area of immediate concern is the technological lag between East and West. Soviet planners appear to be very concerned about the growing gap between the Eastern bloc and the outside world in the leading manufacturing and process technologies, and they are looking to cooperation and specialization among bloc members as at least one way of closing this gap. At the June 8–10, 1982, CMEA meeting in Budapest, agreements were signed on multilateral cooperation in microprocessors, industrial robots, and microelectronics.\textsuperscript{11}

Even if the CMEA states manage to overcome these immediate economic problems, the bloc will still face the unresolved problem of constructing a permanent and self-sustaining order in Eastern Europe. Any such order must accomplish the minimum Soviet requirement—maintenance of control. In addition, from the Soviet perspective, it should also allow for the mobilization of East European resources in support of Soviet global strategy. This means moving beyond mere control and establishing the viability of the region and a competitive position in the world.

Unfortunately for Soviet planners, the pursuit of control and viability have rarely been mutually reinforcing processes. A Stalinist Eastern Europe might prove stable, but it would be unlikely to be economically dynamic and capable of contributing to Soviet global capabilities. Conversely, an Eastern Europe organized along the lines envisioned by the pre-1968 Czechoslovak economic reformers or according to certain proposals current in Hungary might be economically viable, but would inevitably present the Soviet Union with problems of maintaining political control. For the foreseeable future, it is likely that Soviet policy will continue to be a process of balancing—of tinkering with different ways to achieve an acceptable combination of control and viability for Eastern Europe without maximizing either of these desiderata.

At present, the Soviet Union seems to be reappraising the extent to which closer bloc integration can both promote growth and lower dependence on the West. Some officials are arguing that stepped-up integration within CMEA must be made a substitute for East-West ties. One of the main exponents of this view appears to be Oleg Bogomolov, the Soviet director of the Institute for the Study of the World Socialist System. According to Bogomolov,

\begin{quote}
In the early 1970s the decline in business activity and the reduction of orders in many industries compelled the U.S. and European banks to hastily seek a profitable place to invest their money and made
\end{quote}

them responsive to the CMEA countries' requests for credit. But not
enough consideration was given here to the fact that reimbursement
of the credits provided requires the creation of normal conditions for
exports from the CMEA countries to Western markets. Instead, just
the opposite is happening—protectionism and discrimination against
the socialist countries are being stepped up. In addition, in an
attempt to "penalize" the USSR and a number of other countries,
new restrictions are being introduced on the import of many goods
from these countries and the supply of modern technology to them.
The risk involved in industrial cooperation with the Western firms
has been revealed most clearly, and this cooperation must be
approached more circumspectly.\textsuperscript{12}

Unfortunately for Soviet planners, efforts to enlist the East Euro-
pean countries in the solution of the USSR's problems under the guise
of CMEA cooperation cut two ways, as disgruntled East Europeans can
use CMEA as a forum from which to demand Soviet help in addressing
their own problems. This dilemma was brought home to the Soviets in
1983, as they sought to convene a long-planned summit to develop
plans for further integration and common positions in confronting the
West. Ultimately, the Soviets were forced to postpone the summit
indefinitely as a result of a dispute with Romania over the agenda. As
a price for attendance at the summit, the Romanians were demanding
substantial economic aid from the Soviets, including sharp increases in
Soviet oil exports at concessional terms and the creation of a CMEA
"food program" that would allow Romania to import agricultural prod-
ucts from other member states at reduced prices.\textsuperscript{13} In addition to caus-
ing the USSR considerable embarrassment internationally, the collapse
of the planned summit demonstrates the circular dilemma that the
Soviets find themselves in with regard to Eastern Europe: While they
see intensified economic integration as at least a partial solution to
their own economic problems, these problems are now so severe that
they prevent the Soviets from offering anything really attractive to the
East Europeans and thus hold back even modest efforts to increase
integration.

Food and energy, two of the most critical problems in the bloc, illu-
strate this dilemma. The Soviet leadership is looking to increased
cooperation with Eastern Europe as a partial solution to its own prob-
lems in agriculture. The final section of the Food Program outlined by
Prime Minister Tikhonov in June 1982 called for greater CMEA

\textsuperscript{12}O. Bogomolov, "SEV: Ekonomicheskaia strategia 80-kh godov (CMEA: Economic
integration in the sphere of food production. The Soviet Union already imports processed food from Eastern Europe. The region's main contribution to the Soviet Program will not be food itself, but participation in joint investment projects in the fertilizer industry. Bulgaria, Hungary, the GDR, Poland, and Czechoslovakia have provided credits for the USSR for the construction of potassium mining and production plants. The USSR has repaid these loans with the provision of output from the new facilities.

As the experience with energy reveals, both the Soviet Union and the East European states want the benefits of CMEA integration but not the costs. The USSR wants to tie the smaller countries to its economy but still retain the option of selling oil and other resources to the West in order to acquire technology and grain that the East Europeans cannot provide. For their part, the East Europeans want the benefit of Soviet energy supplies and an undemanding Soviet market for East European goods, but they too want to retain options to the West and other parts of the world. The situation is one that assures a high level of frustration and resentment on both sides.

The extent to which a greater emphasis in the bloc on integration is compatible or in conflict with an avowed Soviet (and East European) interest in continued economic ties with the West and with Japan is not yet clear. On the one hand, there is little evidence to support the view, frequently voiced in the West, that trade between the West and Eastern Europe slows the integration of Eastern Europe into the Soviet economy, or, conversely, that a diminution of East-West trade forces Eastern Europe into greater reliance on and integration with the Soviet Union. Indeed, the contrary may be the case, as trade with the West can actually serve as a catalyst for intrabloc economic integration. Much the way American multinational corporations proved to be an important external stimulus to the development of a continental market in Europe following the formation of the EEC, Western economic partners are helping to unify and standardize economic ties within Eastern Europe. It is often pointed out that Fiat, by building automotive plants throughout the bloc, has done more to standardize the East European automobile industry than decades of CMEA planning.

---

14See Pravda, June 9, 1982.
15Yu. Shintiapin, "Prodol'sstvennaia programma SSSR i sotrudnichestvo stran SEV (The USSR Food Program and Cooperation Among CMEA Countries)," Meshhdunarodnaia zhizn', No. 8, July 1982.
CMEA-wide computer industry, has provided the external basis on
which the East European countries have standardized their computer
industries.17

The Soviet Union has an interest in promoting joint East-West ven-
tures that play this standardizing role, not only for the obvious
economic benefits, but because these ventures are consistent with
Soviet political strategy, which emphasizes all-European cooperation
leading to a gradual fusion of East and West on all but the "ideologi-
cal" level. Just as trade with the West can in many circumstances pro-
mote, or at any rate not conflict with, integration in the East, so
enhanced integration within CMEA could, in the Soviet view, actually
further long-term cooperation with the West. Soviet efforts to promote
integration in Eastern Europe "from the bottom up," insofar as they
blunt Western charges that the individual members of the bloc are
resisting closer integration with the USSR, help to promote a possible
CMEA-EEC accord, even as this accord would further enhance integra-
tion in the East.

Energy is another issue on which the Soviet Union at first appears
to face difficult choices between promoting integration in the East and
opting for greater ties with the West, but which on closer inspection
proves to be far more ambiguous in its effects. There is no doubt that
the East Europeans remain under intense pressure from the Soviet
Union to lower their imports of Soviet energy and to seek alternate
sources of supply, thereby freeing up Soviet resources, especially oil, for
export to the West.18 While it might be argued that cutbacks in the
supply of energy could lower Soviet leverage over the bloc, in practice
they have actually increased it. With a ready market for Soviet energy
in the West, Soviet negotiators have been able to claim that East Euro-
pean imports of Soviet energy that could otherwise be sold in the West
ought to be paid for in industrial goods that are competitive with those
the USSR would be able to purchase on Western markets. The Soviet
Union has thus used the tightening of energy supplies as a lever to
force greater East European attentiveness to Soviet industrial require-
ments, which in turn entails closer cooperation at the bilateral level
and within the CMEA mechanisms.

How the "integration through autarky" versus "integration through
cooperation" discussion is resolved may depend on the Western
response. For now, it appears that the Soviet Union is following a
two-pronged strategy, on the one hand pressing for greater integration

17S. E. Goodman, "The Partial Integration of the CEMA Computer Industries,"
18Amity Shlaes, "Soviet Bloc Squabbles at Recent Parley Show Divisions Over
so as to lower vulnerability to Western sanctions, while on the other attempting to convince the West that a sanctions policy is futile and that it therefore ought to be abandoned. Ironically, the more autarkic CMEA appears, the more likely it is that autarky will not in fact be required as political leaders in the West conclude that sanctions do not work or that the West has an interest in preventing the bloc from “turning inward.”

The question of how much the bloc should turn inward in response to the worsened political climate and the lowered expectations of what infusions of capital and technology from the West can accomplish is not unrelated to the question of whether the bloc should undertake sweeping economic reforms. With the accession of Andropov to leadership in the Soviet party, there was an upsurge of speculation in the West about the prospects for reform in the USSR and throughout the bloc, perhaps along the lines of the Hungarian NEM. Within a few months, however, it was clear that Andropov’s actual policies were concerned mainly with improving economic performance by extracting untapped “reserves” in the Soviet and bloc economies, using the familiar methods of mobilization and discipline. The long-standing conviction among Soviet planners that there are untapped reserves of economic growth, both within the Soviet economy and within CMEA as a whole, have helped to forestall moves toward fundamental reform.

Indeed, Soviet planners are convinced that the process of integration will in itself produce untapped reserves of economic growth in CMEA. Such reasoning is to some extent sound, in that it represents the socialist version of Western liberal economic doctrine that holds that free trade, in permitting specialization on the basis of comparative advantage (with specialization in turn yielding economies of scale), increases overall growth and prosperity. The Soviets are undoubtedly right in concluding that the possibilities for further rationalization and integration within CMEA—where, political rhetoric notwithstanding, there has been far less integration than in the EEC—have by no means been exhausted. Realizing these possibilities will not be easy, however. As was noted earlier, unlike in the market or quasi-market economies, where the expansion of trade is an almost spontaneous process brought about by the decisions of individual economic actors (firms and consumers), the planned economies must make decisions on increasing trade from the top down.

Because of the tension between the planned economy, with its inherent tendencies to autarky, and the requirements of international specialization, it is likely that progress toward greater integration in the 1980s will not be dramatic. While Soviet and bloc political and economic commentators talk a great deal about the need to perfect
economic mechanisms and to switch from "extensive" to "intensive" economic growth, rationalization at the intrabloc level will be hindered by the same obstacles that operate within the Soviet economy. Soviet demands for more supranational planning and a subordination, in effect, of East European economic planning to the dictates of Gosplan are likely to persist. The result, however, is likely to be simply a greater quantity of transnational physical exchanges rather than a change in the qualitative nature of transnational exchange through the adoption of market and price indicators. Moreover, under Soviet prodding, CMEA is unlikely to resist the temptation to launch new showcase projects, while neglecting the kinds of reforms from below needed to encourage intensive growth. It is instructive, for example, that at the most recent (October 1983) meeting of the CMEA prime ministers, the East Europeans were induced to join yet another massive joint investment project in the Soviet Union—an iron mining and processing complex at Krivoi Rog.\(^{19}\)

The Internal Level

Finally, the Soviets have had to formulate a response to the problem of dissent within the individual East European countries. Clearly the Soviets were utterly opposed to the developments in Poland and demanded a harsh response from the Polish leadership. There remains, however, a vast gray area in which Communist leaders no doubt debate among themselves about the dangers of permitting some dissent. There is a range in which Communist regimes can operate, from utter repression on the Stalinist model to the relatively relaxed atmosphere that has prevailed in Hungary.

Many Soviet statements, as well as the example of Soviet actions in the USSR itself, suggest that the leaderships in Poland and other bloc countries will be prodded to keep an even closer rein on dissidents. The Soviet press voiced broad support when the Jaruzelski government announced the curtailment of scientific and cultural exchanges between Poland and the United States in late 1982. The Soviets seem particularly enraged at KOR and other intellectual groups and will resist with particular ferocity attempts to forge links between dissident intellectuals and disgruntled workers. The highly unusual arrest of intellectual dissidents in Hungary in March 1983 may have indicated a greater emphasis on action against the intellectuals under the Andropov

regime, although the evidence is inconclusive. Also indicative of a harder line were Zamyatin’s comments on the role of the church.

While there may well be a stronger crackdown on dissidents, churches, and other groups in the next several years, there is not likely to be a large-scale re-Stalinization of Eastern Europe. As even the Polish case shows, the Soviets and the local Communist authorities have no desire to enter into a direct confrontation with the church or the workers. Rather, they seem confident that they can erode these sources of resistance by steady pressure and attempts to split “political” clergymen (trade unionists, intellectuals, etc.) from those who are said to constitute only a “social” group without political ambitions.

For now, even the weakest regimes in Eastern Europe appear strong enough to cope with internal dissent. In doing so, they will no doubt make every effort to cloak themselves in the law and to accuse their opponents of undermining the accepted legal order. While they will probably not be successful in translating their defense of “legality” into political legitimacy, their identification with order could help to win over populations that, like the Poles, appear to be growing weary of political struggle and economic hardship. This identification with order would be put at risk if the regimes themselves engaged in wholesale and perhaps gratuitous violence against their own populations. As the Polish case also shows, however, in an extreme situation most regimes probably would resort to such measures, if doing so was the only way to retain power.

THE LONG TERM

Although the Soviet Union is likely to undertake few dramatic changes in the short- to medium-term, over the long term it could permit or encourage major changes in Eastern Europe. These potential long-term changes must be considered, not only because they are possible, but more importantly because the mere expectation of fundamental change, however remote, influences the perceptions of publics and elites, especially in Western Europe.

To sort out possible alternative futures for Soviet-East European relations, it is useful to consider several “ideal-typical” models, each of which can be evaluated in terms of its likelihood of realization and its desirability from Western and Soviet points of view. The first model, which might be called a European collective security system, closely

---

20 Reports have reached the West that Kadar confirmed, in a 3-hour speech to the Central Committee, that the raids had his full support. (Andrew Csepel, “Kadar Orders Crackdown,” The Guardian, May 12, 1983.)
approximates the USSR’s preferred vision for a European order. Its realization clearly would represent a major gain for the Soviet Union and for this reason remains a Soviet objective. The second model, which might be called “Europe des patries,” would represent a defeat for Soviet ambitions, at least as they are defined at present. It would mean greater independence for the East European states and a “deideologization” of East European politics. The third model, identified simply as “empire,” would mean no dramatic gain or loss for the Soviet Union and could develop from incremental changes in the current situation.

Collective Security

From the Soviet standpoint, the most favorable long-term prospect probably remains the resumption of steady, “irreversible” progress toward the creation of an all-European system of collective security and economic cooperation. One object of creating such a system would be to underwrite Soviet control of Eastern Europe by gaining a greater say in the economic and security affairs of Western Europe. Although dramatic progress in this direction is not likely, it cannot be ruled out entirely, either as an objective possibility or as a subjective factor that will shape the perceptions and policies of Soviet leaders.

As has been stressed in this analysis, maintaining an empire imposes economic and political costs on the USSR that it would rather avoid. By overtly constructing an empire in Eastern Europe, Stalin created two sets of problems for himself and for all future Soviet regimes. First, he took on the task of policing a large area whose population was for the most part hostile to the Russians; and second, he severely damaged the prospects for advancing Soviet influence in Western Europe. Moreover, it became apparent over time that these two problems would interact with and reinforce each other: The existence of a free and prosperous Western Europe outside of Soviet control would make it difficult for East Germans, Poles, and Czechoslovaks to reconcile themselves permanently to Soviet domination, while the repressive behavior of the USSR toward the East Europeans would insure West European wariness of Soviet motives and would undermine any Soviet effort to bring the whole of the Continent under Soviet influence.

“Collective security” has traditionally been the means to which Soviet leaders look to escape the vicious circle of their policy in Europe. They seem to think, perhaps rightly, that a submissive Western Europe could solve many of their problems in Eastern Europe. Such a Western Europe could be expected not only to shut down American broadcasting facilities such as Radio Free Europe, but would
THE OUTLOOK

itself refrain, on the Finnish model, from criticizing the Soviet Union and other Communist states for their internal affairs. Again on the Finnish model, there would be no asylum in Western Europe for those fleeing Communist rule. Economic conditions in Eastern Europe and the USSR would improve as a result of “cooperation” that was not only all-European in scope, but that in form took account of Communist economic peculiarities. Western Europe could become a workshop for the economic development of the USSR and its satellites. It would be paid for the goods it provided out of long-term credits, increased buy-back provisions, and the import from the Soviet Union of industrial goods that would otherwise be procured elsewhere. Long-term agreements would govern East-West trade and allow Soviet and bloc planners to better accommodate trade with central planning. CMEA and the EEC would cease to be rival organizations. Agreements between the two would be concluded, perhaps resulting in the merger of both into CSCE or the UN Economic Commission for Europe. The USSR and its allies might be able to lower the burden of defense expenditures on their economies as a result of the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Western Europe and a more accommodating military posture by the West Europeans themselves. Ultimately, the Soviet Union could use its external leverage over Western Europe to bring about internal changes, such as limitations on press freedoms or acceptance of Communist participation in West European governments.

Traditionally, in working to advance its influence in Europe and to bring about something resembling the order just described, the Soviet Union has resorted both to “hardline” attempts to bully the West Europeans and to the more détente-oriented approach of attempting to encourage long-term incremental change. In the Brezhnev period, overt intimidation was minimized, as détente became the overwhelmingly preferred policy. It remained the preferred policy under Andropov, although overt threats and pressures seemed to increase as a result of the INF controversy.

Despite occasional successes for Soviet policy, on balance there seems to be little prospect of the détente process leading inexorably, as Soviet analysts once might have hoped, to the creation of a new order in Europe. The détente process itself is stalled and is not likely, for political and economic reasons, to regain the momentum of the early 1970s. In any case, even if it did resume its previous pace, the USSR would still face a dilemma that was apparent even in the early 1970s, namely that the Soviet hidden agenda in Europe—stabilization of Communist rule in Eastern Europe, institutionalization of Soviet military preponderance in a collective security system, and diminution of U.S. influence on the Continent—is in fundamental conflict with a West
European hidden agenda that includes liberalization in Eastern Europe, preservation of ties between East and West Germany, and conclusion of arms control agreements that in relative terms may reduce the Soviet rather than the American military presence. Even if détente continues in Europe, it will remain a process in which East and West European governments each pursue their hidden agendas, agreeing on short- and medium-term measures, but doing so with fundamentally different expectations as to their long-term significance.

In spite of these difficulties, however, there does remain a certain objective convergence between the Soviet Union's long-standing interest in a European collective security system and the interest in West Germany and elsewhere in the creation of a European "peace order." Many in Western Europe, including a minority within the German Social Democratic Party, believe that if the West were to adopt more accommodating policies, the USSR would lose those fears that allegedly compel it to dominate Eastern Europe and would permit an eventual "Finlandization" of the region. The task for Soviet diplomacy and propaganda will be to convince increasing numbers of West Europeans that it is the United States that is the main obstacle to the creation of such an order, while the USSR is largely favorable to it.

To foster this impression, the Soviet Union engages in periodic "disinformation" efforts designed to promote the idea that a new order in Europe, including possible reunification of Germany, is possible. Words, however, are one thing, actions another. To bring about a profound reversal of West European thinking probably would require either fundamental changes in Soviet policy or the unexpected collapse

21The concept of a European peace order was popularized by Willy Brandt in his tenure as Chancellor in the early 1970s. (See Brandt, A Peace Policy for Europe, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1968.) The goal of a "peace order" for Europe is by no means a strictly leftist demand in Europe. It is endorsed, for example, by West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher in "Toward an Overall Western Strategy for Peace, Freedom and Progress," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 61, No. 1, Fall 1982, p. 44.

22These ideas are developed by Andre Gunder Frank, "From Atlantic Alliance to Pan-European Entente: Political Economic Alternatives," Alternatives, Vol. 8, No. 4, Spring 1983, pp. 423–482. Frank dedicates this work in part "to my friends in Eastern Europe who unknowingly encouraged me in this direction . . . ." p. 423.

23Reports occasionally reached the West of discussions between Andropov and East European leaders that suggested a potential willingness on the part of the Soviet Union to reopen the question of the European order. According to one such report, during three long meetings with Andropov, Hungarian officials gained the impression that the Soviet Union, in pursuing its "long-range strategic plan" of a fundamental change in policy toward East and West, might offer to withdraw Russian troops from Eastern Europe, provided the United States withdrew from Western Europe. The Hungarians also reported that the Soviets are now thinking about possible reunification of Germany. (Lajos Lederer, "Russia May Opt for Unity of Germany," Observer, July 31, 1983.)
of Western strength and unity. To encourage change, the Soviet Union probably would have to do more to accommodate the concerns of the European “peace movement” and to lend credibility to the non-Communist left’s claims regarding the kinds of changes that are possible in Europe. So far, however, no Soviet leadership has been willing to take large risks in Eastern Europe in order to encourage favorable trends in the West. Apart from occasional propaganda gestures such as Brezhnev’s unilateral “withdrawal” of a tank division from East Germany in 1979, the Soviets have shown no willingness to cut forces in Eastern Europe, and they may in fact be moving in the opposite direction as they increase the number of short-range nuclear systems stationed in Eastern Europe. Nor does the Soviet Union show much interest in permitting the kind of far-reaching reforms in Eastern Europe that would bolster the credibility of the idea of a “socialism with a human face.” To do so, Soviet leaders would have to accept East European assurances that domestic reform would not lead to changes in defense and foreign-policy alignments. It may well be that 1968, when the Czechoslovaks tried to give such assurances, offered the best chance for the Soviets to accept such an outcome, had they been inclined to do so. Poland after 1980 presented far greater risks for the USSR, as the internal reform movement quickly took on anti-Soviet and anti-Russian overtones.

In the absence of prospects for inducing Western Europe into joining a Soviet-sponsored collective security system, the possibility remains that the Soviet Union could abandon the détente approach altogether and revert to a very “hardline” approach, attempting to advance its collective security proposals not by offering reform or disarmament, but by direct and indirect pressure on Western Europe. The Soviets have already shown a willingness to play upon European vulnerabilities by offering superficially attractive economic and security guarantees to any European country willing to dissociate itself from the United States. In early 1980, at the height of Western concern about world energy shortages, Soviet spokesmen put out feelers for a system of mutual guarantees involving the CSCE member states and the oil producers of the Middle East. In similar but less subtle ways, the USSR has pledged not to target with nuclear weapons those states in Western Europe that refuse to host U.S. systems.

As the fate of these initiatives so far suggests, overt pressure has not led to breakthroughs in the Soviet campaign for a collective security system. It could be more successful if a drastic deterioration of

---

24Western intelligence sources concluded that the withdrawal of this division was more than offset by a buildup of other units. (Richard Burt, “Soviet Said to Add to Its Bloc Troops,” The New York Times, June 8, 1980.)
Western Europe's global position occurred that would in effect force West European leaders to come to terms with a powerful Soviet Union. A complete divorce between the United States and Western Europe, assuming the West Europeans themselves did nothing to increase their own military deterrent, would leave Western Europe vulnerable to Soviet pressure. Such a divorce might come about as a result of U.S. isolationism, preoccupation with Latin America or the Pacific, or an alliance clash over crises in the Third World. Chaos and instability in the Third World would further induce Western Europe to look East for energy supplies and markets, as would competition for non-Eastern markets from the newly industrialized countries.

Barring such a dire scenario, however, it is likely that even those West Europeans most committed to building a European "peace order" will resist Soviet overtures. A new order in Europe, if it can be constructed at all, would probably have to be based on diminished rather than increased Soviet influence in Europe, on a "status quo minus" outcome for the USSR rather than the desired "status quo plus." Such an order could come about only under circumstances very different from those that prevail today. They might in fact resemble those that de Gaulle saw when he proclaimed that Eastern and Western Europe would eventually overcome the existing "Yalta order" and create a Europe des patries.

Europe des Patries

Western observers have long speculated about prospects for a voluntary Soviet pullback from Eastern Europe, either unilaterally or in conjunction with a withdrawal of U.S. forces from NATO. In the early 1960s, French President de Gaulle developed the concept of a Europe des patries from the Atlantic to the Urals. In de Gaulle's assessment, Soviet domination of Eastern Europe was the product of an internationalism based on Marxist-Leninist ideology that he believed would eventually fade as a motive in Soviet behavior. "Deideologization" and with it the reassertion of the USSR's Russian identity would eventually permit the reestablishment of a Europe of competing great powers, including an autonomous Eastern Europe. Measures to curb American influence on the Continent, which de Gaulle believed were necessary to promote France's interests in Western Europe, would also encourage the Soviet leadership to begin a parallel process of disengagement from Eastern Europe.25

25De Gaulle also theorized that increasing pressure from China in Asia would force the Soviet Union to assume a more "Russian" and European character and to seek a settlement in Europe favorable to the West European states. See John Newhouse, De Gaulle and the Anglo-Saxons, Viking, New York, 1970, p. 63.
De Gaulle's vision of a future Europe was discredited by events, not the least of which was the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Nonetheless, speculation continues in the West about the possibility of the Soviet Union eventually relinquishing control of Eastern Europe. Leftists and "peace movement" members in Western Europe have suggested parallels between the aversion of the Poles to the Soviet presence in Eastern Europe and the rising anti-Americanism in Western Europe. If the West Europeans, it is argued, take the lead in limiting U.S. influence in Western Europe, a parallel Soviet withdrawal would follow. In the United States, academics have also speculated on the possibility of a voluntary Soviet withdrawal from Eastern Europe. Adam Ulam has suggested that in the long run the USSR would be more secure and more prosperous if it permitted some type of "Finlandization" of the region. Seweryn Bialer has predicted that "one of the key events of this century and the next will be the decline and disintegration of the Soviet empire. The Soviet Eastern European empire will be gone probably within the next 20 to 25 years."

In order to speculate about the possibility of realizing such changes, it is necessary to analyze precisely what factors motivate the USSR to maintain its grip on the region and to ask if these factors could change. It is useful to distinguish between the defensive (or buffer) role that Eastern Europe plays for the Soviet Union and the offensive (or springboard) role. The defensive considerations in turn can be broken into three categories: (1) those that affect or are believed to affect the most vital Soviet interests, namely the maintenance of the cohesion of the USSR proper and CPSU control within it; (2) those that affect the Soviet Union's ability to defend itself from external aggression such as occurred in the two world wars; and (3) those that relate to the maintenance of the Soviet Union's overall standing in the world as a great power.

Soviet domination of Eastern Europe is occasionally justified on the grounds that an end to this domination would lead to the end of Russian control of the minorities within the USSR and a breakup of the Soviet Union. Maintaining the cohesion of the USSR from Moscow may well be less of a potential problem than is often suggested in the West, however. With the single exception of Pakistan, there is no case since 1945 of a state splitting into its component parts. It is probably overly fatalistic to conclude that the internal cohesion of the USSR is

---

36See Peter Bender, *Das Ende des ideologischen Zeitalters*, Severin und Siedler, West Berlin, 1981.


so fragile as to require the permanent maintenance of Soviet control in Eastern Europe. It is also questionable whether the CPSU needs control of Eastern Europe to maintain prestige among the Soviet people and thus control of the USSR itself. The CPSU has survived splits with Yugoslavia, China, and Albania and would not necessarily totter if the remainder of Eastern Europe regained its independence. It is possible to envision face-saving solutions to the problem of the "irreversibility" of Communism in Eastern Europe. Perhaps the preservation of Communism in Eastern Europe on Yugoslav lines would satisfy some enlightened leadership that had decided to turn its attentions to internal development and perhaps to increasing Soviet influence in other parts of the world.

A second argument used to explain the Soviet interest in control of Eastern Europe is the Soviet need for a security buffer on its Western border. In the early postwar period, the Soviets probably were genuinely concerned about land invasion or air attack from the West. Like others in Europe, they also were concerned about a possible revival of German power. As the fear of physical attack moderated somewhat, the Soviets became increasingly concerned about the threat of ideological subversion from the West. This provided a new and perhaps more important rationale for the maintenance of an East European buffer.

While the Soviets make every effort to keep alive the memory of World War II and to reap domestic and foreign-policy benefits thereby, it is valid to question whether the USSR can claim in perpetuity a buffer area that may have been useful under earlier circumstances but that has outlived its original purpose. It is extremely doubtful that the present Soviet leaders genuinely fear attack from Western Europe, particularly since the Soviet Union could deter any such attack with nuclear weapons. Certainly, the further the World War II experience recedes and the more the military gap between the Soviet Union and the medium powers widens, the more reason there is to expect that fear of direct physical attack will diminish both as a serious Soviet motive for retaining control in Eastern Europe and as a credible excuse in the eyes of the outside world.

There is also reason to question whether control of Eastern Europe is an absolute requirement for Soviet internal security. It could be argued that Finland has been at least as reliable as Poland and Czechoslovakia in seeing to it that its territory is not used as a springboard for ideological subversion against the Soviet Union.29 It is

29It should be stressed that "Finlandization" itself is not a very appropriate term to describe a process whereby fundamental change in Eastern Europe might be accom-
already quite revealing that the informational and cultural barriers between Western and Eastern Europe are more porous than those between Eastern Europe and the USSR itself—a circumstance that suggests that the bloc may be as much a conduit for as a buffer against Western influences.

These observations are of course not meant to minimize the high degree of concern for security that is evident on the part of the Soviet elite, or to imply that a Soviet leadership would lightly undertake fundamental changes in Eastern Europe that in the short run at least could increase the risks—however marginally—of a physical and political threat to the USSR proper. What they are meant to do is to question the assumption that change in Eastern Europe can be ruled out purely on the basis of the “defensive” requirements of the USSR. There is no reason to assume that a Soviet leadership that genuinely wanted to rid itself of the “burdens of empire” could not do so for strictly defensive reasons.

The third set of “defensive considerations” affecting Soviet calculations regarding Eastern Europe, those relating to the maintenance of the Soviet Union’s great-power status, are less easily dismissed than the other two. In view of the role that Eastern Europe plays in permitting the USSR to lead a “world system,” the liberation of Eastern Europe would require a fundamental reorientation of Soviet leadership perceptions from an internationalist to a more exclusively nationalist outlook. It seems unlikely that a Soviet leadership with a decidedly internationalist outlook and a craving for international power and respect would permit a far-reaching relaxation of control in Eastern Europe. As long as the ruling group in Moscow continues to identify the basis of its own legitimacy with the promotion of world Communism and to measure Soviet achievements—and Soviet security—against the United States as the leader of a rival “world system,” any Soviet pullout from Eastern Europe is almost unthinkable. The economic “burdens of empire” in Eastern Europe (and elsewhere) will be borne regardless of the cost.

The Soviet motivation in permitting the establishment of an independent Finland was very different from the motivations that would be needed to allow change in Eastern Europe. Finnish independence, however fortunate from the standpoint of the Finns themselves, was not an act of charity on the part of the Soviet Union but a calculated move by Stalin in his ongoing struggle with the “imperialist” world. With relations with the United States and Britain tense, Stalin, who clearly believed that Poland and Germany were the key countries in the postwar settlement, had strong incentives to hold back from Sovietizing Finland. “Finlandization” stemmed from the same set of motivations that led to the subjugation of the Poles and the rest of the East Europeans; only the local and international circumstances were different. In addition, the Finns had won a certain amount of respect from Stalin by imposing severe costs on the Red Army during the “Winter War.”
At this point, of course, the distinction between the USSR as a “defender” of its stature as a great power and the USSR as an offensive power threatening the international system becomes largely academic. If Soviet leaders believe that the Soviet Union’s status as a great power requires stable control in Eastern Europe and that the status quo in Western Europe undermines this control, then there may be little point in arguing about whether the Soviet Union is “defensively” or “offensively” motivated. (This is not an unprecedented situation—history has shown examples of numerous powers that became aggressively defensive, e.g., Austria-Hungary in its waning years.) In any case, conditions for a change in Soviet thinking are less favorable with regard to this set of considerations.

What could lead to fundamental change would be a combination of internal and external factors that over time convinced the Soviet leadership that control of Eastern Europe, while not necessary to the maintenance of Soviet security in the traditional sense, is also not sufficient to help the USSR achieve those objectives that go beyond traditional security requirements (maintenance of the USSR’s status as a power “equal” to the United States and the creation of a Communist “world system”). While it must again be stressed that conditions for a fundamental change are remote, there are at least indications that certain trends could over time favor its realization.

Although it is hard to envision circumstances (except perhaps that of a long, conventional Sino-Soviet war—an extremely unlikely event) in which the USSR would give up what it sees as assets in Europe to pursue other goals, Europe is not as central to the global political competition as it was in the immediate aftermath of World War II. While Europe—West and East—is likely to remain the “main thing” in the Soviet view of world politics, it is possible to envision a slow, decades-long process whereby the relative importance of Eastern Europe and perhaps of Europe as a whole declines in world politics. Such a decline, if accompanied by development elsewhere, could induce even an ambitious Soviet leadership to rethink the costs and benefits of continued domination of the region. Despite Soviet propaganda claims regarding the “dynamic” character of the bloc, Eastern Europe’s relative weight on the global scale is in secular decline. With the exception of Poland and Romania, the East European countries are in a state of demographic stagnation, perhaps even decline. The share of the six European CMEA states in world GNP has declined from 7.5 percent in 1960 to 6.2 percent in 1970, to 5.9 percent in 1980, to 5.8

---

percent in 1981, and to 5.7 percent in 1982. Poland, the largest of the six countries, ranked tenth among world industrial powers in 1970; by 1980, it had dropped to fourteenth.\footnote{31} In qualitative terms, the relative decline of Eastern Europe is even more pronounced. The Skoda armament works of Czechoslovakia and the oil fields of Romania were once major prizes and heavy contributors to the Nazi war effort. Today their weight in the world power balance is negligible.

Even as Eastern Europe is a declining asset for the Soviet Union, other challenges outside this immediate area are presenting themselves to the Soviet leaders. Japan's spectacular rise to the status of a great economic power has not gone unnoticed in the Soviet Union. China, if it is moderately successful in its modernization drive, will also present the Soviets with a challenge. More generally in Asia, the USSR risks being left out of the development of the "Pacific Basin" as the most economically and technologically dynamic region of the globe. While the Soviets are aware of the statistical dimensions of Eastern Europe's relative decline and would clearly like to reverse them—particularly on the economic level—the decline itself has not led to a fundamental reassessment of Eastern Europe's geopolitical importance.\footnote{32} Nonetheless, with the domination of Eastern Europe of declining utility and perhaps rising cost to the Soviet Union, an evolution in Soviet attitudes over time cannot be ruled out.

Such an evolution could be helped along by internal developments in the Soviet Union. Most evidence suggests that the Soviet public and the elite regard domination of Eastern Europe as a vindication of Russia's national greatness and a just reward for its role in defeating Nazi Germany in the "Great Patriotic War." Soviet and even Russian nationalism can thus be said to contain an internationalist component. The peculiar quality of this nationalism militates against a return to exclusively Russian or even Soviet concerns and contributes to Soviet

\footnote{31}Calculated from the CIA Handbook of Economic Statistics, 1982. 1983. The relative decline of Eastern Europe, which persisted in a period of slow or negative growth in North America, Western Europe, and Latin America, should accelerate in 1984 and beyond as economic recovery gathers speed.

\footnote{32}The Soviet claim that the "imperialists" wanted to use Poland to "reverse the course of history" is indicative of the importance still attached to the region. This assessment is reinforced by the enduring "Eurocentrism" of the Soviet and Russian foreign-policy elite. To the extent that the Soviets see threats and opportunities in the "globalization" of world politics, they tend to conclude that this simply further enhances the value of the original Soviet power bloc in Central and Eastern Europe. In reacting to developments in Asia, the USSR has reassessed its inherent right as a "great power" to a voice in Asian and Pacific affairs. Moreover, it has exerted pressure on the East Europeans themselves to participate with the USSR in developing Siberia, aiding Vietnam, and otherwise helping to fulfill the USSR's global vocation.
intolerance for rebellious peoples like the Poles and the Czechs.33 There is some possibility, however, of an eventual reorientation of Soviet attitudes toward Eastern Europe brought about by the emergence of a genuinely Russian nationalism stripped of all internationalist pretensions. Some Russian nationalists have already argued that Eastern Europe is a burden on Russian resources. An extreme exponent of this view is Solzhenitsyn, who has urged that "the state . . . switch its attention away from distant continents—and even away from Europe and the south of our country—and make the Northeast [of Russia] the center of national activity." Such a switch, according to Solzhenitsyn, "would oblige us sooner or later to withdraw our protective surveillance of Eastern Europe."34

One factor that may provoke a renewed interest in Russian values is the ongoing depletion of Soviet natural resources and the gradual decay of the Soviet environment—both of which, it could be argued, are at least in part the result of the Soviet Union’s ambitious foreign and defense policies. There are occasional indications that some Soviet officials oppose the massive export of Soviet natural resources that is part of the Soviet Union’s policy toward both Eastern and Western Europe. Another, perhaps more important, factor that could kindle a renewed concern with Russian rather than international objectives is the changing demographic situation in the USSR. As has been noted, the "internationalism" with which the USSR justifies its domination of non-Russian peoples is based on more than political and military solidarity. It also encompasses a claim that the peoples of the Soviet empire are gradually "drawing together" and then "merging" into a new supranational entity.

Like so many other aspects of Soviet policy, the doctrine of the "merger of nations" is at least in part a result of the Soviet Union’s ambitious international policies. Khrushchev’s proclamation of the emergence of a "Soviet" people can be seen not only—or perhaps not even primarily—as a response to the domestic situation in the USSR, but as a response to the Soviet Union’s competition with the United States for global influence. In pressing its claim to status as a global power, the Soviet Union was virtually compelled to transcend its European and Russian origins. Either it would develop the means to tap the resources of peoples other than the Russian, or it would be forced

---

33This outlook was epitomized in a remark reportedly made by Brezhnev to Alexander Dubcek in 1968: "We have already got the better of other little nations, so why not yours too?" (Quoted in Jiri Valenta, Soviet Intervention in Czechoslovakia, 1968: Anatomy of a Decision, p. 151.)

to cede permanent inferiority to countries like China and the United States, with their in some ways inherently superior demographic bases.\textsuperscript{35}

While Soviet nationality specialists vary in the emphasis that they place on the “merger of nations doctrine,” there is no sign of a Russian nationalist effort to abandon a doctrine that can be said to follow from the “logic” of Marxism-Leninism. As long as they ground their legitimacy in Marxism-Leninism, Soviet leaders are in a sense condemned to upholding the “merger of nations” doctrine, despite its potentially explosive political implications. If propagated too forcefully, it could easily provoke a backlash among the peoples to be “merged.” Perhaps more importantly, it implies an eventual transformation of the Russian nation itself—a “yellowing” that is by no means popular with the Russian people.\textsuperscript{36}

How the Soviet leaders will handle the merger question, particularly in light of the explosive population growth in Central Asia, is difficult to predict. The higher the proportion of Soviet citizens of non-Russian origin in the USSR, the greater the incentive of the leadership in Moscow to press for the merging of these citizens into a new “monolith,” impervious to internal fragmentation and external irredenta. At the same time, however, the sheer size of the Asian population will not only make merger more of a practical impossibility than ever; it will imply a change in the identity of the Russian people themselves.

In the medium term, it is extremely unlikely that even a “Russia first” nationalist backlash in the USSR would mean liberation for the Poles, Romanians, and other peoples of the region. As the problems associated with the Central Asian minorities grow, pressures on Eastern Europe could actually intensify, as the USSR stresses Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy in combatting all nationalist “deviations.”

\textsuperscript{35}Khrushchev’s proclamation of the existence of a monolithic nationality with a demographic weight exceeding that of other nations was of course mostly rhetoric. The USSR remained fragmented among its numerous nationalities. Over the long run, however, it was an important indication of a more ambitious Soviet foreign policy and a realization on the part of Khrushchev of the demographic prerequisites for the pursuit of global power. Eastern Europe was of course also eventually affected by this shift in Soviet nationality policy, since by the same “proletarian” logic its peoples were expected to take part in the formation of a new “socialist community of peoples.”

\textsuperscript{36}Official sensitivity to fears about the future “purity” of the Russian nation is evident in a passage from an article by R. I. Kosolapov, chief editor of Kommunist. Kosolapov states: “Remember Makar Nagul’nov in Sholokhov’s Podnyataya tselina, who, in explaining the Communist future, predicts that ‘everyone’s faces will be pleasantly dark-complexioned and all the same.’ Precisely this or some kind of naïve thought was at times accepted as Marxism with all the resulting consequences. But Lenin should be treated according to Lenin, and not according to Nagul’nov.” (Quoted in Roman Solchanyk, “Merger of Nations: Back in Style?” Radio Liberty Research, RL 84/83, February 18, 1983.)
and perhaps as it stresses Russia's European and Slavic character by increasing its "fraternal" solidarity with the Bulgarians, Poles, Czechs, and others. In sum, even a development as profoundly significant as a change in the demographic composition of the USSR, while it will affect Eastern Europe, is not likely—in itself or even in conjunction with factors such as a decline in the benefits derived from control of Eastern Europe—to induce a fundamental change in Soviet thinking about Eastern Europe.

A Soviet Empire

In light of the foregoing analysis, neither collective security nor a "Europe des patries" is likely to emerge, at least during the remainder of this century. Political and economic circumstances are likely to preclude realization by the Soviet Union of its "preferred vision" for a European order, but at the same time they will not compel the Soviet Union to grant independence or autonomy to Eastern Europe. In the absence of these alternatives, the most probable trend for the next decade or more may be the development of the Soviet bloc along the lines of a traditional empire. This outcome would depend not on a fundamental change in Soviet, U.S., or West European policy, but rather on incremental developments in the status quo.

While Western observers have frequently stated that the USSR already is the world's last great multinational empire, there is a sense in which this characterization is only partially correct. While it is true that the Russians, under the tsars and subsequently under Communism, have ruled many non-Russian and non-Slavic peoples, the real basis for power has always been the Russian and Ukrainian peoples. As a continental power based on a large ethnic grouping—in fact the largest such grouping in Europe—Russia in some (although by no means all) respects resembled its three greatest rivals, the United States, China, and Germany, more than it did any of the "imperial" systems with which it is often tacitly compared.37

For Russia, as for these other powers, political influence over other nations ("imperialism") was the consequence of inherent size and strength, not the cause. This situation contrasts sharply with that of such empires as the Ottoman, the Austrian, or even the British in its waning stages, where a relatively small metropolitan people drew upon extranational resources to maintain a position in world politics that was totally incommensurate with its relative economic and demographic weight on a global scale.

---

37 As Raymond Aron has remarked, "the frontier is vague between the so-called legitimate influence of great powers and the so-called culpable imperialism . . ." (Raymond Aron, Peace and War, Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1966, p. 260.)
Russia, in contrast, has always been a powerful nation-state first and an empire only secondarily. Given its relative size in Europe, Russian influence over the eastern part of the Continent was conceded to be inevitable from the eighteenth century onward. During World War II, Western governments concluded that after the war, the USSR, particularly in the absence of a strong Germany, would have a major voice in the affairs of the region. The USSR thus emerged from World War II having attained recognition as a great power, the establishment of the security glacis in Eastern Europe, and the elimination of Germany as a power capable of challenging Soviet preeminence in Europe.

Despite the fulfillment of these great-power objectives, in the aftermath of World War II the Soviet leadership made clear that it would not be content to measure Soviet security and influence by the standards of traditional European and great-power politics. Had the Soviet leadership measured its security needs and political ambitions in more modest terms, it is possible that “Finnish” or “Austrian” solutions for Eastern Europe could have been worked out, although Poland would clearly have presented difficulties. But Soviet ambitions as much as fears required that these countries be welded into a “camp,” “commonwealth,” or “system” that embodied the USSR’s presumptive claim to a role that was not only global in scope, but ideological in content.

It is this claim to a universal mission, along with the globalization of conflict with the United States that it entails, that is gradually transforming the USSR into a real “empire.” The change in the Soviet Union’s self-perception from primarily that of nation-state to empire—albeit an empire justified according to universal principles—began after Stalin’s death and the realization that the Russian people were in a global competition that is fundamentally different from their World War II struggle with the Germans. While Stalin regarded the Russian people as a virtually inexhaustible resource, the Soviet Union’s guarantee of victory in war—even atomic war—with the West, following his death there was a new awareness in the Kremlin that the Red Army alone, despite its preponderant position in Europe, was insufficient to deal with the Soviet Union’s potential enemies and its global ambitions. The attempt to create large and effective East European armies certainly stems from the realization that the Red Army alone could not counter the combined U.S. and West European forces, or could do so only at unbearable economic and potentially human costs to the Russian people.

---

35 This shift in thinking is carefully documented in Herbert S. Dinerstein, War and the Soviet Union, Praeger, New York, 1959.
Ironically for the Soviet Union, the more success it has in pressing its claim to status as a global power, the more insignificant it renders its original great-power gains from World War II. As a global power claiming to lead a “system” that offers an alternative ideology, culture, economic model, and society to the other “world system,” its capabilities must be measured on a global scale and not in terms of a traditional sphere of influence over Central and Eastern Europe. While the USSR has amassed great military power and has shown an ability to project it on a global scale, it has not shown that it can successfully extend the Soviet model beyond the USSR proper.

In a Soviet-led bloc in which progress toward creation of a universal state is arrested in practice but not repudiated in principle, the actual result is likely to be something similar to a traditional empire. In such an empire, the Soviet or Russian nation-state will continue to dominate other nations, but will do so in the name of a historic mission that will be postponed indefinitely and in whose realization virtually no one any longer believes. The Soviet bloc or the “world socialist system” may well come to resemble the USSR itself, with propaganda maintaining a facade of organic unity, while in reality a kind of mechanical unity will be imposed by the kinds of coercive controls “from above” usually associated with empires.

Such an empire will have little real cohesion other than that imposed from without by Soviet military power. The Soviet Union may have to devote increasing attention and resources to the mere preservation of the empire from internal corrosion and what it regards as external subversion. Barring major political or economic collapse on either the Eastern or the Western side, the balance of power will be such that the USSR will be too strong to be forced to relinquish its East European empire, but too weak—in the whole range of economic, political, and other forms of power—to transform Eastern Europe into a genuine “world system” operating according to its own inner logic and drawing upon its own sources of strength.

In such a system, the outlines of which are clearly already in place, there may well be a decreased Soviet interest in establishing the legitimacy of Communism among the peoples of Eastern Europe, and corresponding emphasis on the cultivation of key elites or interest groups (e.g., the conservative party apparatuses) that are able to impose control. This conservative approach could be accompanied by increased reliance on police and paramilitary forces such as the ZOMOs in Poland.\footnote{ZOMO stands for “Zmotoryzowane Oddzialy Milicji Obywatelskiej,” or “Motorized Units of the Civil Militia.” For a description of its origins and activities, see “Recht auf Grausamkeit,” Der Spiegel, No. 23, June 6, 1985, pp. 95–101.} The prevailing bilateral, “radial” pattern of
economic, military, and cultural ties is likely to be maintained and accentuated, with little progress toward genuine multilateral integration. While this pattern of organization will facilitate Soviet political control of the bloc, it may also mean—again along the pattern of a traditional empire—a continued and perhaps increasing drain on metropolitan (e.g., Soviet) resources. Meanwhile, ideologists will continue to make the doctrinal adjustments needed to explain continued postponement of the long-term domestic and international objectives of Communism. These adjustments will inevitably include heightened militancy toward "imperialism," whose policies would be invoked to explain continued postponement of these objectives.

To the extent that the Soviets have encouraged Eastern Europe to develop ties with the West as part of its overall détente policy, the bloc countries might be forced to cut their ties with the West to a minimum and redirect their economies toward the Soviet Union. On the domestic level, there would be less reliance on consumer satisfaction and attempts to "humanize" socialism to attract popular support for regime objectives and greater resort to police repression.

Like other empires, the Soviet empire may also be subject to periodic upheavals which it will have to suppress by military means. In the late 1980s or 1990s, Eastern Europe could undergo crises that will dwarf those that have occurred in Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. Such upheavals could lead to dangerous East-West crises as well. Even if they do not, they would most likely still have negative implications for the USSR's standing in the world. Where détente has been primarily an offensive policy on the part of the Soviet Union—a turning outward from its former isolation—continued upheaval in Eastern Europe could lead once again to defensive Soviet belligerency.

Given the internal dynamics of the Soviet Union, there is little reason to expect that the system could not survive such a phase indefinitely. Again, however, there would be a price to pay. The Soviet Union would, as Zbigniew Brzezinski once suggested, become increasingly "irrelevant" to the rest of the world. In an inward-turned Soviet bloc, stability will be bought at the price of stagnation. The Soviet Union's East European sphere could prove less troublesome, but in the long run the bloc's ability to compete on a global scale will suffer. A stagnant, inward-looking bloc would offer little prospect of fulfilling its claim to eventually supplanting the existing world "system." The influence of the bloc on world affairs would rest, perhaps even more than it now does, on Soviet military and particularly strategic nuclear power. The trend that began after the fall of Khrushchev, in which the Soviet Union ceased to assert its claims to world
influence by presenting itself as a positive, alternative model, particularly in the Third World, and instead concentrated its efforts on an active military policy in the Third World, would continue. Outlines of this "militarization" of Soviet policy are already evident and may be increasing. As Bialer has stated, "As achievement in other fields declines, the military might could well become to an even greater extent the showcase of the state’s success and glory." As a result of this turning away from reliance on nonmilitary achievements to project global influence, Eastern Europe could become increasingly marginal to global politics, except insofar as its agents and military forces worked alongside their Soviet counterparts to exploit existing turmoil. Under these conditions, the Soviet bloc might present an increasingly less credible threat to the influence of the United States and the West in general, but it would remain a troublesome and destabilizing force in potential conflict situations.

---
